

STAMFORD PLANNING BOARD
MEETING MINUTES #3564
TUSEDAY, NOVEMBER 10, 2009
7TH FLOOR CONFERENCE AREA
888 WASHINGTON BLVD., STAMFORD, CT

Stamford Planning Board Members present were: Duane Hill, Theresa Dell, Claire Fishman, Rose Marie Grosso and Jay Tepper. Present for staff were Robin Stein and Todd Dumais.

REGULAR MEETING

The chairman, Duane Hill, called the meeting to order at 6:00 pm.

Zoning Board Referral:

ZB 209-38 City of Stamford, Childcare Learning Center, 83 Lockwood Ave., Special Exception to operate a Child Day Care Center within a portion of the former Rogers School.

Robin Stein introduced the application which is part of the Capital Budget process. The Childcare Learning Center needed a document signed for the State expressing compliance with local zoning regulations and they needed a Special Exception.

Lou Casolo, City Engineer, as applicant for the City of Stamford, went before the Planning Board last year and received funding for this project. The project was relocated and reconstructed using modular classroom units with completely reconstructed interiors.

Barbara Garvin-Kester, Executive Director Childcare Learning Center (CLC) stated the project helped us in several ways. 1) programmatically, it allowed teachers and students to offer better programs; 2) it consolidated six sites and they now have a properly designed building for pre-school children and 3) financially benefited from site consolidation savings and better utilization of staff

Mrs. Fishman asked if they a music teacher and what about physical education? Barbara answered no.

Mrs. Dell asked what the hours are? Answer 7:30am – 5:30pm. Mrs. Dell asked how many students per class and the answer was 20. Mrs. Dell asked if Dommus would be the only occupant of the building? Mr. Casolo said there was still some space available.

After a brief discussion, Mr. Tepper moved to recommend approval of the application. Mrs. Grosso seconded the motion and it passed unanimously, 5-0. (Hill, Dell, Fishman Grosso and Tepper).

Capital Budget Presentations FY 2010/10-2017:

Stamford Center for the Arts

Michael Moran, Jr., Director of Operations presented to the board. He described how they recently went through Chapter 11 and emerged. They are requesting \$227K to assist with the needs of four buildings. The current allocation for \$225,000 is to be used to help pay down capital leases, leaving about \$156,000 available.

Robin Stein asked if they were appearing before the Board to close out or transfer the balance?

Mr. Moran described an energy management system with controlled air for \$37,500 and go through NE Utilities which would rebate 50% of the project. They want to upgrade fire protection of two different systems at a cost of \$25K.

They want to add a 4 camera security system which would be helpful on show nights. They need to add a sump pump in the northwest corner of the building where the storm drains overflow and leak into the Palace. They need to replace the HVAC system at \$26K.

Mr. Moran described preventative maintenance/routine maintenance expenses for \$26K which included a drop in the orchestra pit which would allow increased seating in the theatre; replace all fire exit doors; carpeting throughout the building last done in 1983 and needs replacing for \$45K, a \$12K repair to deteriorating plaster and repaint; \$15K to renovate administrative space in the theatre and an engineering survey for the sough wall along Kiwanis Park.

Mr. Tepper asked what the engineering survey would be for? The reply was historically, a shared wall between the two structures and need to know if it's ok.

Mrs. Dell stated the SCA was being very specific with the Board and recommended specific comments when going to other Boards. Mrs. Dell commented the SCA has \$0 requested in out years and the building is getting older and proactively they should plan to 2017.

Mr. Moran stated they have a five year plan in the office.

Office of Operations:

Lou Casolo (City Engineer), Ed Gentile (Deputy City Engineer), Mani Poola (Traffic Engineer) and Ernie Orgera (Traffic & Road Maintenance Supervisor) were present to speak to the Board.

Traffic & Road Maintenance

Guard Rail Account – have designated a list of where deficiencies exist. \$75K

Mr. Orgera described ongoing replacement program for failed structures.

Mr. Tepper stated it appeared they are doing a lot with wood. Mr. Orgera stated some replacements were wood especially where they would fail and rust away.

Mr. Tepper asked if this expense was typically \$75K per year and the answer was yes.

Bridge Reconditioning

Mr. Casolo said they are asking \$380,000 to rehabilitate bridges.

Mrs. Dell asked if this number was an increase from last year? Response was yes because of a backlog of smaller bridges they've identified which must be maintained.

Mrs. Dell asked how long a bridge is closed for repairs? The response was they try to close only one lane at a time.

Mr. Tepper asked if there was a specific item amounting to the large increase?

