

**Torrington Development Corporation  
Board of Directors**

Tuesday, October 5, 2010, 8:00 a.m.  
TDC Office

**Board of Directors Members Present:** J. Baer, R. Bingham, E. Carbone, A. Daley, C. Donaldson, P. Herbst, J. Lalonde, J. Libby, M. McEachern, M. Menard, V. Muschell, R. Ponte, J. Ryan.

**Others in attendance:** V. McDermott and Gary Fontanella (Milone & MacBroom), M. Cook, B. Baxter, S. Nocera, J. Schamberg, M. Agogliati (Register Citizen), K. Litton (Republican American).

Quorum present.

8:04 a.m. Meeting called to order by President Baer.

**Prior Minutes**

Motion by J. Lalonde to approve the Minutes of Board of Directors Meeting 5/4/2010.  
2<sup>nd</sup> by R. Ponte.

Approved.

**Project Summary:** G. Fontanella and V. McDermott briefly reviewed the status of the project to date. M&M have completed the preliminary designs for the first phase of the project. All plans have been drafted to be consistent with the MDP and the format and requirements of DOT. Green design elements have been incorporated as well as traffic calming measures. Specific attention was given to breaking the project down into logical stages that can be done as separate construction phases as necessary in order to tap grant money and do break-off projects with minimal throw-aways as follows: 1. City Hall Avenue extension. 2. One way Main Street. 3. East Main Street, the bridge and tie-in to Water Street work being done by the City. In addition, an alternative plan was developed for the sidewalks on the west side of Main Street from the bridge and matching up with the City's Water Street work. The alternative plan for sidewalk improvements on the west side of Main Street is entirely consistent with and compatible with the final design of the overall project. The cost was estimated to be \$900,000 to \$1M. Any work on one-way Main Street cannot commence until the City Hall Avenue work is completed.

The green design elements were developed in order to provide a "complete street" to safely accommodate pedestrians and bicyclists together with better traffic flow. The green design elements follow one of the MDP conditions suggested by DEP to

incorporate low impact design techniques for provision of water infiltration and storm water protection. At present, this is the only design in CT with through pavement, parking stalls with permeable pavement and collection measures, island plantings that provide water filtration measures, replacement of curbs by rain gardens.

J. Baer then invited questions from the board members. R. Ponte asked whether M&M was aware of any grants for projects that incorporate green design. V. McDermott is not aware of anything specific right now, however, green design elements tend to add points that could enhance the likelihood of qualifying for grants. R. Bingham mentioned that in a conversation with Sen. Dodd's office, there are sustainable street/sustainable community grants becoming available via HUD. This project may fit into one of those grant programs, and he is not aware of any low impact design specific grant programs. It may be possible to position a portion of the project as a community planning demonstration project which may qualify for grant money.

V. McDermott stated that M&M has finished the terms of their engagement except for local permitting. From this point forward, the board must decide if it will proceed with local permitting. Once permitting is in place, the project will be poised to receive money when funds become available and move forward. If the board contemplates using federal transportation dollars to realize the project, DOT would have to request design approval from the federal government. B. Baxter noted that M&M has submitted a proposal for ad hoc consulting once permitting is completed.

Motion by P. Herbst to accept the M&M Phase I Report.

2<sup>nd</sup> by V. Muschell.

Approved unanimously by those present and voting.

Motion by P. Herbst to apply for and seek all necessary local and state permits for Phase I.

2<sup>nd</sup> by V. Muschell

Discussion: B. Baxter noted that the stakeholder releases are in process. The Warner Theatre board has approved signing the releases for their affected parcels. One property is in foreclosure, however, contact has been established with the bank and the release is moving forward. V. McDermott noted that consent from the affected stakeholders is necessary in order to go before Planning & Zoning. A. Daley asked when P&Z approvals expire. V. McDermott answered that they are good for five years, they run with the land and can be extended for an additional five years at the discretion of the Planning & Zoning Commission.

A vote was then taken and the motion was unanimously approved.

Motion by R. Bingham to approve the alternative project for improvements to the sidewalks on the west side of Main Street together with streetscape improvements from the Center Street bridge to Mason Street.

2<sup>nd</sup> by V. Muschell.

Discussion: M&M noted that no acquisitions were required for Main Street work. According to the City, that section of sidewalk does need work and it will not change the curb line so none of the work would be thrown away in future. Minor utility work would be needed, the finished product is designed to have Main Street look better than the side streets. One of the advantages of this project is that it would not need any land use approvals with the exception of an encroachment permit as it would fall within the state's right of way. B. Baxter gave special mention to E. Fabbri for initially suggesting this project.

Approved unanimously; voice vote.

Any discussion of financing is likely to be stalled until after the mid-term elections per B. Baxter. V. Muschell asked if Phase I can be considered "shovel ready" once the permitting is complete. V. McDermott and G. Fontanella said yes, as currently defined. B. Baxter is reviewing the P&Z application process and will move forward.

