

STAMFORD PLANNING BOARD
PUBLIC HEARING & REGULAR
MEETING MINUTES
TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 5, 2013
4TH FLOOR CAFETERIA, GOVERNMENT CENTER
888 WASHINGTON BLVD., STAMFORD, CT

Stamford Planning Board Members present were: Theresa Dell, Chairperson, Mike Totilo, Claire Fishman, Dudley Williams, Zbigniew Naumowicz and Jay Tepper. Present for staff was Todd Dumais.

Mrs. Dell opened the Public Hearing at 7:30pm. Mrs. Fishman read the legal notice into the record. Mrs. Dell made the following opening statement:

“On behalf of the Planning Board I would like to welcome you to this evening’s public hearing on the Preliminary Capital Budget for Fiscal Year 2013/14 and the Capital Plan 2014-2020 and provide you with a brief narrative of the process involved in its preparation.

First and foremost let me state the Planning Board is and always has been...keenly aware of the changing, difficult economic environment and the financial challenges facing our City. It was imperative that we as a Board, adequately identify the Capital needs of the entire City and plan and allocate the City’s financial resources while exercising appropriate fiscal restraint in developing this Budget.

This year’s Capital Budget process began in September when City Departments, Boards and Outside Agencies; were advised of the Planning Board’s schedule to hold meetings for reviewing the Capital Budget requests and detailed instructions from OPM on Capital Project requests were sent out.

In total we received 141 Capital Budget requests totaling over \$68.7 million (excluding Board of Education requests)...This compares with \$94.8 million in requests for the 2012-13 Capital Budget and \$97 million for the 2011-12 Capital Budget.

Throughout October and November the Planning Board met formally (each Tuesday for four weeks) to review the Capital Budget requests. Per the City Charter requirements, the meetings were open to the public (however, they were not permitted to ask questions) and were attended by members of the Board of Finance and Board of Representatives Fiscal Committee, with members from each Board fully participating in the review process. Each of the City Departments and Outside Agencies presented their requests; providing rationale for their criteria ratings, answering questions and giving clarification where necessary.

After these meetings, the Planning Board and staff met weekly to discuss each project in depth and the Capital Budget as a whole. Projects were then placed into the current budget year and the out years and per the Board’s request, Staff adjusted the out years for dollar values and to make sure no project was dropped and that future requests were honored.

Our criteria for consideration in the 2013/14 was: Department / Agency’s Priority Ranking and; Overall City-Wide Infrastructure

After our final preliminary budget decisions for 2013/14 and capital plan 2014-20 were made; the Planning Board then ranked the projects on a scale of 1 to 4 with 1 being most important for the City. The Planning Board will now ... Hold a Public Hearing on our recommended Capital Budget. Hear any and all inputs, from the Public or City Department or Agency on any proposed projects and on Tuesday, February 19, 2013 we will discuss our final adjustments based tonight’s public hearing recommendations.

The Planning Board’s recommended Capital Budget will then be presented to Mayor Pavia by March 1st, as required by the Charter. Once the Mayor has made his revisions, he will submit Capital Budget to the BoF for their review and approval and finally, the Budget will be reviewed and acted upon by the BoR.

The Planning Board feels the recommended Capital Budget 2013/14 and Capital Plan 2014-2020 that we will be presenting this evening, is one that encompasses the physical needs of the entire city, and is cognizant of the financial restraints of the City. We look forward to hearing your input this evening.”

Mrs. Dell next explained the Public Hearing process and described how the public could address the Board and asked that any speakers not repeat the same comments. She asked for a show of hands from those present who wanted to speak on the Animal Shelter. The Board agreed to take that item first.

2013-2014 Capital Budget and 2014-2020 Capital Plan

Arthur Layton, Springdale Board of Rep, said he was the founder of the Stamford Dog Park a few years ago and last year worked with site selection on a new citywide shelter. Since then, they've received significant private donations towards this project. It will be a boon to Stamford taxpayers. There's a risk to the dog park if this item is put off another year. He strongly urged the board to allocate funds for this project.

Jim Bailey, Cove resident and taxpayer, said we need this project and the shelter needs more space.

