

**MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL MEETING**  
**CITY OF STAMFORD, CONNECTICUT**  
**URBAN REDEVELOPMENT COMMISSION**  
**WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 14<sup>th</sup>, 2011**

1. Chairman Osman called the special meeting to order at 8:30am. The following were in attendance:

Commissioners:

Stephen C. Osman, Chairman  
James I. Nixon, Vice Chairman  
Joel P. Mellis, Secretary/Treasurer  
Jackie Heftman  
Christopher D. Meek

Staff:

Rachel Goldberg,  
Interim Director & General Counsel  
Durelle Alexander

Attendees:

Arthur Selkowitz, Chairman  
Mill River Collaborative

2. Agency Administration/Personnel

At 8:33am, Commissioner Mellis made a motion to go into Executive Session to specifically address matters pertaining to personnel. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Nixon 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 9:05am, Commissioner Nixon made a motion to return to Open Session. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Mellis and carried by unanimous vote. Ms. Alexander returned to the meeting.

Commissioner Nixon made a motion to approve the hiring of Celeste M. Johnson as Chief Operating and Learning Officer of the *Reinventing Stamford* program upon the terms and conditions in a draft hiring letter and a scope of work to include a review of the existing proposed operating budget and to make recommendations for a travel and entertainment budget. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Heftman and carried by unanimous vote.

3. Mill River Corridor/Mill River Collaborative

Chairman Osman introduced Arthur Selkowitz, Chairman of the Mill River Collaborative, who gave a brief update on Mill River Park, noting that the URC was one of the three founding institutions, along with the City and the Stamford Partnership, for the Collaborative in 2002. Commissioner Heftman noted that the Commission had supported the Collaborative financially with contributions of \$30,000 a year for the past three years. It was also noted that Mr. Selkowitz is the URC's representative for the Collaborative. Mr. Selkowitz said, "We are the instrument of the URC, fulfilling the Commission's mission of having this park developed." He discussed the following accomplishments which were able to take place simultaneously with the planning and design process:

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- Playground – Evolved from the original plan to create a neighborhood playground to becoming a world-class facility built by over 1,500 community volunteers. Today it is a unique place for families and children from all over the City of Stamford offering free summer programs on Saturday mornings and a myriad of entertainment over the summer.
- River – Following the Army Corps' dam and dredging completed in 2009, for the first time in 350 years, the river flows freely. Its importance was demonstrated in the storms of 2010, when the restored river fulfilled its role of containing flood waters within the part in its newly expanded flood plain.
- Phase I – On October 16<sup>th</sup>, ground was broken for Phase I of the park, from the Main Street bridge to Broad Street. Over 2,000 people attended the groundbreaking ceremonies.

Mr. Selkowitz said, "We do all the maintenance at the park ... we have management responsibilities as well as the responsibility for developing the park and this is all contained within our budget, which is stretched pretty thin. Our fundraising goal is \$20 million, of which \$6½ million has been pledged from public support to date." Mr. Selkowitz asked the URC for an additional appropriation of \$30,000 per year for two additional years, until the Collaborative would receive potential income generated from the carousel, the carousel pavilion and events held in the pavilion. Attorney Goldberg noted, for the record, that funds from the URC (Item I program income) must specifically be spent on planning activities.

Discussion ensued. Chairman Osman recused himself because he is a member of the Collaborative. Commissioner Nixon asked, "Are there plans to extend the park up the river to the state border, to the Merritt Parkway?" Mr. Selkowitz responded, "The TIF District goes from the UConn garage to I-95. Our vision is north to Scalsi and south to the Stamford harbor." Commissioner Heftman asked about the screening that currently blocks the vision of the park. Mr. Selkowitz responded, "Last month the City began construction – laying water and drain pipes, installing walkways, etc. and with the amount of topsoil and fill piled up, a heavy storm would wash this all over Washington Boulevard." It was noted that the contractor has been asked to open a couple of windows in the screening.

Following further discussion, it was the sense of the Board that a vote on an additional appropriation be delayed until the next meeting to give Attorney Goldberg time to: (a) determine whether to recommend creating a new grant agreement or to extend the previous one; and, (2) assess the Agency's current cash position. A special meeting will be held, at a date to be determined, to further address this agenda item.

At 9:55am, Commissioner Heftman made a motion to return to Executive Session to continue discussing personnel matters. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Mellis and carried by unanimous vote.

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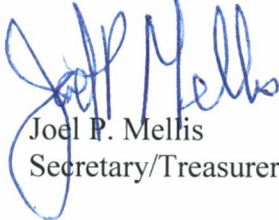
Ms. Alexander was excused from Executive Session. Attorney Goldberg participated in the discussion. No motions were made and no votes were taken. At 10:20am, Commissioner Nixon made a motion to return to Open Session. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Mellis and carried by unanimous vote.

4. Adjournment

Commissioner Heftman made a motion to hold the Annual Meeting on Thursday, January 12, 2012, the date of the next regular monthly Commission meeting. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Mellis and carried by unanimous vote.

There being no further business before the Board, Commissioner Nixon made a motion to adjourn. The motion was carried by unanimous vote and the meeting was adjourned at 10:22am.

Respectfully submitted,



Joel P. Mellis  
Secretary/Treasurer

## **SPECIAL** **MEETING NOTICE**

A special meeting of the City of Stamford, Connecticut, Urban Redevelopment Commission, will be held in the Commission Offices on the 9<sup>th</sup> Floor of the Stamford Government Center, 888 Washington Boulevard, Stamford, Connecticut, on Wednesday, December 14, 2011 at 8:30am.

### **REVISED AGENDA:**

1. Roll Call
2. Agency Administration
  - (a) \*Personnel
3. Mill River Corridor
  - (a) Mill River Collaborative
4. Adjournment
  - (a) Discussion – Next Meeting Agenda
  - (b) Confirmation – Next Regular Meeting Date (1/12/12 @ 6:00pm)
  - (c) Confirmation – Annual Meeting Date (1/12/12 @ 6:00pm)

*\*All or portions of this subject may require discussion  
in Executive Session.\**