

STAMFORD PLANNING BOARD
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES #3751
TUESDAY, JUNE 26, 2012
7TH FLOOR LAND USE CONFERENCE AREA,
GOVERNMENT CENTER
888 WASHINGTON BLVD., STAMFORD, CT

Stamford Planning Board Members present were: Theresa Dell, Chairperson, Roger Quick, Michael Totilo, Dudley Williams, Zbigniew Naumowicz and Jay Tepper. Present for staff was Todd Dumais.

Mrs. Dell called the meeting to order at 7:00pm and introduced the Board Members.

Regular Meeting

Supplemental Capital Appropriation Requests:

Stamford Lights requesting a supplemental appropriation of \$150,000 to create a place to display and showcase works of art at the Stamford Transit Center. The funds will supplement a State Grant of \$155,000 for the project.

Mrs. Dell introduced the application to the Board and introduced Laure Aubuchon, Director of Economic Development who will speak for the City and noted that Cynthia Reeder also requested to speak to the Board.

Laure Aubuchon said there's been confusion since April about the required 1 to 1 match of funds. They were under the impression that at that time, this grant required a match. Subsequently, they have learned that the rules were changed and no match is required. Ms. Aubuchon stated that they originally applied for TIGER III funds because those are related to the train station but then decided that wasn't appropriate for this project. She said that it will be City money and they are requesting a supplemental appropriation and that they have gone through the RFO process and selected a consultant. Ms. Aubuchon next described the detail of the project including art and color lighting station and the locations it will be on the building. The goal is to enliven the train station and provide more light around the station because it is the gateway for the City and they want to make it visible to the tens of thousands of people that pass through this area daily.

Mr. Tepper asked if the lighting is on the main building or is it artistic lighting? Ms. Aubuchon said it's a way to convey information through light.

Mrs. Dell asked what the life expectancy was of the project? Ms. Aubuchon said they have a contract for three years; the life expectancy of the lights are 11 to 23 years if they run 8 to 10 hours a day it is 23 years.

Mrs. Dell asked when they applied for these supplemental fund if they spoke to Peter Privitera? Will the lights be extended past the 3 years? Where will the operating funds come from to cover this?

Mr. Tepper asked an additional question about the lighting? Mrs. Aubuchon said the lights were projected on the building.

Mrs. Dell felt this should not be listed under the 20-year capital funds; this project is more of a short term capital item and that she felt it was not truly a vital project that needs to come out of the major capital funds.

Mr. Tepper said that in his opinion the original purchase should come out of Capital and the rest out of operating.

Mrs. Dell asked what the time-line was for this and could they get back to the Board because it's a lighting situation?

Mr. Quick tended to agree with this (as well as Mr. Totilo) that this is more like an electrical fixture and not a capital project improvement to a building. They agreed with Mrs. Dell and they all were concerned about the classification of the project.

Mr. Williams expressed the same concern about classification. The Board has denied or delayed regular capital projects based on the City's financial situation. He said that to now put this in as a regular capital project now he was uncomfortable.

Mr. Tepper said it belongs as a capital expense and the Board is dependent on an analysis.

Mrs. Dell said she didn't feel this was a vital need for the City, as lovely as it may be, compared to fixing roads and major infrastructure repairs. This should have come through as a short-term project.

Mr. Tepper said the main thing the Board determines is if it's a capital project and something the City needs to spend money on.

Mrs. Dell said this is different than street lighting.

Mr. Tepper said the criteria is whether it's capital or not and does it have merit.

Mr. Quick noted this is similar to the town buying Christmas Tree lighting.

Mr. Williams agreed with the classification around the definitions and stated his other concern is on the merit of the project. If you compare this to all projects they reviewed a few months ago, does this have the biggest impact on the City?

Mr. Totilo asked what the logic was to pick the Train Station? Ms. Aubuchon said is this a necessity of life? No, is it a quality of life; it's a marketing notion and a low cost approach to doing that.

Mrs. Dell asked if Metro North had given permission? Ms. Aubuchon said yes, they were part of the selection committee.

