

## **SPECIAL MEETING**

Mill Sites Redevelopment Advisory Committee (MSRAC)  
Friday, November 18, 2016 – 9:00AM  
Merrill Seney Community Room  
Thompson Town Hall

## **MINUTES**

PRESENT: J. Blanchette, Chairman  
N. O'Leary  
R. Faucher  
B. David  
S. Lewis  
J. Hall

ALSO PRESENT: M. A. Chinatti, Director of Planning & Development  
K. Beausoleil, First Selectman (arrived 9:05AM)  
S. Herbert, Selectman  
S. Donohoe, Property Owner Liaison  
W. Bugden, CME Associates

### **1. CALL TO ORDER**

J. Blanchette called the meeting to order at 9:02AM.

### **2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

- a. October 14, 2016 Special Meeting  
(M/S/C Faucher/O'Leary) to approve as presented. Carried unanimously.

### **3. COMMITTEE BUSINESS – J. Blanchette stated the Committee was to recess/reconvene for a site walk at 929 Riverside Drive following Committee business, but was informed by S. Donohoe he would be unavailable, so the site walk would be on the December agenda. She also stated S. Donohoe requested that agenda items 3ii and 3iii be switched to discuss 929 first, as he has an appointment. It was the consensus of the Committee to reverse the order of the items.**

- i. Adoption of 2017 Meeting Schedule  
(M/S/C Davis/O'Leary) to approve as presented. Carried unanimously.

- ii. 929 Riverside Dr. – Project Update – Moved from item 3iii on the agenda.

J. Blanchette stated there's been quite a few behind the scenes activities the last couple of weeks, and asked MA Chinatti to update the status of the mill and what's going on.

MA Chinatti provided an update, stating that it has been made known that the property owner is in negotiations with Southend Reclaimed, a North Carolina company, and that Southend has contracts with the bank and the property owner. She stated it is Southend's intent to demolish the oldest portion of the mill (4-story sections) for the purpose of salvaging materials (wood/brick) for resale elsewhere. She stated discussions have been held with developers interested in restoring the mill to mixed use, appropriate State agencies, and the Town, are opposed to unnecessary demolition, and that Thompson Together has agreed to host an informational meeting and has allocated funds for advertising that meeting, should it be scheduled.

In response to a question by B. Davis re the tax lien, K. Beausoleil stated that when the property is sold the Town would get paid the outstanding taxes owed, and if there's any money left the Town could get the \$384,000 grant money back. He stated Southend is currently working out the details re the contracts.

J. Blanchette stated it would be appropriate for this Committee to take a vote to stop demolition. She stated her thought that support in opposition would be critical in the eyes of the State.

B. Davis stated this Committee has first hand experience with what we are left with after demolition.

J. Blanchette stated if it were to be torn down, that would be in conflict with, and would defeat, the whole purpose of the grant.

W. Bugden explained the difference between the 929 Riverside Drive and 630 Riverside Drive brownfield grant programs.

J. Blanchette asked, re outstanding grant work, if the State might see the different components of the grant, like the Hazardous Building Materials Survey and Structural Evaluation, to which W. Bugden responded that the HBM and SE shouldn't be done, as they would have to be done by the demo group anyway and we don't want to facilitate that. He stated DECD seems very amenable to changing the scope of work.



S. Donohoe stated there have been 20 guys that have been come and gone over the past 2 years. He stated he finds it really odd that there's all this town support now when it didn't support WINN. He stated there aren't too many alternatives – it's a big building in an area that can't support it. He asked what the alternatives are. He stated he's been here a long time and doesn't know what to tell the Committee. He stated different groups have come in and evaluated the value of what's there, to evaluate and decide ultimately what to do with it. He stated this is going down a road and now the town's met with three developers and hasn't had those developers talk to the owner. He stated, don't you think the town would have talked to the owner, and restated this is going down a road. He stated if there are alternatives those people need to reach out to the owner.

