

**MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING**  
**CITY OF STAMFORD, CONNECTICUT**  
**URBAN REDEVELOPMENT COMMISSION**  
**THURSDAY, JULY 8, 2004**

1. At 6:03PM, Chairman Stephen C. Osman called the regular 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

Absent

Neal M. Jewell

Staff:

Laszlo Papp, Executive Director  
Rachel Goldberg, General Counsel  
Sheila R. Kilcoyne, Fiscal Officer  
Durelle Alexander

2. Approval of Minutes/May 13, 2004 Regular Meeting

Commissioner Fuhrman made a motion to approve the minutes. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Nixon and carried by unanimous vote.

3. Announcements

None.

4. Correspondence

None.

5. Southeast Quadrant

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.

(c) **Re-Use Parcel 36 (corner Greyrock & Main)** – Executive Director Papp reported that at the last Commission meeting in May, he was asked to write to the three known applicants to (i) confirm their interest in the site, and (ii) determine if they would be willing to share in the cost of the appraisal (approximately \$4,500). He said, “All three indicated that they are interested and two of them indicated that they would be willing to share in the appraisal cost. However, two of the parties, Robert Wilson and Rick Redniss (acting on behalf of his client, the Milstein Brothers Capital Partners of New York), expressed some concern about a potential conflict and, after thinking about it, I also have reservations about asking the known applicants to share in the cost of the appraisal. I think the appraisal should be independent, commissioned and paid for by the URC, and an RFP should go out to see if anyone else might be interested in the parcel. I do not want questions later about the openness of the process.”

**MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING JULY 8, 2004 – PAGE TWO:**

Chairman Osman asked, "What are the reasons we are considering selling Parcel 36 and what are the reasons we have to consider selling it?" Executive Director Papp responded, "Our job is not to land-bank it. Our job is to foster development." Chairman Osman asked, "Should we foster development whatever the development is or should we decide if this is a good purpose?" Attorney Goldberg explained to the Commission, "This all started because we got a letter from a developer saying 'I would like to purchase your property and develop it for a housing project. Here's a check to cover the cost of an appraisal.' About a week later, we got a letter from another developer also saying they wanted to develop that property. And, a year ago, we had a developer present an unworkable project for that same parcel – an approximately 30-story building with 250 senior apartments and no parking or financing. The Commission, however, thought it appropriate to move forward, talk to the prospective developers, and have them refine what they would propose to do on the on the parcel. To recap, Tom Rich (represented by Attorney Donald Gustafson) indicated he wanted to do housing. The nearby property owner of Parcel 38 (represented by Land Use Consultant Rick Redniss) indicated they were looking at the whole block and this was a part of the whole block and they basically wanted the Commission to wait and see what might happen with Parcel 38. It is unclear what Mr. Wilson, the third party, would do since the Commission has made it clear that we didn't think his last proposal was doable." Attorney Goldberg continued, "Another way to proceed would be to draft an RFP, return Mr. Rich's check, see who responds, invite the three parties we have now to give us actual proposals to determine what they would do on the site and how much they would pay for it."

Commissioner Fuhrman asked, "I have two separate sets of questions, the first set being related to should we address that small parcel separate from the larger. There were comments made at the last meeting that it was unlikely due to a variety of circumstances that the adjacent buildings would be torn down." Attorney Goldberg concurred, noting that the URC's 11,000 sq. ft. parcel is land-locked on two sides by the existing structure. The Chairman asked, "What are our responsibilities in terms of this property? Do we have the right to turn down a project because we don't like it?" Attorney Goldberg responded, "Yes, but we have an obligation to respond to the proponents. However, the Commission needs to think about what it wants on the property and tell the proponents if you are interested in developing the property, these are the proposals we would consider." Commissioner Fuhrman continued, "This is a small piece of property and it's hard to imagine anything but a modest housing development on the parcel."

Discussion continued. The Chairman concluded, "There are three things we can do. We can decide which proposal we like right now and give them an opportunity. We can decide what we want to do, or we can sit and wait." Attorney Goldberg added, "Or we can ask each of the three to give us a proposal." Commissioner Mellis said, "I'm a bit concerned if we make too premature a decision on this, it could have a negative impact on Parcel 38. If there's a decision going a particular way, could it adversely impact the bigger piece of property, even though they're not attached? Isn't this a factor we have to consider?" Attorney Goldberg responded, "I think it's extremely remote. We've seen at least seven proposals for Parcel 38 over the past years ... and none of them needed 11,000 sq. ft. on a remote corner to work."



**MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING JULY 8, 2004 – PAGE THREE:**

Land Use Consultant Rick Redniss said, "The issue in terms of Parcel 38 (the hole in the ground) and the way that came about is that the Mayor initially started the ball rolling. He said 'go look at the rest of the block'.... and in doing this, one of the critical aspects became Parcel 36 because you could take the Suburban Club parking lot (Parcel 39) and move it to Parcel 36 and then you would have access to Main Street, which might be important in terms of making the traffic work downtown. The issue is do you get an appraisal on your own so you are ready to move when someone comes?" Attorney Goldberg noted that the appraisal would only be good for six months. Commissioner Nixon suggested that the Commission issue a request for Expression of Interest. Commissioner Mellis suggested that the Commission consider proceeding with a Request for Proposals. Commissioner Fuhrman said, "Whatever deal we strike should be in the best interest of the City and the betterment of the downtown area, not on the basis of the best economic deal."

Following further discussion, Commissioner Nixon made a motion to authorize the Chairman to meet with the Mayor, Land Use Bureau Chief Robin Stein and Principal Planner Norman Cole to determine if there is a serious plan for Parcel 38 and if Parcel 36 is involved in this plan. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Nixon and carried by unanimous vote. This agenda item will be addressed again at the next Commission meeting.

- (a) **Park Square West/Status Report** – Attorney Goldberg reported that Park Square West has to redesign/reconfigure the Phase II residential building to conform to Zoning Regulations that require a 15-foot setback from all property lines. It was also noted that the developer has to reconfigure the parking in lieu of the fact that the sub-terrainian rights were valued at an amount higher than originally assumed and thereby not acquired. Attorney Goldberg is waiting for the developer's final comments on the latest version of the amended contract.
- (b) **Block 9 Parking Garage/Status Report** – Attorney Goldberg reported that we are "on schedule." She anticipates the selection of a developer by the end of November or beginning of December, with the sale of bonds the following week. A kick-off meeting with LZA, the URC's Architectural/Engineering Consultant, was held on this date. Attending were: Paul Lew, Arturo Salgado & Joel Weinstein, LZA; John Dugan, Haley & Aldrich; Ray Redniss, Redniss & Mead; Ernie Orgera & Tim Curtin, City of Stamford, and Stephen Osman, Laszlo Papp & Rachel Goldberg, URC. Participating via conference call were Harry Nash & Gabrielle Jones for Corcoran Jennison, and Will Van Dyke for Kimley-Horn. The group will meet again in two weeks (July 22, 2004 at 12:00noon). Issues discussed at the meeting included the importance of consumer friendliness, different operating systems and their advantages and disadvantages, and the need to provide a speedy exit from the garage.

Executive Director Papp suggested that the Commission schedule meetings on Tuesday mornings for the purpose of visiting parking garages in the area. On July 13, 2004 the Commission, along with any interested parties, will visit the new municipal parking garage in White Plains on Martin Avenue.

## MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING JULY 8, 2004 – PAGE FOUR:

- (i)  Ratification of Agreement with LZA Associates  – A copy of the proposed contract was sent to the Commissioners for their review and comment. Following discussion, Commissioner Fuhrman made a motion to ratify the contract, as distributed, with LZA Associates. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Nixon and carried by unanimous vote.
- (ii)  Re-Use Parcel 19B/Operating Agreement for Temporary Parking Lot  – Attorney Goldberg briefly discussed the proposed Operating Agreement between the URC and the City of Stamford, identifying the three parking lots, reviewing terms of the agreement and the fee structure. Following discussion, Commissioner Nixon made a motion to authorize the Chairman to execute the Operating Agreement between the URC and the City of Stamford for temporary parking on portions of Re-Use Parcels 19 & 19B for two years beginning September 1, 2004 and ending August 31, 2006. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Fuhrman and carried by unanimous vote.

