

TOWN OF FARMINGTON, CT

Gateways Committee Meeting

Agenda

May 19, 2016

DATE: May 19, 2016

TIME: 5:00 P.M.

PLACE: **Town Council Chambers**

AGENDA

- A. Call to Order
- B. Public Comments
- C. Communications- (Attachment 1)
- D. Approve minutes from March 17, 2016 and April 7, 2016 (Attachment 2)
- E. BL Company Presentation
- F. Select Consultants for the Farmington Center Phase 2 Project
- G. Review next steps for Farmington Center
- H. Review next steps for Five corners
- I. Other Business
 - i. CT Main Street Annual Award

cc:

Kathleen A. Eagen, Town Manager
Paula Ray, Town Clerk
Deb Bull, Administrative Assistant (by e-mail)
Lisa Johnson, Preservation Now
Gateway Committee Members

April 25, 2016

Peter, as the Chairman of the Gateway committee:

I had planned to attend your meeting on Thursday evening and speak; but since the meeting was canceled, I am writing to all of you to express some concerns about your current plan to hire a consultant to formulate a plan for the Gateway area, the next phase of the long-range plan. I also have some questions that I believe you should ask yourselves before you sign a contract with anyone.

The workshops last year about the Gateway were a huge success – about 500 townspeople participated in them, and they offered many ideas and suggestions for the eventual plan for the area. I attended all of the workshops, and at them people were promised by your committee that they would have the opportunity to have further input as the process goes along. So far, unless, I am mistaken, there have been no further public meetings or workshops. The only thing I see in your current plans is that the next consultant will have to make a presentation to public meetings, but nothing says that they must hold workshops for input. So my question to you is this – what happened to the plan to have the public offer reactions to the first plan and input to the next phase of the process? Are you going to honor that promise or not? Will there be another public workshop before the next consultant starts work? Do you have any plans to ask people how they like the plans so far and how they would react to low-, moderate, and high-density alternatives? If you do not have a workshop, you risk having the next consultant come up with a plan that is not acceptable to most people in town, and you risk contention instead of consensus.

Secondly, after the workshops, the Farmington Center Study Plan was produced. I have read that; and while I am not completely content with it, I believe that it does accurately reflect many of the concepts expressed at the workshops. People there talked about green spaces, walking trails, traffic concerns, and parking concerns; I never heard at the workshops any talk about high-density development with multi-story buildings. And yet it seems that you are preparing to hire a consultant who specializes in multi-story, high-density development. Why? If you hire this firm, will you be assured that they will consult with the people in town? In their proposal, I read nothing about workshops but only that they will “consult with stakeholders” – a rather vague term, which needs some clarification. My second question about this issue is – is this consultant willing to listen to all of us and accept what the people of Farmington want, not what developers want? Is this firm flexible enough to produce a plan that meets the desires of our residents? If the consultant is not flexible, then we are wasting time and money. I have talked to many people this past week about high-density, multi-story development, and their reaction has been “don’t worry, Farmington won’t allow that” - well, I am worried, because the last

time someone told me not to worry, we ended up with the destruction of the historic Judah Woodruff Lewis/Barney house that is occurring now. Farmington allowed that. This time I am going to worry before we get into trouble. I urge you to make sure that you have a consultant who will listen to people and come up with a plan that meets our desires and needs.

Respectfully,

Betty Coykendall

15 Whispering Rod Rd, Unionville 06085

April 20, 2016

To the members of the Farmington Gateway Committee,

I have found myself repeatedly ruminating on the consultant presentations to the Farmington Gateway Committee last week. Unfortunately I will not be able to attend the April 21st Gateway Committee meeting. As I drive around the Parson's curve and enter the Farmington Village area I find it inconceivable that BL Companies could suggest a five to six story structure and they feel that it would be esthetically consistent with the historic village area. I understand that BL Companies submitted this only as a preliminary concept plan but I am concerned that this does represent a significant bias on their part and that "bigger is better" will be pushed in the feasibility study. I believe Bill Warner said that most of BL's work is with developers rather than with communities. It was my understanding that the purpose of the town workshops was to ascertain the preferences of the community. As Jeff Apuzzo noted on July 9, 2015, "We share a common goal which is to see the development of the Gateway evolve in a way which reflects the desires of the residents of our town.." The Parson's parcel will represent a unique opportunity as a town owned parcel with no preexisting obligations to developers. While I was impressed with BL's professionalism in their presentation, I find it difficult to understand how they could ignore the workshop recommendations in their initial presentation of a concept plan. I am concerned their own large scale development concept will bias their market analysis to justify this initial concept plan rather than the community's goals. If the only way to make development of the Parson's lot is with construction of this scale, then I would prefer to see this area preserved as open space with a park (? welcome center) and the emphasis of planning on the enhancement and reconfiguration of the existing commercial properties as opportunities arise.

I understand that the Committee was planning to review the community's preferences further with BL Companies. I would urge caution to ensure that the community's desires and goals are honored if the Committee elects to proceed with BL Companies for this next stage.

