

**MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL MEETING**  
**CITY OF STAMFORD, CONNECTICUT**  
**URBAN REDEVELOPMENT COMMISSION**  
**FRIDAY, AUGUST 25<sup>TH</sup>, 2006**

1. At 9:30AM, 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

Other Attendees

Robert S. Robins, URC Member Designate  
Jeremy Wilkening, Project Director, Corcoran Jennison  
Marc Garofalo, Project Director, Corcoran Jennison  
Michael J. Cacace, Cacace, Tusch & Santagata, C-J Counsel  
Herbert S. Newman, President, Herbert S. Newman & Partners, C-J Architect  
Erin Hastings, Herbert S. Newman & Partners, C-J Architect

2. Southeast Quadrant

- (a) **Park Square West Phase II** – Chairman Osman noted that C-J President Marty Jones had offered to be available by phone if needed during this meeting. Mr. Wilkening began the presentation noting that C-J would be showing the schematic set of design plans, and that the next submission would be more detailed incorporating feedback received from the Commission and the requisite Boards. Attorney Goldberg advised the Commission that, even though there were subsequent levels of design submissions, it was important to remember that “any design decisions/choices made at this level of design development could in fact be locked in stone.”

Mr. Newman said, “The idea of an abstract collage is what we’ve been trying to work with in dealing with this building and its big picture issues of skyline. You will see a very strong image from I-95 and as you walk along the streets, we see this forming a composition with the older buildings in Stamford. We are trying to capture the idea of cornice, masonry, brick windows, all with the idea of a very lively activity level on the sidewalk – with shop-fronts, street furniture, awnings, signs & lights and people.” Mr. Newman continued, “On the ground floor, plans are for one retail tenant and discussions are on-going with a Green Grocer. Since this potential tenant would like one contiguous space, we’ve moved the two-story residential lobby from the north side to the south side.” Discussion ensued re: addressing the proposed changes. Mr. Newman said, “Let’s discuss the major significant issues because I hope that in the approval we reach today, we will be able to agree on the big things and allow the things we can’t agree on to remain open to be worked on further.”

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Attorney Goldberg said, "What you and Attorney Cacace need from us can be accomplished even if some of the big issues are not resolved. However, the things that do need to be resolved in order to proceed are things like the south elevation, the location of your loading facilities, why it's now treated like a back door, and the question of where and how the loading service occurs assuming the Commission is going to agree to move the lobby from the north side to the south. The bigger issue as I see it is traffic in an alleyway where trucks are queued. The plans we had previously approved had the loading facilities in an area that would allow the trucks to be parked in a place that didn't interfere with the rights of the property owners to the south for ingress and egress. Contrary to what's proposed, you don't have a right to make that alleyway one-way and I don't see at this point how we can approve a set of plans to go forward that rely on that basic premise when the premise just is not legally enforceable." Mr. Wilkening responded, "What we agreed was we would all have an area in the alleyway where we would park the service vehicles for all the tenants. There would be a designated area and traffic could still get around." Mr. Wilkening also noted this had not been written into any type of agreement at this point, pending feedback from the Zoning Board. Executive Director Post said, "I would like to see some dimensions. Right now you have a 12-foot curb-cut with a 14-foot apron and you have no delineation ... it looks really bigger than it actually is. Once you put a building there you are going to have very little space to have all this activity converging, especially with a Green Grocer." Mr. Wilkening responded, "We're trying to consolidate services for all the property owners to minimize the impact." Discussion re: parking and areas for trash removal continued.

Chairman Osman said, "One of the Commission's functions here is to make sure that this building interacts with the other buildings in the area even if they agree to what you're proposing. This is one of our functions – to ensure there will not be a clogged passageway." Attorney Goldberg said, "We could approve this with a proviso, only on the condition that there is an agreement with the southern property owners to consolidate the trash into a single location. You sold the Commission and the rest of the City on the vision that had this space as an 'active pedestrian area' and as long as you have all these trucks parking the way they are now, it's not going to happen." Executive Director Post said, "Let's look at the reality of what that space is. It's a service space, not a pedestrian walk. Most of the time you are going to have roll-offs, delivery trucks, cars going back and forth in this alleyway and pedestrians are going to get in the way. It's not that big a space." Mr. Newman responded, "We have designed spaces like this in three or four alleys in New Haven and it works very, very well. If you are not going to get people to cooperate for something that is in their best interest then it won't work no matter how it's regulated. This can work, and this can be a very pleasant amenity for the City. With lighting and other amenities, we can make this space as pedestrian-friendly as possible."

