

East Haddam Village Revitalization Committee
Special Meeting
Tuesday, August 31, 2010
Minutes

DRAFT

Committee Members Present: Phil Barlow, Randy Dill, Bill Gerrish, Melanie Kolek, William Brady, Lisa McNellis and Eric Sabetta (arrived 7:23 p.m.). Others in attendance: George Fellner, Bob Scherrer, Hattie Kittner, Dan McMahan, Russel Carter, Jef Wolter, Karl Stofko, David Nelson, Steve Rossi, Joseph Zirlis, Michael Marsden.

Mr. Gerrish called the meeting to order at 7:03 p.m.

Old Business

Mr. Gerrish stated that the progress to this point has been fantastic given Mr. Fellner's renderings and constructive input from the audience on the same. Mr. Gerrish stated that he expected that this was the first step in a longer process of generating enthusiasm for the project, that the renderings created were a tool to move the project along. Mr. Gerrish thanked Mr. Fellner for his efforts up to this point. Ms. Kolek agreed, stating that the committee expected further changes as the process moved along.

New Business

Mr. Fellner recapped the presentation he made at the August 26th meeting, noting the changes he made since that meeting were based on discussion and committee consensus. Modifications made were to the façade on the two front buildings, adding a somewhat different roofline and a upper porch to both. He also added a stairway to the vista area between the two front buildings and fencing along the vistas overlooking the Goodspeed/Gelston House properties. The changes made added approximately 400 sq. feet to the project. He also highlighted in different coloring the pedestrian pathways. He also added some greenery to the front of the Visitors' Center (present Town Office Building). Mr. Fellner indicated that he was prepared to create color rendering of this draft schematic should it be approved by the committee.

Audience of Citizens/General Discussion

Mr. Carter liked the new design of the two front buildings. He inquired regarding the parking spaces that Mr. Fellner took account of in his renderings versus the parking spaces presently there. It was unclear how many parking spaces are presently on the space. Mr. Fellner stated that the parking spaces allotment complies with required code of the overall square footage of the project.

Mr. Wolter stated that the stairs from the vista to the roadway between the two front building should be wider, which Mr. Fellner agreed with. There was discussion about the width of those stairs.

Mr. Stofko stated that the DOT should be contacted to discuss the state truck access to the bridge (bridge tenders). Mr. Fellner noted on the renderings where access could be had and noted that the area around that access could be modified to accommodate truck access.

Both Ms. McNellis and Mr. Barlow noted the enhanced parking and access to pedestrians. Mr. Barlow discussed making the project walkable which Mr. Fellner took account of. Mr. Fellner pointed to the coloring in the draft renderings noting the walkable areas and access to and from the project.

Mr. Nelson was concerned about access to the upper levels for the handicap, which Mr. Fellner stated that once the project was finalized, consideration for handicap access would and should be included in the design. In any event, this was on his mind at the time he created the project. Mr. Nelson liked the revisions to the two front buildings but expressed that he still took issue with the front buildings intrusion on "Goodspeed Square." Having recently reviewed the committee's vision statement, he stated that the statement was completely lacking of its mention of history. He stated that lighting and cobblestone were not necessarily "historic." He took issue with the committee's alleged oversight of the historic preservation/restoration and alleged lack of consultation with the Historic District Commission prior to submitting its statement to an architect to draft renderings.

Mr. Scherrer inquired regarding the Chairman of the Historic District Commission, whom Mr. Gerrish confirmed sits as a member of the committee.

Mr. Barlow questioned Mr. Nelson regarding "Goodspeed Square" documentation. Mr. Nelson stated that there are numerous pictures in the Historical Society which include a picture of Goodspeed Mansion. Mr. Barlow stated that he believed that the plan developed by the committee was adequate in terms of the purpose of making the property interesting for a developer.

Mr. Dill stated that "Goodspeed Square," should the concept be recreated, would not work because there is a bridge in existence now. Mr. Dill felt that the renderings were adequate for the purposes which they are intended.

Ms. McNellis stated that she finds that the plan is adequate and comports with the overall vision statement of the committee, which the committee had worked for over a year and a half creating in open forum. She believes that Mr. Fellner has graciously gone above and beyond what the committee asked of him. Ms. McNellis further noted that committee agenda and minutes are available for review by the general public, such that if there was any concern or input to be had by any member of the public or other committee prior to this, it should have been previously raised.

Ms. Kolek reiterated Mr. Gerrish's opening statement, stating that this is the first draft of what the committee expects to be several changes once a developer is retained and the plan is submitted to the various town committees/town vote. She further noted that to the extent that the word "history" was not indicated in the plan, it was on the conscience of the committee when creating their vision, especially in light of the historic property that is the Goodspeed/Gelston House. Ms. Kolek stated that she could not think of a better architect than Mr. Fellner to create these rendering given the fact that he has previously done a historic analysis of the Town, is a resident of the Town, is a former resident of East Haddam Village, and methodically and thoughtfully crafted his project with the surrounding environment and buildings in mind.

Mr. Brady stated that it would be difficult to recreate the Goodspeed Mansion but noted that there could be additional changes made to the two front buildings.

Ms. Kolek made a motion to accept the revised renderings from Mr. Fellner as memorialization of the committee's vision statement. Mr. Dill seconded. All in favor except for Mr. Brady, who abstained. Motion carried.

There was discussion by the committee regarding the next steps of the plan. Mr. Fellner will convert the renderings into color in advance of the next meeting on September 23rd.

Motion to adjourn made by Mr. Dill, seconded by Ms. McNellis. Meeting adjourned at 7:53 pm.