

**REDEVELOPMENT AGENCY
MEETING MINUTES
JULY 7, 2016 – 7:30 A.M.
LINCOLN CENTER HEARING ROOM**

Members Present: Timothy Devanney, Chair; Robert Schneider, Vice-Chair; Terry Bogli, Secretary; Aaron Ansaldi, Michael Darby, Gary Sweet, Louis Spadaccini, Steve Carter, Tricia McMann, Stephanie Knybel

Members Absent: Michael Farina, Aaron Wlochowski, Jim Williams

Also Present: Mark Pellegrini, Director of Planning & Economic Development; Kyle Shiel, Senior Planner; Katie Williford, Administrative Secretary; Matthew Bordeaux, Environmental Planner; Jeff LaMalva, Town Engineer; Rob Topliff, Chris Silver, Director of Leisure, Family and Recreation; Jay Moran, Mayor

Adoption of Minutes of June 2, 2016

Ms. Knybel moved to adopt the minutes of June 2, 2016 as written. Ms. Bogli seconded the motion and all members voted in favor.

Executive Session to Discuss Real Estate Negotiations

Ms. Bogli moved to enter executive session at 7:33 a.m. to discuss real estate negotiations. Ms. Knybel seconded the motion and all members voted in favor. The Agency came out of executive session at 7:51 a.m. No decisions were made.

Project initiation meeting: Extension of Center Springs Park

Mr. Pellegrini introduced Chris Ferrero, the consulting landscape architect from Fuss & O'Neill; Matt Bordeaux, the Environmental Planner; Jeff LaMalva, the Town Engineer; Rob Topliff, the Parks and Recreation Facilities Manager; and Chris Silver, the Director of Leisure, Family and Recreation.

Mr. Pellegrini said the goal was to have an attractive interim treatment for the park as soon as possible after the Asian restaurant building is demolished. The total amount of bond funds remaining is \$1.2 million, and he said some members expressed a desire to leave \$800,000 in the fund to help with the development of the Town property. This project initiation meeting is the opportunity for RDA members, the consultants, and Town staff to make suggestions on the park expansion.

Mr. Ferrero said there will not be any vehicular connection over the subject property to the park. Mr. Schneider asked if this plan would potentially allow vehicular connection down the road, and Mr. Ferrero said it would. Ms. Bogli noted there was concern among residents about

vehicular connection in the park previously. Mr. LaMalva noted it would be very difficult and expensive to attain vehicular access given the current grades at the bridge.

Mr. Ferrero suggested 5-10 parking spaces would be sufficient and asked for members' input on the number of spaces. Mr. Silver said he anticipated increased use of the area and thought that might be insufficient parking in the future. Mr. Ansaldi said there needs to be sufficient parking; otherwise, people will park on the commercial property next to the park entrance.

Mr. Ferrero said the area will be a busy location and a trailhead will need to be developed somewhere. He suggested the Agency might consider limiting the parking to what is needed now, with the opportunity to accommodate more parking on the site in the future. In response to a question from Mr. Sweet, Mr. Ferrero said the cost per parking stall is \$7,000 - \$8,000 per space for asphalt and half that for gravel.

Mr. Schneider suggested 10-20 parking spaces in the back area where the trees are now. Mr. Darby said putting parking where the trees are, closer to the stream, would be more complicated due to wetlands permitting likely to get involved. Mr. LaMalva added that area was in a flood plain. There were also concerns about visibility to the parking area which would be important for a sense of security.

Mr. Ferrero said one possibility was to keep the parking against the retaining wall as a continuation of the urban context, then have greenery after that. He said he saw the rear of the area along Bigelow Brook as more passive with the sumac and poison ivy removed and selected tree clearing and a lawn. This location could be a shaded picnic area.

Mr. Sweet suggested the parking spaces should be asphalt for maintenance. Ms. Bogli said asphalt did not look park-like and the plans would likely change down the road. Mr. Silver said he liked the idea of gravel, but the parking area would need to be plowed to allow access to the park in winter. Mr. Pellegrini said there would need to be a hard, plowable surface. He said there is a wide driveway off of Broad Street, so a narrower drive with parking on both sides is possible. Mr. LaMalva said if the trail would be an open pedestrian path up to Broad Street, then the parking might need to be all on one side.

