

MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING
CITY OF STAMFORD, CONNECTICUT
URBAN REDEVELOPMENT COMMISSION
THURSDAY, DECEMBER 11, 2003

1. At 6:08PM, 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
Neal M. Jewell
Edward J. Fuhrman

Staff:

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

Consultants:

Eric M. Wormser
Special Representative to the Commission

2. Approval of Minutes/May 8, 2003 Meeting

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

3. Announcements

None.

4. Correspondence

None.

5. Mill River Corridor/Presentation by River House, LLC - 35-49 West Broad Street

Attorney Bill Hennessey for River House developers (Ray Kinol, Paxton Kinol & Seth Weinstein) introduced members of the development team submitting a plan to build 92 condominium units on the corner of West Broad and Hanrahan Streets (the Marandino site). The development team is comprised of Ray & Paxton Kinol of River House Associates LLC; Timothy Gooding of Do H. Chung & Partners Architects and Planners; Eric Rains of Wesley Stout Associates Landscape Architecture; Rick Redniss & Craig Flaherty of Redniss & Mead Land Use Consultants, and Attorney Jacqueline Olschan of Sandak, Hennessey & Greco.

Attorney Hennessey explained that the Mill River Corridor Project Plan designated that the City purchase the 1.5 acre parcel designated "to be acquired for Public Use" and put "residential assisted housing" there to eventually accommodate residents of 26 Main Street. Since the building at 26 Main is no longer in the planned park area, the developers are now asking the City to eliminate the site from its list of future acquisition and permit a mostly market-rate building to be constructed there instead. Under their current plan, the developers will set aside 11 units that will be offered at subsidized prices, with the remainder being sold at market rate.

MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING DECEMBER 11, 2003 - Page Two:

Attorney Hennessey outlined the requisite steps in the approvals' process, noting that (1) the Land Acquisition Map would need to be amended to reflect the fact that this property should not be included within a boundary of area designated as "Land to be Acquired for Public Use" or "Land to be Acquired for Redevelopment," and (2) revise the designated use as "residential-assisted" housing contained in the Mill River Plan, replacing it with the affordable housing component to be consistent with other provisions of the Plan.

Attorney Goldberg said, "We will need a plan amendment." Vice Chairman Nixon said, "The best way to approach affordable housing is to mix it in with market-rate housing." Land Use Consultant Rick Redniss noted that "The Stamford Housing Authority tried to buy and develop the property but was unable to come up with a workable plan." Mr. Redniss also noted that this site is unique "because it doesn't displace anyone."

Following discussion, Attorney Hennessey showed proposed schematic designs and site illustrations, saying that: (i) the proposed River House development will be financed privately; (ii) it will be a condominium complex as opposed to rentals, with 12% below market rate units to satisfy the Mill River Plan's affordable housing requirement for new development; and (iii) it is important to note that this will be the first substantial private development on the west side of the River." City Land Use Bureau Chief Robin Stein said, "This complex would be the first major private development to contribute to the City's Mill River Park through its tax increment financing mechanism." Under this plan, up to half of the additional taxes from new development along Mill River will go to support the park and other developments.

Paxton Kinol distributed two proposed layouts for the bicycle trail along Hanrahan Street. He explained that since Hanrahan Street is very narrow, the building has been "pulled back" to allow 12-14 feet for the bike path. It was noted that the City has been seeking a path that would connect the future Mill River Park with Scalzi Park, and through Hanrahan is one way to accommodate this. Mr. Kinol continued, "We (Stillwater Investment) build housing for the masses at a price in the \$200K range ... and here in Stamford, there is a need to build housing for someone who earns less than \$100K a year."

Mr. Kinol introduced architect Eric Rains, who gave a brief overview of the condominium project. It will be comprised of 61 two-bedroom units, 31 one-bedroom units, and 164 parking spaces, with unit sizes ranging from between 1200 and 1400 square feet arranged in a 4½ story format above a parking garage with a common courtyard at the center, open to the west. He said, "We have tried to create a street-friendly, urban-type building. A tower at the corner will serve as an architectural focal point and, along the two streets, the first level units (six of them), will have porches and stoops. Our lobby is on the corner to provide both activity and light at that location. Exterior materials will be mostly brick used in varying heights to break up the mass, and an inside courtyard will be available to residents. Parking will be concealed and the garage walls will be brick." Discussion followed. Attorney Goldberg asked the Commission to consider whether they wanted to bring in their Design Consultant at this point. Attorney Hennessey asked, "What are our next steps?"

MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING DECEMBER 11, 2003 - Page Three:

Attorney Goldberg responded, "Upon receipt of your formal request for the two plan amendments (submitted on this date and attached as part of these official minutes), I suggest that you meet with our Chairman, the Planning Board Chairman, Zoning Board Chairman and Board of Representatives Land Use Committee Chairmen and possibly Rick Redniss to hear the pertinent issues, come to a consensus and bring this information back to the URC (through its Mill River Sub-Committee), where the full Board will determine if the plan modifications are substantial or non-substantial. Upon formal submission of plans, another approvals' process with a 45-day time-frame begins." Chairman Osman assured the developers that the URC would meet and move quickly in order not to delay the project. He said, "We welcome more housing downtown. However, I would like to see more connection with the sidewalk and the street ... to assure this will not become a 'stand-alone' building." Mr. Kinol affirmed his commitment to the project, noting that "this plan is not cast in stone. We will work with you to make appropriate changes and are open to finding solutions for everybody, just as we have done with other Boards."

The Chairman called for a brief recess at 7:40PM. The meeting was resumed at 7:45PM.

Mill River Corridor Pedestrian & Bicycle Trails

Land Use Bureau Chief Robin Stein showed a map illustrating the proposed Mill River Corridor Park "Trail System", noting that the first phase of the bicycle path would extend from Broad Street along the west side of the Mill River, ending at Tresser Boulevard. He explained that the Trail System is part of the City's plan for the Mill River Corridor, a project which is supposed to create a central park or greenbelt along the river. Construction of the first phase of the bike path is expected to cost close to \$1 million, 80% of which will come from Federal Highway Administration grants. Mr. Stein also noted that the Mill River Trail System might eventually extend up to Scalzi Park to the north, and perhaps as far as the Merritt Parkway.

Transportation Planner Tom Bruccoleri reviewed the details of the plan, saying that the portion of the 12-foot Trail System running near Mill River & Greenwich Avenue would be made of concrete or asphalt and another segment comprised of stone dust would run by the cherry trees along the river. New lighting is planned around the perimeter and there are plans to keep Main Street as a "pedestrian only" bridge, according to Mr. Bruccoleri. No motorized vehicles will be allowed on the trailway/path. Mr. Bruccoleri said that the proposed Trail System would be "a little more than half a mile but is part of a larger trails plan by the City". A second phase is being designed to run through a tunnel under Tresser Boulevard to the train station. Another above ground route allowing riders and walkers to cross at the intersection of Greenwich Avenue and Tresser Boulevard near the train station will connect with the Urban Transitway.

Land Use Bureau Stein also noted that a state-of-the-art playground which will include a restroom facility is being designed for Rotary Park. He said, "Your Chairman and I are participants in a collaborative, the Mill River Conservancy, and through this group we are hoping to obtain some corporate grants for construction of the playground." URC Chairman Osman asked about the timing of this project. Mr. Stein responded, "Our anticipated target date is next fall."

MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING DECEMBER 11, 2003 - Page Four:

6. Southeast Quadrant

(a) **Park Square West** - Attorney Goldberg reported that she and Corcoran Jennison President Marty Jones are trying to schedule a conference call to complete the final revisions. A draft "as-is" version has been distributed and any further changes will be sent to the Commissioners via e-mail.

Executive Director Papp reported on the status of the temporary road leading up to the Target site. Target is paying for the design and the costs will subsequently be incorporated into the financing for the entire garage. It was also noted that the City may do the road work itself.

Executive Director Papp also reported on the status of the Bids for Demolition. He said, "It was a sealed bid process. There were four (4) responses, with one contractor withdrawing during the process. A selection committee comprised of Attorney Goldberg, City Purchasing Agent Robert Ruskowski, Assistant City Engineer Edward Gentile and myself unanimously chose Standard Demolition Services, a local firm with excellent references. Their lump sum bid was \$234,000 (two hundred and thirty-four thousand dollars)."

Chairman Osman recused himself because of his relationship with a principal of the above referenced company and turned the chair over to Vice Chairman Jim Nixon. Vice Chairman Nixon gave the Commissioners one week to review the draft contract with Standard Demolition Services and asked that anyone with changes/comments report back to him no later than Friday, December 19th. Following discussion, Commissioner Jewell authorized the Vice Chairman to make the final determination on the proposed contract demolition contract with Standard Demolition Services and to execute same, subject to review by each of the individual Commissioners. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Mellis and carried. Chairman Osman abstained from the vote. Following the vote, the chair was returned to Mr. Osman.

Director Papp noted that the Demolition Contractor had expressed concern re: a buckling wall between La Nueva Amor Café and Curley's Diner. The Commission directed Mr. Papp to meet with General Counsel and the City's Engineering Department as soon as possible "to assess the risk and determine if there was any imminent danger to the public."

