

**MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL MEETING**  
**CITY OF STAMFORD, CONNECTICUT**  
**URBAN REDEVELOPMENT COMMISSION**  
**THURSDAY, MARCH 16<sup>th</sup>, 2006**

1. At 6:02PM, Vice Chairman James I. Nixon called the Special Meeting to order. The following were in attendance:

Commissioners:

James I. Nixon, Vice Chairman  
Neal M. Jewell  
Edward J. Fuhrman

Staff:

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

Absent:

Stephen C. Osman, Chairman  
Joel P. Mellis, Secretary/Treasurer

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

3. Mill River Corridor Presentation – Royal Bank of Scotland (RBS)

Attorney William J. Hennessey of Sandak, Hennessey & Greco, land use counsel for RBS, said that the proposed bank headquarters expects to have approximately 1,850 employees initially, relocating 700 RBS Capital employees from their Greenwich office, 550 from RBS' corporate banking operations in Manhattan, and creating 600 new jobs. The 500,000 square foot complex located at the corner of Washington Boulevard and Richmond Hill Avenue is being built to eventually house 3,000 employees, with a 95,000 square foot trading floor that will accommodate 1,000 traders.

Attorney Hennessey briefly described the site assemblage, noting that RBS is buying the largest piece of property, 3.3 acres currently being used as a surface parking lot, from the Dreyfus Property Group, which originally planned to construct a 23-story office tower there. RBS has also purchased several smaller parcels in the project area and received approval from the City to relocate a portion of Richmond Hill Avenue about 100-feet to the north, widening it to four lanes with bike lanes in each direction, and adding a left-turn lane from northbound Washington Boulevard onto Richmond Hill Avenue. Attorney Hennessey explained that upon its completion, the relocated Richmond Hill Avenue would be dedicated to the City of Stamford; further, that remnant areas north of the relocated road will remain under RBS ownership and be improved as a public "piazza" to function as a gateway to the Mill River Park. The newly assembled expanded site for the RBS facility is 4.24 acres.

Attorney Hennessey concluded his part of the presentation noting that "the RBS team is here before you tonight to ensure that their proposal is in conformity with the Urban Redevelopment Commission's Mill River Corridor Project Plan."

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Design Architect Roger Ferris of Roger Ferris & Partners in Westport, CT introduced his associate Dave Beem and noted that they had been working on the RBS project for approximately 18-months. He said, “RBS wanted to be in a City – part of an urban fabric - and presented us with many challenges. They needed a user-oriented building designed to meet their specific needs; i.e., large floor plates of 75,000 sq. ft. and up; a trading floor to accommodate 1,000 traders; a 1,250 car parking garage, and the requisite office space.” The architects showed renderings of the proposed building plans, which include a 12-story office tower wrapped around a glass-enclosed trading floor. The u-shaped building, which would take up about three-quarters of the four-acre site, would include landscaped plazas along Washington Boulevard and Richmond Hill Avenue, as well as a 360 by 55 foot riverside park that would become part of the Mill River Corridor Greenway. The south facing glass façade would parallel the I-95 on ramp, curve toward the eastern side of the building on Washington Boulevard, and wrap around at a right angle to Richmond Hill Avenue. The architects also showed renderings from each direction, noting that the acre outside the building’s footprint would include a portion of the Mill River Greenway, pocket parks at the corners of Clinton and Richmond Hill Avenue, and landscaped pedestrian plazas leading to the building’s main entrance at the corner of Washington Boulevard and Richmond Hill Avenue. Six primary office floors, beginning on the sixth floor, include the following:

- 95,000 sq. ft. trading floor on the 6<sup>th</sup> floor;
- sky lobby/trading floor mezzanine on the 7<sup>th</sup> floor;
- amenities floor on the 8<sup>th</sup> floor, with kitchen & dining facilities, atms, exercise facilities, office space and access to a rooftop garden overlooking the Mill River;
- office space on the 9<sup>th</sup> through 11<sup>th</sup> floors, and
- mechanical penthouse on the 12<sup>th</sup> floor.

It was noted that suggestions made by the URC and its Design Consultant Alan Plattus at earlier design meetings had been incorporated. For example, the “stepped-down” concept was created in response to a suggestion to break down the four-story garage. Better screening has been provided for the loading deck, which has been pushed back underneath the colonnade, and pedestrian improvements have been achieved by recessing the colonnade. Mr. Ferris concluded, “This is a predominately glass, mid-rise building approximately 200-feet in height with no back door. The façade is being treated equally from each direction and is designed to create an attractive and pedestrian-friendly streetscape experience. Site improvements will be made for a prominent pedestrian connection between the Transportation Center and Washington Boulevard and Mill River Park by the creation of a public piazza, new public sidewalks and a bicycle lane.” RBS plans to break ground sometime later this year and complete construction by fall 2008.

Landscape Architect Eric Rains of Wesley Stout & Associates in New Canaan, CT showed illustrative site plans indicating planting areas and tree groupings and briefly described the landscaped roof deck overlooking Mill River and plantings along the building’s footprint.

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Chairman Stephen C. Osman arrived at 7:00PM and presided over the balance of the meeting.

Mr. Rains continued, "Shade trees will line Richmond Hill Avenue and kiosks with an educational/informational component will be located along the Mill River edge." Commissioner Nixon asked what type of information the kiosks might contain. Mr. Rains responded, "Information on the use of recycled water, for example." Substantial landscaping work will occur to replace current vegetation along the riverbank with "a variety of plantings more appropriate to a river setting." Attorney Goldberg asked about the type and size of trees. Mr. Rains responded, "The street edges will contain a mix of 18-foot maples and honey locusts and there will be blends of trees elsewhere."

