

MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL MEETING
CITY OF STAMFORD, CONNECTICUT
URBAN REDEVELOPMENT COMMISSION
THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 14, 2013

1. At 4:02pm, Chairman Christopher D. Meek called the special meeting to order. The following were in attendance:

Commissioners:

Christopher D. Meek, Chairman
Jackie Heftman, Vice Chairman
Joel P. Mellis, Secretary/Treasurer
Taylor R. Molgano
Peter Sciarretta

Staff:

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

Also Attending:

Attorney William J. Hennessey, Sandak, Hennessey & Greco
Attorney Lisa Feinberg, Sandak, Hennessey & Greco
Angela Dutt, Sandak, Hennessey & Greco
Rick Redniss, Redniss & Mead
Stuart Lachs, Perkins Eastman
Andy Montelli, Post Road Residential
John R. McFadyen, Post Road Residential

2. Southeast Quadrant

(a) **Trinity/Status Report** – Attorney Goldberg reported that pursuant to the Second Amended Land Disposition Agreement (LDA), Trinity has provided formal notice of its intention to close on the Phase II property on or about March 31, 2013 and on the Phase IV property by December 31, 2016. She said, “Our design consultant Dan Doern and I have been through the construction drawings for the Phase II building and the parking garage and you have received a copy of his report. We have just received a building materials’ listing, cut-sheets and construction management plan and this review should be completed shortly. The one thing we have not received is their percent for art proposal, but that doesn’t need to be developed further in order for us to sign off on the construction plans.” Attorney Goldberg continued, “On the business front, Trinity has obtained their construction loan financing; they have gotten approval from the Loan Committee for their equity participant, and the condominium documents are just being drafted and should be in place to close March 31st.”

Commissioner Heftman said, “I thought originally Phase II was going to be built the same time as the garage.” Attorney Goldberg responded, “They’re somewhat concurrent. Construction of the Phase II building, beginning March 31/April 1, takes about twenty-four months to complete and construction of the garage only takes about twelve months to complete. About twelve months after beginning construction of the Phase II building, Trinity will commence construction of the parking garage so that they will be completed at the same time.” Commissioner Mellis asked if there had been any developments on Phase III. Attorney Goldberg responded, “No.” It was noted that Trinity is continuing to work with the Downtown Special Services District on parking during project construction.

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(b) **75 Tresser Boulevard Presentation/Proposed Modifications** – Attorney Goldberg reported that about two years ago, the Commission reviewed and approved some modifications to the Mill River Project Plan to permit the development of a large residential project on the former *Advocate* site. She said, “As part of the approval process, because the building didn’t have the same height as identified in our Design Guidelines, we brought Dan Doern in to help us work with the developer and their team. They developed a concept of a 12-foot-high lighting/beacon element to illuminate the top of the structure, giving the building interest and the feeling of more height. As the development team brought on a lighting designer to work on that element, it became apparent that the initial design wouldn’t yield the best lighting. They’ve modified the design and Mr. Doern and I both agree that the changes are not substantive; the overall height of the structure is not substantially different. Mr. Doern and I agree that the new design of the lighting element is an improvement that will provide better light than the original plans. However, we still want to see some further development at the corner of Clinton and Tresser Boulevard, but that’s not something that would have to come back to the Board either because it doesn’t impact that part of our approval. Approval for that project was not based on a contract. It was based on the zoning regulations review and the Mill River Plan review for a private sector development.” Because the building is going to be a little bit different, Attorney Goldberg asked the developers to make a presentation to the Board.