(b) **URC Parking Garage** - Chairman Osman reported that he had visited the Robotic Parking Garage in Hoboken, NJ; further, that a Special URC meeting would be noticed for Friday, December 19, 2003 at 11:00AM to enable the Commissioners and any other interested parties to visit the automated garage. Executive Vice President of Development for Corcoran Jennison Mr. Harry Nash will join the group on Friday.

Executive Director Papp noted that the Request for Qualifications (RFQ) for the Stamford Summer Place Garage "Design/Build Services" has been issued and responses are due on Friday, December 19, 2003 by 4:00PM.

Attorney Goldberg reported that the URC's Financial Advisor Lori A. Granato of First Southwest Company and its Bond Counsel John F. Stafstrom Jr. of Pullman & Comley have both been working on a Lease Agreement between the City of Stamford and the URC. Draft documents have been sent to the City's Law Department.

MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING DECEMBER 13, 2003 - Page Five:

When asked about time-frames, Attorney Goldberg responded that she hoped to go before the requisite Boards with an initial presentation for bond authorization after the first of the year.

(c) Status of Litigation - Attorney Goldberg requested formal ratification of the Settlement Agreement with Mr. Ray Miller, former owner of 1055 Washington Boulevard. Following a brief recap of the issues by Attorney Goldberg, Commissioner Jewell made a motion to approve the Settlement Agreement (previously approved by voice vote via telephone). The motion was seconded by Commissioner Nixon and carried unanimously.

At 8:45PM, Commissioner Nixon made a motion to go into Executive Session for the purpose of discussing matters pertaining to litigation (Agenda Item 6(ii)). The motion was seconded by Commissioner Mellis and carried unanimously. Executive Director Papp and Attorney Goldberg participated in the discussion. No motions were made and no votes were taken. At 9:20PM, Commissioner Jewell made a motion to return to Open Session. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Mellis and carried unanimously.

7. Stamford Urban Transitway

(a) Status Report - Discussion on this agenda item was tabled.

8. Agency Administration

(a) Operating Budget - It was the sense of the Board that the budget be reviewed further and expanded to report on monthly expected cash flow. Discussion will continue at the next regularly scheduled Commission meeting.

(b) Committee Reports - There were no further Committee reports at this time.

9. Old Business

None.

10. New Business

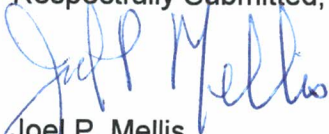
None.

11. Adjournment

There will be a Special Meeting on Friday, December 19, 2003 at 11:00AM for the purpose of visiting the Robotic Parking Garage in Hoboken, NJ. The next Regular Meeting is scheduled for Thursday, January 8, 2004 at 6:00PM.

There being no further business before the Board, Vice Chairman Nixon made a move to adjourn. The motion was carried by unanimous vote and the meeting was adjourned at 9:46PM.

Respectfully Submitted,


Joel P. Mellis
Secretary/Treasurer



SANDAK HENNESSEY & GRECO LLP
ATTORNEYS AT LAW

970 Summer Street
Stamford, Connecticut 06905-5568

Telephone
(203) 425-4200

Facsimile
(203) 325-8608

Kevin M. Greco
William J. Hennessey, Jr.
Gary S. Klein
Peter M. Nolin
Jay H. Sandak
Mary E. Sommer
Michael P. Sweeney

December 11, 2003

Stephanie A. McLaughlin*
*Also Admitted in New York
Via Hand Delivery

Attorney Rachel Goldberg
Urban Redevelopment Commission
City of Stamford
888 Washington Boulevard
Stamford, CT 06901

**Re: River House Associates LLC
35-49 West Broad Street**

Dear Attorney Goldberg:

Further to my correspondence of October 16, 2003, and our several subsequent conversations, I am writing in order to formally confirm my client's request that the Urban Redevelopment Commission amend the Mill River Corridor Project Plan so that the subject parcel, 35-49 West Broad Street, is not identified on the Land Acquisition Map as "Land To Be Acquired For Public Use". Further, we would like to clarify that the plan proposed by my client, with its affordable housing component, conforms to the definition of "Residential Assisted Housing", as said term is defined in the plan or in the alternative that the proposed land use map be amended to redesignate the property from "Residential Assisted Housing" to "Residential".

We understand that the Mill River Corridor Project Plan provides for a process for determining whether such requests for redesignation constitute a "Substantial Change" as defined in Section 1011 of the plan. We kindly request that you begin the process of consulting with the parties identified therein to come to such determination.

Sincerely,

William J. Hennessey, Jr.

WJH/jc

cc: Development Team
Michael Jones, Esq.