

**Minutes from Downtown 2020 Committee Meeting December 20, 2012
Room # 309 at 12:00 AM**

In Attendance: Lou Gagliano (chair), Dan Kail, Ken Bernhard, and Robert Jacobs

Absent: Gerry Kagan, Craig Rebecca Schiavone and Valerie Smith-Malin

Summary of Minutes

1. No minutes reviewed.
2. The purpose of the Meeting was to hear a presentation by the firm of Wallace, Roberts and Todd (WRT) to help lead the Master Planning process. The meeting began at 12:20 PM following a tour of the downtown area. Members of the WRT group included David Rouse and Wo Kim of WRT, John Plante of Lagan Engineering, Tom Brown of Nelson Nygaard and by phone Rena Leddy of PUMA (Economic Consulting Service). Each member of the WRT team presented their portion of the contemplated work plan.
3. The WRT group characterized Westport as a “rich”, high character, high standards town with seemingly the desire to give the downtown a “sense of place” for the community.
4. In terms of the river flooding issue it was clear that John Plante had a strong grasp of the issues, and his knowledge obtained from working on projects in and along the river in Westport is an advantage. He commented that dredging would not do anything significant to limit the flooding, but he thought drainage improvements might be the biggest relief item. It was pointed out that insurance companies are becoming more selective in terms of coverage, premiums are likely to increase and if patterns of flooding were to continue policies would become harder to obtain, the implication on the commercial tax base could be significant.
5. The discussions on traffic led by Tom Brown confirmed that it would be a large part of the project budget and scope. Tom acknowledged the choke points that exist now and the potential negative impacts of further

development leading to the need to do a global and comprehensive traffic study.

6. Discussions on the Economics of development led via the phone connection with Rena Leddy covered the concept of a Special Services District and the related issue of managing of services in the downtown area, such as garbage collection, street cleaning, parking, etc. She noted a number of such projects that she and PUMA have been involved. The key in many of these is to make sure that the revenue is clearly earmarked in terms of where and how it will be used. The PUMA group has experience in identifying needed development opportunities (i.e. housing, retail, etc.) and helping to provide documentation to substantiate these projects.

7. The concept of the development of the downtown as an expanded living area for our community members was noted. The issue of aging in place- in one's own community will lead to greater demand for in or near in town living.

8. Discussed broadly the concept of private/public structure to development with the public side making the process work and being part of it including the concept of an Economic Development Corporation.

9. Requested of WRT they provide some thoughts about timing and need to do this type of Master Plan targeted to helping the Committee make the request for the funds they are seeking.

10. Point #9 and their proposal for work to be in our hands in early January.

11. Meeting adjourned at 2:30 PM.