Cynthia Reeder, resident of Stamford, agreed the lights are a lovely idea but wondered whether or not we should be spending money on this type of capital project with all the dire capital needs of the City. This wasn't a concept that came to them as a planned project and was just an ad-hoc reaction to a grant.

Mrs. Dell asked if anyone had approached the DSSD to be a partner in funding this? Ms. Aubuchon said no, not at this phase. There was another wayfinding project and they would look for a match from the private sector. She noted that the lights are rated from 50-1000 hours and low end is 11 year lifespan to high end of 17 years.

Mrs. Dell asked Ms. Aubuchon to be available on July 3, 2012 at the next Planning Board meeting when the Board would vote. Mrs. Dell asked Staff to contact Peter Privitera to clarify if this should be a capital request.

Zoning Board Referral:

ZB 212-13 – Zoning Map Amendment – SILVIA TORRES, EAST MAIN STREET, to rezone approximately 78,375 s.f. of land currently zoned R-6 (One Family, Two Family Residence) to C-N (Neighborhood Business District).

Mrs. Dell introduced the map change and seated Zbigniew Naumowicz to vote on this project.

Attorney Jackie Kaufman, presented the application for Silvia Katores. She explained that her client works and lives on East Main Street operating a salon which they rent and is currently owned by the City because it was subject to part of the Phase II of the Urban Transitway. The Map Change Application takes the opportunity to bring uniformity to East Main Street where in 2002 the Master Plan changed it to CAT 7 but the Zoning was never changed to commercial. Attorney Kaufman distributed aerials on this application to orient the Board on the location of the application and distributed color photos of the existing conditions on site. She further explained that the street is a mix of uses, zones and Master Plan categories and ultimately this application is would move the property to Category 7 and into the C-N district.

Mrs. Dell asked if they'd spoken to other area homes in the area about the change? Attorney Kaufman's client said they stopped by homes and obtained signatures on a petition and the consensus was that this will raise the value of all the properties.

Mr. Tepper noted that every residential parcel has at least one business next to it.

Attorney Kaufman said in 2002 the Planning Board's vision for the Master Plan was for this corridor to be commercial.

Mr. Quick asked about input from people who live on Sherman? Attorney Kaufman noted there wouldn't be any more demand on the street than there is today but they'll look into this.

Mrs. Dell asked about the quantity of parking spaces required now by the salon? Attorney Kaufman said 6 spaces.

Phil Steinberg, Executive Director Eastside Partnership, said they'd talked about this with everyone at their most recent Neighborhood meeting and all were supportive.

Rachel Goldberg, Interim Director/General Counsel URC, said under a contract with the City, they bought the property from the owner and one of their goals is to keep businesses in the neighborhood and hoped the Board would look favorably on this application.

Mr. Williams moved to recommend approval of the application. Mr. Quick seconded the motion and it passed unanimously with the eligible members present voting, 5-0 (Dell, Quick, Fishman, Williams and Naumowicz).

Planning Board Meeting Minutes:

Meeting of 5/22/12

Mr. Totilo moved to approve the minutes as submitted. Mr. Naumowicz seconded the motion and the minutes were approved unanimously with the eligible members present voting, 5-0 (Dell, Quick, Totilo, Williams and Naumowicz).

Meeting of 6/5/12

Mr. Williams moved to approve the minutes as submitted. Mr. Tepper seconded the motion and the minutes were approved unanimously with the eligible members present voting, 5-0 (Dell, Quick, Totilo, Williams and Tepper).

New Business

Mrs. Dell and the Board discussed holding a Special Meeting to discuss and vote on the Stamford Lights project. It was decided the meeting would be held at 4:00PM on the 7th Floor in the Land Use Bureau Conference Area. Mrs. Dell asked staff to collect the additional information requested. Mr. Quick commented that he wanted staff to provide feedback on projects reviewed by the Planning Board that go to other Board's for approval.

Mrs. Dell adjourned the meeting at 8:25 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Theresa Dell, Chair
Stamford Planning Board

Note: These proceedings were recorded on tape and are available for review in the Land Use Bureau located on the 7th floor of Government Center, 888 Washington Boulevard, during regular business hours.