

STAMFORD PLANNING BOARD
JOINT PUBLIC HEARING AND
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES # 3727
TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 1, 2011
4TH FLOOR CAFETERIA
888 WASHINGTON BLVD., STAMFORD, CT

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

Joint Public Meeting

Capital Budget Presentations FY 2012/13-2019

Mrs. Dell called to order of the Joint Public Hearing on the Capital Budget at 7:00pm. She explained the hearing process and introduced members of the Planning Board, Staff and Jay Fountain from the Board of Representatives and Kathleen Murphy from the Board of Finance.

Board Member, Dudley Williams, noted that he was on the Board for the Childcare Learning Center, recused himself from the CLC presentation and left the table.

Childcare Learning Center (CLC)

Barbara Garvin-Kester, Director and CEO, thanked the City and Planning Board for past support. She described how CLC provides care to 1,000 families across 8 facilities to those earning less than 75% of the Area Median Income. Mr. Garvin-Kester then distributed handouts with pictures of some of the conditions and areas that the request would replace.

Mrs. Dell noted that painting, furniture replacement and blinds should not be included as a Capital Budget item. She commented that it could perhaps be reorganized as a special project under their operating budget.

Mrs. Fishman asked if they do any fundraising? Mr. Garvin-Kester answered that fund raising covers approximately 15% of CLC's operating. She then went on to note that CLC's lease with the City does not stipulate they are required to repair the roof and that they are currently spending funds to repair the roof which creates health and safety issues. Mrs. Dell said if the roof is leaking, they should call operations at this time to fix it. Mr. Tepper asked if this request should really be in Operation's Budget or CLC?

Operations

Present for discussion on Operations: Ernie Orgera (Director of Operations), Lou Casolo (City Engineer), Dan Colleluori (Supervisor Solid Waste), Mani Poola (Traffic Engineer) and Michael Scacco (Fleet Director)

Guard Rails – Mr. Orgera said this is an ongoing project with repairs and replacement to guardrails throughout the City. Mr. Tepper asked why they are requesting \$80,000 when it's been \$75,000 in prior years? Mr. Orgera stated that this was because this was an actual balance in the account.

Ms. Murphy noted last year \$75,000 was approved and only \$50,000 was spent. She asked if \$50,000 was a more accurate gauge of the amount of money they spent on these projects. Mr. Orgera said no, they typically spend the entire approved amount each year and that the remaining unspent \$25,000 would be spent prior to the end of the fiscal year.

Bridge Reconditioning

Mr. Casolo stated that the Office of Operations, Traffic and Roads is responsible for smaller projects. He explained that one of the projects in this request was for the deteriorating deck for the Board Street bridge and that other bridges in this request included, Hunting Ridge and Old Long Ridge Road. Mr. Casolo stated the total amount requested for this project was \$319,000.

Mrs. Dell asked if there were any punitive measures imposed by the State if all of the Bridges weren't repaired. Mr. Casolo answered no but that it would create a safety issue.

Mr. Tepper asked for the specific amounts for each project? Mr. Casolo answered, Broad Street \$113,000, and Hunting Ridge \$90,000 and added that there was currently no mechanism for requesting State aid.

Mr. Tepper had a question about prices on bridges and balance and numbers that don't seem to add up. Mr. Orgera said they don't have exact numbers but believe \$319,000 plus \$50,000 balance will cover the total costs of the projects. Mr. Tepper restated that the numbers don't add up.

Ms. Murphy said that \$169K of the request is for third party inspection services and asked why this type of service should be included as capital? Mr. Casolo said it is for professional services on evaluating capital assets and that there is a State requirement for all bridges under 20 feet in length to be inspected bi-annually. Mr. Tepper agreed with Mrs. Murphy that this was not a valid capital expense and was an operating expense.

Public Services – Fleet Management

Fuel Station Upgrade

Michael Scacco described the current system as a 27-year old cumbersome system which has been on the capital request list for the past three years. He added that the parameters for pump and tank replacements are set by DEEP and that the City is currently 3 years overdue.

Mr. Scacco also explained the request to replace five 30-year old furnaces in the building.

Mr. Williams stated he was unclear about what was meant about the facility being 3 years overdue? Mr. Casolo answered that the DEEP will issue citations for underground fuel storage tanks that are over a certain age. Mr. Tepper then asked what the consequences of delaying this request would be the operating budget? Mr. Scacco answered that there could be fines from the DEEP and that the new system would allow for a better report an analysis of fuel usage. Mr. Tepper asked if there could be some savings in the operating budget? Mr. Scacco said yes. Mr. Casolo added that the tank replacement could potentially proceed the pump replacement.

