

**MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING**  
**CITY OF STAMFORD, CONNECTICUT**  
**URBAN REDEVELOPMENT COMMISSION**  
**THURSDAY, APRIL 12, 2012**

1. At 6:06pm, 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  
Celeste Johnson, Reinventing Stamford  
Chief Learning & Operating Officer  
Durelle Alexander

Absent:

Christopher D. Meek

2. Approval of Minutes 2/9/12 Regular & 3/1/12 Special

Commissioner Heftman made a motion to approve both the February 2, 2012 and March 1, 2012 meeting minutes. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Mellis and approved by unanimous vote.

3. Correspondence

Attorney Goldberg asked if the Commissioners had each received "River Currents," the Mill River Collaborative Newsletter. She noted that the Sakura Matsuri Cherry Blossom Festival and corresponding events will be held in the Mill River Park on Saturday, May 5<sup>th</sup>, from 11:00am to 3:00pm. She also noted that Artie Selkowitz, Chairman of the Mill River Collaborative, was being honored as Stamford's Citizen of the Year on Monday, May 7<sup>th</sup>.

4. Announcements

None at this time.

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

5. Southeast Quadrant

(c) **Downtown Rezoning/DSSD Request** – Attorney Goldberg said that the Commission, along with the DSSD and some of the property owners who are members of the DSSD, provided the original funding for work by Rick Redniss re: the zoning amendment to reduce the parking ratio to one space per unit and to make some changes concerning open space requirement. The URC's contribution was \$5,000.00 toward the \$20,000.00 fee.

## MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING APRIL 12, 2012 – PAGE TWO:

She said, "The process was extremely extended, with many lengthy Planning & Zoning Board meetings and hearings, including a late night visit in which Mr. Redniss took the Chair of the Planning Board to visit a couple of parking garages to count cars and see that the actual use rate in the downtown is between .8 and .9 per unit. Consequently, his fee is quite a bit more than estimated. There is no question in my mind that the work was put in and we've been asked to contribute toward the overage by paying another \$5,000.00. Commissioner Heftman said, "From my perspective, I'm not sure how you weigh the value gained by the URC from having the amendment passed ... how much gain the URC gets as opposed to the downtown property owners." Attorney Goldberg responded, "It makes a project at lower Summer Street possible without them having to go to the Zoning Board for a zone change. And, as to Parcel 38, it avoids the need to go through the process again. We went through the process before to reduce the parking ratio from 1.5 to 1.25 when we did PSW Phase I and we also went through the process again to get a special exception to reduce the ratio from 1.5 to 1.25 when we got our first approvals of the Phase II, III & IV site. It takes months and months, and I think there is huge value to the Commission in terms of marketability." It was noted that the cost of building a space in a garage is \$40,000.00 and up. Chairman Nixon said, "To add to Jackie's point 'was it worth doing' and I strongly believe it was, to not do this would be to end up with what we have now - a lot of empty garage spaces that cost \$40,000.00 to build, and are not useful for any alternative function."

Commissioner Heftman moved to approve the additional expenditure of \$5,000.00 (five thousand dollars) to Redniss & Mead for work on the downtown Stamford parking ratios (from 1.25 to 1.1) and open space requirement. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Mellis. Following further discussion, the question was called and the motion passed by unanimous vote.

### 6. Mill River Corridor Project/Status of Property Acquisition

Attorney Goldberg reported that: (i) a check from the trustee for the Weiss property was received; (ii) a Statement of Compensation was filed and funds were deposited with the court in March; (iii) the Statement of Compensation was served by the CT State Marshal on March 28; and (iv) we should have title to the property by mid-May. Commissioner Heftman asked, "What happens to the property then?" Attorney Goldberg responded, "We will prepare a resolution giving control of the property or leasing control of the property to the City park system for the Park, and the Board of Representatives will have to pass a resolution accepting control of it. Then they will formally have control of the property and it will officially be part of the Park." Commissioner Heftman asked if the URC should go through the process of rezoning the parcel specifically as parkland. Discussion ensued and it was the sense of the Board that Attorney Goldberg discuss this further with Land Use Bureau Chief Norman Cole.

### 7. Old Business/*Reinventing Stamford* Status Report

Celeste Johnson reviewed the scope of her work and progress to date, noting the following:



### MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING APRIL 12, 2012 – PAGE THREE:

- Elevator Pitch - The elevator pitch crafted by Mike Markovits (retired IBM Chief Learning Officer) has been approved by consensus by the RS Advisory Board. The new RS tagline will be "We're making a GREAT place even *better*."
- Main Street Collective – CEDF (the Community Economic Development Fund) headed by President and CEO Donna Wertenbach has agreed to partner with RS because the Main Street Collective concept closely parallels the new funding program CEDF has specifically for Stamford. Their mandate is to go into selected communities and do their version of 'micro-finance.' However, until this year, Stamford was not one of the eligible communities, so the timing of RS's proposal offering local networking capabilities and a support structure is very valuable. CEDF has capital to give away, but no way to network into all the small businesses in the Stamford area, and sees this as a chance for RS to help them. CEDF is also anticipating an equity fund for small businesses distinct from any monies targeted for the iCenter to enable them to encourage and support 'main street type' start-up businesses. Bill Callion is continuing to help RS further the working relationship between RS & CEDF.
- Bike Trails/Bike Friendly-People Friendly – Rachel had passed along an invitation that the URC had received about participating in an initiative that was started at the grass roots level trying to make pathways around the city safer and more attractive for bicyclists, walkers, and the handicapped. Celeste sees RS as the vehicle which could provide the impetus to get the involved groups moving instead of just planning and talking. The organization has consolidated enough around the idea that working with RS gives them a forum for a Town Hall meeting, which is tentatively scheduled for May 23<sup>rd</sup> at UConn. Celeste is currently working on funding, organization of the event, and sponsorships.
- Eco-Arts Trail - Progress on this has stalled because the environmental groups cannot get together until the end of April and because Laure Aubuchon asked Celeste to support the Arts Festival activities.
- Arts Festival (working title StamfordLights) – RS continues to be involved in and supportive of the Mayor's interest in an Arts Festival patterned after New Haven's two-week long Art & Ideas Festival by working with Economic Development Director Laure Aubuchon & her Project Manager, Bill Fair. This involves \$250,000.00 coming in from Hartford under a grant from the City Canvasses Program. Chairman Nixon said he was not familiar with this program and asked for further details. Celeste said, "One of the things that Kip wanted to do as Deputy Commissioner was to start following the idea that 'place making is made by art.' Three RFP's were provided to Hartford, New Haven, and Stamford. Stamford submitted a proposal describing an illumination-based art project at the Stamford Transportation Center and received the grant." The RFP was released to artists on April 2<sup>nd</sup>, with the official public viewing party at the train station scheduled for September 22, the same weekend as the DSSD Bedford Street Arts & Crafts Festival.

## MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING APRIL 12, 2012 – PAGE FOUR:

Supporting events throughout the City on September 22 and 23 will now include many neighborhoods. The West Side will have a Health Fair at the Yerwood Center. There will be a Diversity Fest at Waterside. The Harbor Point area will have a Block Party Saturday afternoon, and the East Side is planning an International Food Festival on Sunday. Celeste said, "We are hoping that Metro North will let people who get on in Springdale or Glenbrook take the train in and back for free. The Palace Theatre also is negotiating for a 'super-big Friday night draw' to enhance the weekend experience." Further details will follow.

- Fund Raising – Chris Bruhl, Chairman & CEO of the Business Council of Fairfield County, has agreed through the Business Council Foundation to be RS's Fiscal Agent.
- Next Steps – Celeste will continue to work on sponsorship and securing funds for the May 23<sup>rd</sup> Town Hall meeting and follow-up supportive *Reinventing Stamford* events.

### 8. New Business

(a) **UConn Stamford Campus** – Attorney Goldberg reported that in 2010, the General Assembly ordered the University of Connecticut trustees to prepare a study of the UConn parking garage to determine its highest and best use going forward and she served on that Study Committee. During the course of that study, the committee discussed and recommended expanding the curriculum and providing housing for undergraduate, graduate students, faculty and staff. She said that UConn is now proceeding with a Request for Information (RFI) to get a Stamford campus housing demand and feasibility study. In order to move forward, they have to have a good understanding of the demand. With this RFI, the idea is to get fifteen or more potential firms who would submit responses. It is anticipated that the actual report will be completed by the end of the summer. Commissioners received draft copies of the RFI and were asked to expand upon the distribution list.

At 7:15pm, Commissioner Mellis made a motion to go into Executive Session to specifically discuss contract negotiations re: Re-Use Parcel 38 (agenda item 5a) and PSW/Trinity (agenda item 5b). The motion was seconded by Commissioner Heftman and carried by unanimous vote. Durelle Alexander was excused from Executive Session. Attorney Goldberg participated in the discussion. No motions were made and no votes were taken.

At 7:45pm, Commissioner Mellis made a motion to return to Open Session. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Heftman and carried by unanimous vote.

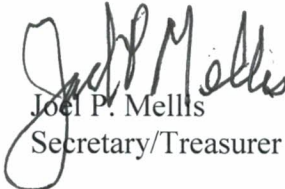
### 9. Adjournment

Due to conflicting schedules of several Board members, the regular meeting scheduled for Thursday, May 10, 2012 at 6:00pm is cancelled. There will be a special meeting on Wednesday, May 16, 2012 at 6:00pm.

**MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING APRIL 12, 2012 – PAGE FIVE:**

There being no further business before the Board, Commissioner Molgano made a motion to adjourn. The motion was carried by unanimous vote and the meeting was adjourned at 7:50pm.

Respectfully submitted,

  
Joel P. Mellis  
Secretary/Treasurer



**James I. Nixon  
337 Mayapple Road  
Stamford, CT 06903-1310**

**May 1, 2012**

**Michael A. Pavia, Mayor  
City of Stamford  
888 Washington Boulevard  
Stamford, CT 06904-2152**

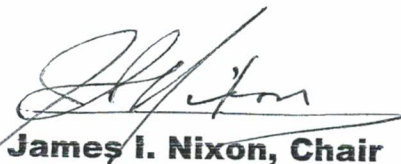
**Dear Mr. Mayor,**

**It is with the deepest regrets that I must inform you that, for reasons of my health, I must resign from the Stamford Urban Redevelopment Commission, effective immediately.**

**I have certainly enjoyed my eighteen-plus years on the Commission but my health care advisors have determined that I should minimize the stress of life at this point, to allow for continued survival of my transplanted organ as well as other critical biomedical systems.**

**My best wishes for your continued success and the future growth and prosperity of the City of Stamford.**

**Sincerely,**



**James I. Nixon, Chair  
Urban Redevelopment Commission**

**Cc: URC Commissioners**