

MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING
CITY OF STAMFORD, CONNECTICUT
URBAN REDEVELOPMENT COMMISSION
THURSDAY, JUNE 12, 2008

1. At 6:08pm, Chairman Stephen C. Osman called the meeting to order. The following were in attendance:

Commissioners:

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

Staff:

Rachel Goldberg,
Interim Director & General Counsel
Durelle Alexander

Absent:

Robert S. Robins

Other:

Milton Puryear,
Mill River Project Director

2. Approval of Minutes

(a) **May 8, 2008 Regular Meeting** - Commissioner Heftman made a motion to approve the minutes. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Mellis and carried by unanimous vote.

3. Correspondence

None at this time.

4. Announcements

None at this time.

5. Southeast Quadrant

(a) **Park Square West Phase II** – Interim Director Goldberg reported that the City had put in an application to FEMA to change the flood zone at the Old Town Hall site in order to proceed with the building the extension. She said, “As part of that determination, FEMA has changed the flood zone and the change takes the entire Block 9, which is where Park Square West Phases II, III & IV is, out of the 100-year flood zone immediately. It is unclear at this time what this change will mean in terms of dollar savings to Phase II. PSW didn’t have a basement but it may now be cost effective for them to create a basement to eliminate a number of issues.” Interim Director Goldberg has provided the redeveloper with correspondence the Mayor’s office received from FEMA so they can analyze the data.

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

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6. Mill River Corridor

(b) **Presentation by Milton Puryear, Project Director** – Mr. Puryear began his presentation by showing the Board draft schematics of the proposed project. He said, “One of the specifications in our Master Plan is that each of the bridges will get illuminated in a different way to make it interesting as you cross. Richmond Hill is the first bridge to be redesigned and reconstructed. A lighting designer has been hired to work with the engineers to come up with a scheme to under light the bridge as well as to eliminate the railings.” Mr. Puryear noted that: (i) the City has signed a contract with the Army Corps of Engineers to move forward with construction; (ii) the Army Corps has completed their plans and specs; and (iii) a project schedule has been determined. In the third (next) quarter, the Army Corps will issue bids and, in the fourth quarter, they will retain a contractor.

Mr. Puryear continued, “The Army Corps’ work will be primarily in the river channel. What we have now is a 100-foot wide channel, which will be increased to over 200-feet at the widest flood plain, mostly to the west. The river itself will be 40 to 60 feet wide.” Commissioner Nixon asked, “Do you contemplate swimming?” Mr. Puryear responded, “Not swimming, but we do envision people putting their feet in the water. We are designing some rocks/rock paths to lead people to the river.” Commissioner Heftman asked, “Could someone get an inner tube in at the end and tube the river?” Mr. Puryear responded, “Yes, and they could also kayak up the river during the right conditions.” Commissioner Nixon asked, “What about the birds? Are we going to have Canadian geese?” Mr. Puryear responded, “We have a dog trained to deter the geese and she has been very effective. The geese won’t disappear but will be at a manageable level so they will not be a deterrent for people who use the Park.”

Mr. Puryear then showed the Board proposed grading plans and briefly reviewed the demolition, construction and dredging sequences. He noted that the City’s contractor, using Olin’s plans, will be finishing the parts of the Park outside the Corps’ area at street-level; i.e., walls, paths, lighting, irrigation and a site for the proposed fountain. Commissioner Heftman asked, “Will the Park be closed while this work is going on?” Mr. Puryear responded, “Yes. The whole area, from Main to Broad and Mill River Street to Washington Boulevard, will be fenced in.” Commissioner Heftman asked, “For how long?” Mr. Puryear responded, “Total construction is about two years – 18 months for the Army Corps with an overlapping construction period for completion of the City’s work.” He noted that the Army Corps and Olin Partnership collaborated on what goes inside the excavated area. Commissioner Mellis asked, “Is there an assurance of continuity ... that there won’t be an interruption of one kind or another?” Mr. Puryear responded, “The assurance is that all the funding is in place. Everything is appropriated. When the contractor is retained by the Corps, all his funding will be in place.”

Mr. Puryear continued, “One of the things happening is that the river surface will be lower than it is today. From the area of the street level where the cherry trees are down to the surface of the water, there will be a 10-foot drop. There will be a small valley running down the river that will be totally vegetated with native plantings.”

