

SPECIAL MEETING- MSRAC

Mill Sites Redevelopment Advisory Committee (MSRAC)

Thursday – November 10, 2022 – 9:00 AM

Hybrid – Merrill Seney Community Room and Zoom

Zoom recording:

https://us02web.zoom.us/rec/share/3nMKPHtn4Zn_c_m9JJmkmHgKvDrLf5Idrac7EoKPKbk_kxtVchRGzcWmrOeMjUDw.P7DM3UexOq7Hp8Q?startTime=1668088971000

Passcode: 7@kjVx8*

YouTube recording: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qGi5pMHntpg>

Minutes:

Members attending: J. Blanchette – Chair, K. Beausoleil, R. Cournoyer, B. Davis, C. Langlois, S. Lewis, N. O’Leary, R. Waldron **Others Attending:** K. Bloomquist – Freeman Co LLC, Tyra Penn-Gesek – Director of Planning & Development

1. **CALL TO ORDER** 9:02 a.m.
2. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES: October 14, 2022 MSRAC Regular Meeting** S. Lewis moves/N.O’Leary seconds the approval of the minutes with one edit: K. Beausoleil is not listed as having attended, but he was present on Zoom during the meeting. Passes unanimously.
3. **CORRESPONDENCE** None
4. **CITIZEN COMMENTS** None
5. **COMMITTEE BUSINESS**
 - a. **Riverside Drive LOTCIP Sidewalk Project**
 - i. **Construction update**

The project is nearing the end. NC Inc addressed some punchlist items during the week of 7 Nov. The crosswalks are to be completed during the week of 14 Nov. A walk-through of the entire project is scheduled for Thursday 17 Nov at 10 a.m., to verify that the project is substantially complete according to the contract. MSRAC will schedule a special meeting, in order to be able to attend the site walk without creating an illegal meeting. The return date to install the bus shelter is still TBD.
 - ii. **Rawson Ave intersection area**

At the request of the business owner, the First Selectman asked CT DOT to review and comment on the proposed lease of two parking spots that could be added on the edge of the new stamped concrete plaza area. DOT’s written comments indicate that the State will not approve a lease in that portion of the ROW. The building owner has seen DOT’s comments and disagrees with their determination. The committee members discuss what options may be available to the building owner. T. Penn-Gesek will reach out to State Senator Flexer’s office and see if there is any way the senator can influence the dept’s willingness to consider the lease. For the time being, the temporary installation will remain in place until the contractor returns in the spring to wrap up the final contract items.

Members of the committee also express some concerns about a lack of clarity in the traffic flow coming off Rawson toward Rte 12, in the vicinity of the 4 new parking spaces. Various options are discussed,

including painting directional arrows & striping on the local road, and adding signage to identify the new parking area. The committee will pay special attention to the area during the walkthrough on the 17th, and if it seems beneficial a change order to add the striping/signage may be authorized. The general feedback since the completion of the plaza area has been very favorable.

b. Blain Road Intersection paving
i. Construction update

The project still needs an update to the plan from Provost & Rovero. The First Selectman has inquired a few times, but the revision has not been received. The plan is still to have NC complete the construction when they return to finish the LOTCIP project in the spring, but CT DOT will need to approve the revision before that time. Some concerns are raised about the volunteer fire dept's ability to draught from the French River once the bump out is constructed. It has already been discussed to have mountable granite curbing installed as part of the project, to accommodate for plow trucks and school buses making the turn. K. Beausoleil will reach out to Chief Sharpe for his comments.

ii. LID grant

The item was not specifically discussed, but there is not likely to be an update from ECCD until the Town is able to confirm the final approved plan for the construction.

c. Update MSRAC web site
i. "What we Do" description

J. Blanchette was looking at the committee's webpage, and observes that the bullet points referring to the committee's charge are slightly out of date, in that they refer to managing grants that have been closed for some time. The Chair requests that the members come to the next meeting with ideas on how to best update that section of the website.

ii. Members – Bernie missing, new alternate member

The webpage needs additional revisions to add Bernie Davis' name to the roster, as well as new alternate member Ryan Cournoyer.

d. River Mill/ FEMA flood map appeal update

The appeal submitted by the Town with the assistance of WMC engineers was largely successful, and the flood levels will be adjusted accordingly. There is still a small concern with the way the floodplain is depicted as impacting a small corner of the building, but that is being handled separately by the developer with help from WMC and CHA, and will use a different process than the FEMA appeal.

The DECD grant is still being held up for lack of signature by the current owner, although he has agreed in writing to sign the documents requested by the State. The grant funds will not be accessible until the contract is fully signed and executed by the State.

e. Additional street lights on utility poles over new sidewalk

Several committee members have recently made a point of observing the lighting conditions along the length of the new sidewalk, and especially in the area around Mill Town Grill/Swanson Park/Rawson Ave. During the walkthrough on the 17th the members will make note of what poles have lights, and where more light would be beneficial, with the purpose of writing a letter of recommendation to the BoS to either relocate or add lighting to make a more uniform, functional lighting pattern.

f. T-Mobile Placemaking grant - \$50,000 shovel ready project - Riverside Park? Lighting?

Since the committee was unable to take a site walk through Riverside Park at the October meeting, they will instead take a look at Swanson Park at the conclusion of the project walkthrough on the 17th. The grant program for T-Mobile is intended to fund shovel ready "placemaking" projects that emphasize community gathering places. After some discussion, a project in Swanson Park is thought to be a better

target area than Riverside Park. Improved landscaping/park furnishings/footpaths/location of the Veterans' memorials is felt to be a good continuation of the work done for the sidewalk project, and something that could be accomplished with the amount of funding in play from the T-Mobile grant. Input will be sought from the American Legion/VFW once an application is started. The grant program is open quarterly throughout the year, but is likely to be highly competitive.

g. 65 Main Street update

The project has been confirmed for a \$124k+ award from the USDA Urban Agriculture & Innovative Production grant program, as of 26 October. The grant will fund the development of the business plan, maintenance plan, curricular programming and landscaping plan for the small business center and adjacent public food forest & park at 65 Main St. Local funding will pay for the architectural/engineering, the contract for which was signed on 9 Nov; a prior \$240 k grant will fund the renovation construction; and this latest grant can be put to work nearly concurrently with the renovation, as a year-long public engagement workshop. Once the plan is fully developed, one more round of funding will likely be needed for initial implementation.

h. Other Committee business

T. Penn-Gesek mentions that the Superior Bakery properties are listed for sale, and that she has put three potential buyers in contact with the listing broker. The status of the St Joseph's School property is also mentioned. K. Beausoleil reports that he is aware that the seller is not considering additional offers. It is likely that the property is to be redeveloped into some form of rental housing, possibly senior housing, possibly with additional mixed-uses incorporated.

6. MEMBER COMMENTS None additional

7. ADJOURNMENT 10:46 a.m.

Respectfully Submitted,
Tyra Penn-Gesek, Director of Planning & Development