Mr. Ferrero said there could be some buffer along the property line to the right, parking on one side, a zoning compliant driveway, and then from that point a trail, and then greenery. Mr. Shiel suggested filling to reduce the visibility of the retaining wall to the south.

Mr. Topliff said he didn't like the idea of a parking lot on Broad Street because it would be uninviting. He agreed with parking on the south side and he envisioned trees to soften the wall. The area in front of current restaurant should be a parklike setting with flowers, shrubbery, and flowering trees to make the entrance inviting, he said. Because the site is between other parking lots, the edges on both sides need to be softened. For maintenance, he said he prefers gravel for aesthetics but it's more difficult to plow. Also a water supply should be available, especially for the area fronting on Broad Street.

Mr. Spadaccini said the Agency should choose the most economical plan that would not prevent future improvements, because it is still unclear how the former Parkade area development will take shape.

Mr. Pellegrini said the auto repair business to the north should be screened.

Ms. Bogli said she understood there was an effort to create a uniform sign program for Town parks, and asked if the signs here would be part of that new system. Mr. Silver said he didn't know when the new wayfinding system would be finalized. He said currently there is no one under contract for the actual design. Ms. Bogli asked if rebranding Manchester was part of the park plan. Mr. Silver said there has been discussion of Manchester being a health and wellness community.

Mr. Darby said the Agency should try to reach a consensus about the parking. He said he thought at least 10 spaces were needed and that asphalt was more practical. Mr. Pellegrini said you could design 10 hard asphalt spaces and have overflow parking with grass pavers that would be good enough to park on but wouldn't be a paved lot. Mr. Ansaldi agreed the amount of parking at Case Mountain would be the minimum amount needed here. He said 10-20 spaces would be needed, and the parking should be back far enough (20-30 feet) to allow an attractive entrance with signage, flowers, and perhaps a stone wall for curb appeal on Broad Street. Mr. Ansaldi agreed the north side was an eyesore and screening was needed. Mr. Ferrero said having shade trees where the restaurant is now would help even if they did not entirely screen the view.

Mr. Pellegrini said the questions of irrigation and site lighting also needed to be considered. Ms. Bogli said some lighting was needed, she liked the idea of a picnic area, and asked if it would be possible to arrange an agreement with the lot next door to use it for overflow parking for special events. She also agreed with screening the auto repair business.

Mr. Schneider asked how to prevent this area from becoming attractive to homeless people. Mr. Ferrero said activity helps, and sight lines are also important. The frontage is easily visible, but the rear presents challenges, he said. If needed, police could drive the trail, as they do the bike trail, Mr. Ferrero said. Mr. Topliff said as different pockets of the park have been opened up, the homelessness and loitering issues have gone away.

Mr. Pellegrini asked if irrigation was necessary and Mr. Topliff said he would suggest putting some irrigation in to benefit the flowers and shrubs. Mr. Ferrero said the lawn could be irrigated or not, but if the lawn is not irrigated, he would suggest a seed mix that is more drought tolerant.

Mr. Ferrero asked for input on lighting. Mr. Darby said lighting is important but also a function of price. Mr. Pellegrini said there is some ambient light but the parking lot will probably need lighting. He mentioned the possibility of light along the trails. Mr. Silver said lighting the whole pathway would invite people in the park after dark. Mr. Pellegrini pointed out that lighting also affects visibility. Mr. Ferrero suggested up lighting the bridge so it was visible from Broad Street, which would also create some ambient light.

The next steps are to come back to the Agency with one or two alternatives for a park design.

Other Business

Mr. Schneider asked Mr. Silver for an update on Center Springs Park. Mr. Silver said the Parks department has been encouraging groups to bring events to the park. There will be a mural event in fall. The Recreation Department is developing a millennial sports club program, looking at programming the park for the next generation of younger people. The disc golf course card box is consistently being refilled, he said. Usage of the park is increasing and graffiti has slowed down, he said.

Adjournment

Mr. Sweet moved to adjourn. Mr. Schneider seconded and all members voted in favor. The meeting adjourned at 8:49 a.m.