### 6. Agency Administration

#### (b) **Committee Reports**

(iii) Mill River – Chairman Osman gave an update on the work of the Mill River Collaborative, an ad hoc group brought together as a conservancy like the Central Park Conservancy in NYC. He said, “The group meets monthly and after six months of research and committee meetings, everyone involved agreed that it would be a set up as a collaborative rather than a 501(C) corporation which has a hierarchy.” Parties involved in this effort include the Stamford Downtown Special Services District, The Stamford Partnership, the URC, the City, the Friends of Mill River, some other agencies and some stakeholders from the West Side. Chairman Osman continued, “One of the things we have done is hire a Director for the Mill River Project, Milton Puryear, and we have raised money from some of the local corporations to fund that. Mr. Puryear has been the unifying force bringing in the Army Corps of Engineers. The Corps held an open meeting on June 24<sup>th</sup> to explain to the general public what was going on and what their recommendations were.” Chairman Osman reported further that “the Collaborative has taken the position that they will replace the cherry trees, many of which will need to come down, and \$60,000 has been committed to this effort. The Collaborative is also putting together a project to build a sophisticated state-of-the-art playground. \$400,000 of the City’s money has been committed for this and the Collaborative is interviewing landscape architects. The Chairman concluded, “What we want to do now is set up a web site and I have asked Commissioners Fuhrman and Jewell and Mill River Consultant Arthur Selkowitz to be involved in its creation.”



**MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING JULY 8, 2004 – PAGE FIVE:**

Commissioner Nixon said, "I noticed in reading the information about the Army Corps of Engineers that one of the benefits of changing the river seems to be lowering the flood plain. To me this is of major significance and if we're talking about the role of the URC, a major part of our role is to look after and protect the Central Business District ... and the fact that we can bring the flood plain down 2½ feet is not a minor point at all." Attorney Goldberg noted that the only map that counts is FEMA's map and she posed the question of 'how do we change that map' to the Army Corps of Engineers. Attorney Goldberg has not received an answer from FEMA yet on the process needed to change their flood map.

Action on the remaining Committee Reports was tabled.

5. Southeast Quadrant/Park Square West

(b) **Demolition** – Executive Director Papp reported that the demolition contractor is grinding up the concrete and brick and all the contaminated fill has been removed, except for one small load from a fuel tank found underground. The site is going to be turned over to the road contractor in a few days.

6. Agency Administration

(a) **FY 04/05 Operating Budget** – Commissioner Mellis reported that he had reviewed the budget with Fiscal Officer Kilcoyne. It was noted that Stamford Urban Transitway figures, reimbursed by the City, were included. The Commission requested a report indicating the percentage of budget expended out of the total budget for both the URC and the Transitway project. The budget report will be revised and presented at the next Commission meeting.

At 8:20PM, Commissioner Mellis made a motion to go into Executive Session to address matters related to Personnel. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Nixon and carried by unanimous vote. Sheila Kilcoyne and Durelle Alexander were excused from Executive Session at this time. Executive Director Papp and Attorney Goldberg participated in the discussion. No motions were made and no votes were taken. Executive Director Papp and Attorney Goldberg left Executive Session at 8:45PM. They returned at 9:15PM.

At 9:17PM, Commissioner Nixon made a motion to return to Open Session. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Fuhrman and carried by unanimous vote. Staff returned to the meeting at this time.

7. Old Business

None.

**MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING JULY 8, 2004 – PAGE SIX:**

8. New Business

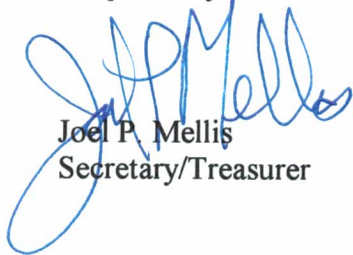
Executive Director Papp reviewed the soil removal report submitted by Hygenix, Inc. and briefly outlined the remediation process. It was noted that soil excavation was initiated on June 6<sup>th</sup> and completed on June 25<sup>th</sup>; further, that a total of 132 truckloads of soil required excavation, hauling and disposal. Arthur Morris of Hygenix indicated in his report that the City might be eligible for partial reimbursement through the Underground Storage Tank Petroleum Clean-Up Fund administered by the CT-DEP. The Executive Director was asked to investigate this further and report back to the Chairman.

9. Adjournment

There will be a Special Meeting on Tuesday, July 13, 2004 at 9:30AM for the purpose of visiting the new Municipal Parking Garage in White Plains. There will also be a second Special Meeting on Tuesday, July 27, 2004 at 9:30AM to visit parking garages in New Haven. The next Regular Meeting is scheduled for Thursday, August 12, 2004 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 9:35PM.

Respectfully submitted,



Joel P. Mellis  
Secretary/Treasurer