**Parking Committee Report:** B. Baxter directed attention to the Parking Committee's summary proposal, and made special mention of recognizing J. Paganini's efforts with regard to the information presented for consideration. Due to the uncertain financing climate, the Executive Committee, at their meeting held October 4, 2010, moved to table any further discussion of parking issues and proposals until there is movement in the project. V. Muschell made mention of the amount of work done and the time spent to date. J. Baer noted that it was a significant undertaking and that J. Paganini did a great job.

V. Muschell moved to formally thank J. Paganini for his work on the parking proposal.

2<sup>nd</sup> by R. Bingham.

Approved unanimously.

**Treasurer's Report:** Presented by B. Baxter. There is approximately \$29,000 left for TDC operations. Because M&M came in under budget, there could be an additional \$40,000 - \$50,000 available under the DECD grant due to those cost savings. The DECD funds will be available to continue work on the project. September payables are estimated to be \$4,500.

Motion by C. Donaldson to accept the Treasurer's Report as presented.

2<sup>nd</sup> by J. Lalonde.  
Accepted.

J. Baer received a letter from V. Patrick. With regret, she needs to step down as Treasurer and a board member, two roles she has carried since the inception of the TDC.

Motion by J. Baer to formally thank V. Patrick for her exceptional work on behalf of the TDC.

2<sup>nd</sup> by V. Muschell.  
Approved.

Board members were asked to give consideration to taking over the role of Treasurer and Executive Committee member.

**Executive Director's Report:** B. Baxter introduced the proposal submitted for an upgraded website. E. Carbone reported that the Public Relations/Website Committee started to examine this issue almost a year ago in terms of making it more interactive. The PR/Website Committee agreed that now is a good time to engage a web designer to move forward with the upgrades and enhancements and get the enhanced website up and running by the end of the year. The Committee estimates that \$1,500 would be sufficient to carry out the work in its proposal to cover website design and implementation. Website maintenance would be done by TDC board members on a volunteer basis.

Motion by J. Ryan to provide a sum not to exceed \$1,500 for website design and implementation.

2<sup>nd</sup> by V. Muschell.  
Approved.

B. Baxter reported that he, R. Ponte and J. Baer recently met with state historic preservation officials regarding signage in the historic district and the possibility of a grant for signage. M. McEachern is to make a presentation to the Historic District Commission. The CT Main Street Center will be contacted to do a walk-around audit.

R. Bingham reported on his attendance at the Mayor's Institute on City Design. He brought the Torrington River Walk project for consideration. He plans a more formal presentation to the TDC board once he receives the final write-up, but can report that he had excellent discussions with experts on planning, economics, water issues, etc. He came away from the weekend very pleased that the design and focus of the project received such high praise from all present that weekend, and very encouraged that

the plans for Torrington are headed in the right direction. The Torrington River Walk Project will focus on providing visibility and activity along the river. V. McDermott mentioned there may be some DEP funds available to help realize that project. M. McEachern recalled that the Historical Society has sets of plans from previous redevelopment efforts and some showed proposed river access. He will make those plans available to the Mayor to consider as he continues his work on the river walk project.

R. Ponte invited all to be sure to attend the follow-up to the very successful Main Street Marketplace summer event – the October 22 Fall Festival Evening (5 p.m. – 9 p.m.). The farmer's market vendors, bands, etc. will be back on Main Street, the Warner Theatre has two shows that are substantially sold out, the community has been invited to bringing carved pumpkins.

B. Baxter pointed out the success of the conversations that resulted in the gubernatorial debates being held at the Warner Theatre and that this is a very big opportunity for City to show itself to the whole state. The Warner's box office had to limit ticket sales to four per person and the event is almost sold out.

V. Muschell noted to the board that the new Torrington Downtown Partners website makes mention of the TDC as specifically encouraging them to invest in downtown. In his view, the TDC's job at the moment is infrastructure and continuing to encourage owners to invest in the buildings and the future of downtown. B. Baxter followed by announcing the best example to date of public/private partnership in getting investors into downtown Torrington is the closing on the Lighthouse Partners properties by Torrington Downtown Partners. The partners, Steve Temkin, Dave Bender and Steve Roth were all acknowledged. S. Temkin and D. Bender then joined the meeting and were invited to speak to the board.

S. Temkin reported that they have 22 public partners to date in this venture. D. Bender noted they will need a lot of help but they do have serious plans to bring people in to downtown and make a success of their project. They made special note of the overwhelming support of the TDC and gave a short presentation on some of their ideas to "turn Torrington around," in terms of downtown revitalization. P. Herbst complimented Torrington Downtown Partners on their vision and their plans.

Motion by R. Bingham to adjourn.

2<sup>nd</sup> by V. Muschell.

Approved.

Meeting adjourned at 9:23 a.m.