

STAMFORD PLANNING BOARD  
PUBLIC HEARING MINUTES #3574  
THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 4, 2010  
4<sup>TH</sup> FLOOR CAFETERIA  
888 WASHINGTON BLVD., STAMFORD, CT

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Stamford Planning Board Members present were: Duane Hill, Theresa Dell, Claire Fishman, Rose Marie Grosso and Jay Tepper. Present for staff were Robin Stein and Todd Dumais.

***Public Hearing***

The chairman, Mr. Duane Hill, called the meeting to order at 7:34 pm.

**2010-2011 Capital Budget and 2011-2017 Capital Plan**

Chairman Hill introduced the members of the Planning Board and Staff to the public present. He stated the purpose of the public hearing was to consider the 2010-2011 Capital Budget and 2011-2017 Capital Plan. Mr. Hill explained that the Capital Budget process begins in October each year with the Planning Board hearing representatives from each agency and department head. From October to December, these representatives come before the Planning Board to explain in detail their requests for capital funds. He added that there was a joint meeting of the Planning Board, Board of Finance and Board of Representatives to review the department / agency recommendations. Mr. Hill then described the process by which the Board's Capital Budget goes through to become adopted. He stated that it is presented to the Mayor who can add or subtract line funds and then it goes to the Board of Finance can, who can subtract line items funds. Mr. Hill then added that the final version goes to the Board of Representatives in early May for final approval. He explained that this evening's meeting was to allow the public to speak on the Capital Budget's specific 30+ line items and at the end of the meeting, to speak in general about the any aspect of the Budget.

Rose Marie Grosso read the Legal Notice of Public Hearing that appeared in the Stamford Advocate on January 28, 2010 into the record.

Mr. Hill said the process for the meeting would be to go down the list of projects as outlined in the Budget and if any person from the public wished to comment on an item or department / agency request they could.

Office of Administration – No members from the public commented.

Traffic & Road Maintenance – No members from the public commented.

Fleet Maintenance – Kathleen Murphy, 68 Saddle Rock Road, asked what the Board's specific cut was to fleet maintenance, if it was specifically to target the fuel system replacement item?

Solid Waste – No members from the public commented.

Engineering – Cynthia Reeder, 43 Old North Stamford Road encouraged the Board to keep \$150K in the Budget for the Oaklawn Avenue sidewalks project. She stated that the project is critical and that it should not be slashed. Mrs. Reeder then asked the Board to increase the amount. She also commented that the sidewalk budget

overall is under-budgeted and noted it went from \$4.3 million to \$1.7 million. Mr. Hill stated these were not cuts but represent phasing. Mrs. Dell explained the Engineering Department tries to utilize funding for projects currently underway before starting new ones.

John Gallager, 251 Turn of River Road said there is no traffic calming device for Turn of River and Buxton Farms and asked for a traffic calming device.

James Grunburger commented that sidewalks are the backbone of pedestrian transportation system in the City and requested the Board to consider a request to fund Phase II on Oaklawn Avenue.

John Routollo, representing the DSSD, read a letter into the record regarding the lack of funding for the Light Rail Study. He said it's crucial to fund the next phase of the study and asked to restore funding for its next phase.

Mitchell Kaufman, 180 Old North Stamford Rd, 11th District Board of Representative, commented on sidewalks and Light Rail stating that they are interconnected and funding for these projects is important. He stated that Master Plan highlights a need for sidewalks and that sidewalks on Oaklawn Avenue are needed for community. Mr. Kaufman also added that the Light Rail is important for the future growth of the City.

Joe Tarzia, Member of the Board of Finance, recommended capping the Capital Budget at \$35million. He explained that the Administration has recommended a \$40million safe debt limit and that the Planning Board has a responsibility to plan based on the dollars the City can bond. Mr. Tarzia commented that he is disturbed by the fact that the Planning Board is not taking its job seriously. He added the Board should focus on roads, sidewalks, and bridges and that public safety should be the number one priority of the Planning Board. He further commented that the Grand list is not growing and cautioned the Planning Board to look carefully at its priorities and to make tough decisions. Mr. Tarzia also added that the bundling of projects worries him and that he doesn't like it.

Mr. Hill said the Planning Board recognizes that we are in dire financial times and stated that tonight is not the appropriate place to discuss the safe debt limit. Mr. Hill commented that the Planning Board for several years has been proposing that all of the City Boards meet early in the year to discuss the Capital needs of the City. He added that the Capital Budget is a reflection of what the needs are for the community.

John Rowland, of the Eastside Partnership said safety is an issue for the old Rogers School and would like to see funding stay in the budget for its repair.

Traffic Engineering – Penney Burnett, 2285 Shippan Ave, requested that the Planning Board remove Phase II of the Transitway from the budget stating that we can't afford this at the present time and that it will wipe out several small businesses. She further commented that it was proposed to handle South End development which is currently on hold or moving slowly and that there is no need for this phase of the Transitway now and that we should wait.

Kathleen Murphy commented that there are a number of projects that are all discretionary, all of which can be postponed or deferred to out-years. She stated that now is not the time to be going forward with these projects.

Mr. Hill responded by stating that if these projects were deferred, there would be, no guarantees that they would ever be completed.

Kathleen Murphy stated that City is addicted to grant money and the Federal Government is setting our priorities and we need to change those priorities.

