

Minutes – Downtown Revitalization Committee

November 9, 2022 @ 6:30 PM Room 2 (downstairs)

Meeting called to order by Chair Ron Pagnini at 6:30 PM.

Members Tony Pinto, Paul Malnati, Ron Pagnini (chair), Laura Mann, and Mitch Ruscitti in attendance.

Member Mitch Ruscitti had to leave the meeting at 6:50 PM.

Members Ray Auger and Christine Schadler were absent.

Also in attendance were 3 members of the Milford Cultural Council, who were Geri Eddins (chair), CC Chapman, and Patty Salomon.

Geri gave information on the Cultural Council and their prior successful projects of picnic benches and trash can art. They have been wanting to support downtown public art but until the recent town meeting, this was not permitted under Milford zoning by law. The change to allow murals (on side or rear of buildings) passed at October town meeting and they are only waiting for the 90 day AG approval which should come in February, and then it will be effective. Generally the murals would be in the CA and CB zoning districts (from the Hospital to the old Stop and Shop)

Geri reported that Attorney Steve Chaplin had contacted her about an interest of a dentist in putting a mural on their building, Dr. Patrick Assioun's pediatric dental office. A discussion occurred on how building locations will be chosen. There are very limited grant funds they could seek to help pay for some public art but if an owner will pay the mural costs, it obviously would be better.

VOTE: The committee voted unanimously to support the Cultural Council's desire for downtown public art. The 2 groups will try to work collaboratively and perhaps start with reviewing the pediatric dental mural idea and then Patty will look at other opportunities in the downtown area.

A discussion occurred on the boundaries of the 'downtown area' being used, and whether it was the same as the Cultural Council's target area for public art. Ron agreed to provide a copy of the map that was part of the original zoning review report (funded with the \$15,000 state grant) to Geri to review and then let us know if that is the area desired by the Cultural Council too, or what modifications would be needed.

Next Geri discussed whether we would work with their council to perhaps establish a proposed cultural district. She provided a handout explaining the initiative. We agreed this would be something an economic development person for the town could pursue, and money is available in grants and from the state on a rolling basis to support this designation. The Town

must be the applicant. The area must be walkable, and they think it possibly could be Draper Park to Calzone Park.

VOTE: The committee voted unanimously to support the establishment of a Cultural District and to work collaboratively with the Cultural Council as the idea proceeds, as it will benefit and help to revitalize the downtown area. Again, the boundaries of such an area needs to be decided and the Committee agreed to share the map being used by the Downtown Revitalization Committee to assist.

The 3 members of the Cultural Council thanked the committee and left the meeting.

A short discussion occurred on the e-mail from Brendan Rickert regarding electric vehicles and state infrastructure. Apparently Brendan had contacted Rick Villani on who in the Town would look into this and Rick suggested our committee. The committee did not know anything about this, and whether they were looking to put charging stations in the downtown area or what, so more information is needed, including why our committee would be appropriate as it doesn't involve our mission.

The committee asked the chair about the status of the economic development person to be hired, and whether it has been funded. Apparently Rick has told Ron that the funding should be there but the vote would be in the Spring and then the position would start in July 2023. The members felt it is critical that this position be fulltime. Ron will relay this to Rick Villani.

Rick also had told Ron that the Rail trail restaurant has had some delays and it likely will not be until March that it opens.

A discussion next occurred on the delays in removing the Stone building as it truly is an eyesore to the Central Street downtown area. Ron thought it was in litigation and Laura will check with Gerry Moody on this to try and see what the plans now are.

Pete Moynahan resigned as a member since the last meeting, and Josh Lioce had resigned several months ago, and the Committee voted to accept these resignations. Paul suggested a possible new member for the committee could be Bob McCarthy. It was suggested he be invited to attend a meeting then a decision could be made to submit to the Selectmen to add him.

Ron reported that the sign by law to remove restrictions that were not being enforced did pass at town meeting. Once an Economic Development person comes on board, it is hopeful that they will be able to address the current enforcement and challenges with small businesses and the sign by law.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 7:35 PM.