

MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING/JOINT PUBLIC HEARING
CITY OF STAMFORD, CONNECTICUT
URBAN REDEVELOPMENT COMMISSION
THURSDAY, JULY 11, 2013

1. At 6:00pm, Ranking Member, Commissioner Taylor R. Molgano called the meeting to order. The following were in attendance:

Commissioners:

Taylor R. Molgano
Peter Sciarretta
Michaelle Jean-Pierre

Staff:

Rachel A. Goldberg, Interim
Executive Director & General Counsel
Durelle Alexander

Absent:

Christopher D. Meek, Chairman
Mayra M. Rios

2. At 6:01pm, Commissioner Sciarretta made a motion to adjourn the meeting to the Republican Caucus Room on the fourth floor of the Government Center to conduct a Joint Public Hearing with the Land Use-Urban Redevelopment Committee of the Board of Representatives (Land Use Committee meeting notice attached as part of these official minutes). The motion was seconded by Commissioner Jean-Pierre and carried by unanimous vote.

At 6:05pm, Commissioner Molgano and Land Use Chair Harry Day called the joint public hearing to order to address the proposed Plan Amendments to the URC Mill River Corridor Project Plan. Land Use Board members in attendance included: Chairman Day, Rep. Jay Fountain and Rep. J.R. McMullen. Also attending were Arthur Selkowitz and Milton Puryear representing the Mill River Collaborative.

Land Use Chair Day noted the following: (i) the proposed changes represented a major plan change, requiring Board approvals from his Board, the Planning Board and the full Board of Representatives; (ii) the proposed changes had been properly noticed in *The Stamford Advocate* (copy of notice attached as part of these official minutes); (iii) the matter had been previously discussed by the Land Use Board; and (iv) the Land Use Board did not have a quorum and would vote on this item at its next meeting on July 23, 2013. The URC will vote following the public hearing at its regular meeting and advise Chairman Day of the vote.

Attorney Goldberg distributed a red-lined version of the proposed changes to the financing provisions of the Plan (Section 905). She noted that the Connecticut State Statute requires an opinion from the Planning Board specifically stating that “the plan is consistent with the City of Stamford’s Master Plan.” That opinion, issued by the Planning Board on June 11, 2013, is posted on the Board of Representatives’ web site.

Attorney Goldberg reviewed the three (3) proposed changes to the Plan (complete meeting transcript available for review at the URC office):

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- (i) Extend the project boundary north and south along the river to include publicly-owned and/or controlled real property within the current project area. She showed the specific area and proposed boundary extensions on maps entitled MRCP-1A and MRCP-1B. It was noted that the management of the properties being included in the TIF district would not change.
- (ii) Expand the available financing options and Tax Increment Financing (TIF) flexibility within the Plan in order to obtain the best possible financing rates. Attorney Goldberg explained that this would permit the City to provide guarantees against the TIF debt or to provide supplemental funding if the TIF were not sufficient. It would also permit the issuance of GO bonds by the City payable with TIF funds, but which would count toward the City debt limit. Discussion ensued. Rep. Fountain suggested inserting a “no later than date” for new debt. Attorney Goldberg noted that: (a) the TIF district must remain in place as long as there is outstanding debt, and (b) the proposed amendment makes no changes to existing debt. Chairman Day noted that the new state statute requires a plan review every ten years. Attorney Goldberg said that this change will “expand the tools/financing options the next time we sell debt.” Chairman Day said, “This mechanism is a magical tool for development within the City and for a terrific project.”
- (iii) Modify the termination date of the Plan in accordance with the requirements of Chapter 130 of the Connecticut General Statutes, as amended. Attorney Goldberg said that this is in response to statutory requirements that all redevelopment plans be reviewed every ten years; further, that the TIF will remain in effect as long as debt secured by the TIF is outstanding.

Following further discussion, Attorney Goldberg noted that the Mill River Corridor Project Plan and the TIF address not only Mill River Park, but the need for affordable housing in the area.

3. At 7:10pm, Commissioner Molgano and Chairman Day closed the public hearing

At 7:25pm, the regular Urban Redevelopment Commission meeting was resumed. Following discussion, Commissioner Molgano made a motion to approve the resolution amending the Redevelopment and Urban Renewal Project Plan for the Mill River Corridor Project by: (i) extending the project boundaries; (ii) expanding available financial options; and (iii) complying with the Connecticut General Statute Chapter 130 amendments regarding ten-year plan review. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Jean-Pierre and carried by unanimous vote. A copy of the resolution is attached as part of these official minutes.

4. Approval of Minutes (12/13/12, 2/14/13, 4/17/13, 5/23/13,6/6/13)

Action of this agenda item was tabled until the next meeting.

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5. Announcements

None at this time.

6. Southeast Quadrant

- (a) **Trinity Status Report** – Attorney Goldberg reported that construction is underway; further, that although there was an initial problem with the first mortgage note payments, a check was received on June 10th and payments are now up-to-date. As of August 1st, payments will be automatically generated from the escrow agent.

Attorney Goldberg also reported she has been before the Land Use Committee and the Board of Representatives twice re: the proposed Loan Agreement from the City to the Commission and they are satisfied; however, the Administration has not sent its recommendation to the Board of Finance and the Board of Representatives cannot act unless and until the Board of Finance acts. It is on the Land Use Committee's agenda for their July 23rd meeting but if it does not go from the Administration to the Board of Finance, they will table it. Attorney Goldberg said, "Trinity has selected a developer to do the pre-cast work for the garage and once they sign a binding contract and place their order, the City and the Commission are obliged to return a security deposit to Trinity in the amount of approximately \$400,000. Writing a check in that amount would leave the Commission with insufficient funds to operate and would constitute an act of Bad Faith. You as a Board clearly have a fiduciary obligation to act in Good Faith and oversee the financial health of the Commission. The idea for the loan from the City to the Commission with Trinity agreeing to pay 6% interest on that loan for three years was so that the City would get the money back plus interest."

