

STAMFORD PLANNING BOARD
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES #3764
TUESDAY, OCTOBER 23, 2012
4TH FLOOR CAFETERIA, GOVERNMENT CENTER
888 WASHINGTON BLVD., STAMFORD, CT

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

Mrs. Dell called the meeting to order at 6:45pm. Mrs. Dell seated alternates Tepper and Naumowicz for Regular Members Totilo and Quick who were absent.

Regular Meeting

Mr. Tepper moved that the Board go into executive session on the first item on the Agenda Subdivision # 3994 – Michael A. Innaurato, seconded by Mr. Williams and the motion carried unanimously with the eligible members present voting, 5-0 (Dell, Fishman, Williams, Tepper and Naumowicz).

Executive Session:

Subdivision #3994 – Michael A. Innaurato, Executive session to current legal appeal of this application.

The Board returned from Executive Session. Mrs. Dell reported that while in Executive session, the Planning Board voted unanimously to approve the Stipulation to Judgment and Settlement Agreement pertaining to Subdivision Application number 3994. The Planning Board found the Settlement to be a mirror image of its approval of the Subdivision and notes that the parties involved have worked out the terms of the agreement without compromising the Board's approval or conditions.

Subdivision:

Subdivision Application # 4002 Estate of Lillian Lotstein for subdivision of property into two (2) parcels. The property is located on the northeast corner of the intersection of Webbs Hill Road and Dogwood Lane, having an address of 6 Dogwood Lane.

Mr. Dumais briefly described the subdivision to the Board. Attorney Thomas Cassone reviewed the application with the Board and asked if there were any specific questions that the Board had.

Mrs. Dell asked if the Board Members had any questions and asked them to review the materials and be prepared to vote on the application at next week's meeting.

Planning Board Meeting Minutes:

Meeting of 9/18/12 - Mrs. Dell tabled a vote on the minutes until the next meeting.

Meeting of 10/2/12 - Mr. Tepper moved to recommend approval of the minutes as submitted. Mr. Naumowicz seconded the motion which carried unanimously with the eligible members present voting to approve the minutes, 4-0 (Dell, Fishman, Naumowicz and Tepper).

Meeting of 10/9/12 - Mrs. Fishman moved to recommend approval of the minutes as submitted. Mr. Tepper seconded the motion which carried unanimously with the eligible members present voting to approve the minutes, 5-0 (Dell, Fishman, Williams, Naumowicz and Tepper).

Joint Public Meeting

At 7:30pm, Mrs. Dell opened the Joint Meeting of the Capital Budget. She introduced Kathleen Murphy, Board of Finance and Frank Cerasoli (R-15) Board of Representatives to the Public and the members of the Planning Board present. Mrs. Dell described the process by which these Joint Public Meetings would be conducted and that the public would be given the chance to speak at a Public Hearing in February 2013.

Mrs. Fishman read the legal notice into the record.

Capital Budget Presentations FY 2013/14-2020:

Mrs. Dell noted the budgets were prepared in a new format and asked Tony Romano, OPM, to explain the balances on the forms. She also explained that David Martin, Board of Finance, had asked for a “life year expectancy” for each project if it’s known at the time. Mrs. Dell noted that the Planning Board wants to ensure all projects are true capital projects and not an operating expense. Mrs. Dell asked the Board Members and presenters to remember we are in lean financial times and we don’t have unlimited funds for all projects.

Mr. Tepper inquired about the balances. Mr. Romano said the balances were as of September 30, 2012 as listed in the City’s system. He noted that for the Housing Development Fund, the unbundled portion is \$970K. Ms. Murphy added that the City has \$2M in cash. Mr. Tepper wanted to know if the balance of funds is for previously approved projects.

Office of the Mayor – Housing Development Fund (HDF)

Tim Beeble, Community Development Director for the City of Stamford presented the request. He explained that it was for \$1.5M for HDF was estimated in 1982 to provide a pool of funding to develop affordable housing. He distributed packages to the Board and reviewed the history of the program with over 1,100 housing units developed from these funds. Mr. Beeble added that today they had the ribbon cutting at Marshall’s Commons and Palmer’s Square which are two projects that received funds from HDF and that in the past 6-month period, they’ve had three ribbon cutting ceremonies.

Mr. Beeble described additional phases of development receiving funds: the current unencumbered balance for the CDC Merrell Avenue project of approximately \$1.1 M and the CDC St Luke’s at 992 Summer Street, a 50-unit project of approximately \$1.25M and the St. Luke’s 6-family home project of approximately \$280K. He described how they address current funds and what they look for to receive from capital budget funding.

Mrs. Fishman asked how many BMR units at Palmer’s Square? Mr. Beeble said 46 units.

