



Downtown Committee

Jan. 19, 2012

Meeting Minutes

Present: **Mike Whitten**, Manchester Transit Authority; **Stephanie Lewry**, Intown Manchester; **Pat Long**, Ward 3 Alderman; **Bruce Thomas**, City of Manchester Department of Public Works; **Charlene Carignan**, APSS Group; **Chris Wellington**, City of Manchester Economic Development Office; **Don St. Germain**, St. Mary's Bank; **Brad Alderfer**, Northwestern Mutual; **Judi Window**, Granite State Ambassadors; **Linda Connell**, McLane, Graf, Raulerson & Middleton; **Will Stewart**, Greater Manchester Chamber of Commerce.

Linda Connell called the meeting to order at 2:05 p.m.

1. Welcome & Introductions

2. Updates

- Mike Whitten reported that the Jan. 18 Green DASH rolling press conference was a great success. The event was covered by WMUR and the Union Leader. Mayor Gatsas spoke in addition to Mike and Robin Comstock. Afterwards, attendees were treated to a ride on the Green DASH.

3. Downtown Sidewalk Improvements

- Bruce Thomas, Engineering Manager at the Public Works Department, noted that the City has not allocated any money to sidewalk improvements since 2007 (\$75,000), which is also the last time the City conducted its previously annual comprehensive sidewalk survey noting all of the areas in need of repair. Since 2007 the department has been able to patch holes in the bricks with asphalt using money within department's existing budget. It's not the prettiest fix, he said, but it's safe and it's done in a timely manner.
- Public Works continues to request \$75,000 in sidewalk repair funds each year from the City's Community Improvement Program (CIP) even though Mayor Gatsas (and Mayor Guinta before him) have said there will be no cash or bond CIP expenditures—only federal pass-through money (CDBG, etc.). To catch up on all downtown sidewalk repairs would cost some \$200,000, Bruce said.
- Bruce also noted that the City is currently being sued by a woman who tripped on a broken brick behind Citizens Bank at 875 Elm St.
- To replace the sidewalks, Bruce, using previous projects on Amherst and Hanover streets as a guide, said a ballpark figure is around \$100,000 per block, but noted there are many variables on each individual block that could make the price higher

(underground vaults, etc.). Price also depends on what material is used (concrete, stamped concrete, brick pavers, etc.).

- With regard to new sidewalk materials, it was noted we might consult with local ADA advocates as it is rumored that the ADA will at some point require concrete (as opposed to bumpy brick) as this is easier for people in wheelchairs to traverse.
- To help the committee determine a more realistic estimate, Bruce said he would analyze one downtown block as an example, giving estimates for several types of different materials.
- Ward 3 (Downtown) Alderman Pat Long said he often hears complaints about downtown sidewalks and encouraged the committee to make sidewalks an issue. “When the business community has an issue, aldermen want to fix it.”
- Pat mentioned the existence of a \$2.5 million M.E.R. bond fund, monies from which might be used for sidewalk improvements. He said he would ask the mayor about the funds.
- With regard to other funds, Pat suggested first getting estimates from Public Works, then talking to the mayor. He also said if we could come up with a good plan he would take it to the Board of Mayor and Aldermen himself. He also suggested brainstorming “creative financing,” wherein the downtown business community pays a portion of the bonding cost for such a project, perhaps as an add-on to the Central Business District assessment.

4. Downtown Publication

- Chamber Marketing and PR VP Gemma French is meeting soon with McLean Communications regarding the 2013 edition of *Advantage* magazine, the Chamber’s annual regional guidebook. At this meeting she will discuss the printing of a rackable, brochure-like publication that could be printed as an *Advantage* overrun. Before this meeting Gemma needs the committee’s “wish list” of all such information to be included in said publication. We hope to have an estimate for the committee at the February meeting.

5. Old/New Business

- No new business was discussed.

6. Adjourn

- The meeting adjourned at 3:25 p.m.

Next Meeting: 2 p.m., Thursday, Feb, 23, 2012