

STAMFORD PLANNING BOARD
JOINT PUBLIC HEARING AND
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES # 3728
TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 15, 2011
4TH FLOOR CAFETERIA
888 WASHINGTON BLVD., STAMFORD, CT

Stamford Planning Board Members present were: Theresa Dell, Roger Quick, Dudley Williams, Claire Fishman, Jay Tepper. 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 that this was the final Joint Public Meeting on the capital Budget which began on October 18 and was noticed in the Advocate. Mrs. Dell next introduced members of the Planning Board, Staff and Frank Cerasoli from the Board of Representatives and Kathleen Murphy and Jerry Bosak from the Board of Finance.

Mrs. Dell announced that as a reminder, as she has been saying at each meeting, this is going to be a hard budget year and that all projects will be bonded project by project and that there would be no more bundling.

Ferguson Library, Including Short Term Capital

Board Member, Dudley Williams, noted that he was on the Board for the Ferguson Library and recused himself from the Library's presentation and left the table.

Ernie DiMattia, presented the request for the Library. He distributed a detailed project list packet with items broken down by components to better show the individual costs of items. Mr. DiMattia then presented the first request which was the Main Library Building restoration and described the ongoing project and that they have already spent \$15 million and have brought the costs down to \$150 per square foot. He further explained that the focus of this request was for the exterior work of the building. Mrs. Dell asked if the balance of \$375,000 was still available for this project. Mr. Privitera answered yes.

Mr. DiMattia described the next project: the Material Control System. He explained that this is the equipment and machines that allows people to self checkout and helps to reduce operating costs. Mr. Privitera asked why this was not included in Short Term Capital? Mr. Bosak asked what the life term of the equipment was. Mr. DiMattia answered over 10 years.

Mr. DiMattia then described the Harry Bennett Branch Repairs capital request. Mrs. Dell said that he may have a problem because painting and furniture replacement should not be included as capital items. Mr. Privitera commented that the operative work is repair, if it is a maintenance expenses it is not a valid capital repair expense. Mr. DiMattia said that he understood but that it had been years since the library has had any money in its operating budget for capital.

Mr. DiMattia next described a request to digitize local documents. He explained that it was really for the digitization of the Advocate and 180 years of history that nobody else is willing to do and make accessible. Mr. DiMattia explained that the cost would be approximately \$1 per page and that it was well over a 1 million dollar project and that he has been asking for money to start this for over ten years. Mr. Bosak asked why the Historical Society wasn't involved. Mr. Privitera asked if he had looked for some type of historical document grants?

Mr. DiMattia answered yes but there was one grant given to the State and it went towards the digitization of the Hartford Courant.

Mr DiMattia then described the following short term capital requests of the library, as PC replacement, computer system infrastructure, AV Equipment, a material dispensing kiosk and replacement of the Purple Bus. Ms. Murphy asked if instead of replacing the bus they use School District buses. Mr. DiMattia said that if the school system would provide the library with a bus they would love to have it.

Stamford Center for the Arts

Mike Moran, General Manager of the Center for the Arts, described the request. He distributed photographs depicting issues of the building to the Board. He explained the first project is to replace the Palace Auditorium roof because it is leaking and moisture is penetrating the south wall of the building. Mr. Moran also presented requests to bring upgrade the audition fire protection system and replace the auditorium seats. He said that the south wall is his top priority. Mr. Pia, Board of Reps, District 7, stated that the palace is the only major venue left in the City and the only one that provides the City with any type of entertainment. He stressed that it was important for the City to support this project.

Board of Education, Including Short Term Capital

Al Barbarotta, Jerry Pia (Board of Education) and Mr. Lyons (Board of Education) were present to present the Board of Education capital projects requests. Mr. Barbarotta explained that the BoE maintains 2.5 million square feet of Building in the City and understands fully the financial situation the City is in. He explained that they have backup information to all of their requests and it is based on the needs report prepared by EMG, a report that recommend spending 140 million over four years on BoE projects. Mr. Barbarotta added that the City has only spent 25 million over the past four years. He added that the Board of Education approved, at a Public Meeting, all of the projects on his request including their prioritization.

Mr. Barbarotta then distributed a Board of Education Capital Project handout to the Board, outlining their requests. He explained that district-wide technology infrastructure and equipment are the Board's two top priorities, followed by Davenport Code compliance and district-wide code compliance. Mr. Barbarotta then explained that if the HTE balances are closed out they would request a different amount than what is shown per the columns of his handout. Mr. Privitera said that this raises an interesting question to do you want us to close this years request and only close out certain amounts from the closeout list. He added that the closeout list is only a recommendation and any of the three Board's can reject the requests.

Mr. Lyons expressed a concern about the projects that were approved but not bonded and are now being proposed to be scrubbed without any public input. Mrs. Dell then explained how the close out list was supposed to work. Mr. Pia stated that he didn't understand the process when the City has 20 million projects and only 7 million get done. Mr. Privitera said that there are two issues, a capacity to do the work and the recommended closeouts. Mr. Lyons commented that the City is taxing its residents on the previously approved Capital Budgets.

Ms. Murphy stated that when we changed to project specific bonding, auditors came into the City and couldn't trace how the money was being spent. She added that every year supplemental capital requests brought the total capital requests up to nearly the originally requested amounts, above the safe debt limit.

Mrs. Dell reiterated that before we had bundled projects and now we were moving to a project specific bonding. Mr. Lyons commented that the BoE never bundled its projects.

Mr. Tepper asked Mr. Barbarotta if we could assume that everything in the left most column of his handout could reduce what is in the right hand column by that amount.

Ms. Murphy asked what the state trigger was for reimbursement on projects. Mr. Barborotta answered that its when doing a major project rather than a project in a piecemeal fashion.

Stamford Fire & Rescue

No representatives were present from Stamford Fire and Rescue to represent their requests. Mrs. Dell noted that the Board would review the provided CP1 forms.

Mrs. Dell then announced that the Joint Public Hearing on the Capital Budget was closed and thanked members of the Board of Finance and Board of Representatives for their attendance and input.

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 unlike the previous meeting he could report the location of the site as 90 Magee Avenue. After a short discussion, Mr. Williams moved to recommend approval of the agreement. Mrs. Fishman seconded the motion and it passed unanimously with the eligible members present voting, 5-0 (Dell, Fishman, Williams, Quick and Tepper).

Planning Board Meeting Minutes:

Mrs. Dell announced that the review / approval of all minutes on the Agenda would be tabled until the next meeting date.

Old Business:

Subdivision #3998, 1857 Newfield Avenue, request of a 180-day extension of time to file the final subdivision map.

Mr. Dumais described the request and explained that Staff had no issues with it. Mr. Tepper moved to recommend approval of the extension of time request. Mr. Williams seconded the motion and it passed unanimously with the eligible members present voting, 5-0 (Dell, Fishman, Williams, Quick and Tepper).

There being no further business to discuss Mrs. Dell adjourned the meeting at 9:30 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Claire Fishman, Secretary
Stamford Planning Board