

**Town of Seymour
Economic Development Commission**

**Special Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, February 28, 2012 – 6:30 PM
Flaherty Room – Seymour Town Hall**

Members present: Jon Szuch, Rosalie Averill, Michael Horbal, Ted Holly, Ron Balabon, Marietta Sabetta and Kathleen Conroy-Cass.

Also present: Fred Messore, Economic Development Director, Maryanne DeTullio, Recording Secretary

ITEM #1 Call Meeting to Order

Meeting called to order at 6:30 p.m. by Chairman Jon Szuch.

ITEM #2 Pledge of Allegiance

Pledge of Allegiance led by Chairman Jon Szuch.

ITEM #3 Interview Consulting Firms for Qualifications and Proposals for Scope of Work for Updated Action Plan for 2007 MEDP

Fred Messore stated that at last month's meeting the Commission discussed having three firms come in to make a presentation regarding revising the 2007 MEDP with the focus on downtown. Mr. Messore stated that the first firm to make their presentation this evening is Planimetrics.

Glenn Chalder, Planimetrics stated that they are a land use planning firm working mostly for municipalities. They have been in business for over 20 years and did the 2002 Plan of Conservation and Development for Seymour. Mr. Chalder stated that each community in the State of Connecticut is to have a plan of conservation and development and if it is not updated by 2014 a community can become ineligible for State discretionary grant. He urged the Commission to think of ways to get that done.

He submitted an overview of how they feel they help the Commission best. He stated that they would take the 2007 plan and through public participation and working with the Commission and focus that into action steps that would likely cause results. He stated that do unique and different things to get people to participate in meetings and get ideas from them. He stated that they would review the 2006 Seymour Master Economic Development Plan and the 2002 Plan of Conservation and Development. They would meet with Economic Development Commission to learn which strategies are still relevant and get ideas for new strategies. Mr. Chalder stated that they would then schedule a public meeting and create awareness of the public meeting through press releases and newspaper articles as well as posting signs throughout town. They would conduct the public meeting and get the people to participate and get their input on what they would want to see in their downtown.

He stated that another thing that they do is to determine who is responsible for doing what when. He stated that the Commission can do it by itself but needs to help of other boards and agencies. He stated that they would prepare a preliminary report based on what they learn at the public meeting. It would also include the

recommendations and strategies that they feel are important to make an action. He stated that they would work with the Commission on that report and refine it. They would then schedule another public meeting to have the Commission present the report to the community.

Mr. Chalder stated that their fee would be a lump sum of \$9,000.00 and they feel it is important to get this going and would be done by June 1st.

Mrs. Averill asked who would do the identification of who would be responsible. She asked if the Commission would do it or would it be done in the final analysis. Mr. Chalder stated that they would recommend based on their knowledge and experience of working with communities who are the best entities to be responsible for accomplishing the different objectives. He stated that information would be in the draft report so that the Commission could review it and comment on it and make any suggestions.

Mrs. Averill then asked that they state that other boards and commissions would be critical for implementation but did not see any interfacing with them and other boards and commissions. Mr. Chalder stated that they would proceed in two ways. One would be to send an invitation to all the other boards and commissions and invite them to the public meeting. He stated that the public meeting allows everyone to participate.

Mrs. Averill stated that in talking about the downtown would they meet with the downtown merchants outside of the scope of the public meeting. Mr. Chalder stated that if the Commission felt that was important they would do that.

Mr. Chalder stated that another thing that they have done is to send out questionnaires to members of other boards and commissions. He stated that they encourage people to get their comments to them regarding their town.

Mr. Horbal asked who would be the lead contact person that the Commission would deal with. Mr. Chalder stated that he would be the lead contact person.

Mr. Horbal asked Mr. Chalder what he considered the downtown area of Seymour. Mr. Chalder stated that it is pretty much defined by topography of the river. If the Commission felt that the downtown jumped the river to the other side then they would consider that the downtown. He stated that they thought the core area was on this side of the river to the river.

Mr. Horbal stated that in the scope of services he did not see anything about the terms and conditions of the actual contract. Mr. Chalder stated that the terms and conditions are very municipal friendly. He stated that basically they agreed on a lump sum and it is billed on progress made. He stated that an invoice would be sent in and they would like to have it reviewed and paid within 45 days.