J. Blanchette asked why the owner hasn't reached out to developers.

MA Chinatti stated the only contact information she had is for S. Donohoe, which was given to each of the three developers, and quite possibly they hadn't yet reached out because they were doing background work first.

S. Donohoe then explained the WINN project, stating that buildings 1 & 2 were going to be turned into residences and that WINN was going after the tax credits. He stated there were a lot of moving parts, that there was a town meeting re moving for a modification of monies owed the town and other types of things. He stated that hit the people negatively and then hit the State negatively. He stated WINN lost points because of lack of community support, and region support, and that WINN spent a lot of money on that project.

J. Hall stated blame for past happenings should not carry forward.

S. Donohoe stated he's not blaming the whole town. He stated the Small Cities funding (\$384,000) had to be moved off that piece so the bank could be first on the mortgage, which is what caused "the big uproar."

K. Beausoleil stated at the time it was correct but it's such a lengthy process and the Town ultimately did approve moving the \$384K around but by that time they couldn't get the credits. He stated it started on a negative note.

J. Blanchette stated what's been presented is a lot of information, and asked if the Committee wants to make a resolution in support of developers as opposed to demo.

J. Hall stated this Committee should get involved.

S. Lewis stated the Committee should at least support the Board of Selectmen resolution.

**(M/S/C Lewis/Hall)** the Mill Sites Redevelopment Advisory Committee fully supports the Board of Selectmen resolution not to unnecessarily demolish the 929 Riverside Drive mill and in addition to fully support the emphasis/focus on redevelopment of the property as an important part of Thompson's history. Carried unanimously.

J. Blanchette stated she clearly thought that if there's a new developer they would have to go before many boards and omission and she would like to "put her money where her mouth is" and go to speak at those meetings.

R. Faucher said he wanted to caution that the mill has had financial struggles over the past 10 – 12 years, they've talked to many developers over the years, and it's private property. He stated they are going to do what's best for them, and that he's not sure how much impact the Committee will have. He reiterated that it's private property and the owner is going to do what's best for him/them, and that ultimately they need to be made hole – it's not the Town, it's the owner.

J. Blanchette stated one of the things that was submitted was a scope and budget estimate for the 929 brownfield work, and she asked W. Bugden to go over it with the Committee and, if the Committee gets confirmation from the State that they are not going to require repayment of monies expended should demolition occur then the work can move forward.

MA Chinatti stated a vote can be taken with that condition.

W. Bugden stated the estimate will be forwarded to members digitally, and that the proposal isn't all that different from just about a year ago when he spoke re the 630 property in the same way. He stated there are a lot of similarities between the two properties, and then recapped the Ph. II/III work, stating they would be done in unison. He stated he came up with what is considered to be a middle-of-the-road approach to the areas, with some areas possibly less contaminated and some more. He stated CME provided in the budget is unit cost and a bunch of assumptions, stating he thought enough costs were provided so that, hopefully, total actual project costs will come in less than the total grant funds. He stated the estimated budget provided comes to approximately \$113,000 and with some of the other things there would



still be money left over should it be discovered additional testing is needed as part of the Ph. II/III.

J. Blanchette stated the most this Committee can do is say we are in agreement.

**(M/S/C Davis/Lewis)** that the Mill Sites Redevelopment Advisory Committee is in agreement with work moving forward when the First Selectman confirms the State won't require repayment of expended grant funds if the building is demolished. Carried unanimously.

J. Blanchette reminded members that the site walk has been rescheduled for next month and will be included on the December 9 meeting agenda; S. Donohoe stated today's conflict came up after the walk was scheduled; he confirmed his availability for next month.

- iii. 630 Riverside Drive – Project Update. Moved from item 3ii on the agenda.

W. Bugden provided an update re status of brownfield work at the site, noting that, as of last month's meeting, there were three remaining tasks to be completed: finalize the sediment quality report for the French River, structural assessment of the retaining walls and other structures bordering the tailrace, and submit final Remedial Action Plan/Redevelopment Plan. He apologized to the Committee that the RAP has not yet been completed, that they are working on some cost estimates, but indicated it will be done/submitted soon.