Mr. Tepper asked with \$1.5M they’d have \$3.5M for new projects? Mr. Beeble said the request for \$1.5M is for new projects. Mr. Tepper asked what kind of leverage does the City get financially when it develops these projects? Mr. Beeble said 6:1. Mr. Tepper asked about how the fee-in-lieu figures in? Mr. Beeble said there was a separate line for this.

Mr. Cerasoli said with the 3 projects just discussed, they have \$2.6M which doesn’t add to \$3M. Mrs. Dell added the Board would like to see specific amounts for each project and what was approved in previous years.

Mr. Beeble said the HDF is looking for funds to be flexible and have the ability to move forward on projects. Mrs. Dell said the Board approves funds for specific projects and she asked to have this put on hold until the Board speaks to Peter Privitera. Ms. Murphy said they need to have more flexibility especially the way the bond issuance came down. Mr. Beeble said at times they have developer buyouts to take some pressure off the City. Ms.

Murphy noted they've had \$2.9 million sitting and still looking for additional funds. Ms. Fishman stated that the department should be allowed some discretion with funds.

Short Term Capital - Citywide Technology

Mr. Romano noted that last year's funding amount was \$0.

Michael Pensiero, Director, Technology Management Services, noted they hadn't received funding in the past two years. He distributed a 4-page handout and has been working with each department to get the requests down. Projects 1 to 10 are in descending order by importance.

Ms. Murphy said they should make a format change in their requests. Mr. Pensiero said he needed some flexibility with funding because computer replacement line is almost depleted but becomes more and more difficult.

Mrs. Fishman asked why the ambulance service receive the call 10 minutes after the police/fire do? Mr. Tepper asked if any projects become crippled without funding? Mr. Pensiero said the first three requests are most concerning and from 4 on would be "nice-to-haves."

Mr. William asked a question on the telephone upgrade. Mr. Pensiero answered.

Ms. Murphy said in June 2012, the project reports \$2.7M in cash that has been sitting for a year. Project expenses won't be spent until 2014. Mr. Pensiero said he didn't know they had that in funding in place and that is why the balance was so large. Mrs. Dell asked if they'd spent down some of this? Ms. Murphy said if we add \$1.9M, how fast will you spend it; the issue pertains to a lot of projects.

Mr. Romano said in the new quarter, they'll have updates.

Scofield Manor

Vin Tufo, CEO of Charter Oak Communities (COC), explained they are the operator of the Scofield manor program sponsored by the City. He explained what Scofield Manor is and that it's about 80 years old. Fully funded for operating from a program from the State General Fund but no funding for capital improvements. Issue: future of operating from State which is inadequate. Mr. Tufo said they'd done a capital needs analysis of the building to see what they'll need over the next two years which will be approximately \$5M over 20 years and about \$1.5M over the next 3 years of which all are ADA compliant issues in public buildings.

Mr. Tufo said they are under full disclosure in the State system and they are not including anything in these requests that are operating expenses like paint or carpeting. They bundled their projects into 3 categories.

Mrs. Dell said indeed painting and carpeting are not capital expenses; she asked how they justified 20-year bonding?

Mr. Tepper said some of the funds can be considered operating funds by the City and how the State handles their bookkeeping should have no bearing on us.

Ms. Murphy asked if they have other funding sources for Capital? Mr. Tofu said no and they are working with the State to supplement operating services. They have no supplemental funding sources other than public. The suggestion to partner with private entities to supplement Scofield is a good one but relying on the private sector to provide funds for operating expenses is difficult.

Mr. Cerasoli asked how much of the balance has been spent and bonded? Mr. Tofu said much is tied up in the elevator project? Mr. Romano said all has been bonded. Ms. Murphy wanted to confirm all requested funds are for elevator and exterior repairs?

Bartlett Arboretum

Paul Travaglino, Co-President, Board of Directors, presented the request to the Board. He explained this is the birthplace of horticulture and some of the infrastructure is as old as 1913 and that they are one of 25 public arboretums in the country. He distributed a handout detailing their site and infrastructure improvements; totaling \$85K. They have water compliance issues; wells have to be brought into compliance as both well caps are below grade.

Mr. Tepper asked if the well water had been tested for pollution? Mr. Travaglino said yes and they are not contaminated. Mr. Williams asked if they have plans to tie in Brookdale Road into the City's water system? Mr. Travaglino said they are on restricted conservation land and can't even water flowers. Mrs. Dell said their #2 priority must happen especially because of how the City operates. Mr. Tepper asked about how much private fundraising they do? Mr. Travaglino said they do private fundraising and have just started another campaign.

Stamford Historical Society

No one was present to answer questions.