Mr. Horbal asked how the work is provided to the Commission. Mr. Chalder stated that they would like to have one dedicated meeting per month for them on the project of approximately one to two hours in length. He stated that they would prepare materials

and get those to Mr. Messore a week before the meeting so that Commission would have time to review it prior to the meeting.

Mr. Horbal asked if at the end of the project the Commission determined that there was some extra work that the Commission wanted done how would the charges be structured. Mr. Chalder stated that at the end of the project all the materials are given to the Commission on a cd. He stated that almost everyone in their office is a former municipal employee and rarely do work on a hourly basis. He stated that he feels that it is most beneficial for a community to have a set fee. Mr. Messore stated that when he solicited the companies for this project he let them know what the budget is. Mr. Chalder stated that since they would really like to make the public meeting an event they would take \$1,000.00 for expenses for that meeting.

Mrs. Averill stated that she did not see any request from them to get this started in terms of what the Commission would need to get him. Mr. Chalder stated that if they were selected the next meeting would be as soon as possible and talk through the 2007 Plan, what the expectations are for this process and begin work on it. He stated that they would stop working with the Commission until they had the public meeting. He stated that they would work with Fred on collecting other information and do background research. Mrs. Averill asked if they would get all the maps and other things that they needed to get started. Mr. Chalder stated that they would. Mrs. Averill ask if they would do any background information on the demographics of the downtown and the number of people who commute from Seymour. Mr. Chalder stated that the 2007 report was very good on that type of information. He stated that since then they have the 2007 economic census and the 2010 demographic census. They would look at that information to see if there is anything significant there but the scope of work did not ask to replicate the MEDP of 2007. It said take that plan and turn it into an action plan for results. He stated that they have worked on the 2002 Plan and are familiar with the Town of Seymour.

Mr. Messore asked if with the budget that the Commission has if this is the best direction to go in. Mr. Chalder stated that the economy is still in a challenging situation so despite the residents to have more downtown, the economy may not be ready. He stated that we need to have everything coming together. He stated that the Commission needs to make sure that the Plan of Conservation and Development gets updated so that the Town does not lose out on obtaining grants. Mr. Messore stated that the Town has not budgeted any money for the update at this time. He has met with VCOG and OPM to find out about the last update that was done on a regional level. He stated that he has made the Board of Finance aware that we need to set aside funds for planning.

Mr. Messore stated that the next company was Fitzgerald & Halliday.

Michael Morehouse, Kevin Hively and Susan Van Benschoten from Fitzgerald & Halliday were present.

Mr. Morehouse stated that they are based in Hartford and have been in business for 25 years.

He stated that the 2007 MEDP has a lot of good information in it. He stated that since 2007 market conditions have changed significantly with a much different economic climate today. He stated that they would help formulate an action plan. He stated that the 2007 Plan did not really give a clear consensus on where to begin. He stated that they want to gather the information from other plans and studies and see what is still relevant. They would also want to find out the goals and objectives of the Commission. Mr. Morehouse stated that they would conduct a downtown revitalization planning workshop. They would invite people to attend the workshop. They would handle the logistics for the workshop and through the workshop get input from the people in attendance. He stated that they would use the information and information from the Commission and workshop to develop an action for Seymour. They would create a list of future action items and prioritize them.

Mrs. VanBenschoten stated that they feel that they would be a good fit for Seymour because they bring both market and development perspective as well as infrastructure perspective and transportation and access. She stated that almost all the projects that they get involved with may start with one thing and then grow into something else.

Mr. Morehouse stated that they have been working in Seymour on the Route 42/67 plan the VCOG worked on. They were on the team to do traffic analysis and look at the parcels of land that Haynes owns and how to access that property. He stated that they learned quite a bit about the community through that process.

He stated that they feel that all projects need to start with a strong vision. He stated that the old report needs to be refreshed and updated. Then there would be a series of actionable, realistic steps that would be prioritized. He stated that they have a full range of services that they can provide to the town.

Mr. Morehouse stated that they have demographic information and other reports on Seymour which they would use to determine how they would proceed. He stated that they know that as the town moves forward there may be land use and other regulatory recommendations that would be important. He stated that a lot of downtowns face the same goals. He stated that there may be zoning strategies that they could recommend to achieve those goals. He stated that there may be areas that need to be protected. He stated that they really understand the transportation aspects of planning.