Bonny Margolis, lives in the Cove, has rescued two dogs. Requests the Board help out the shelter, its cold, uncomfortable and an embarrassment. She'd like to see this improved.

Ally Geradi. Ditto to previous comments. Stamford has an antiquated facility which is not capable of handling the needs of a city our size. What's needed is a modern design promising healthy and happy pets. Everything we do for rescue is a major effort. Cats are in cramped cattery. A new city shelter is not an amenity, it's a necessity and we need to be the City that Cares.

Spencer Abber, H2O Capital Partners, 1 block away from the shelter is a \$9B company. We can judge a society by how it treats the least among us and these animals don't have a voice. We need to have a humane shelter. Our business is a large real estate business and we will make sure this gets done.

Alison Fisher, 25 year resident of Stamford. Concerned with the health and welfare of the employees of the City. Our employees need a good work environment. Compared Stamford's square footage facility to others in Fairfield County. The animal shelter hasn't grown since it was built in 1960s.

Audi Cupiski, resident of Stamford, said the shelter has terrible conditions. Stamford can become a leader in animal welfare.

Cora Margino, 501K feline rescue. Adopted out 113 kittens last year. Something needs to be done with the existing shelter. She is on the front line seeing the terrible existing conditions. She begs the Board to please build a new animal shelter

Susan Ridge, will be a new resident of Stamford. Said she was shocked and surprised at the animal shelter conditions in Stamford.

Laurie Hollywood, Animal Control Officer. Told the Board they've outgrown their space. It will cost the City more money if they don't do something about the shelter.

Mrs. Dell asked what new site they are looking at? Ms. Hollywood said one is at Cummings Park. Talk of a four acre parcel in North Stamford. The Shippan location is not a good location. Another area was Courtland avenue but she's not crazy about this location.

Martin Stee, 6 year volunteer at the animal shelter. Invited the Board members to visit the shelter.

Barbra Fox, asked who the appropriate person is to approve getting a new shelter.

Mrs. Dell moved on to the next Capital Budget item.

Kevin Murray, AFB Parks Director discussed Cubata Stadium and their request for \$500k for improvements to a major safety hazard. Mrs. Dell said there's a balance of \$109k. Will these funds go to Veteran's Park?

Laurie Albano, Acting Director of Parks and Rec said there's a safety issue with the current lighting. Over 200 games are played at this stadium each year. They need \$75k-\$100k to upgrade electric fixtures and wiring.

Jerry Ramada, Stamford Babe Ruth League, has experience turning the lights on and off and it's unsafe to turn the circuit on.

Mrs. Dell asked when the fields first go into use during the year.

Judd Bell said the electric has never been upgraded since 1969.

Al Falco, 27 year resident of Stamford, is critical because Stamford has so few fields to play baseball on. Lights are critical and there's a real need for funds to fix this.

Mrs. Dell asked if they are looking for the same quality of lights or need something brighter? Mr. Murray said the cost is for the lights, less the amount of the fixtures.

Ernie D'Matti, Ferguson Library, thanked the Board for renovations funding and Advocate newspapers.

David Yarness, 27 year Stamford resident, spoke about Westover, Meribrook and Meribrook Lane being a major safety problem.

Jennifer Hawthorne, 792 Westover Road, said the road needs to be fixed. They've engaged City officials who recognize there is indeed a problem.

Don Hubbert, Stamford Historical Society, thanked the Board for putting in funds for the roof replacement which is critical.

Mary Uva, Board of Rep district 1 in Shippan and the Cove, agrees the animal shelter needs to be upgraded or issues addressed. She spoke about Cummings Park and how the Master Plan needs to be addressed. The description in the Capital Budget is not what the community has been looking for. Laurie Albano, Erin McKenna (City Park Planner) have been working on the design going to bid. West Beach Pavilion, question about whether we need funds in the budget to cover those repairs.

Rachel Ment, spoke about handball and racquetball courts, not considered a priority in the budget but it's an oversight by the City and these courts are in poor condition. Handball is a phenomenal new trend and she asked the Board to place priority to resurfacing these courts.

