

STAMFORD PLANNING BOARD
SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES #3752
TUESDAY, JUNE 28, 2012
7TH FLOOR LAND USE CONFERENCE ROOM,
GOVERNMENT CENTER
888 WASHINGTON BLVD., STAMFORD, CT

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

Mrs. Dell called the Special Meeting to order at 4:00pm and introduced the Board Members and staff to the public.

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 explained the Public Hearing Rules and procedures and that this was a continuation of the Tuesday, June 26, 2012 meeting. She added that at Tuesday's meeting the Board had asked for clarification of the project and whether it should be classified a true Capital Project request and had asked for additional information regarding the lights.

Mr. Dumais updated the Board and noted that additional materials, per their requests, were received and distributed.

Peter Privitera, Director of OPM, provided the Board with an outline of the Board of Finance fiscal policy manual regarding Capital Expenses. He noted according to their manual, the purchasing of equipment in excess of \$50,000 with a useful life expectancy of greater than 5 years and a non-recurring expense meets the criteria of Capital. Mr. Privitera noted that he was only looking at it from an equipment perspective and clarified that the only difference between this and the charter is that the manual allows the Board to raise the amount. He next discussed paying for the project over 20 years and the next time we add this, the Board would pay with short term 5 year bonds.

Mr. Tepper asked if the life of the lights is 11-12 years, will he still pay out over 5? Mr. Privitera said yes, it doesn't make sense to pay out over 20 years.

Mrs. Dell asked a question about operating costs and who does this? Mr. Williams asked who pays the electricity at the train station now? Ms. Aubuchon said the state pays now and it is their hope that the State or Metro North will pay for the electricity in the future. She noted that the first three years of operating costs are included in the budget for the project.

Mr. Totilo asked about the maintenance aspect of this and noted it's not like replacing a normal bulb.

Steve Hamlin, representing the tentative contract company for the project, said this product is rated at 50,000 hours, LEDs tend to degrade over time.

Mr. Tepper asked what percentage of the \$300,000 is for bulbs? Mr. Hamlin said there's \$159,000 budgeted for that; however, clarified that there are no bulbs per se, they are strips.

Mr. Quick asked if all four sides of the building would be treated the same? Mr. Hamlin said only the side facing I-95, and the East and West sides of the building.

Mr. Totilo asked about efficiency of the lights? Mr. Hamlin said they use only 20% electricity of normal bulbs.

Mrs. Dell expressed concern about approving additional Capital on a project like this since this year and last year the City was under tight constraints to make hard decisions about what to put in. She stated as lovely as this is, can't justify including this at this time especially since the Board had to leave out fire trucks, road repairs, etc. It's on a building the City doesn't own but to her, it's not a major need of the City from which to contribute capital funds. She commented that the City should explore a private partnership. In addition, Mrs. Dell expressed concern about having decorative lights that don't really contribute to the betterment of the overall City and that all projects for the City are important but this doesn't meet the needs for capital fund expenditures.

Ms. Aubuchon agreed that it's not a City owned building but the reason the train station makes sense is that it's the most visible location. The City has spent nothing to advertise itself. From an economic development standpoint, it's all part of a quality of life expression. She asked the Board to think about this as multi-pronged and good for the entire City.

Mrs. Dell asked if they'd talked to the MTA about providing funds for this project? Ms. Aubuchon said they have tentative discussions and the MTA expressed a willingness.

Mr. Quick asked if this could be done in phases as opposed to all at once? Ms. Aubuchon said yes it could.

Mr. Totilo asked what the bond rate was on this? Mr. Privitera said around 2.6. Mr. Totilo said he liked the idea of publicizing and promoting the City and it's a cheap way to do that. He expressed concern that the City hasn't bonded more projects at these rates.

Mr. Williams said he shared Mrs. Dell's concerns. But was sympathetic about the marketing effort.

Mr. Totilo moved to recommend approval of the supplemental appropriation request, seconded by Mr. Tepper and the motion carried with the eligible members present voting, 3-2 (Totilo, Williams and Tepper in favor and Dell and Quick in opposition).

There being no further business, Mrs. Dell adjourned the meeting at 4:40 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Theresa Dell, Chairman
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.