

Montague Planning Board

One Avenue A, Turners Falls, MA 01376 (413) 863-3200 Ext 207 Email: planner@montague-ma.gov

MEETING MINUTES

May 24, 2022, 6:30 PM

Held in person at Montague Town Hall and via ZOOM

Members: Ron Sicard, Elizabeth Irving, Matt Lord, Bob Obear **Absent:** George Cooke

Staff: Walter Ramsey, Town Planner

Consultants: Clair O’Neil (Mass Dev), Ben Murphy (Mass Dev), Lee Morrisette (Dietz and Company)

Public: Jack Nelson, Eileen Dowd, Ella Ingraham, Rob Steinberg, Jim Mussoni, Brian McHugh, Alyssa Larose, Erin MacLean, Chris Hinkle, Julian Medoza, Cooper Ward, Kristi Bodin, Powertown Representative, Pam, Janel Nockleby, Jeremy Toal

6:30PM: Call to order

6:30PM: Planning Public Workshop: Canal District Master Plan Community Workshop

MassDevelopment is helping the Town to develop a master plan for the 16 acre Canal District in Turners Falls. This area comprises the former industrial sites along the Canal from the Turners Falls-Gill Bridge to Sixth Street. This is an interactive planning event that will involve an opportunity to hear from the project leaders and for the public to share feedback.

The Dietz and Company team presents the slide deck to provide context to residents and show the different aspects of the planning process which might include demolishing the worst mill buildings along the canal. Topics introduced to the public include the project site, market analysis, market findings, demographics, land use and natural resources. A \$35,000 grant will be used to form the public vision into an actionable plan.

Lee Morrisette (Dietz and Company) outlined the poor condition of six former mill sites, which are unsafe and unstable. Building 11 is in the best condition and the only structure able to be repurposed.

Rachel Selsky, marketing consultant, presented her work which includes future uses for the mill sites. The survey results showed residents’ desire for mixed-use infrastructure, local business, canal visibility, enjoyment, housing, senior/cooperative housing, and small-scale manufacturing.

Comments from the Public

J. Mussoni (MEDIC Vice-Chair) speaks in favor of a cultural center or museum at Strathmore, including a new bridge to Strathmore. Mussoni is in favor of saving more of the mills and wants to align the EDIC with these goals.

C. Hinkle (resident) expressed a sense of urgency, citing his observations of decay over the last decade due to inaction. He will request GIS files from the Town Planner.

Rob Steinberg (EDIC member) acknowledged that ownership and easements are a “mess” and asks if

eminent domain can clear up the issue more quickly.

Cooper Ward (resident Keith Apt.) speaks in support of redevelopment for indoor growing.

Bob Obear (Planning Board) suggests that the base plan should show existing and proposed utilities.

Brian McHugh (FCHRA) wants to be sure that the consultant team refers to Tighe and Bond 2019 Strathmore Demo Study as a resource.

A representative of Powertown Apartments asks for a plan that includes sustainability and reuse of materials.

7:56pm The Planning Board briefly convened for updates from the Planner to the Main Plan and 40R efforts. Minutes from April were not approved. No votes were taken.

MOTION by R. Sicard to adjourn the public meeting. Seconded by E. Irving. VOTE: Ron Sicard (AYE), Elizabeth Irving (AYE), Matt Lord (AYE), Bob Obear (AYE). Meeting Adjourned 8:01 pm

Exhibit 1. Slide Deck Titled: Turners Falls Canal District Community Workshop by Dietz and Co. Architects