

**BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS MEETING
DOWNTOWN MANCHESTER SPECIAL SERVICES DISTRICT**

**MARCH 4, 2009
6:00 PM**

**OFFICE OF
THE DOWNTOWN MANCHESTER SPECIAL SERVICES DISTRICT
983 MAIN STREET SUITE 10
MANCHESTER, CT 06040**

MEMBERS PRESENT: Ed Firestone, Chair
Hope Igdalsky
Glenda Sinnamon
John Tunila
Don DuBaldo
Michael Esposito
Rev. Salvator Mancini

EX-OFFICIO MEMBERS PRESENT: Mark Pellegrini, Dir., Planning & Neighborhood Services
Sue O'Connor, GMCC

STAFF PRESENT: Tana Parseliti, Downtown Manager
Sabina K. Wilson, Administrative Assistant

ALSO PRESENT: Joe Sinnamon, Anne Miller, Kyle Archer, Lindsay Tomko,
Marty Fins, Michael Suhie, Tom Tomko

MEMBERS ABSENT: None

EX-OFFICIO MEMBERS ABSENT: None

Call to Order

Mr. Firestone called the meeting to order at 6:01 PM.

Minutes – February 4, 2009

Ms. Igdalsky moved to accept the minutes of February 4, 2009 and Mr. Esposito seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously (6-0-0).

PROPOSAL FOR Forest Street Parking Lot Development

Mr. Tomko introduced himself to the Board of Commissioners. He serves on the Redevelopment Agency, which has been charged with two areas of town, Broad Street and Main Street. Within that committee a motion was made that the Redevelopment Agency wanted to concentrate on the Forest Street lot redevelopment plan immediately. Mr. Tomko shared with the commission a conceptual schematic of the plan for the Forest Street lot that consists of three building towers. Building 1 would include lodging and a conference and banquet facility. The banquet facility would accommodate up to 250 people. Mr. Tomko felt that a facility of this type could be successful due to the following factors: easy access to the highways, a population of around 60,000 people, close proximity to MCC, proximity to UCONN (approx. 20 minutes) where parents would be coming to visit or drop their children off and need a place to stay overnight.

Building 2 would be a mixed-use/destination use building. The first floor could be retail with a climbing wall, 2nd floor a bowling alley, a small theatre, or some other kind of family entertainment. These uses would bring people into the area and of course cash flow. The third floor would possibly be a fitness center with the top floor possibly being a Penthouse Office space. This building with these businesses are a little more risky than building 1 and 3.

Building 3 is planned as an apartment building with approximately 125 one-bedroom units. The target market would be young professionals, college grads and/or college students and empty nesters. The second floor could possibly be a live/work apartment situation. Ms. Miller asked if the building could be condos and Mr. Tomko said that all that could be looked into. The building could be apartments, condos and live/work apartments. The project is just in the planning stages.

A parking garage is planned with a basement level with about 250 car spaces, ground floor with about 150 car spaces and an upper deck with room for about 75 cars.

Mr. Tomko discussed the estimated values of the project, the branding of Main St. and the risk/rewards of this 30 million dollar project. He suggested that the board go to the websites for the Inn at Middletown, AMF and Brunswick. In conclusion, Mr. Tomko expressed his hope that the commission would endorse this project.

After Mr. Tomko left, the commission discussed the proposed project. The consensus of the commissioners was that this is an exciting concept. The proposed uses are consistent with those identified by the commission as preferred for the Downtown. The commissioners offered the following recommendations:

- 1) Incorporate pedestrian oriented uses for the first floor spaces fronting on Main St. Having parking spaces front Main Street on the first floor was not considered desirable.
- 2) Ensure that a quality firm operates the hotel.
- 3) Consider incorporating condo housing and/or some two-bedroom units into the apartment piece of the project. The residential project should be market rate.
- 4) Have the buildings relate architecturally to the existing historic structures in the Downtown to preserve the historic feel. Further, the project should be architecturally sensitive to the scale of the Downtown where most buildings are one, two, three stories high.

The board directed Ms. Parseliti to send a letter to Mr. Tomko, thanking him for his presentation and expressing the commission's support for the project uses and concept along with the recommendations noted above. The commissioners also asked that Mr. Tomko keep the DMSSD in the information loop as the Redevelopment Agency moves forward.

Marketing & Promotions Committee Report

- **Spring Celebration Update** - Ms. Parseliti reported to the commission on the status of the event. The Spring Celebration will take place on April 11th from 10:00 –1:00. A list of event activities was provided to all commissioners. Additional costume characters have been added, the Manchester Art Assoc. will host a button making activity and a few non-profits will set up a tables and sharing information on their organizations. The Manchester High School Honor Society has been contacted regarding wearing the costumes for that day. Ms. Parseliti reported that we would have a costumed character coupled with a an activity and/or informational display on each block along a five block stretch of Main Street with the trolley and story hour at the library. Also, a form was sent out for businesses to sponsor the trolley and costumed characters to help defray costs. The event is moving forward well with some nice additions without additional cost.

Parking Committee

- Snow Removal Budget Update – Ms. Parseliti reported that as of 2-20-09 the District has expended \$59,804 on snow removal and is over budget by \$21,804. The FY 08-09 budget for snow removal is \$39,000. Ms. Parseliti expects additional expenditures of approx. \$10,000 before the snow season ends bringing the total snow removal expenditures to approx.\$69,804.

Public Comment

None.

Other Business

Following the February commission meeting Ms. Parseliti contacted Ms. Treiber to discuss the feasibility of having NewAlliance remove the awning over the sidewalk area at 903 Main Street and add additional lighting to the bank buildings along Main St. Ms. Treiber shared with the commission that it would be costly to take the awnings down at 903 Main St. but that NewAlliance would be happy to install lighting with a timer in that area to help create a brighter sidewalk area.

Ms. Parseliti noted that the Parking & Maintenance Committee would be discussing the need for improved pedestrian lighting along Main St. at its next meeting.

There being no further business Mr. Tunila moved to adjourn the meeting with Ms. Igdalsky seconding the motion. All voted in favor (5-0-0) and the meeting was adjourned at 7:50 PM. Ms. Sinnamon excused herself at 7:00 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Sabina K. Wilson, Administrative Assistant
Recorder