

**CITY OF NORWALK
PLANNING COMMITTEE
REGULAR MEETING
DECEMBER 3, 2015**

ATTENDANCE: John Kydes, Chair: John Igneri, Tom Livingston, Faye Bowman ,
Shannon O'Toole-Giandurco, Travis Simms

STAFF: Timothy Sheehan Redevelopment; Tammy
Strauss, Director of Community Development Planning

OTHERS: Council Member Bruce Kimmel, Atty. Larry Cafero, GGP
Attorney; Steven Cecil, Cecil Group; Charles Tapa, GGP;
Bob Gerry, GGP; Rob Gachukic, GGP; Debora Goldstein

CALL TO ORDER.

Mr. Kydes called the meeting to order at 7:09 p.m.

ROLL CALL.

Mr. Kydes called the roll. A quorum was present.

I. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A. October 1, 2015 Regular Meeting

**** MS. O'TOOLE-GIANDURCO MOVED THE MINUTES OF THE OCTOBER
1, 2015 REGULAR MEETING.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

B. October 5, 2015 Special Joint Meeting

**** MR. IGNERI MOVED THE MINUTES OF THE OCTOBER 5, 2015 SPECIAL
JOINT MEETING.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

II. BUSINESS

A. REED PUTNAM URBAN RENEWAL PLAN

1. Review approved Concept Master Site Plan for SoNo Collection, related
conditions and implementation

Atty. Cafero said that there had been a number of events since the last meeting on October 27th . Since then, GGP has been working the City in the area of design review. There were a number of conditions that were put forward by the Council and the team has worked on making progress on those conditions. Atty. Cafero said that they had made good progress on those conditions. He said that a number of items had been met, others can not be completed until the construction is completed, such as the planting of trees and exterior landscaping. There were concerns about the slip ramp and that it was crucial to the design to prevent traffic back up onto West Avenue. Both anchor stores, Bloomingdales and Nordstrom's, have strong concerns about the slip ramp. Bloomingdales has stated that they wished to have the traffic able to go to their door. Atty. Cafero said that GGP and the Cecil Group are very committed to this and are very aware of public safety and all the other concerns also.

Atty. Cafero then gave a brief verbal overview of the proposal mall, including the public realm spaces, the active streetscape and the parking. He said that the group is very optimistic about reaching their goals.

Mr. Kimmel asked if there could be a presentation about how the Cecil Group views the slip ramp. He also asked about progress on the public realm spaces. Mr. Sheehan said that there had been some progress and that some ideas had been presented to the City that seemed very favorable.

Mr. Sheehan said that he would like to ask Mr. Steven Cecil to present their view on the slip ramp. He added that he also agreed with Atty. Cafero's assessment that the overall tone of the meetings were very cooperative and positive

Mr. Livingston asked what the Next key deadline was. Mr. Sheehan said that the developer would like to file with Zoning in January and completed that by March. He went on to outline the upcoming steps (15:00)

Atty. Cafero said that GGP does have an ambitious goal in terms of Zoning and would like to have some special meetings so that they could have a grand opening in October of 2018. Everyone has been working very hard to move the project forward.

Mr. Kimmel asked if the word aggressive was being used in reference to the project. Mr. Sheehan said that GGP was attempting to move as quickly as possible, but also pointed out that GGP does have statutory deadlines to meet, also.

Mr. Steve Cecil came forward to speak about the project. He said that the tone of the discussion has been very collaborative. He said that when they discuss the public realm, it is focused on meeting the goals. he said that it was important to have a visual connection between the inside and outside. There were some concerns about the areas near the I-95 ramps were was going well. He said that the discussions about the slip ramp and the overhead parking have been moving forward. He said that it would be

important to connect the dots and continue to serve as a City street. There were some alternative solutions that are being explored. The team is aware that they need to have a structure where pedestrians can move, along with the traffic and the normal vehicles. He said that he was looking forward to having an opportunity to update the Committee, but said that they did not have a firm solution yet.

