



TOWN OF THOMPSON

Mill Sites Redevelopment
Advisory Committee (MSRAC)

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Regular MEETING- MSRAC

Mill Sites Redevelopment Advisory Committee (MSRAC)

Friday – February 9, 2024 – 9:00 AM

Hybrid – Merrill Seney Community Room and Zoom

Minutes

Zoom Recording Link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/rec/share/jsAul-hmOXKNJ2NqDNcoekqcyjyugTbxmzMJXeQfN7rttJiaVygn6oCux8DunQ2eW.uEoleU1vfTKqr-bL?startTime=1707487230000>

Passcode: !B23Fz4^

YouTube Recording Link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1hDXV7cSkpE>

Members Attending: J. Blanchette – Chair, J. Hall, S. Lewis, N. O’Leary, R. Waldron

Staff Attending: T. Penn-Gesek – Director of Planning & Development, A. St Onge – First Selectman

1. CALL TO ORDER – 9:00 a.m.

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES: December 8, 2023 Regular Meeting

J. Hall moves/S. Lewis 2nds acceptance of the minutes. Passes unanimously

3. CORRESPONDENCE - none

4. CITIZEN COMMENTS - no citizens in attendance

5. COMMITTEE BUSINESS

a. CT DEDC Community Investment Fund grant application

Notification of awards is expected at the end of March. **T. Penn-Gesek** sent in a Villager article from the current issue highlighting the 65 Main project, which is one of the elements of the CIF funding request, to the grant administrator to add to the grant file. The same article was forwarded to State Senators Flexer and Gordon with a request to advocate for the proposal directly to the CIF Board.

b. 65 Main Street workshops

T. Penn-Gesek asks for feedback from the MSRAC members who attended the January workshop, and pulls up the first draft concept plans on the screen to share with the rest of the committee. Feedback from **J. Blanchette** and **J. Hall** is positive. **S. Lewis** also has positive feedback from the previous 3 meetings, although he was unavailable for the January workshop. **T. Penn-Gesek** describes all the features of the concept plans for the benefit of the members who were not available (*copies of concept plans will be posted with these minutes*). **S. Lewis** points out that the area indicated for an “amphitheater” is very flat and not conducive to raked/terraced seating. At the February workshop, the stakeholders will look at the next revision of the concept plans for final comments. The final draft and full plan (including construction estimates and phasing) are due for the March meeting. **R. Waldron** asks if a maintenance plan will be part of the consultant’s deliverable. **T. Penn-Gesek** will follow up with him to be sure that some maintenance strategies will be a part of the final plan & report. **N. O’Leary** also indicates that she is concerned about planning for maintenance and the potential for vandalism. **T. Penn-Gesek** agrees that the topics of maintenance and vandalism will be addressed in the upcoming workshops. **S. Lewis** asks if phasing had been discussed. **J. Blanchette** did raise

the topic in the January workshop and reiterates the phasing must accommodate for vehicular access during construction. With the current plan, there is no final vehicular access indicated, so it would make sense to do the work on the riverside portion first. **A. St Onge** comments that she thought there might not be enough parking included. **S. Lewis** asks whether anyone from public safety has looked at the plans. **T. Penn-Gesek** will show the plans to the Fire Marshal and one or more of the Fire Chiefs for their input. The plans are public documents that can be sent to anyone who would like to see them. The next workshop is scheduled for Wednesday 28 February, 6-8 p.m. on zoom and at Town Hall.

c. Ongoing Committee business

a. River Mill

The process to finalize the DECD Brownfield grant is in much the same status as it has been: there is a document chain that needs to be completed. The Developer has met in person with the current owner, and the owner has said he will sign whatever documents are needed. **T. Penn-Gesek** was part of a touch-base email thread throughout the week regarding the remaining documents. There is some indication that the finalization of the private sale may be able to close relatively soon. The first payment of the back taxes has been made, as was agreed in the abatement agreement & assignment of the lien.

b. 630 Riverside Dr

The current owner has floated the possibility of bundling 630 into the sale of 929/915 to the Developer. **T. Penn-Gesek** has been trying to set up a call with the Developer and his attorney to talk about that possibility, but that has not been scheduled. **J. Blanchette** reports that commercial broker P. Lange has left her messages indicating that there is a reputable developer who has interest in the parcel. She asks **T. Penn-Gesek** to contact P. Lange to find out more.

c. Main Street Reconstruction – no updates until CIF funding is announced

d. Blain Road Intersection

The work is complete and is successful. Based on resident feedback reflector poles were added to reduce potential hazard in case of snow. ECCD will return in the spring to plant the rain garden on the north shoulder.

e. Swanson Park – no updates until CIF funding is announced. If funding is not awarded, this portion of the proposal is small enough that other grant opportunities may be feasible.

d. Other/New Committee Business

6. MEMBER COMMENTS

7. ADJOURNMENT – 9:38 a.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Tyra Penn-Gesek, Director of Planning & Development