

RECEIVED  
TOWN OF THOMPSON, CT.

**REGULAR MEETING**

2017 MAR 10 P 12:45

*Linda Paradise*

TOWN CLERK / ABSY.

Mill Sites Redevelopment Advisory Committee (MSRAC)  
Friday, March 10, 2017 – 9:00AM  
Merrill Seney Community Room  
Thompson Town Hall

**MINUTES**

PRESENT: J. Blanchette, Chairman  
S. Lewis  
N. O'Leary  
R. Faucher  
B. Davis  
J. Hall

ALSO PRESENT: S. Donohoe, property owner liaison, K. Beausoleil, First Selectman (arr. at 9:20AM), M. A. Chinatti, Director of Planning and Development

1. CALL TO ORDER

J. Blanchette called the meeting to order at 9:02AM.

M.A. Chinatti explained why W. Bugden was not in attendance.

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

a. February 10, 2017 Regular Meeting  
(M/S/C O'Leary/Hall) to approve the minutes with the correction to the spelling of Tyra Penn-Gesek's last name. Carried unanimously.

3. CORRESPONDENCE – M.A. Chinatti distributed a March 1, 2017 email from Sean Kellerson, CME, providing an update on the River Mill Status. The Committee will discuss under the appropriate agenda item.

4. CITIZEN COMMENTS - NONE

5. COMMITTEE BUSINESS

a. 630 Riverside Drive

i. Project Update – W. Bugden, CME Associates

a. BoS Public Informational Meeting Feb. 21, 2017

J. Blanchette stated the meeting went well and there was good Committee turn out. She also noted that the Selectmen asked good questions.

N. O'Leary asked if, in the future for such public meetings, a PA system could be used as it was oftentimes difficult to hear people speak. She then apologized, saying she was referring to meetings held at the library, as the acoustics there are not good.

M.A. Chinatti confirmed that, going forward, she would arrange for a PA system for public informational meetings to be held at the library.

- b. UCONN Structural Analysis – Status/Discussion on Presentation – Not addressed as W. Bugden was not in attendance. Item will be included on the April agenda.

It was noted that next month's meeting is scheduled for a recognized holiday; Committee consensus was to (a) cancel the Regular Meeting, scheduled for Friday, April 14, 2017, and (b) schedule a Special Meeting for Friday, April 21, 2017.

S. Donohoe left the meeting at 9:11AM to take a phone call.

**(M/S/C Davis/O'Leary)** to address item 5.b. before item 5.a.ii until S. Donohoe returns to the meeting. Carried unanimously.

- ii. Site Aesthetics Discussion w/Owner's Liaison **(discussed after item 5.b.)**

J. Blanchette stated that, while waiting for S. Donohoe to return to the meeting, the Committee could discuss some ideas.

R. Faucher stated that use of Town resources to help clean up the site was discussed in the past and, if that will again be part of the discussion, it needs to be run by the Board of Selectmen and the Town's attorney.

B. Davis stated there was huge public outcry against that when it was proposed in the past.

R. Faucher stated there is nothing to gain for the Town and there's a lot of lose.

S. Donohoe returned to the meeting at 9:15AM.

S. Donohoe stated he met with the First Selectman and discussed the possibility of the Town's brush hog doing the first clearing work, on both sides of the fence, as that would require larger equipment than he has available. He stated the reception was "luke warm" but that if this Committee were to support the request it may be more favorably received. He stated that, once the Town did the "first sweep" he would then be able to maintain/mow on both sides of the fence. He also stated the First Selectman suggested the little building remain, and converted to a visitor center, and do a lease with the Town. He stated the owner is agreeable to that. He stated he does not know how it (the visitor center) would be staffed or maintained, just that the owner is interested in doing a lease. He also stated a window in the building needs replacing, which he'd intended to do today but was unable to because of the snow. Regarding the fence, he stated the fence has to stay for a couple of reasons, including that W. Bugden previously said things on the site can't be disturbed without prior proper approvals, and for insurance purposes. He stated he will work on areas where the barbed wire is hanging, to remove it, but that the barbed wire will remain where it's intact. He stated the snow fence will be removed, and the chain link fence will be repaired when the weather improves. He stated he's been in discussions with a company out of Worcester re pricing the tower and smoke stack work; he said he hopes to have a proposal by next week.

The Committee then discussed whether it would be best to keep the overgrowth, to hide the rubble that's on site, or remove the overgrowth, which would then make the rubble more visible. The Committee agreed that it would be best to keep the rubble hidden as much as possible.

S. Donohoe stated the fence has to stay for insurance reasons, but that he would double-check to see if the barbed wire can come down. He noted that, if the property is sold in the future, the purchaser may want the barbed wire for security purposes so as to protect any equipment brought to/left at the site. He did reiterate he would check on the barbed wire.