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He then showed the Board an overview of the entire site, pointing out the proposed cherry tree esplanade and the stepping stone path down to the river. Chairman Osman asked, "The Army Corps contract will be to do the work, but if there's an overrun, who pays for it?" Mr. Puryear replied, "The Army Corps program has a limit of \$5 million dollars and we're using it all. We have a grant for the Open Rivers program for \$145,000 in additional federal money and we also have a \$10 million dollar Water Resources Act authorization that we could draw on. From a practical point of view, the City would have to come up with the money if we wanted to avoid suspending work." Commissioner Mellis asked, "Do you have to accommodate the American's with Disabilities Act?" Mr. Puryear responded, "Yes. It is federal money and paths along the river will be wheelchair accessible. Also, the landscape architects try to make sure that a wheelchair can navigate the grades." Commissioner Heftman asked, "The fund raising that the Collaborative is doing – could that money be used for construction?" Mr. Puryear responded, "Yes, but it would be used more for structures than for grading and base planting. It might be used for trees, but is really intended for things that are on the land as opposed to the basic footprint." It was noted that the proposed skating rink and fountain will not be undertaken without a donor.

Mr. Puryear reviewed the plan for materials. He said, "In terms of path hierarchy, the outside areas are concrete; the areas in the flood plain are oil and chip because it can withstand the flooding and be cleaned off relatively efficiently; and, the intermediate paths out of the flood plain are crushed stone like we have at the playground." Commissioner Nixon asked about the gazebo. Mr. Puryear responded, "The plans bring it down to ground level. It's in really bad shape. The eventual intention is to rebuild it and put it on the grassy knoll." Commissioner Heftman asked about the location of the merry-go-round. Mr. Puryear responded, "The carousel will be in the northeast area of the Park." Commissioner Nixon asked about a projected start date. Mr. Puryear responded, "We're hoping to start in the first quarter of next year."

5. Southeast Quadrant

(a) **Park Square West Phase II** – Interim Director Goldberg briefly reviewed a proposed Legal Services Agreement with Attorney John Stafstrom of Pullman & Comley to: (a) assist the Commission with the review and understanding of pro forma and other financial information presented by the redeveloper, and (b) assist the Commission with the development of a mechanism and procedure to ensure ongoing compliance of all financial agreements by the redeveloper. She noted that Corcoran Jennison has agreed to reimburse the Commission for Attorney Stafstrom's services for an amount not-to-exceed \$10,000 (ten thousand dollars).

Following discussion, Commissioner Nixon made a motion to approve the Legal Services Agreement with Pullman & Comley, specifically Attorney John Stafstrom, for an amount not-to-exceed \$10,000 (ten thousand dollars). The motion was seconded by Commissioner Mellis and carried by unanimous vote.

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(b) **Re-Use Parcel 36** – Interim Director Goldberg reported that a “Term Sheet” was issued by the Commission in April. A subsequent meeting was held with Tom Rich and his attorney, Donald Gustafson, on May 28. The redeveloper was then given a June 4 deadline to reach a decision on accepting the terms as presented. A response was received today, June 12, from Attorney Gustafson proposing a different transaction.

6. Mill River Corridor

(a) **Archstone/Re-Use Parcel 21** – Interim Director Goldberg reported that the Archstone design team made two presentations today – one to Board members Robert S. Robins and Jackie Heftman, and a second to the expanded Design Committee. Several design issues were put on the table. A follow-up meeting has been scheduled for Thursday, July 10 at 10:00am.

Executive Session:

At 7:30pm, Commissioner Nixon made a motion to go into Executive Session to specifically discuss contract negotiations re: Park Square West Phase II, Re-Use Parcel 36, and Re-Use Parcel 21. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Heftman and carried by unanimous vote. Interim Director Goldberg participated in the discussion. No motions were made and no votes were taken. At 8:08pm, Commissioner Mellis made a motion to return to Open Session. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Nixon and carried by unanimous vote.

Open Session:

Commissioner Nixon made a motion to authorize the Interim Director to issue a letter to Archstone stating that as long as the status quo of the proposed project remains unchanged, the Board does not anticipate taking any action prior to the July 10, 2008 meeting. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Mellis and carried by unanimous vote.