Mr. Kimmel asked if there was the possibility for having a computer simulated program showing how the slip ramp would work and potential problems. Mr. Cecil said that the design team was working on a 3-D model. He said that having a simulated program shouldn't be a problem. Mr. Sheehan said that it was a misnomer to say that the slip ramp was there to service Bloomingdales, but that became apparent when Mr. Cecil displayed design for the back of the garage. He added that while it was nice to have the attorneys presenting, the designers had a fundamental understanding that the lawyers did not.

Mr. Simms had several suggestions about the different options regarding the Crescent Street. Atty. Cafero said that a number of options were being considered. Atty. Cafero said that he agreed that the lawyers didn't have the understanding that the designers. He pointed out that if the mall was not a welcoming place and one that people wanted to return to, the businesses would be the first to suffer.

B. ADMINISTRATIVE

A. Adoption of the Schedule of Meetings for calendar year 2016.

B. CDBG

Mr. Kydes said that the next meeting on the schedule was on January 7th and the meeting would be starting earlier because there were 22 CDBG grant applicants that would be presenting.

Mr. Kimmel asked if the material would be provided earlier. Ms. Strauss said that the binders will be sent out earlier this year to give the Committee more time before the May deadline. She then went on to give an overview of the process and the various categories. She said that she had requested the applicants to indicate what portions of their program would go forward if their funding was cut in half. Discussion followed about the concept of new organizations that had not received funding in the past years. Mr. Livingston asked if performance metrics had been analyzed. Ms. Strauss said that HUD requires that on a yearly basis. Mr. Kimmel asked if the Open Door Shelter had submitted their application before they found out that they were one of the two recipients of the Mayor's Ball. Ms. Strauss said that the Open Door Shelter had just submitted an application earlier in the week.

**** MR. IGNERI MOVED TO APPROVE THE SCHEDULE OF MEETINGS FOR CALENDAR YEAR 2016.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Discussion continued about the CDBG applications, the decision making process, the matching funds requirement, and evidence of financial managements along with the details.

Ms. Strauss distributed copies of the Conflict of Interest Forms. She also announced that there had been an item added to the upcoming Council Meeting for Council Members to announce their potential conflicts. Ms. Strauss explained that the Redevelopment Agency has to submit a letter to HUD when there is a conflict of interest and received their approval for a waiver.

III. OLD BUSINESS.

There was no old business to consider at this time.

IV. NEW BUSINESS

Mr. Sheehan congratulated everyone on their election or re-election. He said that the Council Member should feel free to contact the staff if they need information or have questions.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Ms. Debora Goldstein, of Osborne Avenue, said that she was going to make observations about the mall. She said that Atty. Cafero said that the slip ramp could cause some traffic back up on West Avenue. There hasn't been a traffic study, so there is no base line to judge whether the statement is true.

Ms. Goldstein said that the Cecil Group was brought in before the Mayor's Task Force and was appointed to review all the zoning regulations for the City a few months ago. She said that she was not able to obtain copies of the minutes to see what the Cecil Group was brought in to discuss, but was concerned that this might be a myopic opinion about the project.

On the issue of the aggressive zoning by going in during January and completing it by March, she pointed out this is very questionable since there are private residents who can not get through them through them that fast. The project is very large and will have a major impact on the City. Zoning's ability to limit activity around the project is very different from the Planning Committee's ability.

Ms. Goldstein asked why Public Participation was at the end of the meeting. Customarily, the Council Committees have had Public Participation in the beginning. She respectfully requested that it be moved to the beginning of the meeting. Mr. Sheehan stated that the previous chairman had requested that public participation be moved to the end of the

meeting. Ms. O'Toole Giandurco explained that this was done because of the large number of presentations. By putting the public participation at the end, it allowed everyone to hear the new information and then ask questions or comment. Ms. Goldstein said that there was nothing to prevent having Public Comment at both ends of the meeting.

ADJOURNMENT

**** MR. LIVINGSTON MOVED TO ADJOURN.
** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

The meeting adjourned at 8:05 p.m.

Respectfully submitted

S. L. Soltes
Telesco Secretarial Services