Mr. Gentile responded not one item specifically but a combination of inspection expenses and all small bridges.

Property Acquisition

Purchase of County Auto Wrecking and a \$1.5 million request to collect yard waste.

Mrs. Dell stated again this was a \$1 million jump from last year and why? Mr. Hill stated the request from last year was \$1.5 million for property.

Mr. Casolo said last year's request was \$3.2 million and this year it is \$3 million.

Parking Structure Renovation

Mr. Orgera described needed renovations at the Bedford & Bell Street garages. These structures are nearing 40 years old and in need of repair. Currently have an RFP going out for electrical systems in the Bedford Street garage which has failed. Both garages need better lighting at approximately \$350,000 per garage.

Mr. Tepper asked if these are all revenue funded requests. Mr. Orgera said correct.

Parking Fund

Parking meter replacement. Haven't installed real time communications in the machines and want to hardwire them to eliminate cost to cellular modems. Meters have batteries which need replacement. Explained how enforcement officers use machines to check tickets effectiveness.

Street Signs

Out year request.

Stamford Ferry Terminal

Mani Poola described how they've finished the feasibility study. Earmarked funds of \$2.5 million which must be used or will lose funding.

Mrs. Fishman asked if they'd found a site for the terminal. Mr. Poola said yes and described the two possible sites.

Mr. Hill asked if they'd determined what level of operating service will be demanded? Mr. Poola said ferry operations would be limited to morning and afternoon peaks.

Mr. Hill asked if there was a contract bid for the ferry operations?

Mrs. Dell asked how it would compare to the Bridgeport Ferry?

Waterside Village had no funding requests this year.

Stamford Urban Transit Way

Mr. Poola described there are three federal funded projects and they are asking for four grant projects.

Mr. Tepper asked if construction would start in 2010? Mr. Poola replied late 2010. Mr. Casolo added the most difficult phase will be property right-of-way acquisitions.

Mr. Hill asked if any lessons were learned from last time? Mr. Casolo replied they had to go through strict federal guidelines and this economy is different.

Mrs. Dell said on the TIGER fund (Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery), if something happens and we don't get \$32 million, how do we move the project forward?

Roadway Improvements

Mr. Casolo briefly described the current plan:

Henry Street & Atlantic Street Intersection – realign both sides of street to improve safety which involves taking one property.

City-wide corrections – funds used for design work, minor construction project. They have a long list of properties they are working on and requesting about \$200K.

Hope Street – STP project is matching fund for right-of-way.

Mrs. Fishman asked if they will widen the road. Mr. Casolo answered yes plus new sidewalks.

Concept design for Intersection Improvements – currently putting out RFPs

Roadway Design/Reconstruction – projects initiated in the past and still have \$150K balance from previous years.

Oaklawn Avenue – some funding available under STP program for next year and they want to be ready with pre-engineering.

Westover & Merribrook Lane – design this year and construction next year.

Largo Drive & Hope Street – funding requested for design work with construction in out years.

Cold Spring & Washington Blvd – corrective measures to improve traffic operations

East Hunting Ridge Road – funding to address alignment and drainage.

Mr. Tepper asked if nothing could be done regarding surfacing of the road?

Roxbury Road – design drawings and full roadway resurfacing.

Toms Road – tight curve – design services and survey work; some property acquisition.

Myano Lane – improvements.

Traffic Calming Implementation – implement measures from Master Plan

Rest of projects are for out-years.

Master Plans – Land Use

Light Rail Transit – preliminary engineering – want to see how much it would cost and would funding sources are available and evaluate environmental impact.

Traffic Signals, Lighting and Safety Improvements

Lou Casolo, Mani Poola and Ed Gentile described funding needed to complete the projects

and street light half night photocell installation.

Mr. Tepper asked what the projection of savings is? Mr. Casolo said 25% and CL&P is also developing a half night light for savings. Mr. Casolo said they could see a yearly savings of \$250K if all street lights were switched out.

High Ridge/Long Ridge Corridor Study – the Board questioned the scope of what the study would include.

Street Light Infrastructure Upgrade – upgrade deteriorated poles and lower wattage.

Mrs. Fishman asked if this wouldn't make streets darker? Mr. Casolo said not necessarily as technology has improved and the idea is not to make it darker.

Traffic Signal upgrade – Mr. Poola described receiving a \$2 million federal grant with 10% City matching.

Parking Guidance System – Mr. Poola explained this and said funding is 80% federal and 20% City match.

City-wide Signals – have 200 signals in the City; trying to upgrade 5 that Mr. Poola described are safety issues and Mr. Casolo described as making the system more reliable.