Mr. Quick asked if there were plans to change the entire fuel system for the fleet? Mr. Scacco said the process would be long and expensive. Mr. Casolo said there's a balance of \$900,000 not reflected in the budget.

Public Services - Solid Waste

Dan Colleluori described the request for Phase II to old incinerator building on Harbor Avenue as adding showers, locker rooms and ADA accessibility. Mr. Casolo said there was a \$152K request last year with no funds approved. The transfer station floor is worn out and side walls need to be raised.

Mr. Tepper asked about the solid waste building renovations? Mrs. Dell asked what the balance of \$200,000 was for? Mr. Casolo said it was a \$200,000 request and is an ongoing success.

Mr. Orgera added that every ton of garbage that doesn't go into the City's waste stream has a huge positive monetary benefit to the City. Mr. Colleluori said their goal is to educate the public to recycle as much as possible and keep the City's cost on collection as low as possible.

Solid Waste Maintenance Garage

Mr. Colleluori described the request to construct a facility to house the waste collection vehicles and keep them out of the elements. Mrs. Dell stated that this is going to be a difficult year financially for the City and questioned if this request could be pushed into an out year? Mr. Fountain asked if the proposed building would actually extend the life span of the vehicles and then asked how many trucks would be able to park in the facility. Mr. Colleluori answered yes and approximately 12.

Engineering

Mr. Casolo, City Engineer, explained how he prioritized the Department's requests. He began his presentation with a discussion of Scofieldtown Park design and remediation. Mr. Casolo noted that the City received a consent order from DEEP and they have completed a closure plan for the Park and that the first part of the plan is an offsite impact analysis. He explained that the requested funds were for this offsite impact analysis (\$650,000) and for quarterly monitoring for all wells. Mr. Casolo then added once complete, they will know if the Park is impacting offsite properties and this will determine how to best to cap contaminants at the Park.

Mrs. Dell asked if the State would give them funding? Mr. Casolo answered that currently there are no state funds available. Mr. Williams asked for clarification on what the remediation steps were and stated that from what he heard at a minimum there must be a cap over the Park but that there may be greater measures needed.

Mr. Fountain asked if the \$5.4 million takes the place of the \$4 million request? Mr. Casolo answered yes, that was the balance in addition to the requested \$650,000.

Ms. Murphy asked for a distinction between design/development and professional services?

Mr. Casolo described the environmental remediation at the Barlett Arboretum. He stated that there are three small areas about (10' x 10') that need remediation and that it is the administration's desire to pursue a physical remediation option.

City-wide Storm Drains

Mr. Casolo, stated that one of the largest City-wide complaints is drainage and that it has a big impact on private properties. He added that last year he requested \$600,000 and received nothing.

Mrs. Dell asked the general cost to replace a storm drain? Mr. Casolo answered \$4,000. Mrs. Dell stated that they must get away from bundled project lists. Mr. Casolo said he has estimated costs on known projects with a value from \$5K - \$100K and confirmed that when projects were bundled, it was a slightly different process.

Ms. Murphy said when you lay these all out, it will probably span more than one year. They should schedule it over several years and get approved funding but this should be phased in.

She strongly suggested implementing a defined scheduling program for this project. Mr. Casolo said they tried to take out larger drainage projects and list them as segregated separate items. Mr. Dell said if this project was bundled, it would have to be for specific identified roads and only those roads.

Mr. Tepper was concerned with the mechanics of it. Mr. Fountain wanted clarification that this \$500,000 is for specific streets only. Mr. Orgera assured the Board members that the requested funding would not be used for any road not on the list.

City-wide Manhole & Basins

Mr. Casolo stated they use these funds to replace failed structures as they are reported. He stated that they replace 5 per month over a 10 month working period which gets us to our \$600,000 request.

Major Bridge Repair

Mr. Casolo noted that the roads listed in this project are Cold Spring, June Road, design of half the West Main Street Bridge, design of Cedar Heights and Riverbank Roads.

Ms. Murphy asked about State and Federal funding? Mr. Casolo said June Road is eligible for State Aid.

Mr. Fountain asked if they have a systematic approach to assessing and addressing street conditions. Mr. Casolo answered yes and that he would provide a copy of their bridge replacement schedule.

Chestnut Hill Road Reconstruction

Mr. Casolo described the project as a portion of the road and culvert that are collapsing and that the funds requested are for replacement of culvert.

Environmental Compliance

Mr. Casolo described the MS-4 EPA/DEP permits and the requested project. Ms. Murphy asked if this shouldn't be a project all by itself, put in one place. Mr. Casolo said that this was one large unfunded mandate by State and the Federal EPA.

