

MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL MEETING
CITY OF STAMFORD, CONNECTICUT
URBAN REDEVELOPMENT COMMISSION
FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 2, 2007

1. At 9:45am, Chairman Stephen C. Osman called the special meeting to order. The following were in attendance:

Commissioners:

Stephen C. Osman, Chairman
James I. Nixon, Vice Chairman
Joel P. Mellis, Secretary/Treasurer
Edward J. Fuhrman
Robert S. Robins

Staff:

Gerrie Post, Executive Director
Rachel Goldberg, General Counsel
Durelle Alexander

Other Attendees:

Thomas L. Rich, President, F.D. Rich Co.
Attorney Donald R. Gustafson, Shipman & Goodwin
Attorney Michael J. Cacace, Cacace, Tusch & Santagata
Monica Potts, The Stamford Advocate

2. Southeast Quadrant

(a) **Re-Use Parcel 36/LDA Amendment** – Attorney Goldberg reported that the LDA amendment was previously discussed regarding changes to the existing contract to permit the construction of a 56-unit project as opposed to 35 larger units within the same existing structure. She said, “On Monday night (October 29th), the Zoning Board rejected the application and, therefore, there is nothing further to discuss at this time. Discussions with the redeveloper are on-going about how to recast the project.” A Parcel 36 Sub-Committee meeting will follow the Commission meeting at 11:00am.

3. Agency Administration

(a) **Holiday Luncheon** – Sub-Committee members Fuhrman and Nixon announced that the holiday luncheon will be held on Thursday, December 13th at the Rulu River Café in the Hampton Inn at noon.

(b) **Strategic Planning** – Executive Director Post gave a brief recap of the October 18th meeting, noting that Commissioner Robins had expressed a specific interest in historic preservation and cultural development; Commissioner Mellis in technology communications, and Chairman Osman in architectural design review.

The Chairman continued discussing his strategic planning priorities. He said, “I think we should be looking at different areas of the City that might be better developed and put a plan in place with specific goals in mind that would positively influence that development. There are areas of the community that could use our help, such as the area around Stamford Hospital.” Additional priorities addressed by the Chairman included:

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- Bringing/providing educational support, such as URC's Design Consultant Alan Plattus from Yale to the City to share his knowledge with the various Boards. In this regard, Attorney Goldberg said, "We can also put together forums and seminars that aren't strictly limited to local Board members. To the extent that we're talking about urban planning and Smart Growth, it is ideal to include property owners, developers, and tenants in addition to Board members." Executive Director Post said, "A group of community leaders has been working to put together a series of workshops and seminars that would be addressing topics such as Smart Growth, Green Buildings' regulations, energy efficiencies, etc."
- Helping other institutions in Stamford learn how to support their activities; i.e., Ferguson Library and the Stamford Ballet.
- Finding a way to influence the development of retail stores in downtown Stamford. Chairman Osman said, "Stamford has not been able to attract a diversity of retail stores/merchants and I would like to see the URC help to bring added value to Bedford Street."
- Studying the traffic problem with the goal of reducing traffic to and from Stamford as well as within the City of Stamford itself.

Chairman Osman reiterated that his main area of interest would be architectural design review.

Commissioner Fuhrman reviewed his five major strategic goals in priority order:

1. Improve the appeal of the downtown Stamford area with attractive buildings and sites which eliminate presently open or unsuitable locations; e.g., Parcel 38, the Archstone site, etc. Commissioner Fuhrman said, "I would embellish that to the degree that I would include the south side, east side and west side to enlarge our scope of activity beyond the downtown."
2. Enhance pedestrian accessibility and appeal in the downtown area; i.e., Bedford Street.
3. Develop projects that will make Stamford the premier destination for residence, business, shopping and culture in the Westchester/Fairfield counties region.
4. Realize the vision and goals of the Mill River development.
5. Achieve a meaningfully increased availability of convenient and affordable housing in Stamford.

Commissioner Fuhrman's main area of interest is affordable housing. He would also like to work with Commissioner Robins and Attorney Goldberg on making Stamford a cultural destination.

Commissioner Nixon reviewed his five major strategic goals, adding a sixth, and noting that although they were goals already recommended by the committee, his were in a somewhat different order, as follows:

1. Realize the vision and goals of the Mill River development.
2. Ensure the attractiveness of buildings and sound utilization of open areas.
3. Enhance pedestrian presence and appeal in the downtown area.