School Zone Flashers – need to install flashers in each school zone.

Pavement Markings – Mr. Poola described new pavement special markings for “Do Not Block Intersection” regulations.

Emergency Backup – add 20 – 25 intersections for when power loss occurs.

Remaining projects are all in out years.

Street Patch & Resurfacing – Mr. Casolo described this city wide project.

Major Bridge Repair and Design Account – Cedar Heights Road and South State Street design. Mr. Stein asked what is the schedule on West Main Street? Mr. Gentile said State has been slow and they are trying to update current progress.

Scofieldtown Park Design and Remediation – Mr. Casolo said the requested funding is just a placeholder. Can't begin to outline an estimate for remediation until further study to determine scope of project.

Mr. Tepper asked if it will remain a Park?

Fuel Cell Project – Government Center – funds for oversight and part of construction of the project.

Vine Road Sidewalks – Mr. Gentile described there are many requests to pave the street but before they can do this they put in sidewalks and curbs.

Old Town Hall Kitchen – need kitchen for health code

Mrs. Tepper asked what sidewalks are made of? Mr. Gentile replied in-kind replacement.

Mr. Stein said regarding Old Town Hall – need more backup for revenue request - \$500K sounds like a large request.

Mr. Hill took a 5 minute break and called the meeting back to order at 7:45pm.

Environmental Compliance Stormwater Management

Mr. Casolo described citywide storm drain system.

Mrs. Fishman noted streets appear in different sections of town and asked if projects are coordinated. Mr. Casolo replied yes. Backlog of projects identified under Item 8.

Citywide Manhole & Basins – request based on a production rate of 20 per month and they've made significant improvement.

Mr. Stein described how they have mapped all the projects and are in the process of mapping the current request. Tied into quarterly report and will be a very useful tool.

Environmental Compliance Project – Mr. Gentile described this as water quality improvements throughout the City. Requesting \$400K.

Halliwell Drive Drains – Mr. Gentile described the detailed investigation and the analysis of the complex flooding problem. Mr. Gentile also spoke about design work on Pine Hill drainage.

Citywide Sidewalk Program

Mr. Casolo stated this request was for last year.

Mr. Hill asked why the proposed request was increased so much.

Mr. Casolo responded the increase was because they can take on more work because they've developed a very efficient sidewalk program.

Downtown Reconstruction – Mr. Gentile explained the revitalization of the old brick and concrete sidewalks to meet master plan standards. Trip & falls on sidewalks is City's biggest and most expensive liability. Also explained requests for new sidewalks: north side of Upland Road, north side of Oaklawn Avenue (including remaining sidewalk). Connecticut Avenue has a significant amount of work which needs to be done (over 1 mile).

Roger's School Renovation Project

Mr. Casolo described that the Childhood Learning Center program has moved almost entirely to the old Roger's school building. Board of Ed asked to do facilities needs study – out-year request.

Mrs. Dell asked about Roger's School – are we back to putting funds into something that was previously going to be closed? Doesn't make any sense.

Mr. Hill said there were several requests for use of the building – CLC-Domus, Police Academy – all boards approved of this.

Mrs. Dell asked where they'd get \$70 million for a building that's falling apart.

Ferguson Library

William Callion, Member of Board of Trustees

Came before you last year and just beginning phase of project. Completed renovation portion and now trying to bring the building up to code. Extensive ADA upgrades, significant energy improvements and going from Phase 3 to Phase 4. Mr. Callion described the detailed requests.

Mrs. Dell asked if there would be an extra \$1.2 million for renovation work on the Library and Mr. Callion replied yes.

Ernie DiMattia explained in 1912, there was an option to put marble columns in front of the library but couldn't afford it; now dealing with this problem.

Mr. Tepper asked a digitization question.

Mrs. Dell asked how much the total renovation project would be? Mr. DiMattia answered \$15 million.

Mr. Tepper asked if internet has cut into walk-in usage of the Library? Mr. DiMattia said quite the contrary – levels have been maintained and they are experiencing more digital traffic.

Mr. Tepper asked what type of services are available over the internet? Mr. DiMattia answered. He also discussed the digitization project for the Advocate representative present at the meeting.

Nick Bochicchio described the computer system infrastructure and PC network.

Material Control Systems – RFID, one time hardware cost, would allow it to be done at the Main Library.

Branch Library Improvements – Harry Bennett branch – interior improvements.

Mr. Hill asked if roof work was completed? Mr. Bochicchio replied it would be by December.

Delivery Van – currently using 1996 vehicle which was in serious disrepair.

