

STAMFORD PLANNING BOARD  
SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES #3609  
MONDAY, MAY 9, 2011  
10<sup>th</sup> Floor MAYOR'S CONFERENCE ROOM and  
7<sup>th</sup> FLOOR LAND USE CONFERENCE AREA  
888 WASHINGTON BLVD., STAMFORD, CT

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

***Joint Meeting of the Planning Board and the Zoning Board***

(10<sup>th</sup> Floor Mayor's Conference Room)

**"Vision for Downtown Stamford Planning & Zoning"** – Presentation of report and discussion by David Kooris, Regional Plan Agency and Sandy Goldstein, Downtown Special Services District

Audrey Cosentini, Chairman of the Zoning Board, opened the Joint Meeting of the Zoning and Planning Boards for the purpose of discussion of the report *Towards a Livable Neighborhood in Downtown Stamford* commission by the Downtown Special Services District (DSSD) and completed by the Regional Planning Agency.

The Planning Board Chair, Mrs. Dell, called to order the Special Meeting of the Planning Board and announced that at the conclusion of the Joint Meeting the Planning Board would reconvene on the 7<sup>th</sup> Floor to conduct regular business.

Sandy Goldstein, President DSSD, introduced the study and thanked the Board Members for coming together to hear and discuss the plan about having a livable neighborhood in Downtown Stamford. She introduced members of her team: from the URC: Rachel Goldberg, Steve Osman, Bob Khan, and Steve Hoffman and from the DSSD: Karl Bildner, Jackie Whitenhall, John Ruololo, and Martin Levine. Mrs. Goldstein next introduced David Kooris from Regional Planning Agency (RPA).

David Kooris described the RPA as a non-profit, NGO, dedicated to research and advocacy of urban planning issues in the Tri-State area. He explained that they do a limited amount of consulting and never work for private developers or on specific development projects. Mr. Kooris utilized a power-point presentation to highlight the most important aspects of the proposed plan, chiefly to make the downtown area pedestrian, bicycle and transit friendly. He then explained that there were three components to the plan: Master Plan Changes, Zoning Changes and Capital Improvements. Mr. Kooris explained that it is important to encourage and harness private development through specific zoning changes and use capital planning to invest in the public realm. Their team looked at the existing Master Plan Land Use categories in Downtown and then asked what they envisioned it to be. Mr. Kooris discussed the distinctions between the three separate existing Master Plan areas – core, corridor and collar and how they'd like it to be broken down and merged to more accurately reflect current trends and reality of land use in the Downtown area. He emphasized the idea of creating a city center category with a core of intense mixed use and pedestrian infrastructure that would include the city center to the south side of the highway around MetroGreen, Gateway and the Transportation Center. Mr. Kooris explained the need to encourage high density residential projects and to allow for neighborhood commercial and retail.

He then discussed the northern extents of their proposed City Center and explained that in their study they examined the artery along Hoyt and Summer but stopped short of recommending changes because it was outside of the project parameters. Mr. Kooris suggest that the vision being offered to the Board Members be used as a framework for how changes to the Master Plan and Zoning could create a more workable and livable City Center.

Other ideas highlighted in the presentation were urban design issues, the “Park Once” concept and capital investments. Mr. Kooris showed several building facades describing how buildings are perceived from the street and how a building’s design can create a different “feel”. He next discussed parking and how there was an abundance of it in the Downtown. However, the parking is under-promoted with no signage to tell people where to find it and that the City should explore a “Park Once” concept to that people park their cars in one location and walk wherever they need to go within the Downtown. Mr. Kooris also touched upon the existing zoning bonuses and what should be eliminated, retained or created to encourage the type of development desired versus standards used to uniquely benefit specific projects. With regard to Capital Improvements, the study explored the idea of the creation of an urban TIF district to make targeted Public Realm investments such as Veteran’s Park, traffic calming on existing streets, and repairs to street infrastructure.

Mr. Kooris ended his presentation and opened the floor to both Board Members for questions, comments and discussion.

Mrs. Cosentini suggested that the Planning Board ask questions first. Mr. Tepper asked how increasing the geography of the area defined as city center would impact building heights. Mr. Kooris answered that without changes to the Zoning it wouldn’t.

Mr. Quick stated Stamford has become a divided city with railroad and I-95 and then asked how we could encourage a better interaction between the two. Mr. Kooris said through better targeted Public Realm improvements and new private development.