Thank you.

Henry Maresh

mareshmd@aol.com

**TOWN OF FARMINGTON, CT
Gateways Committee Meeting
March 17, 2016**

Present

Peter Mastrobattista
Amy Suffredini
Hilary Donald

Staff:

William Warner
Rose Ponte

J. Call to Order.

The Meeting was called to order at 5:10p.m.

K. Public Comment –None

L. Communications- None received

D. Approve minutes from February 18, 2016

A motion to approve the February 18, 2016 minutes and seconded by (Donald/ Suffredini).

It was unanimously voted: To approve the February 18, 2016 minutes.

E. Review March 21 meeting with TPZ

The committee will attend the March 21 TPZ meeting to review the work that has been completed to date. We will officially ask the TPZ to hold a public hearing to add the Farmington Center report to the Plan of Conservation and Development. Bill Warner advised that the public hearing will be scheduled once the Regional Council of Governments has had thirty days to review the request. The committee will also report to the TPZ that the next area of study will be the 5 corners.

F. Determine dates to interview RFP respondents

It was decided that interviews would be conducted on April 7 from 5:00 to 7:00. Each will receive 40 minutes for their presentation.

H. Five Corners Presentation

Bill Warner provided an overview of the existing conditions of the 5 corners study area. Economic indicators and demographics indicate this area has a very strong market with excellent economic development potential. It is a major gateway into Farmington and the area should be enhanced. Engaging

the residents of this study area is very important. A letter will be mailed to inform them of the committee's work and invite them to future meetings. The next step is to issue an RFP to hire a consultant that would provide conceptual drawings for this area. Once the consultant is hired and the conceptual drawings are completed a public community meeting will be scheduled to show the drawings to the community and solicit their comments.

I. **Other Business-** none discussed

J. Adjournment

Upon a motion made and seconded (Donald/Suffredini) it was unanimously Voted to adjourn the meeting at 6:25 PM.

Respectfully submitted by:
Rose Ponte
Economic Development Director.

cc: Sub-Committee Members
Bill Warner, Town Planner
Kathleen A. Eagen, Town Manager
Paula Ray, Town Clerk
Deb Bull, Administrative Assistant

**Town of Farmington
Gateways Committee Meeting
April 7, 2016**

Present

Peter Mastrobattista
Amy Suffredini
Hilary Donald

Staff:

William Warner
Rose Ponte
Kathy Eagen

M. Call to Order.

The Meeting was called to order at 5:00 PM

N. Public Comment: Received by email on April 5

Dear Friends on the Gateways Committee,
As Chair of the Human Relations Commission, I deeply regret that I will be out of town for your April 7 meeting with the consultants who are finalists for the contract to help continue the development plans along Route 4. Since I cannot attend, Bill Warner has invited me to make written comments; and, as I have said in the past, I am very grateful for this kind of official support in helping the Human Relations Commission live out its mandate of encouraging equality of treatment and opportunity for all members of the Farmington community.

I am attaching two brief articles about Universal Design, a philosophical and practical approach that complements and gives context to ADA regulations, and which is specifically mentioned in the RFP as a needed area of expertise for the consulting group guiding the second stage. If you found any of the three consulting proposals to be skimpy on the question of Universal Design, I would appreciate your asking some specific questions to get a sense of where the consultants are on this issue. Farmington has distinguished itself as a community in the forefront of planning community spaces that are welcoming to ALL people, but this is so only because citizens have spoken up and asked that accessibility be an important priority. You will be that voice on Thursday night with the consultants.

I realize that this is very short notice for you to read background information on Universal Design, so in the attached documents, I have either put asterisks next to or underlined what I consider to be the most relevant

information. It is an approach that was originally formulated by Professor Ron Mace, architect, educator, and Director of the Center For Universal Design at North Carolina State University:

https://www.ncsu.edu/ncsu/design/cud/about_us/usronmace.htm

Thank you so very much for your support of this important issue, which pertains to the quality of life for all Farmington's citizens, not just those with disabilities.

Ruth Grobe, Chair, Farmington Human Relations Commission

O. Interview Consultants for phase 2 of Farmington Center Plan

The following consultants presented their proposals.

- | | | |
|----|--|----------------|
| 1. | BL Companies – | 5:00 - 5:40 pm |
| 2. | Dodson & Flinker, Inc.
Mullin Associates Inc. | 5:50 - 6:30 pm |
| 3. | Fitzgerald & Halliday, Inc | 6:40 - 7:20 PM |

P. To select consultants to conduct phase 2 of the Farmington Center Plan

Discussion ensued among the committee concerning the merits of each proposal. The committee directed Farmington staff to meet with BL Companies and further discuss their approach to the project.

Q. Adjournment

Meeting was adjourned at 8:00 PM

Respectfully submitted by:

Rose Ponte

Economic Development Director.

cc: Sub-Committee Members
Bill Warner, Town Planner
Kathleen A. Eagen, Town Manager
Paula Ray, Town Clerk
Deb Bull, Administrative Assistant