He stated the structural assessment identified five areas where the retaining walls were compromised, and he discussed those areas/issues. He stated some repairs should be made, and that the report makes recommendations of what those repairs should be.

J. Blanchette asked if the State would not allow an ELUR to be placed until repairs are completed, to which W. Bugden stated they would expect it to be put in place and have an inspection program. He stated, because an ELUR is, basically, an easement granted to the Commissioner of DEEP, if actions specified in the ELUR are not done, DEEP could rescind it. He stated the need to demonstrate to the State specified steps are being done. He stated he was also pleased it was as solid as it was, since it's been there 160 years.

He stated sediment sampling was done the end of August/beginning of September, and because of the numerous pipes sticking out of the walls, soils, etc., the soils need to be addressed. He stated it's not as straight forward as the soil and groundwater, noting that criteria is

based on will it harm aquatic life, similar to an ecological risk assessment such as GZA is working on for 929 Riverside Drive. He stated that, hopefully, samples collected are enough to determine no issues downstream. He noted the only caveat is PAHs, which were tested for, and they are toxic. He then explained PAHs/reviewed what creates them for members. He further stated that PAH content doesn't appear to vary between upstream and downstream, and that a little more testing may be necessary to lay the issue to rest. He stated the ecological risk assessment process in CT is arbitrary and capricious, and the he gets a feeling some of the people at DEEP are "making stuff up as they go." He stated he is hopeful that the information garnered will help a developer lay the matter to rest.

In response to J. Blanchette's request that W. Bugden send members a draft of the RAP prior to the next meeting, because that's what's holding up scheduling of the final public informational meeting, W. Bugden confirmed it would be done.

W. Bugden stated there's not a lot of contamination that needs to be cleaned up, and that recommended is, in some areas, clean up and/or buttoning up and ELUR(s).

In response to a question by B. Davis re potential developer clean-up costs, W. Bugden stated probably at least \$100,000. He stated putting an ELUR on a property runs between \$40,000 and \$50,000 and takes two years because it's a legal document stating contaminants will never be exposed. He stated that also required is a subordination agreement that the ELUR is always first, and that ELUR(s) for 630 will make its development palatable.

He stated other parts of the clean-up aren't cheap, noting that haul away/disposal fees will probably be at least \$200,000/ton, and that they could go higher than that depending on what kind of debris is mixed in. He stated that, to get everything "buttoned up", it could potentially cost hundreds of thousands of dollars, and noted it's still a long process but the work done by this project helps developers calculate costs and actions to move forward. He confirmed he'd forward the RAP prior to the December meeting.

Committee consensus was to hold off scheduling the final public informational meeting until next month, and J. Blanchette asked MA Chinatti to review the Board of Selectmen January 2017 meeting dates to determine the best date and to schedule it with the First Selectman. J. Blanchette stated the Committee would formally schedule that meeting at its December meeting.

W. Bugden updated the Committee on UCONN's work as part of the project, and noted that it's been well received by the School of Engineering and that it will be featured in some of UCONN's literature.

He stated, re the FEMA Letter of Map Amendment (LOMA), it's not beneficial to submit it to FEMA because of the "jogs" on the property and, instead of submitting the LOMA, the owner could submit a Letter of Map Revision (LOMR) to show filling in of depressions doesn't have an adverse effect on the floodplain. He stated the Town would have to be on board and it is his belief it would be in the Town's best interest to do that.

iv. Other Committee Business. - NONE

4. CORRESPONDENCE - NONE

5. CITIZEN COMMENTS - NONE

6. ADJOURNMENT

**(M/S/C Davis/Lewis)** to adjourn at 10:08AM. Carried unanimously.

Respectfully Submitted,  
M. A. Chinatti, Director of Planning & Development