Attorney Hennessey gave a brief overview of the project for the benefit of the new Commissioners. He said, “This was a privately-owned piece of property within the Mill River District Project Plan. This plan called for a tall building on that corner (Tresser & Washington) and the developers were seeking to develop something in the four or five story range. After consulting with Dan Doern and Trinity’s architectural team, the architects came up with a very creative solution to bridge the gap – to create the illusion of a lot more height by integrating the so-called lantern that sliced the building north to south and created a light glow that would reach skyward but also slice right down to the sidewalk. Andy Montelli is sourcing out some very different kinds of cladding material, a metal panel system on the outside as well as a limestone system, because the edge along Washington Boulevard will have retail.” It was noted that the project was previously reviewed and approved by this Commission and the Zoning Board.

Attorney Hennessey continued, “The fairly minimal changes that have occurred are reactions to marketing issues, really putting better thought into the lantern and bringing in a group out of New York (CBBLD) who has done lighting for buildings like the Time/Warner Center, the Bank of America tower and RBS here in Stamford. They thought of a different approach to the lantern, saying that they could do better. The idea here was to make something structurally sturdy that could withstand winds and other things; that was as maintenance free as possible, and that would also create the desired light effect without becoming a light annoyance while still maintaining that spinal light down to the sidewalk and across the top, the ‘slice’. When we met with Zoning staff, who agreed that this was the right solution at night, the question was raised about what this was going to look like during the day.”

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In response to Mr. Cole's question, Architect Stuart Lachs developed a rendering showing what it will look like during the daytime. Mr. Lachs explained the changes to the light tower design and the adjustments in height at the residential levels, noting that the retail space had gotten higher. Commissioner Heftman expressed concern that the building was now 9-feet shorter, moving away from the tall building concept. Attorney Hennessey responded, "You're adding and subtracting. You're adding a couple of additional feet on the first floor, then for each of the residential floors you're taking a foot off. However, the illusion of height will be maintained in this new lighting design." Mr. Lachs addressed the elimination of the set-backs at the entrances to the ground floor live/work units along Tresser and Clinton. He also noted that Land Use Chair Norman Cole had expressed some concern that the roofline at the corner of Tresser & Clinton was a little bit too consistent. The architects are looking for some sort of feature on the roof to resolve this. Attorney Hennessey said, "We've also been working on creating elements at both the north and the south of the Clinton Avenue end of the building (at the corner of Tresser & Clinton) to give the building more architectural articulation."

Commissioner Heftman asked about the set-backs at the entrances to the ground floor live/work units. Mr. Lachs responded, "At the western half of the building on Tresser, the secondary doors to the apartment were previously in-set. The main building line has not changed. There are still landscaped areas between the sidewalk and the face of the building. We reduced the set-back so that the doors are now directly facing at the street face. This works better because of the location of the doors within some of the apartments." Commissioner Heftman asked, "Does this shorten/lessen the amount of green space?" Mr. Lachs responded, "No, not at all." It was noted that the design decisions/revisions were based on the importance of how you would see the building when you exit the train station. Building will be complete in spring, 2014.

Commissioner Mellis made a motion to address the remaining agenda items out of order. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Molgano and carried by unanimous vote.

3. Adjournment

(a) **Next Meeting Agenda** – Attorney Goldberg reviewed items for possible inclusion on next month's meeting agenda. The regular meeting scheduled for Thursday, March 14, 2013 at 6pm is cancelled due to scheduling conflicts. There will be a special meeting on Thursday, March 28, 2013 at 6:00pm.

2. Southeast Quadrant

(c) **Property Acquisition Status** – At 5:03pm, Commissioner Mellis made a motion to go into Executive Session to discuss the status and timing of potential property acquisitions. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Heftman and carried by unanimous vote. Durelle Alexander left the meeting at this time. Attorney Goldberg participated in the discussion. No motions were made and no votes were taken. At 5:37pm, Commissioner Molgano made a motion to return to Open Session. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Mellis and carried by unanimous vote.


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3. Adjournment

There being no further business before the Board, Commissioner Heftman made a motion to adjourn. The motion was carried by unanimous vote and the meeting was adjourned at 5:38pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Joel P. Mellis
Secretary/Treasurer


Christopher Meek
Chairman