

MarketStreet Advisory Committee (MSAC)

Meeting Minutes

February 8, 2018

7:00 p.m. – 8:33 p.m.

Merritt Room, 600 MarketStreet

**Attendance: J. Bayer, R. Dalton, P. Parziale,
J. Fleming, S. Yerardi, A. Ferullo, W. McKenzie, A. Mitchell,
P. Doucette, B. Charville, T. McClory, G. Covino
Absent: J. Gioioso, D. Breen**

NEXT MEETING: THURSDAY FEB. 22, MERRITT ROOM 7:00 P.M.

1. Chairperson, Ms. Bayer, calls meeting to order
2. Agenda review, meeting goals and expectations
3. Vote on minutes from 11/30/17 meeting
 - a. Vote to approve passed
4. Finance subcommittee presented their discovery findings:
 - a. Attached is full presentation: Presented by Gene Covino, Phil Doucette and Wally McKenzie.
 - b. MSAC committee discussion highlights/comments;
 - **Wally M.:** MktSt. has vastly exceeded projected revenue but has leveled off.
 - Meals tax of approximately \$500,000. per year not included in Connery report
 - Issues for Town to be aware of:
 - a. Tax Reduction (abatement) request by National. Subcommittee included \$400,000. per year as an estimate. When it is decided those reductions will be made up by property owners.
 - b. Fire Dept. calls by day of week and time of day, information has been requested but not yet received the information. Important due to change in how the Fire Dept. is now staffed by full time during the days.
 - **Phil D.:** Over 7-year period, incremental \$16.5 million revenue;
 - Relative to the Connery report actual is double, much higher than projections.
 - Have had the ability to avoid a prop 2 ½ override due to MktSt.
 - Some expenses in town the MktSt. revenue has provided;

- i. Sports complex
 - ii. Centre farm property
 - iii. Full day kindergarten
 - iv. Public safety improvements
 - v. New Fire truck
 - vi. Police cruisers and equipment
 - vii. DPW trucks updated
 - viii. Road & sidewalk construction
 - ix. Trust for post-employment benefits
 - 1. Required for high credit rating
- 395K sq. ft. of retail space is in the 300K's now, on final leg of development
- Real estate valuation
 - Property values of abutter initially went down
 - Property values have done a complete turn-around. Younger buyers/families want to be close to MktSt. according to Northrup Associates.
- MktSt. has definitely lived up to the financial commitment.
- MktSt. has been a windfall for the town.
- Average single family tax bill has increased 33% from 2009 to 2017 according to the MA Dept. of Revenue
- **Dick D.:** People are always asking, "Where is all the money going?" Is it more quantifiable than what is being presented?
- **Gene C.:** Stressed many of the expenditures were voted on at town meeting and the will of the people. I.e. Centre farm and fields project. It was the new tax growth from MktSt. that allowed the flexibility to complete these projects without significant cuts or a 2.5 override.
- Without the success of MktSt. property taxes would have gone up much more than they have, or some services/improvements would not have occurred.
- **Dick D.:** Dick requested a clear list for the subcommittee on revenue amount spent on each item to show where revenue has been applied.
- **Gene C.:** MktSt. is very significant from a revenue and quality of life standpoint. It must be maintained properly.
- c. Chairperson Bayer thanked the finance subcommittee for all their work on this report.

5. Chairperson Jen Bayer: Feb 22 National Development will make a presentation regarding a theatre concept.
 - a. The presentation is for the MSAC to ask questions & provide feedback. Public comment will be permitted at the end of the MSAC meeting.
 - b. This presentation is concept only, it is not a proposal for town meeting in April.
 - **Anne M.:** At the last meeting, Ted Tye said he'd like to work with the various Market Street subcommittees over several meetings to develop a theater plan that National Development then could propose to the town at Town Meeting for approval. In her opinion, it is not the mission of MSAC to work directly with the developer to come up with a theater plan to propose to the town. Recommended that this issue be discussed among the committee (which she thought was going to be after National Development made a presentation). Pointed out that unlike the other issues/concerns addressed by this committee, the theatre is not an approved use under the Development Agreement. Was expecting the Committee to be presented with a specific proposal from National Development, at which point, the committee would then do its fact finding, which would include discussions with National Development, residents, etc. Back in October or November, MSAC members were told that National Development already had a theater proposal to share with the Committee, which they expected National development to present to MSAC in the next meeting or so. Also raised a concern that the process proposed by National Development will create a perception to the residents of town that MSAC appears to be working directly with a developer to develop a theater plan, which currently is an unapproved use.
 - **Chairperson Bayer:** Read the MSAC mission statement to clarify it is the mission of the MSAC to keep open dialogue.
 - **Dick D.:** Commented that it is not unusual in communities to have a citizens group work with a developer.
 - **Anne M.:** Commented that she believes a more specific proposal from National Development should be presented to the MSAC members, so the committee can undertake its fact-finding as it has done for other

issues/concerns. It appears that National Development is looking for the MSAC to work with it to develop a proposal to put forward at Town Meeting for approval. Does not believe that working directly with the developer to come up with a plan to propose to the Town for approval – currently, an unapproved use -- is MSAC's mission and welcomed comments from other committee members on this issue.

- **Phil D.:** Commented he had heard a different message from Ted Tye. Ted Tye mentioned there is no proposal for a theatre yet. Due to retail decline the need to keep MktSt. viable may need non-retail entity.
- **Taidgh M.:** Commented that the MSAC is the communication link between MktSt. and the residents. Doesn't feel prepared to ask questions without a proposal and ability to talk to residents with info.
- **Dick D.:** This topic is important enough for entire MSAC involvement vs. a subcommittee.
- **Chairperson Bayer:** Polled the committee to gauge how many members preferred to have time to think about National Development's presentation before providing feedback. By a show of hands, it was unanimous. Chairperson Bayer agreed to update the Feb 22 agenda to reflect the following:
 - MSAC will NOT provide specific feedback to National Development at this time. Feedback will be provided at a later date.
 - MSAC to ask Nat. Dev. clarifying questions.

6. Public Comment;

- a. Mrs. Merritt: Would it be possible to get the list (of where revenue from MarketStreet is going) out to the public to help residents understand where revenue has gone?
 - Response by Wally McKenzie: It will be available on-line in a few weeks.

7. Adjourn: 8:33 p.m.