

**MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL MEETING**  
**CITY OF STAMFORD, CONNECTICUT**  
**URBAN REDEVELOPMENT COMMISSION**  
**MONDAY, MAY 24<sup>th</sup>, 2006**

1. At 8:40AM, 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, Secy/Treasurer  
Edward J. Fuhrman

Staff:

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

Additional Attendees:

Kathleen Walsh, President, The Stamford Partnership  
Mike Pensiero, Technology Director, City of Stamford

2. WIFI/Wireless Broadband - Discussion

Chairman Osman reported that he had begun discussing WIFI with The Stamford Partnership about a year ago after reviewing the "Wireless Philadelphia Business Plan" and distributing it to interested parties on a limited basis. In December of 2005, The Partnership formed a Task Force, Stamford Partnership Municipal, to begin exploring the feasibility of having a city-wide wireless network. Chairman Osman said, "In the last six months, WIFI has gotten to be a hot issue in Philadelphia and many other cities now are committing to some form of WIFI, whether they do it themselves or they hire a firm like Earthlink or Verizon, whether they provide it for free or for a low charge. What we're talking about is the ability to walk around with your laptop and your cell phone and have wireless Internet access. I personally think this is a major thing that the City of Stamford should do and that we should do it quickly." The Chairman noted, for the record, that he had considered an investment in a WIFI company and would distribute a potential conflict of interest memorandum (copy attached as part of these official minutes).

Commissioner Fuhrman asked, "Do you see this as an economic opportunity, a service to the community/citizenry, or some of each?" The Chairman responded, "It's a service and I see it as an important part of what's going on in the City. Everyone is tapping into this - it's a resource of communication and education that I think the City should provide." Chairman Osman continued, "The City is in the process of developing towers and a wireless system for first responders and perhaps these two systems should be intertwined, if not the same." Commissioner Nixon asked, "Who is included in the definition of first responders?" Commissioner Mellis responded, "I'm involved with a wireless company in Stamford that does security work and in a meeting with Bill Callion, Director of Public Health, Safety & Welfare for the City of Stamford, first responders were listed as police, fire, EMS, and all public safety-involved services of Stamford."

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Chairman Osman noted that he has been serving on the Stamford Partnership's Task Force along with its President, Kathleen Walsh; John Allario, Chairman of the Task Force; David Martin, President of the City's Board of Representatives; Mike Pensiero, Director of Technology for the City; Michael Freimuth, Director of Economic Development for the City; Ben Barnes, Director of Administration for the City; Chris Bruhl, President of the Business Council of Fairfield County, and Jack Condlin, Executive Director of the Stamford Chamber of Commerce. Chairman Osman said, "The first thing happening is that the City is putting up some money to light up Columbus Park. They're using the system that operates at the Ferguson Library and, to get into that system, you'll need a library card." Partnership President Walsh added, "The Business Council has a grant to do several pilot projects along the Metro-North line through an initiative called 'One Coast – One Future.' The Council has said it would make the demonstration money available for the demo in the City of Stamford through the Partnership." There are also plans to expand WIFI testing to Veteran's Park. It was noted that Starbucks, McDonalds, UConn, Ferguson Library and the Avalon complexes are already wireless "hot spots." Partnership President Walsh said, "We will be looking at these individual 'hot spots' to determine how to link people that don't have access, such as school children or small businesses, and see how we might make it an amenity that would help Stamford become more competitive."

Discussion continued. Chairman Osman said, "The questions really are: (i) should the City be involved in this; (ii) if they decide to participate, should they do it themselves; or (iii) should they hire a Consultant to help them make the decisions." Partnership President Walsh added, "The Task Force at some point will come back and make a recommendation that says we think that this is something the City and its entities should pursue further." Commissioner Fuhrman asked, "Why is the URC talking about this? Why are we involved? Is this consistent with our mission?" Chairman Osman responded, "I thought after being on the Task Force that this would be a good thing for the URC from many aspects similar to our involvement as the lead agency in the Mill River Corridor project. People need to see that we do good things, and helping the City and the Partnership make WIFI a reality would be a good thing." Attorney Goldberg noted that (a) a lot of the WIFI area is in the Urban Renewal Plan's Southeast Quadrant, and (b) this type of project is within the Agency's statutory authority.