Stamford Museum

Melissa Mulrooney, Executive Director, described what has been done to the property over the past few years. William Aron, President of the Board of Directors, was also present. Ms. Mulrooney discussed the Museum's master plan and the need to address several infrastructure projects on the site. This allowed them to correct pedestrian and vehicular issues. She noted that the Museum serves over 18,000 students a year. Now, they are asking the Planning Board and the City to activate the Master Plan on the north end of their property so they can implement a multi-use farm house, parking lot, entrance and security in addition to new pastures. The total being requested for Phase 1 of this plan is \$3.5-\$4M.

Mrs. Dell asked if there was a breakdown of this project. Ms. Mulrooney said they are currently working on that. The farm house will be \$1.3M and all other portions equal the rest.

Mr. Williams asked for a breakdown of costs. Ms. Mulrooney said it doesn't make sense to do any other improvements because they'd be crippled with the construction. Soft costs on the building are \$400K. They are also looking to get matching funds from fundraising efforts. The farm house is the biggest chunk of this and if approved, would be a powerful message to private donors. They hope to activate construction during the 2013-2014 fiscal year.

Mr. Tepper asked what the expectation was for private funding?

Mrs. Dell asked if they only get \$500K from the City, does it still allow for them to fundraise? Ms. Mulrooney said anything they get as a start will help move the project forward. The master plan is a 20-25 year vision from the City that they would do in phases.

Mrs. Dell noted that \$1.8 million was a big request given the City's fiscal constraints.

Mr. Williams wanted to revisit the water line issue with the Bartlett Arboretum since they and the Museum are the two major public facilities in the neighborhood.

Stamford Center for the Arts

Mike Moran, Director for SCA presented the request to the Board. He outlined several projects were including the north wall of the Palace Theatre built in 1920's and a dry well replacement issues.

Old Town Hall

No members from this Agency were present to present this request.

Mrs. Dell returned to the regular meeting.

Zoning Board Referrals:

ZB Appl. 212-17 – Amended GDP, Final Site & Architectural Plan and Coastal Site Plan Review (CSPR), YALE & TOWNE, SPE, LLC, Requesting a GDP amendment, Final Site and Architectural Plans and Coastal Site Plan Review to develop a new five-story building with 102 housing units, 17,600 s.f. office space and associated parking and landscaping and which also includes preservation of an existing historic structure. Block Y1 is part of the mixed-use Yale & Towne development at 110 Towne St. and is located in the SRD-N district.

Application 212-16 – YALE & TOWNE SPE, LLC, 110 Towne St, Text change, to Amend Article III, Section 9k(5)(b) to allow hotel FAR and hotel units to be converted to additional residential FAR and/or residential units with Zoning Board approval.

John Freeman, Attorney for the Applicant, provided a history of the project begun in 2005 when they acquired the 20-acre parcel. The Yale & Towne site is broken out into eight development blocks and Attorney Freeman described each block and its status. Block Y1 was an historic building site, 7 Market Street which used to be a police substation of approximately 17,600 sf. They just signed a new tenant, Kayak.com, and they will have their world headquarters here. The original plan was to build 150 hotel units but they've decided to convert the hotel rooms to residential and instead build 102 apartment units. They propose a lower building of only 5 stories. He discussed where the retail and commercial areas will be allocated towards the Canal Street side and he discussed future development.

Mrs. Dell asked if they intend to take 150 hotel units away and instead build 102 residential units? Mr. Dumais asked for a confirmation of total residential units to be built and Commercial F.A.R. to be relinquished.

Mr. Tepper asked about BMR in all buildings.

Mrs. Dell asked about the architectural aspects of this change and noted that the Board would not be open to a future text amendment for additional commercial F.A.R. to residential conversions in this district.

Mr. Naumowicz moved to recommend approval of Text Change application 212-16. Mr. Williams seconded the motion which carried with the eligible members present voting, 5-0 (Dell, Williams, Fishman, Tepper and Naumowicz).

Mr. Tepper moved to recommend approval of the GDP Amendment, Final Site & Architectural Plans and Coastal application (Appl. 212-17). Mrs. Fishman seconded the motion which carried with the eligible members present voting, 5-0 (Dell, Williams, Fishman, Tepper and Naumowicz). Mrs. Dell asked as a courtesy to the Board that the Applicant bring back the final design on the building, landscaping and parking.

Old Business

MP 415 – Caroline Gaglio, Master Plan Map Amendment to amend portions of the Master Plan Map from Land Use Category 1 – *Very Low Density Single-Family* to Land Use

Category 1 – *Very Low Density Single-Family* and Land Use Category 17 – *Open Space Overlay* for approximately 7,312 s.f. of land part of the property known as 74 Spinning Wheel Lane.

Mr. Dumais provided a brief summary of the application to the Board from the previously closed Public Hearing. Mr. Williams moved to recommend approval of the Map Amendment. Mr. Naumowicz seconded the motion which carried with the eligible members present voting, 5-0 (Dell, Williams, Fishman, Tepper and Naumowicz).

There being no further business, Mrs. Dell adjourned the meeting at 11:10 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.