Mrs. VanBenschoten stated that they really feel that economic development and place making are one and the same. She stated that with the economic being what it is, they feel that this is the time to look at the infrastructure and create the environment that is going to make development or whatever other strategies more desirable. She stated that they wanted to show that they look at the whole picture.

Mr. Morehouse stated that they feel that vision is the key to the whole thing. He stated that they want to understand what the issues are in Seymour and start that vision. He stated that this is a real strategic consulting project. It would be working with the Commission to decide what the next steps are to get things done over the next few years.

Mr. Balabon asked what their time frame would be for this project. Mr. Morehouse stated that they would start with a meeting with the Commission and then get the workshop scheduled and would anticipate having that in April. They would have the report within a month to six weeks after that and the work would be done by summer.

Mrs. Averill asked about the budget and Mrs. VanBenschoten stated that the budget is based on the funding that the Commission has. The focus would be on the action plan and workshop. Mrs. Averill asked about payment and Mrs. VanBenschoten stated that they could do it however the Commission wishes but they like lump sum. She stated that it would be billed out in phases as the work is being done. Ms. Sabetta asked if a retainer was required and Mr. Morehouse stated that it is not. Mrs. Averill asked for completion date and Mr. Morehouse stated that it be more the end of June.

Mrs. Averill asked what other municipalities they have worked in. Mrs. VanBenschoten stated that they have worked in Naugatuck, Avon, New Haven, Groton, Middletown, Brookfield. She stated that they have worked all over the State.

Mr. Messore asked in terms of the document that he gave them and what we feel is our next step if they felt that this was the best way to go.

Kevin Hively stated that he would not spend any more money on market analysis. He stated that what they should focus on is what can the town of Seymour actually execute within the confines of its own abilities. He stated that the Town should think about what they can do first and part of their process is to help figure out what are the priorities that have the most impact and can be done within the resources that the Commission can control on their own. He stated that what you need to do is figure out what can be done to attract developers.

Mr. Horbal asked if they are selected who would be the project manager. Mr. Morehouse stated that it would be Kevin Hively and Susan VanBenschoten. Mr. Horbal stated that their letter referred to terms and conditions but they were not attached. Mr. Morehouse stated that those would be submitted if they are selected.

Mr. Messore introduced the next presenter, Phil Michalowski and Michael Looney from Milone and MacBroom.

Mr. Michalowski stated that Milone and MacBroom is an engineering and design firm and he with the planning group of the firm. He stated that they have worked with the Shelton EDC and came up with the strategy to abandon the industrial redevelopment of Canal Street and the downtown area and make a switch to residential/ mixed use.

He stated that they reviewed the Mt. Auburn report and a lot of things that they recommended they would also recommend. He stated that the Commission has a fairly small budget and the Commission needs to do as much as possible to move forward. There are good suggestions in that report and the Commission needs to identify what can be accomplished in the near term. He stated that the Commission needs to show some progress being made and a plan in place in order to get federal and state funding. He stated that they are recommending a charrette type of process. He stated that they would bring together the information of the downtown area and try

and get the community to accept the recommendations. He stated that you need to build a program and show progress to the funding agencies. He stated that they think it would be useful to get the retail spending power recalculated.

Mr. Looney stated that he is working on a Brownfield study in Middletown. He stated that they did a market overall or analysis of what uses would be supportable based on what was downtown. They took all the information and had a public workshop where people could give their own ideas. They took those and put together a plan. He stated that is the type of thing that they would do here in Seymour. He stated that once you get things started they start to happen.

Mr. Michalowski stated after the public charette process they are able to take the notions and meet with their landscape architects and see what could happen in town.

Ms. Sabetta asked about the Shelton project and if they knew what the owner versus renters were and the average household income. Mr. Michalowski stated that most are owner and it is a younger group and not many school age children there. Ms. Sabetta asked about the possibility of Bridge Street access and Mr. Michalowski stated that nothing has been finalized on that.