Commissioner Fuhrman asked, "What is the goal/purpose today? Is it informational, to bring us up to speed, or are you interested in going further?" Chairman Osman responded, "The project needs about \$70,000 for a Feasibility Study and it also needs staff leadership. Unofficially, I have discussed the possibility of the URC putting up the money and have asked our new Executive Director if she would have the time and interest in being the staff person for WIFI." Commissioner Mellis asked Executive Director Post, "Given the variety of URC projects currently on the drawing board, how would this impact your time?" It was agreed that should time constraints become an issue, the Executive Director's WIFI role would be revisited.



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Commissioner Mellis asked, "Is it a forgone conclusion that the City is going to support the concept of hot-wiring the City?" The City's Director of Technology Mike Pensiero responded, "This summer we will be exploring the use of the technology. We are going to light up Columbus Park as an experiment to determine if the technology will get the use we think it is going to get. In addition, many City agencies have a need, particularly those involved in Emergency Management. They need to have this technology out there. WIFI will move forward in some capacity." Partnership President Walsh added, "We're not at a point yet in which we know exactly what kind of a system or elements of the system or what all the needs and uses that would end up going forward but, generally speaking, we anticipate that this is a technology that in some fashion is going to happen. The next step, the Feasibility Study, is to identify given Stamford's geography and given the assessment of the various needs we can identify, what would a system look like that would make sense for Stamford." Executive Director Post said, "In terms of the Feasibility Study, it really is the first step to say to Stamford that in order for you to make an informed decision, you need to know the parameters. The City must be involved because they have to grant easements, WIFI equipment must be placed on City utilities, etc. and all of this has to be defined."

Commissioner Mellis asked, "Is it too early to think in terms of hot-wiring the developments that are coming before us and put that in as a suggested requirement?" Executive Director Post responded, "Out of this Feasibility Study, guidelines can be developed for the URC requiring all future developments to be 'smart buildings'."

Partnership President Walsh gave a brief overview of a presentation prepared by The Stamford Partnership. Topics covered included:

- Activities to Date: the group's formation, goal, recent milestones, near term tasks & pending WIFI testing.
- Necessary Planning Processes & Considerations: City vision, community input & outreach, regulatory constraints, technology considerations, selection of the optimum business model.
- Current Business Models in Use: public utility model, no cash down model, Google model.
- Wireless Statistics: regional & citywide networks, city hot-zones, planned deployments.
- Municipal Issues & Concerns: consumer privacy, network neutrality, content filtering & security.

Proposed next steps include continuing to meet wireless consultants & vendors (through July 2006); choosing a consultant for the feasibility study & business model (August 2006); engaging the consultant (10-week timeframe with final recommendation November 2006); and, if recommendation is favorable, the City will prepare and issue RFP (January/February 2007).

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Discussion of the URC's further involvement with WIFI ensued. Commissioner Nixon volunteered to be the Agency's liaison to the project and said, "I strongly endorse this effort. The URC has an obligation to examine everything that might improve our quality of life in Stamford and this will certainly improve our ability to communicate."

Following further discussion, Commissioner Nixon moved that the Urban Redevelopment Commission continue to support further development of the WIFI proposal as discussed on this date in conjunction with The Stamford Partnership; that up to \$75,000 (seventy-five thousand dollars) in URC funds be advanced to the Partnership for a Feasibility Study, with the understanding that the URC be reimbursed out of WIFI proceeds; that a portion of Executive Director Gerrie Posts' time be allotted to the project, also to be reimbursed from potential WIFI proceeds; and, that if time constraints arose out of the Executive Director's commitment to WIFI, the issue would be revisited by the Commission. Commissioner Fuhrman seconded the motion. Discussion followed. The question was called and the motion was carried by unanimous vote.