Street Patching

Mr. Casolo described that all approved capital funding in 2011/2012 budget for street patching was used on every road requested except for two. Mr. Casolo said the City contracted with an outside firm to do a surface analysis and set priorities as there are never enough resources to address all the needs of the City. He stated that a \$4million request puts the City on a 25-year replacement cycle.

Mrs. Dell said to raise \$2 million to \$4 million is going to be hard in this budget year. She requested a more detailed copy of all the requested Roads. She then commented that the funds will likely no be there this year but asked Mr. Casolo to sharpen his pencils and get more realistic with what he was asking for.

Mr. Fountain asked if it would be more expensive in out-years? Mr. Casolo said it's an on-going approach and his job to identify what the City needs from a safety infrastructure standpoint.

Ms. Murphy said they have to be cognizant of the current fiscal situation and they are good at kicking requests down the road. Mr. Casolo said they did prioritize the list and ranked top items.

Mrs. Dell announced that the combined Board would take a ten minute recess.

Downtown Sidewalk Reconstruction

Mr. Casolo described the project request. He noted that due to the high amount of lawsuits resulting from the poor condition of the downtown side walks this request would hopefully cut down on the legal costs. He also noted that they are looking at replacing the existing street lighting with more energy efficient /long life lights.

Mr. Tepper asked about cost savings and Mr. Fountain asked about payback on conversion? Mr. Casolo answered that the payback is approximately 5.4 years.

Ms. Murphy agreed there'd be savings but won't be able to take advantage of them in this current year. She asked if developments were causing drainage problems.

There was a short discussion of the Skymeadow, Oakdale and Pine Hill drainage projects.

Traffic Engineering

City Traffic Engineer, Mani Poola described the Hope Street project and Stamford Urban Transitway as the local match to large Federal grants. The Board questioned the way the projects were requested and if they should be requested as the entire project instead of incremental pieces. Ms. Murphy said it would be helpful to look at total costs for the Phase II of the Transitway and see the entire project costs.

Mr. Fountain noted these funds won't finish the project. Mr. Casolo said they could put in another project to hold SUT as a placeholder for the required future funds that will be needed to finish the project.

Citywide Signals

Mr. Poola described the upgrades of the Citywide signals.

Stamford Ferry Terminal

Mr. Poola discussed the Ferry Terminal Feasibility. The Board noted that they would most likely prefer to move these funds to an out year.

There was a short discussion on the School Zone Flashers and a question about whether they are effective and what data is there to back this up?

The combined Board asked Mr. Poola to provide list of Traffic Calming project locations in each district.

Administration – Maintenance

Larry Albinson, Marc Lyon and Joe Barbarata presented the Department requests. They noted that last the Community Centers were unbundled last year and put back under their department.

Lou Usone spoke about Sterling Farm electrical request for \$50,000 for code compliance and ADA requests for restroom upgrades, air conditioning, efficiency issues.

Other projects discussed were the Glenbrook Community Center's roof, Lathon Wider Community Center parking lot, drainage and roof repairs.

Mr. Williams asked which community centers were a priority? The answer was Sterling Farms and Lathon Wider.

There was a discussion about the Government Center Building and the need replace the cooling towers on the roof and upgrade the elevator, both of which were a number one priority.

Yerwood Center needs electrical work. Low bid was \$43K for electrical in addition to other priorities such as windows and walls.

Administration noted that their second priority was Scalzi Park Phase II which was in the Parks Master Plan.

Mrs. Dell asked for a breakdown of each component of the project and a breakout with their associated costs.

There was additional discussion on Terry Conners Ice Rink and the Town Yard facility, and the park lighting request of \$355,000. Also discussed was the Cummings Park Athletic Fields, Cove Island Barn and the Jackie Robinson Park Phase II.

WPCA

The discussed priority request was to upgrade UV disinfection system.

Citywide Equipment Replacement & Upgrade

Mr. Scaco described the request for \$1,063,700 for citywide equipment and replacement. He noted that the vacuum units requested are linked to the MS-4 permitting.

The Chair closed the joint Public Hearing and placed the Board on a ten minute recess.

Regular Meeting

Lease Agreement:

Cox Radio, Inc and City of Stamford, Lease Agreement between Cox Radio, Inc and the City of Stamford for use of property on Magee Avenue.

Mr. Dumais introduced the details of the agreement. He noted that he was unable to confirm the exact location of the tower and that the referenced exhibit was lacking. Several members of the Board suggested tabling the matter until the next meeting date.

Planning Board Meeting Minutes:

Mrs. Dell announced that all the review / approval of all minutes on the Agenda would be tabled until the next meeting on Tuesday, November 15, 2011.

There being no further business to discuss Mrs. Dell adjourned the meeting at 11:35 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Claire Fishman, Secretary
Stamford Planning Board