Ramon Colon, 28 year Stamford resident, spoke about the racquetball/handball court saying he loves this sport but the courts have deteriorated and its unusable. He urged the Board to have a plan for these courts.

Mrs. Dell said the Board would make sure this is looked into immediately.

Joseph Mallozi, property manager on Largo Drive, spoke about accidents and unsafe conditions at this location. Problems are caused because of lack of maintenance on Largo Drive; need to make it better and safer because it's a dangerous intersection.

Mrs. Dell said the Planning Board felt this was a priority this year.

Mrs. Dell closed the Public Hearing and announced it would be continued on Tuesday, February 19, 2013.

Regular Meeting

Zoning Board of Appeals Referrals:

ZBA Appl. 002-13 – Shelter For the Homeless, INC requesting a variance of Table III, Appendix B, Residential Density to permit the reconstruction and reconfiguration of an existing non-conforming building/buildings(s) and allow for three residential units to remain at 38 Ann Street in a RM-F zone.

Mr. Dumais described the variance to the Board.

After a brief discussion, Mrs. Fishman moved to recommend approval of the variance. Mr. Tepper seconded the motion and it passed unanimously with the eligible members present voting, 5-0 (Dell, Williams, Totilo, Fishman and Tepper).

ZBA Appl. 005-13 – 1 Rock Spring Road, LLC requesting a variance of side yard setbacks to permit the construction of a fire egress staircase located on a property having an address of 1 Rock Spring Road, in a R-6 zone.

Mr. Dumais described the variance to the Board.

After a brief discussion, Mr. Williams moved to recommend approve the variance. Mr. Naumowicz seconded the motion and it passed unanimously with the eligible members present voting, 5-0 (Dell, Williams, Totilo, Fishman and Naumowicz).

ZBA Appl. 006-13 – Shanker Panchavati & Asha Shanker requesting variances of front yard setbacks to permit additions to an existing single-family home located at 17 Tree Top Court, in a R-10 zone.

Mr. Dumais described the variance to the Board.

After a brief discussion, Mr. Totilo moved to recommend approval of the variance. Mrs. Fishman seconded the motion and it passed unanimously with the eligible members present voting, 5-0 (Dell, Williams, Totilo, Fishman and Tepper).

Planning Board Meeting Minutes:

Meeting of 1/22/13

Mr. Williams moved approval of the meeting minutes as submitted. Mr. Totilo seconded the motion and the minutes were approved unanimously with the eligible members present voting, 5-0 (Dell, Williams, Totilo, Fishman and Naumowicz).

New Business

Mr. Naumowicz moved to add a supplemental CLC funding request to the agenda. Mr. Williams seconded the motion and it passed unanimously with the eligible members present voting, 5-0 (Dell, Williams, Totilo, Fishman and Naumowicz).

Mrs. Fishman moved to approve the supplemental CLC funding request. Mr. Tepper seconded the motion and it passed unanimously with the eligible members present voting, 5-0 (Dell, Williams, Totilo, Fishman and Tepper).

Mr. Naumowicz moved to add a supplemental Engineering funding request to the agenda. Mrs. Fishman seconded the motion and it passed unanimously with the eligible members present voting, 5-0 (Dell, Williams, Totilo, Fishman and Naumowicz).

Mr. Williams moved to approve the supplemental Engineering funding request. Mr. Naumowicz seconded the motion and it passed unanimously with the eligible members present voting, 5-0 (Dell, Williams, Totilo, Fishman and Naumowicz).

Mr. Williams moved to add an extension of time for a subdivision to the agenda. Mr. Tepper seconded the motion and it passed unanimously with the eligible members present voting, 5-0 (Dell, Williams, Totilo, Fishman and Tepper).

Mr. Tepper moved to approve the extension of time request. Mr. Totilo seconded the motion and it passed unanimously with the eligible members present voting, 5-0 (Dell, Williams, Totilo, Fishman and Tepper).

There being no further business, Mrs. Dell adjourned the meeting at 9:55 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Claire Fishman, Secretary
Stamford Planning Board

Note: These proceedings were recorded on tape and are available for review in the Land Use Bureau located on the 7th floor of Government Center, 888 Washington Boulevard, during regular business hours.