

STAMFORD PLANNING BOARD
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES #3567
TUESDAY, DECEMBER 1st, 2009
7TH FLOOR CONFERENCE AREA
888 WASHINGTON BLVD., STAMFORD, CT

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

Regular Meeting

The chairman, Mr. Duane Hill, called the meeting to order at 7:30 pm.

Zoning Board Referral:

ZB #209-25 Richard Redniss, map amendment to change property from R-6 to R-5 located on the east side of Merrell Ave.

Mr. Stein noted that this application was not on the original agenda and required a 2/3 majority vote to add to the agenda. Mr. Hill called for a motion to add the item matter to the agenda. Mr. Tepper moved to add Zoning Board referral ZB #209-25 to the agenda. Mrs. Dell seconded the motion and it passed unanimously with the members present voting, 4-0. (Hill, Dell, Grosso and Tepper)

Mr. Stein briefly introduced the application. He explained that the applicant sought to rezone current R-6 property to R-5 and explained that the underlying Master Plan Land Use Designation, Category 3 – Residential – Low Density Multifamily, allowed for both R-5 and R-6 zones. Mr. Stein then noted that the applicant requested to speak to the Board

Mr. Richard Redniss, Planner for the applicant, described the Zoning Map Change application request. He explained that this application was in essence a continuation of what the Board recently approved as part of Charter Oak Communities larger Vidal Court revitalization project. The Vidal Court project was a market rate and affordable housing project spread throughout the West Side. Mr. Redniss stated that this five property rezoning request was just a small component of a property swap with Stamford Health Systems and was part of a Master Plan Map amendment application which will likely be withdrawn. He explained that the plan was to rezone the five properties currently zoned R-6 to R-5 and added that this was a simple zone change with no site plans to review at this time.

Mr. Tepper asked if there was a current market for the affordable / market rate unit mixed projects. Mr. Redniss answered yes and that the projects are run like an market rate housing development.

Mrs. Dell asked how much extra density is gained by going from R-6 to R-5. Mr. Redniss explained that R-6 allows roughly 14 unites per acre and the R-5 allows roughly 17 units per acre. He noted that the main benefit to Charter Oaks was that R-5 allows for more flexibility in site design, town house style development and the slight increase in density.

Mrs. Dell then asked if the Hubbard Heights Association was ok with this change. Mr. Redniss answered that the applicant has had several meetings with the Association and

believes that their main concern has been addressed by leaving the properties fronting on West Board Street as single-family structures.

Mrs. Dell moved to recommend approval of the Zoning Map Change 209-25. Mr. Tepper seconded the motion and it passed unanimously with the members present voting, 4-0. (Hill, Dell, Grosso and Tepper)

Capital Budget FY 2010/11-2017:

Mr. Stein distributed a copy of the staff's first pass at coming up with a draft Capital Budget. He reiterated to the Board that the Capital Budget process requires that the Planning Board hold a Public Hearing by February 8th on the Budget and that the Board has until March 1st to make any changes before it must forward its Draft Budget to the Mayor's Office where it then goes to the Board of Finance and onto the Board of Reps for approvals. Mr. Stein explained that between now and early to mid January the Board has to come up with a Draft Budget to take to hearing which is slightly complicated by the fact that they do not know what the Administration and ultimately the Board of Finance will set the Safe Debt Limit at. He then noted that the Planning Board is the only Board charged with looking at the Capital Budget from an infrastructure needs and Planning perspective but in the past the Board has also been cognizant of the financial aspect of the Budget.

Mr. Stein then discussed the overall numbers of the Budget. He explained that the Board received over 150 million dollars in capital requests, which is the gross request amount, meaning that there are projects which are reimbursed that don't count towards the Safe Debt Limit. Mr. Stein then noted that the actual net in requests was close to 99 million dollars and the Board's task is to get it down to what number. He further went on to say that over the last few years the Administration recommended a Safe Debt Limit of around 50 million dollars and emphasized that it is an awesome task to get 100 million down to 50 million.

Mr. Tepper asked how much of the requests were actual City funds. Mr. Stein distributed a summary sheet which detailed the breakdown of gross requests, reimbursable money and net requests for the 2010/2011 budget year and the six out years.

Mr. Stein noted that one major item was not in the Budget, the new Policy Department Facility, and that the issue of project bundling will come up.

Mrs. Dell asked if last year was the first year of project bundling. Mr. Hill answered no it was the second year.

Mr. Stein then suggested that the Board start to look at the actual numbers for each agency's request and noted that the cuts he made were general in nature across the board. Mr. Tepper then asked if any cuts were made based on a specific item or project to point them out to the Board as they went along.

Mr. Stein then read through the working draft copy of the budget highlighting the following items / projects:

Vehicle Maintenance – Mr. Stein explained that he tried to keep the allocated in line with the most pressing needs of the department.

Solid Waste – Explained how he had to cut money and how that may mean the new scale house will have to wait another year.

Environmental Compliance – Explained that the request was consistent with last year.

Vine Road – Explained that this was a new request that did not appear in the out-years for the 2009/10 budget so he pushed it to this budgets out-years.

Fuel Cell – Explained that he did not put any money in this year's quest, but this may be an item that the Board wished to seek clarification from the new administration on where the project is and where it is going.

Major Bridge Repair - Explained that the request was consistent with last year.

Scofieldtown Park – Explained that the money allocated here is not for the actual remediation of the site but is the money that will be used to determine what to do with the actual dump and will be money used to conduct a study of the site.