Mrs. Dell asked if the vehicle funding request shouldn't be included with the City vehicles rather than the Library.

Digital Video Security System – Harry Bennett and South End Branch.

Mrs. Dell asked if they have had a lot of complaints about cuts in the book mobile delivery schedule? The answer was yes.

Mr. Hill said they've been very successful in raising external funds and they might continue to think that some of the other projects represent a potential for external funding. Create a culture of giving and support for the Library.

Short Term Capital – Technology

Michael Pensiero, Director handed out project summary broken down into priorities. Projects 1 to 17 are continuations of what they've done in prior years.

Mr. Hill asked if there was an increase in user interface equipment?

Mr. Pensiero said they've picked up more departments, anticipate 300 new machines, on a 5 year lifecycle, now also have the police and fire department computers.

Mr. Pensiero described two new projects – Operations Fuel System – need to replace pump and tank and need RFID system – only carrying the technical side of it.

GIS Data – Aerial flyover – need to get this done in 2011.

Mr. Stein said it was nice to see one department that was very close to the same request of funds from prior year.

Capital Budget – Short Term Technology

Dr. Joshua P. Starr, Superintendent of Schools

Provided a technical sheet of funding requests and outlined the following in detail:

Replace chalkboards with interactive whiteboards – only 35% of classrooms have them.

Reading lab – miniusers, one in each school.

Request is \$2,496,866 – priority is computer replacement. 48% is Life Safety request, 26% energy efficiency and 8% technology – Dr. Starr provided the board with an overview of all requests.

Al Barbarotta, Facilities Director

Needs to have a needs assessment done building by building and school by school. Then will come up with a space utilization plan. Also need a complete roof assessment for all schools which will be used as a resource for future capital budget requests. Funding requests were prioritized by life safety, energy efficiency and technology. Distributed a handout to the Board and explained each item and request.

Intercom Replacement – needs to be replaced and upgraded - \$200K.

District wide Code Compliance – wired all schools for security cameras and looking at card access systems. No grants currently in place.

Talking about school funding building grants, stringent standards to qualify – they are chasing grants.

Lou Casolo stated that because grants are not in place, risk of not getting reimbursements.

District wide Asbestos Upgrade

Mr. Casolo stated that some areas in many schools have asbestos materials.

Electrical Upgrade

Electrical systems in schools can't meet capacity of new electronic resources of the schools. EMG report calls for this attention at a cost of \$2 million.

Davenport Code Compliance

Identified by EMG as the only school that doesn't have sprinklers. \$2.5 million request.

Turn of River Code – no funding request this year.

Northeast Code Renovations – have projected balance of \$1.247 million. Mr. Casolo said these are out-years because these are continuations over prior years.

Springdale School – low energy star ratings. Attempting to move them towards energy efficiency.

Stamford High School Code Renovations

Mr. Casolo carry over for final phase of Stamford High.

Mr. Hill asked what are expenditures in out years. Mr. Casolo responded it's a phased project. Mr. Barbaratto said there's a need to waterproof buildings to protect interior work that's been done.

Roofing Projects (\$500K)

Mr. Casolo described roof auditorium that needs to be replaced.

Indoor Air Quality – for a variety of conditions – relating to HVAC and air quality.

Boiler & Burners – working with state which is mandating removal of oil tanks.

Mrs. Dell – what happens if you don't remove underground tanks?

West Hill High School – Mr. Barbaratto described EMG report identified this as a priority because of mechanical equipment being placed on the roof.

District wide energy Efficiency Projects – doing everything they can to make buildings more energy efficient.

Paving & Resurfacing - \$500K, balance used to build a new parking lot at Rippowam where modular classrooms were.

Mrs. Dell said she's noticed a lot of children still parking on the road at West Hill – is there not enough parking? Mr. Barbaratto said no, there is space available each day.

Carpet & tile Replacement – ongoing process. Mr. Barbaratto said there were no deadlines on removal just new guidelines where it can go.

Facilities Equipment – no funds requested.

Dolan School – Mr. Casolo described the second phase has been designed they just don't have money for it.

Boyle Stadium – Mr. Casolo said the Phase I historic renovation is complete and Phase II is restoration and ADA compliance.

Athletic Fields district-wide – Mr. Casolo said there is a need to identify major repairs that are needed to several of the grass fields.

Old Business:

None

New Business:

Mr. Stein announced that next week's meeting would start at 7:30 PM.

There being no further business to discuss, Mr. Hill adjourned the meeting at 9:45 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,
Duane Hill, Chairman

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.