

MINUTES OF PLANNING BOARD
REGULAR MEETING #3278 - DECEMBER 12, 2000
7th FLOOR CONFERENCE ROOM, GOVERNMENT CENTER
888 WASHINGTON BLVD., STAMFORD, CT

Present for the Board were: Duane Hill, Chairman; John Garnjost; Marggie Laurie; and Claire Fishman. Present for staff were: Robin Stein, Land Use Bureau Chief; and Carol Davis, Senior Planner.

Mr. Hill opened the meeting at 7:35 PM.

Resolution Authorizing the City of Stamford to enter into a Conservation Easement with the State of Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection for 35 acres of property in the Mianus River Watershed.

Mr. Stein described the river corridor explaining that the river provides drinking water to Greenwich and the corridor includes the Treetops and Blake-Coleman properties. He said the Blake-Coleman property has been placed in an open space conservation easement. He reviewed the history of the Treetops property.

Tim Northrup, Connecticut Director of the Trust for Public Land, said the Board of Finance has approved an appropriation of \$1.5 million. He said the Trust for Public Land is coordinating several public and private partners to purchase the property. He said the Greenwich Board of Selectmen has approved \$1.5 million and \$5 million is to be raised privately by January 31, 2001. Mr. Northrup said the Trust is working to get a federal grant, if possible. He said that 94 acres, 23 acres of which are in Stamford, will become state property and will be permanently protected and accessible to the public. He said a parking area would be maintained by the State.

Andrew McDonald, Corporation Counsel, said there should be a resolution on the record that this purchase is in the interest of Stamford citizens. He said the appropriation will appear in the 2001/02 Capital Budget.

Mr. Northrup explained that the property retained by International Paper will be protected from further building and may be used as a conference center. Mr. Stein said this may require a Zoning variance.

On a motion by Mrs. Fishman, seconded by Mr. Garnjost the Board voted unanimously to approve the resolution.

Correspondence from Tim Northrup regarding parking at Blake-Colman property.

Mr. Northrup said there is a need for limited parking for public access to the open space area. He said a group looking into the parking options hired Kings Mark Environmental Review Team to assist them. Kings Mark suggested there be one lot for all parcels. He said they recommended 4 locations on Howard Road and one on Farms Road. He said there is a title problem on the Farms Road site and the most appealing is the fourth site on Howard Road which would provide parking for 6 to 10 cars. He said he is looking for input from the Planning Board. He said that the area could be ready by spring. In response to a question about the adequacy of the parking, Mr. McDonald said originally only 4 to 6 spaces were proposed since the main purpose is to keep the area in a natural state.

In response to other questions, Mr. Northrup said there have been discussions with the water company to provide a water crossing on their property. He said hunting will not be encouraged. Mr. Hill said a bike rack and signage should be provided. He asked the Board members to explore the parking options and report in writing.

Correspondence from Mayor Malloy regarding Purchase, Sales and Exchange Agreement for One Main Street and 10 Lipton Place.

Mr. Stein related how the exchange came about. Andrew McDonald said it is an example of the need for an open space account. He said the City has been trying to market the parcel on Lipton Place with no luck until this deal surfaced. He said the sale will add the Lipton Place parcel to the tax roles and will add One Main Street to the Mill River public open space.

On a motion by Mr. Garnjost, seconded by Mrs. Fishman, the Board voted unanimously to recommend approval.

After a break the meeting resumed at 8:50 pm.

Capital Budget 2001/2002-2008

Mr. Stein distributed information received from the library and explained that material from the Operations Department will come next week

Mrs. Laurie said the Planning Board role in the capital budget process is unique. She said the Board must consider what is needed in the context of the master plan.

Mr. Hill said the Planning Board looks at the budget with a planning perspective but it looks at the city as a whole within the context of the master plan. He said planning cannot control growth because growth is controlled by market forces.

Mr. Stein said the safe debt limit has not been set but it may be \$30 million net. He said the departments have done a good job of submitting pared budgets but a lower safe debt limit is likely in the out years and this will be difficult. Mr. Stein then reviewed his proposed revisions. He said out years in the Operations budget came in high and the Board may want to look at items that were placed in the capital budget during the lean years and should go to the operating budget.

There was discussion about closing the West Main Street bridge to vehicles. Mr. Stein said a pedestrian only bridge will not be significantly cheaper after state reimbursement.

Mr. Stein said that Deena Diorio recommends that open space acquisition be increased to \$1 million. In response to Mrs. Fishman's comment that traffic calming should be cut, Mr. Stein explained that this is a very popular program. There was discussion about the Waterside Village Streetscape plan with some members saying they did not receive the study.

Regarding the WPCA Mr. Stein said there do not appear to be health emergencies involving sewers this year. He said he has broken the 18-1 phase 2 project into two years.

Mr. Stein said he has removed the laptops from the capital budget since they should be operating budget items. He said Hines has agreed to allow transmitters on top of its Atlantic Street building and the Zoning Board must place this condition on other new high buildings. He explained why there is a proposal for government center security and Mrs. Laurie asked if it should go in the operating budget. Mr. Stein suggested appropriating \$50,000 in the first year giving the police an opportunity to come back in subsequent years.

There was more discussion about the different prices for pumper trucks. It was agreed to ask Tom Cassone about this. Mrs. Laurie asked if a purchase delay will affect public safety. Mr. Stein said he has questions about the East Side fire station and he said the SCBA and Air Bottle replacement could be capital or operating expenses.

Mr. Stein said the cuts in the Smith House budget should be explained in the budget message.

Mrs. Fishman said the library budget is cut every year and she thinks it should not get cut again. Mr. Garnjost said he would like more information about the Main Library Capital Maintenance request.

Mr. Stein said the Board of Education staff agrees that until there is agreement on the middle school plans and location it cannot go forward. He said he reduced the energy performance item subject to Tom Hamilton's review. Mrs. Laurie asked how the city can bring in more residents if it does not build adequate facilities. She said she is concerned that there is to be no auditorium at the Scofieldtown School.

Minutes for Approval

#3275 - November 21, 2000 – Unanimously approved

Correspondence from Attorney Richard Cunningham requesting extension of time for filing subdivision map - Subdivision #3770, Palkimas & Curtin.

On a motion by Mrs. Laurie, seconded by Mr. Garnjost, the Board voted unanimously to amend the agenda to consider this matter/

On a motion by Mrs. Laurie, seconded by Mrs. Fishman, the Board voted unanimously to grant an extension of time for Subdivision #3770 as requested.

New Business

Mr. Stein said a Public Hearing will be held on the Northeast Utilities Master Plan Amendment on December 19, 2000.

Respectfully submitted,
Duane Hill, Chairman
Stamford Planning Board

Note: These proceedings were recorded on tape and are available for review during regular business hours.