Mr. Newman addressed the issue of extending the glass across the façade. He said, "We, and I'm speaking for Cor-Jen, are willing to add glass to the side and turn the corner as well, probably putting in more windows and adding more glass to the residential façade. We are not proposing to go one level down because we think that's a mistake visually."



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Attorney Goldberg noted that in plans previously approved by the Commission, the architects showed one more level of glass. Mr. Newman agreed to prepare a drawing showing the additional level of glass on the façade and present it to the Commission for further discussion. Chairman Osman summarized the discussion saying, "The thing that we want is to see the western wall look more like the rest of the building. Let's table this until we see what it looks like."

Mr. Newman continued, "There are two other issues. One of those has to do with the mezzanine on the second level which replaces the open arcade shown in earlier design plans. Housing units, a multi-purpose room and a health club are now located on the mezzanine level. These couldn't be on the ground floor because we needed the ground floor for retail."

Executive Director Post asked about the parking count; specifically, if the developer was still short. Mr. Wilkening responded, "No. We have found enough spaces for Phase II although we are short some in full build-out." The Chairman suggested that parking be dealt with at staff level.

Mr. Newman concluded, saying that the last open item was the "bridge connection." He showed three walkways with the parking tower behind and noted that the portion of the three levels that connect to the apartment building is open to allow you to see through to the garage. Mr. Newman said, "The idea is to make them as light as possible. The real reason we're doing this is so that people parking on any of these particular levels can come through and go directly to their apartments without having to come in and take an elevator down or up – they can park at the same level, carry bundles, and go across directly. In terms of the architectural quality, we think this is not an issue. It's not detrimental. It does allow for visibility of the tower and in terms of function, we think this warrants approval." Attorney Goldberg asked, "From your perspective as the architect and the designer of the structure, if the Commission were to ask you the relative weight of three items and you could only get one of them – the three items being the bridge, the mezzanine level, and the first level southern elevation – is it my understanding from your conversation that the bridge is the most important of the three? Could you put them in order of priority of importance?" Mr. Newman responded, "I can only evaluate it as an architect. Operation of the building is something that I can't comment on other than its function. If we didn't need the health club and we didn't need the fitness room, we wouldn't recommend the mezzanine, which would be an excessive use of space. However, the idea that you can look through the building on the south side at the ground level and see light coming through – that's very important."

Chairman Osman said, "I want to put some things into perspective because I'd like to try to resolve some of these issues. You are here asking us to change the original proposal that you had ... some things are design issues and some are monetary issues ... and we are trying to negotiate what's really important to us and what's not really important to us. From the Commission's point of view, we want to get this done and I think we have to have an attitude of moving this forward."



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Chairman Osman continued, "It is unfortunate that someone from top management is not here to hear all these issues/discussion, as I requested yesterday, because this is the point where I think we should have some trade-offs. Without having someone on the other side of the bargaining table who can come to an agreement, at this point I don't know how to proceed."

C-J Attorney Cacace responded, "I think we're all on the same page and that our common interest is to move this so that it starts to get through the process of going to other Land Use Boards. To that end, I agree with Attorney Goldberg's comments that some of the design elements and features are not essential to that and need not be decided today. For example, how the glass wraps around the building or whether it comes down frankly doesn't matter when submitted to the Environmental Protection Board, who really cares about where the footprint of the building is and the elevation." Attorney Goldberg asked, "Could we approve plans sufficient to send off to EPB and specifically not approve the bridge? Could we specifically not approve the service area?" Attorney Cacace responded, "Let me go through my list. Certainly the whole façade of the west portion of the parking garage is an issue that can be carved out. That's something you can talk about in the future. I believe, likewise, the glass and how far down it goes and how far it wraps around the back can also be carved out and won't affect our application. The whole notion of the curb-cut and what easements are or aren't worked out with our neighbors on West Park Place can also be a condition of any approval. To me, the four issues that were raised today that really need resolution in order for us to process the application are: (i) the number of parking spaces. I'd like to know that we have enough parking spaces because if we don't and we're short, we have to figure it out; (ii) the issue of the bridges. It's not important to the EPB application, but is important to the Zoning Board application and perhaps could affect the EPB application if the resolution of the bridge issue changes the design of the building; (iii) the lobby, (iv) the easement and the mezzanine. They really don't need resolution unless they force the developer to redesign the building as a result of the Commission's decision. Likewise, where the dumpsters are and where the garbage pick-up is and how we mechanically work out the arrangement with our neighbors doesn't necessarily affect the EPB application unless it changes how the building is designed."

