



City Center Initiative Committee
Tuesday, September 16, 2014 at 5:15 p.m.
The Visitor Center, 14 North Street

MINUTES
Approved 10/20/2014

Present: David Putnam, James Feleen, Roselyn Caplan, Angela Biggs, Timothy Frisch, Melissa Richmond, Thomas Rock, Marty Davis, Catherine LaCasce, William Carpenter

Absent: Kelly LeBlanc, David Messier

Staff: Nancy Merrill, Zachary Williams, Michael McCrory

Agenda

Motion: To accept the agenda as complete

Made by: Mr. Carpenter **Second:** Mr. Rock **Vote:** Unanimous in favor

I. Meeting Minutes

- August 19, 2014

Motion: To accept the minutes of the August 19, 2014 meeting as presented.

Made by: Ms. Biggs **Second:** Ms. Caplan **Vote:** Unanimous in favor

Mr. Putnam asked the committee to weigh all of their decisions against these four criteria:

- Consistency
- Sustainability
- Resources
- Participation

II. Old Business

- Overview – August 31, 2014 Summary

Ms. Merrill stated that the update from the last meeting is still ongoing.

III. New Business

- **Neighborhoods**

- **Walnut/Spruce/School Street project**

Ms. Merrill introduced the committee to a map of the neighborhood that will be the focus of the neighborhood initiative (Walnut Street, Spruce Avenue, and School Street). The map delineates the use of the 37 properties in the target neighborhood. There is a combination of single- and multi-family dwellings. This area was chosen because of a group of engaged residents.

Don Derrick, Executive Director of Upper Valley Habitat for Humanity, outlined his experience at Habitat and described some of the ways in which to approach the project. He offered his techniques for working with volunteers, various legal forms that may be needed, and a means of surveying residents and property owners in the neighborhood that could help get the project started.

Habitat only works with low-income, single-family, owner-occupied homes, so other techniques will have to be developed to address the multi-family buildings in the neighborhood. However the surveys would go to everyone in the neighborhood including tenants and landlords that do not live in the area. The idea is to engage everyone in improving the neighborhood.

Mr. Derrick stated that he would like to partner with PSNH for energy upgrades for the buildings in the neighborhood. He said safety is also important (stairs, windows, etc.), and not just making the outside of the homes look better.

Code enforcement will play a significant role in cleaning up rubbish and cars and in improving the multi-family properties.

Mr. Derrick recommended the following project strategy:

- Conduct a survey
- Take inventories – physical, safety, energy
- Create work plan
- Seek funding.

Which comes first – city improvements or home improvements? It was acknowledged that the City must commit to repair the roads and sidewalks. The Public Works Department has been notified that this is the committee's target neighborhood. This project must move forward, though, and not wait until the City finds the funding to fix the roads and sidewalks.

Habitat will partner with multiple agencies to help with whatever the work will be. Lots of volunteers and fundraising will be needed.

Expectations of outcomes included:

- Landscaping, trash barrels, painting (exterior work) first – then move inside
- Instill pride of ownership (attract better tenants, improve property values)
- Neat, tidy, family-friendly, safe

Catherine LaCasce, Marty Davis and Mr. & Mrs. Adams volunteered to meet with Mr. Derrick to get the project started.

- **Surveys**
- **City Center Business**
 - **Signage**

Ms. Merrill stated that the existing sign ordinance needs to be rewritten. When asked for a working definition of “sign”, responses included:

 - Something with which to identify a business in words or logos
 - Something that gives businesses visibility
 - Something that is unique to each business

Additional thoughts and opinions on the subject included:

 - Informational signs (hours of operation, open/closed) should not be included in the total allowed square footage
 - Decals might be best set back from the window
 - Temporary or promotional signs are necessary but can be problematic
 - No illumination of signs
 - Working awnings with lettering are acceptable
 - Sandwich boards are helpful, but can also be problematic; their size and placement should be regulated

Ms. Merrill will summarize the comments for the next meeting.

IV. Other

There was no other business discussed.

V. Adjourn

Motion: to adjourn the meeting

Made By: Ms. Caplan **Second:** Mr. Rock

Vote: Unanimous in favor

The meeting adjourned at 7:04 PM.

Respectfully Submitted by,
deForest Bearse