Mr. Williams asked for more explanation of the DSSD’s vision of the expansion of mass transportation and light rail. Mr. Kooris answered there needs to be substantial Bus Route and service improvements first and then perhaps another look at the light rail.

Questions from the Zoning Board:

Mr. Mickelson discussed the vision of growth for the City, the kinds of development desired, and how the incentives have become hodgepodge and are destroying uniform zoning. He commented that there is no balance between commercial and residential and loss of/lack of commercial activity other than small retail has occurred over the past years.

Mr. Parson noted the ZBA had not been invited to meeting and that they should have been included.

Mr. Mills asked if UCONN was included in this vision for the Downtown. Mr. Kooris answered that they were.

Mrs. Cosentini stated that the group had done a great job of targeting and highlighting special capital projects needed to enhance downtown, had provided insight into parking and traffic calming ideas, building amenities, greenspace, anticipating urban growth, need for an urban TIF and a cohesive vision for Master Plan and Zoning changes needed to revitalize the downtown area.

Mrs. Dell noted that the Planning Board was going to break from the Joint Meeting and reconvene downstairs to conduct a regular business on the 7<sup>th</sup> Floor to consider several items on their agenda. She thanked Mr. Kooris, and the DSSD and URC for the presentation.

***Planning Board Regular Meeting***  
(7<sup>th</sup> Floor Land Use Conference Area)

The chair, Mrs. Dell, called the Planning Board only portion of the Special Meeting to back to order at 8:37PM.

**Citywide Sidewalks** Request \$150,000 of addition funding for the existing funded Citywide Sidewalks capital project.

Mr. Dumais introduced the supplemental capital request. He explained that the request did not add to the 35 million in bonded projects, but was part of a reallocation of funding from the WPCA which should not have been bonded. He stated that this is not a new project and would be used for sidewalks between 7<sup>th</sup> Street and Bridge street on the west side of Summer Street.

After a brief discussion, Mr. Williams moved to recommend approval of the requested funding. Mr. Totilo seconded the motion and it passed unanimously with the eligible members present voting, 5-0 (Dell, Fishman, Williams, Totilo and Quick).

**Street Patch & Resurface** Request \$554,187 of addition funding for the existing funded Street Patch and Resurface capital project (includes milling overlay, reconstruction and associated fixes to public streets).

Mr. Dumais introduced the supplemental capital request. He explained that like the previous request and the two requests that he will explain next, the appropriation would not add to the 35 million in bonded projects, but was part of a reallocation of funding from the WPCA which should not have been bonded. Mr. Tepper questioned if they need to close out the other projects first. Mr. Dumais stated that as it was explained to his, they did not. Mr. Tepper wanted to emphasize that the Board follow the proper procedure and Mrs. Dell agreed. She asked that in the transmittal for all of the supplemental requests, they put in a statement regarding the projects not increasing the total dollars of the bonded Capital Budget.

After a brief discussion, Mrs. Fishman moved to recommend approval of the requested funding. Mr. Totilo seconded the motion and it passed unanimously with the eligible members present voting, 5-0 (Dell, Fishman, Williams, Totilo and Quick).

**Design Review for Animal Shelter** New Capital Project request of \$75,000 for the design review of the Animal Shelter.

Mr. Dumais introduced the supplemental capital request.

After a brief discussion, Mr. Williams moved to recommend approval of the requested funding. Mr. Quick seconded the motion and it passed unanimously with the eligible members present voting, 5-0 (Dell, Fishman, Williams, Totilo and Quick).

**SNAP Software for Health** New Capital Project request of \$65,000 for School Nurse Assistant Program Software for Maintaining Student Health records.

Mr. Dumais introduced the supplemental capital request. He noted that this was originally presented as part of the Health Department' request in the Fall but never made it into the Draft Budget.

After a brief discussion, Mrs. Fishman moved to recommend approval of the requested funding. Mr. Quick seconded the motion and it passed unanimously with the eligible members present voting, 5-0 (Dell, Fishman, Williams, Totilo and Quick).

***Old Business***

None

***New Business***

Mr. Dumais explained that the Board did not have to meet on May 17<sup>th</sup> and noted that the next meeting on May 24<sup>th</sup> would be a public hearing on a proposed three lot subdivision. Mrs. Fishman commented that she would not be able to attend.

There being no further business to discuss, Mrs. Dell adjourned the meeting at 9:36 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Claire Fishman, Secretary  
Stamford Planning Board

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