Chairman Osman responded, "Then the answer is that there are certain things that have to be approved here which we have not come to an agreement on." Attorney Goldberg explained, "You don't have to make the decision today. You have thirty (30) days from submission to accept or reject the plans and we can ask for an extension of that time. What I would suggest based on correspondence we've received from Cor-Jen is that we might approve plans that require a modification of their submission, that the URC could authorize me to sign off on the EPB application and perhaps the Zoning application, provided we clearly identify that the plans have not yet been approved, ask for an extension of time if we need it so that a decision-maker from Corcoran Jennison can be here when each of you set out what's important to you, and come to a consensus in terms of what we might trade off on."



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Commissioner Mellis asked, "With your suggestion, suppose we feel strongly about an issue that would cause a re-design of some kind? Would that impact what you're advising?" Attorney Goldberg responded, "No. The letter I received from C-J President Marty Jones indicated she was willing to take that risk in order to get the applications filed." Attorney Cacace added, "We're willing to take that risk because although it may cause some amendments to the application, we can start the process and that's key. We cannot start the process either to go to EPB or the Zoning Board unless you, as the property owners, sign off on the application. We're prepared to give you an extension within which you can make your decision ultimately on some of these issues we've talked about. We're prepared to give you a letter that says we recognize that there are certain items that you are not finally signing off on and approving by signing the Land Use application." Executive Director Post said, "I think what we need to discern today is the number of units and the number of parking spaces because that goes to the heart of your Zoning application."

Following further discussion, Commissioner Fuhrman made a motion to authorize Attorney Goldberg to sign off on the Environmental Protection Board and Zoning application that have been presented to the Commission with a clear understanding that this does not represent an approval of the plans by the Commission at this time; further, that it is also based on and subject to correspondence from the Redeveloper giving us a thirty (30) day extension to approve in part or reject in part the plans that have been presented on this date. Commissioner Nixon seconded the motion. Further discussion ensued. Commissioner Mellis asked, "The fact that this goes forward – does that put more pressure on the Commission to make concessions because you've got it in the pipeline?" Chairman Osman responded, "Yes. We'll have to move quickly and I think that's appropriate." Executive Director Post suggested that whatever the Commission reserves the right on that, at some point in time, there is a meeting with a person from Corcoran Jennison who has the decision-making ability to sit across the table and resolve the issue at that time. The Chairman asked that this message be passed on to the management of the company. Discussion concluded and the question was called. The motion was passed by unanimous vote.

It was the sense of the Board that they continue the meeting in order to talk about open issues. Attorney Goldberg asked to see the garage façade. Mr. Newman showed a proposed rendering, noting that part of the garage would be obscured for approximately 65 feet. He said, "We're talking about a façade that has to be solid. It can't have any openings because of the Fire Code. It can have some punch-out openings. What we're proposing is to make this art, to make a façade which will be abstract and provocative." Attorney Goldberg asked, "Can you please explain again why that entire façade needs to be solid in the area where Phases III & IV will attach to it? I don't think it does need to be solid and knowing that as a designer, gives you a lot more flexibility." Mr. Wilkening agreed there might be ways to make the facade more open. This issue will be explored further.

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The Chairman called for a brief recess. The meeting was resumed at 11:35AM.

Discussion continued pertaining to the following open issues:

- alleyway/service way, trash pick-up & deliveries
- lobby location
- arcade/mezzanine area
- the bridges
- garage façade

Chairman Osman asked the Commissioners which issues they felt most strongly about. Commissioners Mellis & Fuhrman agreed it was the alleyway. Commissioner Nixon said he thought “the mezzanine – the space inside” was the most significant issue. Following discussion of the alleyway, trash pick-up & deliveries, Chairman Osman summarized the recommendations of the Commission. He said, “One garbage exit, not two, and we would concur that on the side would be okay with the proviso that the area be large enough to handle everything internally, that they be required to have a hose/clean-up facility there and that they be required to clean up the area daily and that garbage removal be allowed only prior to 6:00AM; further, that deliveries be made only in the western-most area and only the trucks that are delivering be allowed to park in that area.” Commissioner Mellis asked for one additional caveat, that this be reviewed within a year or some period of time to determine if it was working the way we had envisioned. Attorney Goldberg responded, “We aren’t going to be able to change it but what we can do is what we did in Phase I and that is monitor and enforce the design and the restrictions.”