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4. Promote convenient and affordable housing to realize a meaningfully increased level for Stamford.
5. Expand the job and tax base.
6. Help promote projects that will make Stamford the center of a regional (perhaps even a national) destination for culture, sports and education.

Commissioner Nixon said, "I think that there needs to be a look at how the City's infrastructure is modified, developed and built going forward to support the kinds of expansion and changes that we're talking about." Commissioner Nixon also suggested addressing the new trend toward distributed power production, the possible use of fuel cells, solar power and energy efficiencies.

Commissioner Nixon's main area of interest is infrastructure, including energy sources.

Attorney Goldberg identified her five major goals in order of priority as follows:

1. Successful completion of outstanding projects by Park Square West (Block 9), F.D. Rich (Parcel 36).
2. Mill River Project, including the design and construction of the public park, the Archstone site and the affordable/public housing components.
3. The successful redevelopment of Re-Use Parcel 38.
4. Determine how the URC can best play a role to ensure the West Side "Stamford Housing Authority/Stamford Hospital" project moves forward successfully.
5. Analyze the needs and opportunities to play a role in the east side and south end revitalization efforts.

Attorney Goldberg's main area of interest would be in creating/developing a "Smart Growth Think Tank" for Stamford that perhaps the URC could be a leader in putting together. She also expressed an interest in working with Commissioners Fuhrman and Robins on cultural aspects; i.e., making Stamford a cultural destination and relating it to some of the other previously identified projects.

Executive Director Post identified her five priorities, as follows:

1. Complete current projects.
2. Implement strategies to successfully redevelop Parcel 38; expand boundaries of Mill River Plan; and, create opportunities to include potential east side, west side and south end projects in the scope of the URC's authority.
3. Work more closely with City officials and staff to promulgate local planning and zoning requirements, leading to greening of new development, energy efficiencies and other smart growth strategies, and working with State and Federal elected officials to bring additional resources to implement them.
4. Expand and build upon partnerships with community-based organizations for problem solving and greater opportunities to enhance Stamford.

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5. Create strategies to inform the public of the role of and the successes of the URC, namely through an interactive relationship with the Stamford community; more effectively market potential development projects; make available historic documents and archival information; and, create an interactive relationship between the URC and the Stamford community.

Executive Director Post's main area of interest would be developing/expanding collaborative relationships with community organizations. She is also interested in working with Commissioner Mellis on technology.

Commissioner Fuhrman briefly summarized today's comments and said, "We're engaging in a strategic process rather than a tactical process and before we get into the details, I think it's important for us to go back as a matter of strategy and decide 'do we want to go through something resembling a classic strategic plan or at least have a clearer idea of what our vision is.' Do we want to become a little more formal or should we discuss the ideas presented today over the next twelve months and decide what we want to focus on?"


Chairman Osman suggested that each Commissioner take whatever areas of personal interest they have, write why they are interested in them why the URC should be interested, and then identify some ways in which the URC could contribute. The Chairman said, "Let's start now to narrow our interests down to things we have the capacity to have an influence on." Commissioner Nixon said, "I think we also need to spend some time working on and identifying our vision." Following further discussion, it was the sense of the Board that forty-five minutes at each Commission meeting be allotted for continuing discussion of strategic planning.

4. Adjournment

The annual & regular URC meetings will be held on Thursday, November 8, 2007 at 6:00pm. Commissioner Robins and Attorney Goldberg noted they will be unable to attend.

Having completed the business for which this special meeting was convened, Commissioner Nixon made a motion to adjourn. The motion was carried by unanimous vote and the meeting was adjourned at 11:05am.

Respectfully submitted,


Joel P. Mellis
Secretary/Treasurer

CITY OF STAMFORD, CONNECTICUT, URBAN REDEVELOPMENT COMMISSION

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SPECIAL MEETING
NOTICE

A Special 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 Friday, November 2, 2007 at 9:30am.

AGENDA:

1. Roll Call
2. Southeast Quadrant
 - (a) Re-Use Parcel 36 – LDA Amendment
3. Agency Administration
 - (a) Strategic Planning
 - (b) Holiday Luncheon
4. Adjournment
 - (a) Discussion – Next Meeting Agenda
 - (b) Confirmation – Next Meeting Date (Nov. 8 – Annual & Regular)

NEXT STEPS

- **Discuss the observations and conclusions at the October 18 meeting e.g.:**

Is there agreement to them?

Is this all within our purview?

Is the suggested modified approach appropriate?

- **Seek agreement on:**

How we should operate as a “committee of the whole”

The role of sub-committees addressing areas of interest

- **How should we get started?**