Major Bridge Replacement – Explained that there was no request for this year.

Street Path and Resurfacing – Explained that these were monies that were put in last year.

Rogers School Building – Mrs. Dell commented that she believed that there was too much money being put into this former school facility.

Traffic Engineering - Mr. Stein explained that of the many projects listed in this bundle, three have large Federal Grants associated with them; the High Ridge Road & Long Ridge Road – Corridor Study; Street Lighting Infrastructure Upgrade; and Traffic Signal Upgrade – Phase G1.

Stamford Urban Transitway Tiger Funds - Explained that this is the final phase of the Urban Transitway project and all \$32,000,000 comes in the form of Federal funding.

Stamford Urban Transitway Local Match – Explained that this request has 3.65 million in Federal funds and has an approximately \$912,000 local match.

Ferry Terminal – Explained that this project will also have to be a judgment call by the new administration and of the requested money, \$2 million is in federal funds. Mr. Stein noted that if the City doesn't appropriate their share of the match, all the money will have to be returned. Several members of the Board asked for more information about the Ferry Study. Mr. Hill asked what modifications were required to site the ferry at the top choice location. Mrs. Dell stated that the area seems too congested to accommodate a parking garage. Mr. Stein commented that the ferry would provide another commuter mode choice but would not huge numbers of people and reiterated that this project is a call for the new administration.

Waterside Village Road Improvements – Explained the area of the project and that the City already received Federal Funds. He added that the numbers are so high because of anticipated property acquisitions but the local match would likely be only 20%.

Mill River Improvements – Explained that the \$5 million comes out of the TIF district and over the past years the City has historically put \$500,000 towards the Mill River in the Open Space Fund.

Light Rail Transit – Explained that this will also have to be a call for the new administration. He added that the bulk of the requested \$500,000 was for the trolley

study but it may be premature to put this into the budget. Mr. Hill asked if the study was completed and if so, requested the Board receive copies.

Parks and Athletic Fields - Explained that the City cannot afford to do all of them and some will have to be phased in over the years. Mr. Hill asked the status of things at Rosa Hartman Park. Mr. Stein answered that portions of the project are ready to go out to bid.

City Facilities – Explained that the Animal Shelter will likely not get funded for several years. He also noted that the elevators in Government Center definitely need funds for improvement.

Yerwood Center – Explained that the request has been reworked to be phased in over the out-years.

Sterling Farms Barn – Explained that the request was consistent with last year.

Police Department – Explained that the money put in is for maintenance.

Big 5 – Explained that there was a substantial increase over last year's request.

Fire & Rescue – Explained that the new East Side Fire Station funds were put in the out-years. Mrs. Dell asked what the \$1.5 million allocated last year was for. Mr. Stein answered the new station.

Housing Development Fund – Explained that he would like to put in more money because these were funds that could be utilized by the Metro Green Phase II project. Mr. Hill stated that this may be an area where they want to increase the amount.

Scofield Manor – Explained that the request was consistent with the previous years.

Stamford Museum & Nature Center – Explained that the center has recently completed a Master Plan and would like to make a presentation to the Board.

Ferguson Library – Explained that he didn't match their full request but has left enough funding in to complete the interior projects.

Bartlett Arboretum – Explained that they are asking for significant increases in funding. Mr. Hill asked if the arboretum had completed a master plan. Mr. Stein answered yes about 4-5 years ago.

Board of Education – Explained that the out-years have to be readjusted and much will have to be phased in over time. Mr. Hill requested that the Board receive copies of the Board of Education Facilities Needs Study.

Davenport and Turn of River Schools – Explained that these projects will have to be phased in over the out-years.

Springdale – Explained that this will also have to be phased in over the out-years.

Stamford High School – Explained that the numbers in the back up seem to be only \$300,000 and that the Board may wish to move this project into the out-years based on the Board of Education priorities.

Indoor Air Quality – Explained that this is a huge number with no state reimbursement.

West Hill – Explained that because this was listed as a lower priority, it was pushed into the out-years.

District Wide Energy Efficiency – Explained that he would like to give more money because it improves operating expenditures. Mrs. Dell agreed that more money should be allocated for this project.

Dolan School – Explained that this was listed as a lower priority and not sure why asked \$3 million and the Board could approve less.

Boyle Stadium – Explained that he reduced the amount but it will still allow for completion of ADA compliance.

Old Town Hall – Explained to the Board that he was not convinced of the need to allocate \$500,000 for a new kitchen.

WPCA Projects – Explained that these projects were all funded through Federal money or WPCA fees.

E.G. Brennan Golf Course – Explained that this was also a self funded project.

Vehicle Replacement – Explained that the numbers are large but the vehicles need to be replaced. Mr. Hill stated that the operating costs of meding and fixing old vehicles was tremendous and it makes more sense to replace them with new vehicles.

Mr. Stein then explained that it was now the Board's job to go back through all of the Capital requests and figure out why agency's asked for what they did.

Old Business:

Subdivision #3956, Request to modify Condition #11, regarding roadway width.

Mr. Stein briefly described the request to modify the roadway width from 18 feet to 17.1 feet for a portion of the drive area.

After a brief discussion, Mr. Tepper moved approval of the request to modify condition 11 of Subdivision #3956. Mrs. Dell seconded the motion and it passed unanimously with the members present voting, 4-0. (Hill, Dell, Grosso and Tepper)

New Business

Mr. Stein announced that there would be a meeting next week at the regular time and place.

There being no further business to discuss, Mr. Hill adjourned the meeting at 9:00 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.