

East Haddam Village Revitalization Committee
Meeting
Thursday, August 26, 2010
Minutes

DRAFT

Committee Members Present: Phil Barlow, Randy Dill, Bill Gerrish, Melanie Kolek, William Brady, Mary Ellen Klinck, and Lisa McNellis. Others in attendance: George Fellner, Bob Scherrer, Ken Simon, Emmett Lyman, Hattie Kittner, Dan McMahon, Mark Walter, David Nelson, Fran Adams, Russell Carter, Jef Wolter.

Mr. Gerrish called the meeting to order at 7:06 p.m.

Approval of minutes:

Minutes from the meeting of June 24, 2010: motion made by Mr. Barlow, seconded by Ms. McNellis. Motion carried unanimously.

Minutes from the meeting of July 22, 2010: motion made by Mr. Dill, seconded by Mr. Barlow. Motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Gerrish made Ms. Klinck a voting member in place of Michael Gionta.

Old Business

None.

New Business

Mr. Fellner made a presentation regarding his approach in creating the draft for the architectural renderings. He advised that he spent a considerable amount of time at the site, taking pictures of the various aspects of the site, surrounding buildings, and surrounding environment. He briefly went through his “visual journey of the Village,” which presentation he completed in recent years for the East Haddam Historical Society.

Mr. Fellner, a former resident of the Village area and present resident of East Haddam, also highlighted that his renderings of the Village took into consideration the historical and architectural integrity of the Village, noting that he attempted to “get a sense of the village fabric” in creating his plans. He stated that he attempted to stay within the confines of the committee’s vision.

In his site analysis, he focused on the development as a microcosm of the whole Village area. He stated that he found the site access just north of the Stonecroft property would be ideal. He also thought pedestrian access was extremely important. He liked the present “vistas” overlooking the Goodspeed and the river and attempted to incorporate those in his renderings. Attempting to incorporate an adaptive reuse plan, he stated that the present town office building could be used as a Visitors Center and given the fact that the River House is on the list of historical places, could be turned into a restaurant with a double wide wrap around porch. To access the river, he likes the idea of adding some steps from the upper green to the lower green, which is overgrown in spots but with delicate trimming, could easily be pared down. Finally, he

stated that with the possible addition of properties that may become available when the actor housing is completed, this would be ideal and could be incorporated into the renderings.

Mr. Fellner went through the previously proposed site plans discussed at the meeting on July 22nd, noting that it would be preferred to go with smaller elements which transcend the Village into a “pedestrian walking/piazza feel.” In Proposed Site Plan C, he uses the Stonecroft property as access and creates parking 72 spaces per code. He further stated that the parking and parking lot access allows admittance to the Riverhouse. The buildings would include retail for 1st floor, and Housing/offices for the 2nd floor. He stated that “the campus should act as a system,” for example, if someone staying overnight, short walk to get breakfast, etc. He also noted that with respect to the street edge and present sloping (5 foot difference), he would make the town office and potentially two buildings to its left and closer to the river, two level entries (or two front doors, essentially.) He could keep the roadway the same S curve, which works in radial form because of the actor housing in that same shape.

The difference between Plan C and Proposed Site Plan D is dependent on access up top on 149 south of Stonecroft should that land be made available and acquired, and dependent on DOT approval. Proposed Site Plan E uses existing access and parking access in the middle of the project which is not preferred but still usable should we need it. Proposed Site Plan F uses an access point after La Vita Gustosa

Mr. Fellner then presented a 3D and aerial presentation of the site, highlighting his explanation detailed above.

General Discussion/Audience of Citizens

Topic: The two front buildings

Mr. Brady stated that the sloping on the roof should be pushed back as it looks awkward. Ms. Kolek noted that it appears to be the same sloping with the town office building.

David Nelson stated he would like the project to refer back to the original Goodspeed square and allow potential for the roadway to be corrected if we push buildings back and if DOT is able to approval that plan. He liked the piazza feel but stated that the focus should be in Goodspeed square. Mr. Nelson recommended instead of the two buildings something akin to the Goodspeed Mansion. Mr. Fellner disagreed inasmuch as he considered that option but did not want it to compete with the Goodspeed and Gelston House. Mr. Fellner stated that the whole site has to fit and we need a critical threshold of usable footage.

Mr. Simon noted that patrons are going to want to congregate on the road side of the project to watch the happenings at the Goodspeed and Gelston House, which would require these buildings to be pushed back.

Mr. Barlow suggested looking at the overall concept before discussing the minute details.

Mr. Dill stated that if you take out the buildings or push them back, the site becomes limited. He was of the opinion that DOT is not going to change their stance on the roadway, at least in the imminent future, and mixing people and roadways is not a good idea.

Ms. Klinck stated that she understands Mr. Nelson's concerns but the possibility of DOT changing their mind in the next 20 to 30 years may be remote and may not come to fruition. She believes that the Goodspeed mansion or something similar in the front of the project would take away from the Village and change the present architecture in the Village completely.

Mr. Scherer stated that the layout captured the committee's vision developed over the last year. He also recommended that the committee look at the schematic from the street view versus the roof lines which aerial view may not truly represent how the two buildings in front will appear to patrons.

Topic: Footage/Space/Access

Mr. Fellner provided the following approximate statistics on the proposed plan and square footage: Retail 18455 square feet, offices 11000 square feet, bed and breakfast 5700, RiverHouse 3000 square feet and second Floor 1000 square feet, Town hall 2300 and Second Floor 1094 square feet, for total of approximately 42,000 square feet.

Dan McMahon was concerned regarding pedestrian behavior and how pedestrians will be able to find the rest of the Village when there appeared to be only one ramp for access by foot. While the developer will likely specify this in the final plans, Mr. Fellner stated he would add the accommodations he made for this. There was also discussion regarding the mobility study and DOT progress with approval.

Mr. Barlow stated that the space in front of town hall can be developed in piazza. The visitors' center can be used to show pedestrians the other aspects of the Village further down Route 82. Mr. Walter noted that this would require the front plantings to be trimmed back in front of the present town offices.

Mr. Brady stated that Mr. Fellner may want to consider putting steps in the middle of the overlook between the two front buildings versus on the side. Mr. Fellner stated that he considered but did not want to make the stairs or the overlook "ceremonial".

Mr. Brady also inquired about fire access, with Mr. Fellner advised and showed that he appropriately took into consideration.

Mr. Wolter was concerned about the view coming off the bridge, stating that the gateway is paramount when attempting to draw people in. He was concerned about the "solid space" and suggested that the vista between the two buildings be pushed back and a fountain be placed there. Mr. Fellner liked this idea because it keeps the vista of the Goodspeed view but cuts out the solid space.

Topic: Next steps

Mr. Fellner stated that he would need only minimal time to fine tune the details discussed at the meeting. The committee decided to have a special meeting to transition into the next phase, at which time future handling could be discussed. Special meeting scheduled for August 31, 2010, at 7 p.m.

Motion to adjourn made by Mr. Dill, seconded by Mr. Gerrish. Meeting adjourned at 8:53 pm.