Mr. Szuch asked what they saw as the strengths and deficiencies in the Town of Seymour. Mr. Michalowski stated that the major deficiency is more organizational. He stated that Seymour has not been able to come together as a community to have consensus and move forward with specific programs in terms of the downtown area. Mr. Szuch stated that a lot has been done behind the scenes in the last eight years. He stated that Seymour has struggled with its own identity not wanting to accept or embrace change. Mr. Szuch stated that the Commission has done the best that they could do as a volunteer board. He stated that the Town was without an economic director for several years or 28 months and now has Mr. Messorre in place.

Mr. Michalowski stated that the issue is coming together to agree to apply resources and get a program to build forward.

Mrs. Averill asked about his fees and method of payment and did not see delivery time. Mr. Michalowski stated that he would work that out to meet the Commission's schedule. He stated that it would probably be a 3-4 month process. He stated that some groundwork would need to be done and then the meeting dates would have to be set.

Mrs. Averill stated that he also speaks about assessing the consumer spending potential and she asked if that was done in Shelton. Mr. Michalowski stated that it is pretty standard and the information is readily available.

Mrs. Averill stated that in the proposal it states that the Commission will supply digital maps and she asked the cost of that. Mr. Michalowski stated that he thought the regional planning agencies have those and they could be obtain from them.

Mr. Horbal asked who would be the main contact and Mr. Micalowski stated that it would be Mr. Looney and himself.

Mr. Messore stated that the Commission has a lot of information and each one had a different approach. Mrs. Averill felt that Planimetrics was a good match. She felt that Fitzgerald & Halliday was more transportation oriented. Mr. Balabon stated that each had a different perspective. Mr. Horbal stated that he liked the idea of the way Planimetrics would advertise the public meetings. He stated that he liked Planimetrics and also the second group when Mr. Hively spoke. He felt that Milone and MacBroom were interesting because of their Shelton aspect.

Mrs. Conroy-Cass felt that parking will always be an issue and thought that the transportation experience of Fitzgerald & Halliday was an asset. Mr. Szuch felt that they would be ideal if we were doing a complete MEDP. He felt that Planimetrics were down to earth and familiar with Seymour. He felt that Milone and MacBroom has worked with some of the most successful municipalities.

Mr. Messore stated that based on the budget that we have he felt it was important to focus on the downtown. He stated that the 2007 MEDP was the closest document that he to an updated plan of conservation and development. He felt that he was impressed with the information from Planimetrics and how it was presented. He felt that their approach was good. Mr. Messore stated that with Fitzand how it was presented. He felt that their approach was good. Mr. Messore stated that with Fitzgerald and Halliday they presented a lot of information and with three people who would we deal with. He believes that transportation is important because if you have good infrastructure everything else will come. He stated that Milone and MacBroom has a good track record and was not really impressed by their presentation. He felt that we should have asked them more questions about Seymour.

Mrs. Averill moved that the Commission make a decision on awarding the contract for the update of the action plan. The motion was seconded by Ms. Sabetta and carried unanimously (7-0).

Mr. Balabon moved that the Commission award the contract to Milone and MacBroom. There was no second to the motion and Mr. Balabon then withdrew his motion.

The Commission felt that everyone should rate the companies and the results were as follows with Planimetrics being #1, Fitzgerald and Halliday #2 and Milone and MacBroom #3.

Mr. Balabon - #3 - #1 - #2

Mrs. Averill - #1 - #2 - #3

Ms. Sabetta - #2 - #1 - #3

Mrs. Conroy-Cass - #1 - #2 - #3

Mr. Szuch - #3 - #1 - #2

Mr. Horbal - #1 - #2 - #3

Mr. Holly - #3 - #2 - #1

The consensus resulted in a tie between Planimetrics and Milone and MacBroom . The members then took another poll rating Planimetrics (#1) and Milone and MacBroom (#3) as follows:

Mr. Balabon - #3

Mrs. Averill - #1

Ms. Sabetta - #1

Mrs. Conroy-Cass - #1

Mr. Szuch - #3

Mr. Horbal - #1

Mr. Holly - #3

A motion was made by Ms. Sabetta to award the contract to Planimetrics not to exceed \$10,000.00 for the updated action plan for 2007 MEDP. The motion was seconded by Mr. Horbal and carried unanimously (7-0).

A motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Mr. Horbal, seconded by Mr. Balabon and carried unanimously (7-0).

The meeting was adjourned at 9:30 p.m. by Chairman Jon Szuch.

Respectfully submitted,

Maryanne DeTullio, Recording Secretary