3. Community Vision – Discussion

Chairman Osman said, "It has been brought to my attention that there is a need for someone to take a look architecturally and from a planning point of view at what the City of Stamford really needs. What are we visualizing for the community? We need a conversation about this, and our Design Consultant Alan Plattus, Associate Dean of Architecture at Yale University, comes to mind. Partnership President Walsh and I had a conversation about this and The Partnership is doing something that this concept would fit in very nicely with." Partnership President Walsh explained, "After our strategic planning up-date last fall, it was noted that it would be useful to put in place within the City of Stamford a system of continuing education and professional development for the Land Use Boards and for the various entities doing planning around the City. This would give them access to continuing best practices, what's happening in the field, current hot button issues, etc. In this regard, The Partnership intends to be looking for strategic partners to develop something similar to the Westchester model, which would provide each year an on-going series of education seminars. We are now in the process of identifying other partners who might work with us in promoting this idea in the Stamford community. In this context, your Chairman, Executive Director and I have been discussing using Alan Plattus' services more effectively in developing a more global community vision."

It was noted that The Partnership wants to involve UConn in the pilot program and hopes to hold the seminars/workshops there. Attorney Goldberg said, "This is the type of program where we would establish a workshop and governmental agency heads, staff, politicians and appointees would be able to attend for free but development community members could also attend for a nominal fee as a way of providing a first-class seminar."

Commissioner Mellis asked, "How would this work? Are we talking about a workshop/seminar for people on the Land Use Boards and the others we have mentioned as opposed to a particular Commission being addressed by Alan Plattus in terms of their



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responsibility?" Partnership President Walsh responded, "Typically we would be looking at an opportunity to do a series of workshops in the spring, probably three or four, on a variety of topics. The target audience for those workshops would be the volunteer Land Use Boards, City staff and the professionals that serve them, and the general public. One of our objectives at the Partnership level is to improve the public's understanding of how the planning process operates. In the course of the workshops, we would cover specific things such as the powers of those Boards and Commissions, how they make decisions, and beyond that, what broader issues they might consider in making those decisions." Partnership President Walsh continued, "We would have a variety of very well-respected opinion-setters essentially to help the Boards/Groups understand what the best current thinking is around topics for discussion; for example, parking in medium-size cities downtown and what would make sense for Stamford."

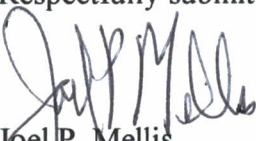
Commissioner Mellis asked, "Do you envision this on-going?" Partnership President Walsh responded, "Yes, we expect to get it started and do it annually on an on-going basis. We also expect to expand it beyond Stamford and offer it to surrounding communities as well." It was noted that, in addition to the URC, The Partnership has spoken to the Regional Planning Association, ULI and SWRPA re: partnering with them in this endeavor. Partnership President Walsh concluded, "It will take us a while to pull together the teaching tools and materials to do this and that's why we're targeting spring as a start date." Chairman Osman suggested "design review" as one potential objective of this new effort. Commissioner Fuhrman expressed an interest in being the URC's liaison to work with The Partnership to further develop/formulate the workshops.

Following discussion, Commissioner Mellis made a motion to support The Stamford Partnership's endeavors to enhance the education and understanding of Land Use Boards and their respective members through a variety of seminars, workshops and teaching mechanisms; further, that URC Design Consultant Alan Plattus and Executive Director Post work with The Partnership to be an active part of this educational effort. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Fuhrman and carried by unanimous vote.

3. Adjournment

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 11:10AM.

Respectfully submitted,



Joel P. Mellis  
Secretary/Treasurer

CITY OF STAMFORD, CONNECTICUT, URBAN REDEVELOPMENT COMMISSION

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**MEMORANDUM**

TO: Urban Redevelopment Commission  
CC: Rachel Goldberg, General Counsel

FROM: Stephen C. Osman, Chairman

RE: Potential Conflict

DATE: May 24, 2006



Be advised that I am considering and have considered an investment in F4W, a WIFI company. If I feel that this interferes with my voting appropriately, I will recuse myself.

-Distributed to URC 5/24/06  
-Mailed to Kathleen Walsh 5/24/06