The next topic for discussion was the proposed bridges. Executive Director Post said, “Remember that this is their second means of egress in and out of the garage. It’s more than a design issue – it’s an issue that determines whether or not the garage can be built the way it is.” Attorney Goldberg said, “If we say only one level of bridge, they have to build another elevator and stair tower somewhere in their building or they have to use ours.”

Chairman Osman then initiated discussion about the mezzanine, noting that “the big issue is that you can no longer see through the way you could at full height and Cor-Jen has now built apartments in there.” Chairman Osman asked, “What about the mezzanine don’t you like and what could they correct? If they agree not to block the view on the first level, except where the trash is and where the loading is, so you could see through on the first level, would that satisfy us?” Attorney Goldberg suggested that the Commission request some kind of a sketch to help everyone visualize the mezzanine concept. Executive Director Post asked, “Are you willing to let the retailer use window displays?” Attorney Goldberg responded, “No, not at all. And no 50%-off sign that covers the whole window.”



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Commissioner Nixon said, "I still don't have a clear understanding of the designer's concept for the sense of this space that started out as high ceiling, vault space that created a sense of awe and all of that. We've clearly lost the ability to see through at the high level as long as we have the mezzanine and its activities, but the northern half of that space still has a 24ft. ceiling height so it seems to me it matters a lot what you see when you stand in that space and look up. At first, the Chairman had wanted this to be a place where when you stepped in gave you a sense you were in somewhere 'upscale.' And that same sense should be conveyed from the street because it has windows that go all the way up. I'm not sure that the developer has lost that, but it could easily be lost by what you do with it." The Chairman said, "We were counting on this being 24ft. high, a very airy spot that you could see through and the mezzanine conflicts with that." Attorney Goldberg added, "If the work-out space in the mezzanine and perhaps the corridor leading to the apartments were glass walls leading to the retail space, this would provide a sense of something happening up there behind the glass as opposed to a sheetrock wall. That might do a lot to minimize the impact of the mezzanine. The other thing to remember is if there is not a mezzanine, it's not a 24ft. high space, it's a 16ft. high space." Chairman Osman said, "My feeling is that the mezzanine has taken a lot away from what we were promised." Commissioner Nixon said, "We should convey that we want something other than just a plain blank wall in that space. Although I think that the mezzanine has the potential to be made very close to what the Commission originally had in mind, it needs to be given serious thought and the Commission needs to get some concepts from the architects."

The lobby location, which Cor-Jen has moved from the north side to the south, was addressed briefly. Commissioner Fuhrman said, "I didn't know it was somewhere else before. Seeing it there, I think it works." Commissioner Nixon agreed that it works at the new location although the Chairman preferred the location on the north side. The proposed bridge was also addressed briefly. Commissioner Fuhrman said, "I think there is an advantage in being able to come across at three different levels, which is an advantage for the people who live in the apartments and doesn't detract from the aesthetics." With regard to the façade, Chairman Osman said, "I think they have made tremendous improvements to the façade. I think we should table this because the architects are going to come back with further refinements which we will need to respond to."

The final item for discussion was the garage façade. Executive Director Post said, "That is not going to be temporary. If that is going to be scored concrete, it's there. Phase III & Phase IV will only cover one part of it – the front and the rear will remain." The Chairman responded, "That's all the more reason for Cor-Jen to let management know that Mr. Newman wants to do something fantastic with that façade and we would love it. But remember the material he uses is really important." Commissioner Mellis asked, "Am I right in remembering that a new concept of openness was introduced on the façade?"

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Attorney Goldberg responded, "Yes, and Mr. Newman was very clear that the new concept gives them a lot more possibilities." Commissioner Fuhrman added, "I think the attractiveness of our garage and the artwork on it establishes a higher goal for the architects."


The Chairman thanked everyone for their participation and cooperation and urged Mr. Wilkening and Mr. Garofalo to take the Commission's comments/suggestions back to management.

3. Adjournment

A Special Meeting will be held prior to October 9, 2006 (date to be determined) to review the revised PSW Phase II schematic design plans and vote to either accept or reject them.

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 1:20PM.

Respectfully submitted,



Joel P. Mellis  
Secretary/Treasurer