7. Agency Administration

(a) **Personnel/Executive Director Status** – Interim Director Goldberg reported that she had reviewed with the Commissioners a slate of potential attorneys and, with the ad hoc committee (Chairman Osman & Commissioner Mellis), selected Attorney Margaret Sheahan of Pullman & Comley. A draft Legal Services Agreement was distributed in the Board package. Following discussion, Commissioner Heftman made a motion to approve the Legal Services Agreement for Personnel Matters with Pullman & Comley, specifically Attorney Margaret Sheahan. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Nixon and carried by unanimous vote.

(b) **Personnel Policy & By-Laws Draft Revisions** – Action on this agenda item was tabled until the July meeting.

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8. Old Business

None at this time.

9. New Business

(a) **Traffic Calming** - Interim Director Goldberg reported that she had attended a Downtown Traffic Calming Workshop and had asked the leader of the seminar if he would be willing to take a “walking tour” of downtown Stamford. He agreed and Sandy Goldstein, Executive Director of the Downtown Special Services District; Josh LeCar, City of Stamford Transportation Planner; Kathy Walsh, President of The Stamford Partnership; Bob Karp, and Interim Director Goldberg spent two and a half hours the next morning touring the downtown. Issues addressed included how to make sidewalks and intersections friendlier and safer and how to make specific trouble spots more comfortable for pedestrians. The consultant discussed possible improvements such as narrowing in the intersections (example: at Broad & Atlantic). Interim Director Goldberg noted the group found the consultant’s expertise so helpful that they talked about finding a way to bring him back to spend a full day walking around the City. The purpose would be to start developing a long-term plan to make the streets, intersections, etc. more pedestrian-friendly. Commissioner Mellis asked if the City would commit in some way to proceeding with this effort. Interim Director Goldberg responded, “The City is currently spending money to do a traffic calming study but they’re not focusing on the pedestrians as much as they’re focusing on the cars. We’d like to bring an additional perspective to what they’re studying.” The Interim Director noted that she might be asking the Commission to help fund this effort.

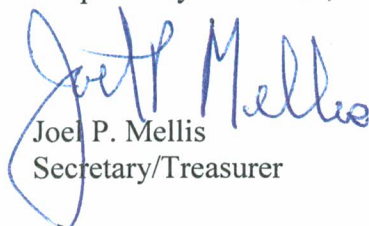
(b) **Disclosure** – Commissioner Heftman announced that she is on the ballot this November for a seat on the Board of Education.

10. Adjournment

The next regular meeting is scheduled for Thursday, July 10, 2008 at 6:00pm.

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 8:30pm.

Respectfully submitted,


Joel P. Mellis
Secretary/Treasurer

CITY OF STAMFORD, CONNECTICUT, URBAN REDEVELOPMENT COMMISSION

888 WASHINGTON BOULEVARD • STAMFORD, CT 06904 -2152

TELEPHONE: (203) 327-9180 • FAX: (203) 975-1552

MEETING NOTICE

The next regular meeting of the City of Stamford, Connecticut, Urban Redevelopment Commission, will be held in the Commission Offices on the 9th Floor of the Stamford Government Center, 888 Washington Boulevard, Stamford, Connecticut, on Thursday, June 12, 2008 at 6:00PM.

AGENDA:

1. Roll Call
2. Approval of Minutes
 - (a) May 8, 2008 Regular Meeting
3. Correspondence
4. Announcements
5. * Southeast Quadrant
 - (a) Park Square West Phase II
 - (b) Re-Use Parcel 36 (corner Greyrock & Main)
6. *Mill River Corridor
 - (a) Archstone/Re-Use Parcel 21
 - (b) Presentation – Milton Puryear, Project Director
7. *Agency Administration
 - (a) Personnel – Executive Director G. Post – Status
 - (b) Personnel Policy & By-Laws Draft Revisions
Discussion - A. McDonald
8. Old Business
9. New Business
10. Adjournment
 - (a) Discussion – Next Meeting Agenda
 - (b) Confirmation – Next Meeting Date (*July 10, 2008 at 6pm*)

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