Executive Director Post asked the architects about the rendering showing the elevation of the river view of the building. She said, "I see a blank wall with no interesting architecture – what will this be made of?" Mr. Ferris responded, "That is the garage wall and most of it is 'stepped.' I envision a screen wall - metal see-through perhaps – but not a solid, hard wall." The Executive Director asked to see a sample of the material.

Attorney Goldberg asked if RBS had considered the locations and nature of public art and clarified their obligation re: the URC's Percent for Art Program. This will be addressed further at a later meeting.

Following discussion, Commissioner Fuhrman made a motion to approve the RBS Development Plans as being consistent with the requirements of the Mill River Corridor Project Plan, subject to full compliance with §502 of the Plan by RBS prior to their closing on the purchase of the former Connecticut Place Property; further, that the final design for the riverfront park (open space) area will be submitted for full review, and a Public Access Agreement will be filed before a Certificate of Occupancy is applied for. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Jewell and carried by unanimous vote.

2. Southeast Quadrant

- (a) **Presentation/Stamford Town Center Redesign Proposal** – Prior to the presentation, Attorney Goldberg explained to the Commission that its role would be to confirm that the new structure, which will be replacing part of the existing structure, continues to meet the requirements of the existing Urban Renewal Plan.

Attorney William J. Hennessey, representing Taubman Associates, owner of 230 Tresser Boulevard, the former site of Filene's Department Store and a portion of the Stamford Town Center, introduced Mark Putney, Director of Development for Taubman, and Michael McAndrews, General Manager of the Stamford Town Center. Attorney Hennessey said, "Starting shortly, the Filene's building located on approximately three acres of land will be demolished completely."

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Designers JPRA Architects of Michigan have been retained to replace the brick façade with two buildings at the eastern and western edges of the site, creating room for at least eight retail tenants ranging in space from 4,300 to 42,000 sq. ft. A driveway and walkway off Tresser Boulevard will run between the retail buildings, creating an entrance to the rest of the mall. Other improvements will include the reconstruction of all perimeter sidewalks, installation of a new lighting plan and the creation of pedestrian-oriented public space with visual landmarks that will include fountains and sculpture. Attorney Hennessey showed aerial photographs depicting the new entry court with a series of three large, highly stylized fountains. Plans also include new escalators and elevators that will connect the public plaza with the existing Town Center.

It was also noted that loading and deliveries would take place via a central service facility located at Edith Sherman Drive, reached through a concealed service tunnel proposed for under the new access road. Attorney Goldberg questioned the amount of screening around the loading docks, suggesting increased landscaping and/or cypress trees on the median. Mr. Putney addressed the importance of keeping this area clean. The Taubman representatives also explained that the proposed pedestrian connection to the Mall from Tresser Boulevard and the vehicular access to the City-owned parking garage from the new access way from Tresser Boulevard “would maximize the public’s access to the Stamford Town Center.” The façade on Greyrock Place will have large glass windows and entrances, allowing views and light into the Mall’s top floor. All eight retail spaces will face the street and the sidewalk. The new construction, expected to total about 144,000 sq. ft. of leasable space at the south end of the Mall, is expected to be finished in November 2007 at a cost of approximately \$50 million.

Following further discussion, it was the sense of the Board that the proposed Stamford Town Center redesign plans were in compliance with the current Urban Renewal Plan. No further action was required.

### 2. Southeast Quadrant

- (c) **Block 9 Parking Garage/Status Report** – Chairman Osman reported that a Temporary Certificate of Occupancy (TCO) would be issued next week. A “soft opening” where users will park free is planned from March 24<sup>th</sup> to May 1<sup>st</sup> and ads for the garage will begin appearing in *The Advocate* this weekend. Commissioner Nixon asked about the status of the remote parking meters. Chairman Osman responded that they have been ordered and will be installed shortly. The Transportation Committee of the Board of Representatives is meeting next month to discuss the fee structure for parking rates.

Larry Kwiat, Senior Vice President of Leasing for Reckson Associates Realty Corporation in Stamford and White Plains, noted that a gutter had been installed and attached to his property at 1050 Washington Boulevard on this date.

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Mr. Kwiat also questioned potential access from the top of the URC's parking garage to his private fourth floor, rooftop deck. The Commission will instruct Construction Manager Jeff Pardo to follow up on these issues immediately.

- (d) **Park Square West Phase II/Status Report** – Attorney Goldberg reported that the Land Disposition Agreement (LDA) was being prepared for execution; further, that the project architects have begun preparing the design/development documents.

At 8:15PM, Commissioner Nixon made to motion to go into Executive Session to discuss Re-Use Parcel 36 Contract Negotiations (agenda item 2.b) and the Status of Litigation (agenda item 2.e). The motion was seconded by Commissioner Fuhrman and carried by unanimous vote. Attorney Goldberg participated in the discussions. No motions were made and no votes were taken.

At 8:35PM, Commissioner Nixon made a motion to return to Open Session. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Jewell and carried by unanimous vote.

4. Adjournment

A Special Meeting will be held on either Tuesday, March 28<sup>th</sup> at 8:30AM or Monday, March 27<sup>th</sup> at 8:30AM to address design modifications to proposed plans for Re-Use Parcel 36.

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 8:38PM.

Respectfully submitted,



James I. Nixon  
Vice Chair/Acting Secretary