- (b) **Tresser Boulevard Sliver Parcel Status Report** – Attorney Goldberg reported that the Board had previously authorized an appraisal of the sliver parcel on Tresser Boulevard by St. John's Church to be paid for by the church. Cushman & Wakefield appraised the parcel for \$18,500.00. Attorney Goldberg is preparing a contract for sale of the parcel and subsequent review and approval by the Commission, the Planning Board, the Board of Finance and the Board of Representatives.

7. Agency Administration

- (a) **Election of Officers** – Attorney Goldberg noted that the Commission needed to elect two officers, a Vice Chairman and a Secretary-Treasurer. Chairman Meek's term runs until the annual meeting in September.

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Commissioner Molgano nominated Commissioner Sciarretta as Vice Chairman. There were no further nominations. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Jean-Pierre and carried by unanimous vote. Commissioner Molgano nominated Commissioner Jean-Pierre as Secretary-Treasurer. There were no further nominations. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Sciarretta and carried by unanimous vote. Attorney Goldberg noted that their terms would run until September because they were completing the balance of former Commissioner's terms.

Commissioner Molgano turned the meeting over to Vice Chairman Sciarretta.

- (b) **Discussion/Approval 2013/14 Budget** – Attorney Goldberg reported that the Budget Committee met on Tuesday and reduced the budget by \$13,300.00. A copy of the revised budget incorporating the Committee's recommendations was distributed prior to the meeting. Budget Committee member Sciarretta reported that Commissioner Rios joined him on the Committee. He said, "We met and looked at costs line-by-line in overhead-recurring & in overhead non-recurring only. The most substantial cost was in meetings and conferences, which has been reduced from \$8,000.00 to \$2,000.00. Attorney Goldberg has highlighted the changes in your copies." Commissioner Sciarretta said, for the record, "Although we have cut \$13,300.00, there is certainly more that we could look at but I think based upon the parameters we were given, we looked at them and reduced them in an amount we thought was responsible." Following further discussion, Commissioner Molgano made a motion to approve the 2013/2014 Operating Budget with the recommended revisions (copy attached as part of these official minutes). The motion was seconded by Commissioner Jean-Pierre and carried by unanimous vote. Attorney Goldberg noted she will instruct staff to disconnect the internal centrex telephone lines.
- (c) **Approval/Revised By-Laws** – By-Law Committee member Sciarretta said, "As a Committee of one, I have reviewed these thoroughly and considered all of Attorney Goldberg's proposed recommendations which were presented and reviewed in detail at our last Commission meeting. Since then, there has been discussion about the committees – how they should be formed and how many people should be on them. My understanding is that we should have a standing committee for personnel and a standing committee for budget, each comprised of two members of our Board. I want to be sure I don't limit other people's participation. Let's say someone outside the URC wanted to sit in or a third member of the Board wanted to be included. I wanted to be certain I was in no way excluding or limiting people's meaningful input." It was noted that consultants and other relevant parties have attended committee meetings in the past, without voting rights. Discussion ensued re: whether the Personnel Committee should be a committee of two or a committee of the whole. Attorney Goldberg clarified the issue, saying that it was the Personnel Search Committee that had been a committee of the whole, not the Personnel Committee. Attorney Goldberg also noted that the Secretary-Treasurer shall at all times serve as a member of the standing Budget Committee.

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The final proposed change moved the annual meeting date from the third Monday to the second Thursday of the month of September to coincide with the regular Commission meeting date. Following further discussion, Commissioner Molgano made a motion to approve the URC By-Laws as presented on this date, July 11, 2013. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Jean-Pierre and carried by unanimous vote.

- (d) **Personnel Search Committee/Committee of the Whole** – Attorney Goldberg reported that the Chairman had requested that the City’s Human Resources Department perform a background check on the proposed candidate for Interim Executive Director. This was done by Clemon Williams, Assistant Director of Human Resources, and everything checked out satisfactorily. An offer letter will be sent to the candidate by Attorney Goldberg tomorrow with a proposed start date of July 15, 2013. Mr. Williams agreed to provide a copy of the report for the Commission’s personnel files.

8. Old Business

None at this time.

9. New Business

Attorney Goldberg reported that she had been asked by the Engineering Department to assist with the acquisition of property and tenant relocation for the Atlantic Street/Henry Street Intersection Improvement Project. They have received state funds so there will be a budget for her work as well as for time expended on the project by staff members. Following discussion, Commissioner Jean-Pierre made a motion to authorize Attorney Goldberg to prepare an Engagement Letter for acquisition and tenant relocation at the intersection of Atlantic & Henry Streets. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Molgano and carried by unanimous vote.

10. Adjournment

A walking tour of the URC project area, cancelled due to weather on June 26th, will be rescheduled. The next regular Commission meeting will be held on Thursday, August 8th, 2013 at 6:00pm.

There being no further business before the Board, Commissioner Jean-Pierre made a motion to adjourn. The motion was carried by unanimous vote and the meeting was adjourned at 8:37pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Michaëlle Jean-Pierre
Secretary-Treasurer