K. Beausoleil stated his thought that the biggest question would be to the insurance company re whether it must remain or can be taken down.

S. Donohoe reiterated the insurance company stated the fence has to stay.

N. O'Leary recommended asking the State to put up better signage so the fence won't get hit, to which S. Donohoe stated it's been directly hit three (3) times in seven (7) years.

K. Beausoleil stated it was hit due to driver error, and that he would reach out to the State and ask for signage. He noted the Town may have signage it could install, but that the State now has signs with a high reflective quality and they would be much better/much more visible. He continued, re use of Town equipment, stating that the brush hog use would cause issues, as citizens would express concern about using municipal equipment/workers for private property. He stated that the park area is taken care of by the Town, and that if the areas around the piles are cleaned up, they'll be much more visible. He continued, talking about the Branding/Identity Project being worked on with NECCOG, noting that a final report is due out in June, and noted that it would be beneficial for members of this Committee to attend those meetings to voice opinions re 630 Riverside Drive so that property will be included as well. He stated he thinks a visitor center is a great idea, and noted that it was the Town's library "back in the day." He stated he'd hate to see the building go, that he wants to see it stay and be utilized and not taken down.

J. Blanchette noted that there hasn't been much talk about taking that building down.

J. Hall noted the guard shack is a beautiful building with nice architecture.

J. Blanchette asked S. Donohoe if there is an ongoing marketing effort for the property, to which S. Donohoe responded that the property will be marketed when final reports (CME reports, Branding/Identity, Business Inventory) are available, as they will help determine the type of Real Estate Agent to hire.

S. Donohoe then asked the Committee to provide him with it's "wish list" of the types of uses it would like to see developed at the site. After much discussion, it was determined that the Committee would think about it and discuss at the next meeting.

K. Beausoleil again discussed the Branding/Identity Project/meetings, and stressed the importance of this Committee's participation, and M. A. Chinatti discussed the Business Inventory/Drought Project that UCONN is doing for the Town.

S. Donohoe noted that a traffic study was conducted late last fall, and stated that the results of that study would be beneficial. K. Beausoleil responded that he would find out which State entity commissioned the study/see if he could obtain a copy.

b. 929 Riverside Dr. **(discussed before item 5.a.ii.)**

- i. Project Update – W. Bugden, CME Associates – W. Bugden was not in attendance; the Committee discussed the S. Kellerson, CME, email distributed at this meeting.

J. Blanchette noted the first bullet is good news for sure, and noted that it does appear there will be a lot more results by the next meeting.

There was no other update.

**(M/SC Davis/O’Leary)** to re-visit item 5.b.i. 929 Riverside Drive – Project Update. Carried unanimously.

S. Donohoe stated that CME was scheduled to do drill testing today; however, that was cancelled due to the weather. He noted they (CME) have been at the site for a couple of days a week recently. He stated contracts have been executed, as of last Friday, but they have not yet been recorded. He stated it is his understanding the new mortgage holder will be coming out next week sometime to meet with the Town, and that they took over the mortgage from the bank. He stated 929 Riverside Drive, LLC still owns the property. He noted that “the tire kicker” (Southend Reclaimed) is the new mortgage holder, and they are still determining what to do.

J. Hall stated it would have to be very attractive for this new mortgage holder to acquire the mortgage.

R. Faucher stated they already know what they want to do, that they’re just keeping us (the Town) in the dark.

S. Donohoe stated the hints about Wells Fargo foreclosing have been around for quite a while and that it was an idle threat, that Wells Fargo had not desire to own the site.

J. Hall stated that now someone having a much higher stake owns it, to which B. Davis added they could foreclose now, and it puts them in a very strong position.

S. Donohoe stated “the property” includes 929 Riverside Drive, and the 10.9 acres behind the former Quinn’s Shirt Shop. He stated he thinks

this is interesting news, but that it's really not "news" until next week. He stated the gentleman he talked with said the company's lawyer was looking into setting something up with the Town next week, that the closing happened last Friday but hasn't been recorded in Town Hall yet, and that it would be done this week. He stated phone calls are going to be going back and forth.

M. A. Chinatti confirmed a meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, March 14, at 10AM with K. Beausoleil, M. A. Chinatti and a representative from Southend Reclaimed. She stated she does not have a name for Southend's representative.

The Committee continued to discuss the new mortgage holder.

J. Blanchette asked the Committee if it should now change next month's special meeting date from April 21 to April 7. The Committee agreed this would be appropriate.

B. Davis asked if M. A. Chinatti would email the Committee results of the Tuesday, March 14 meeting. M. A. Chinatti stated she would email anything permitted to be shared.

## 6. ADJOURNMENT

**(M/S/C Davis/Faucher)** to adjourn at 10:09AM. Carried unanimously.

Respectfully Submitted,  
M. A. Chinatti, Director of Planning & Development