

MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL MEETING
CITY OF STAMFORD, CONNECTICUT
URBAN REDEVELOPMENT COMMISSION
THURSDAY, MARCH 1, 2012

1. At 6:10pm, Chairman James I. Nixon called the meeting to order. The following were in attendance:

Commissioners:

James I. Nixon, Chairman
Jackie Heftman, Vice Chairman
Joel P. Mellis, Secretary/Treasurer
Taylor R. Molgano

Staff:

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

Absent:

Christopher D. Meek

2. Southeast Quadrant

(a) **Southeast Quadrant Plan Review of Potential Plan Amendments** - Attorney Goldberg reminded the Commission that it had submitted the Southeast Quadrant Plan to the Board of Representatives Land Use Committee approximately a year and a half ago for a decennial review in accordance with CT law. She said, "The Southeast Quadrant Plan was put on hold because of the Governance Task Force. Land Use Chair Harry Day has suggested it is now time to get back to work on the decennial review." The item will probably be placed on the Land Use Committee's April agenda.

Attorney Goldberg continued, "One of the starting points is the changes we were looking at to permit the development of the Park Square West/Trinity project; i.e., permitting a 19-story building on the site. We also know that we want to change the parking requirements to be consistent with the zoning amendment that's currently pending, requiring 1.0 parking spaces per dwelling unit. We need to amend the redevelopment plan so that the two documents are consistent. We should also take the opportunity to amend the Plan to reflect the changes that would be necessary to permit Trinity or Park Square West to move forward. And, we have to also take the opportunity to amend the plan to include the tools that we believe will be necessary to develop Parcel 38." It was noted that it will be necessary to extend the term of the Southeast Quadrant Plan long enough to permit the completion of both buildings on Block 9 and the proposed development at Parcel 38. Attorney Goldberg said, "The tools we may need for Parcel 38 are more complicated. It's the creation of a Tax Increment Financing (TIF) District that should be somewhat larger in size than Parcel 38, but would incorporate aside from Parcel 38, Parcel 36 (the small 11,000 sq. foot site that the URC owns). It should also incorporate the rest of that block as it currently exists. Where you draw the line determines where you can spend the Tax Increment money. We may want to consider extending the area north and west so that we could utilize some of the TIF funds to do streetscape/pedestrian improvements along Broad Street."

MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL MEETING MARCH 1, 2012 – PAGE TWO:

Commissioner Mellis asked, “Can these changes stand on their own irrespective of whether these projects we are contemplating come to fruition? Are these positive in a broader sense than just attempting to deal with the proposed projects?”

Attorney Goldberg responded, “If the Park Square West/Trinity project is not developed along lower Summer Street, I think the same changes – the reduction in the parking ratio, the change in height – these are positive things that would be useful to a different developer. I’m on record saying I believe we should force as much as 50% of the parking for what gets developed adjacent to the public parking garage into the public parking garage, whether it’s that one or elsewhere. It’s forcing the developer to give the City revenue that it doesn’t otherwise get. It’s very clear from parking counts that the actual demand for parking in the downtown is approximately .8 per unit. With respect to Parcel 38, I think the same is true.”

Discussion ensued in regard to generic plan changes and determining the TIF boundaries. Attorney Goldberg noted that the decennial review is a process, beginning with tonight’s discussion. She will have informal discussions with representatives of the Stamford Downtown Special Services District, David Kooris of RPA, Rick Redniss and others to start to get a feel for what the community’s thoughts are and also have discussions with the Mayor, Representative Harry Day, Representative Anne Summerville and Board of Representatives Chair Randy Skigen. Attorney Goldberg concluded, “Following my informal conversations, I will prepare a general list of proposed plan amendments.”

3. Mill River Corridor

(a) **Review/Approval of Planning Proposal from Mill River Collaborative** - Attorney Goldberg reported that several months ago, the Collaborative had requested a multi-year grant of \$30,000 per year, which was a grant the URC had given them previously for planning activities but ultimately the Agency was reimbursed for that work through the TIF. She said, “The activities that the Collaborative is currently undertaking in the Park aren’t activities that we could pay for with Southeast Quadrant funds. I met with the Collaborative’s Executive Director Milton Puryear and suggested that the Collaborative give us a proposal to design and plan the physical connection between the Southeast Quadrant project area by Columbus Park to the entrance to the Mill River Park across Washington Boulevard, showing how the Southeast Quadrant meets the Park and what we might do to improve the connection.. This would constitute an appropriate use of our federal funds.” Attorney Goldberg said that the proposal needed narrowing/refining; further, it needed to include: (i) level of design; (ii) who would be providing the design; (iii) time-lines; and (iv) the basis for requisite fees. This agenda item will come back before the Board when a revised draft proposal is received.

4. Agency Administration/Personnel

This agenda item was not addressed at this time.


MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL MEETING MARCH 1, 2012 – PAGE THREE:

5. Adjournment

The next regular meeting is scheduled for Thursday, April 12, 2012 at 6:00pm.

There being no further business before the Board, Commissioner Mellis made a motion to adjourn. The motion was carried by unanimous vote and the meeting was adjourned at 7:30pm.

Respectfully submitted,


Joel P. Mellis
Secretary/Treasurer