Land Use Administration – Arthur Sulkowitz stated that it is important to see the Mill River Project through to completion. He added that completing Phase 1 at one time will save future costs because the current construction costs are low. Mr. Sulkowitz then thanked the Board for its past support. Mr. Hill added that this is one project which has benefited from Federal grants.

Administrative Maintenance – No members from the public commented.

Police – No members from the public commented.

Big 5 Volunteer Fire – No members from the public commented.

Fire & Rescue – No members from the public commented.

Smith House – No members from the public commented.

Health and Social Services – No members from the public commented.

Office of the Mayor – Caroline Vary, of Jonathan Rose Company, stated that her company hopes to start the second phase of the Metro Green project which would deliver forty units of affordable housing and that it hopes that funding will remain in the budget.

Stamford Historical Society – No members from the public commented.

Scofield Manor – No members from the public commented.

Stamford Museum – No members from the public commented.

Ferguson Library – Friends of Ferguson Library thanked the Board for the funding they've received and commented that they need more money to complete the work.

Alice Nap, 61 Fifth Street said thanked the Board for its past support and encouraged the Board to restore the request as part of a 10-year project.

Joe Gambino, former president of the Board of Trustees of the Library stated that they have listed to the Boards comments in the past and generated \$1million a year in revenue. He stressed that the Library needs an additional \$1.170 million more to do the right job for the City and taxpayers.

Bartlett Arboretum – No members from the public commented.

Board of Education – Kathleen Murphy, 68 Saddle Rock Road, commented that the needs study conducted by the Board of Education was a good prioritization of the real needs of the schools. She added that of 23 projects prioritized, the 22 priority of the Board of Education was Boyle Stadium and she doesn't understand why the Planning Board chose to fund this project.

Mr. Hill said the Board of Education collaborated and had several meetings with the Planning Board and the current Capital Budget recommendations do represent the views and requests of the Board of Education.

Child Care Learning Center – Barbara Garvin-Kestor, Executive Director of CLC, thanked the Board for prior support and commented that funded requested in the Budget are necessary for the Center to achieve accreditation for State and Federal funding.

Old Town Hall Restoration – No members from the public commented.

Stamford Center for the Arts – No members from the public commented.

Parking Fund – No members from the public commented.

WPCA – No members from the public commented.

E. Gaynor Brennan Golf Course – Robert Kisk commented that the golf course is self sufficient due to user fees and generates a profit every year. He stated that they are in need \$500K for a major renovation plan to stay competitive with other golf courses in the area.

Technology Outside Agencies – No members from the public commented.

Short-Term Technology – No members from the public commented.

Short-Term Equipment – No members from the public commented.

Short –Term Vehicles – Karen Murphy stated that the budget should be called put it on the kids tab and exclaimed that 25% of the budget was illegal. She said that short term financing in the budget is illegal and that there are many other projects in the Budget which are legally bondable such as the Master Plan. Mrs. Murphy commented that the Capital Budget should not be funded and that Mayor Pavia has promised to conduct forensic reviews of spending which to date he has not. She added that Bond funds are being used to fund City lunches and that the City has so little to account for its \$530 million of debt. Mrs. Murphy explained that this Budget is an open checkbook with no priorities, that it is one big bundled project with no priorities. She further stated that if you follow the money the City has raised \$50 million in August 2009, and \$88 million in August 2008 and out of all of that the Board of Education received nothing. Mrs. Murphy emphasized that the schools aren't getting the money they need and instead we are spending the funds on discretionary funding. She concluded her statements by saying that all projects must be revisited and the budget should be zero.

Short Term Board of Education – No members from the public commented.

Mr. Hill asked for General Capital Budget Comments.

Kathleen Murphy said she appreciates the work done by the Planning Board but is frustrated with the process. She remarked there needs to be a more objective method to determine and set priorities for the City and that the safe level of Capital expenditures should be set at \$35 million. She stressed that infrastructure improvements are needed. There's a need to work together with other Boards and the Administration and that currently there is no safe level to set the budget at and it should be zero.

Mr. Hill wanted to respond and then offer the floor to the public to comment. He said tone is important and Mrs. Murphy's tone has not been constructive. He added there is

much work to be done and welcomes anyone who wants to help the Board improve. The Board welcomes construction comments on the process and hopes going forward there can be a dialog about process and that Stamford continuously is cited as one of the best cities in the country to live in.

Mr. Tepper said the Board is required to submit a budget to the Mayor by March 1 and the Board can't be asked not to submit a budget.

Mrs. Dell said the Board members do take this process very seriously. She explained that they start meetings in August with department heads and work from the Master Plan and have to consider what is good for the entire city by putting everyone's best interest into consideration.

Mr. Joseph Tarzia, 310 Soundview Avenue, said we are a family and when times are tough we question things more carefully. He understands we are all having interesting dialogs and discussions and that the good news is that the administration is looking at past appropriated projects. He stressed that all projects and requests need to be looked at. Mr. Tarzia wished the Board good luck and thanked them for putting up with "us".

Mr. Hill said the notion that the Board doesn't look at priorities in context of the overall budget is not true and not an appropriate comment. He remarked that at the end of the day we all have the same goal which is to live in a great City.

George Tadayo, 195 West Broad Street, said this Budget is identical to the one presented two months ago and the process appears to be static. He asked why the self-sustaining funds always leave same?

Mr. Hill asked if any other Board members or Staff wanted to comment.

There being no further comments or business to discuss, Mr. Hill adjourned the meeting at 8:50 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Duane Hill, Chairman

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