

**CITY OF NORWALK
PLANNING COMMITTEE OF THE COMMON COUNCIL
SPECIAL MEETING
JANUARY 30, 2017**

ATTENDANCE: John Kydes, Doug Hempstead, Thomas Livingston, John Igeneri, Shannon O'Toole-Giandurco, Fay Bowman (6:40 p.m.), Travis Simms (6:45 p.m.)

OTHERS: Tim Sheehan, Redevelopment Agency; Tami Strauss, Community Development Planning Director; Council Member Bruce Kimmel, Gerard Giosa, Level G Parking Associates

CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Kydes called the meeting to order at 6:34 p.m. A quorum was present.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION.

There was no one who wished to address the Committee at this time.

I. BUSINESS.

A. Wall Street Theater

1. Approve advancing to the Common Council the resolution indicating the City of Norwalk's support of the loan structure and underwriting of the \$1,666,000 loan to the Wall Street Theater Company, as structured by and due to the Norwalk Redevelopment Agency.

2. Approve advancing to the Common Council a request for the Mayor to execute the associated Funding Approval/Agreement (HUD 7082)

Ms. Strauss said that these issues had been discussed at an earlier meeting and additional information had been emailed to the Committee members. She said that since the time that the underwriting had been done, HUD has issued updated instructions. The underwriting was largely positive but there were some risks noted. There was a positive cash flow and it appears to be an overall positive analysis. The City has first position with the mortgage, there would be no other loan that would supersede this.

Mr. Hempstead said that due to the changes to HUD's requirements, the backup is no longer accurate. He gave a summary of the leasing arrangement, which were very convoluted. Mr. Sheehan said that if the Committee's decision was to table the item, the

documents could be updated to reflect the most recent changes and the item would be included on the upcoming agenda for February 2.

Ms. Bowman joined the meeting at 6:40 p.m.

Mr. Hempstead pointed out that there did not seem to be any working capital for the business. Ms. Strauss reviewed the first year projections. Mr. Hempstead said that he would like to see some financial reporting. Ms. Strauss said that she would look into this.

Mr. Hempstead asked about the seating capacity of 750. Ms. Strauss said that the balcony seating was permanently fixed, but the main floor had seating that could be removed. Mr. Sheehan pointed out that they now had a Temporary Certificate of Occupancy (TCO).

Mr. Hempstead asked about the pre-development clause. Mr. Sheehan said that he did not think that they would be using a pre-development loan. Discussion followed about the funding process if there was a default.

Ms. Bowman asked for a status update. Ms. Strauss gave her a quick overview of the previously discussed information.

**** MR. KYDES MOVED TO TABLE THE ITEMS TO THE REGULARLY SCHEDULED MEETING ON FEBRUARY 2ND, 2017.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

B. Webster Street Block

Mr. Sheehan said that there has always been an issue with parking around the Webster Street lot. Currently, the lot is 100% subscribed. If a parking structure was considered, it would start out with a need for a minimum of 600 spaces. The lot could be left as is, but this would stop any new development because of the lack of new parking. He reviewed the property that the City owns on an aerial site map.

Mr. Simms joined the meeting at 6:45 p.m.

Mr. Sheehan said that if a garage went in, it would require between 1,300 and 1,500 spaces. The type of structure would be another factor. If the City controls the parking, then they will control what uses future development might have. He said that there were several questions, such as what the remaining uses that could be developed surrounding it; the type of structure and what type of layout would be needed.

Mr. Livingston asked how many floors 1,500 spaces would require. Mr. Sheehan said that it would be something more than 8. Mr. Sheehan said that the railroad and the

Maritime garage have approximately 7 floors. There is also an issue with commuter parking.

Ms. O'Toole-Giandurco asked about the status of the 50 Washington Street building. Mr. Sheehan said that the renovations were underway and that it was approximately 80% rented out.

Mr. Hempstead asked for clarification on the footprint that was being shown on the site plan. Mr. Giosa said that the red square on the site map would represent approximately 160 parking spaces.

Mr. Hempstead said that he would like to understand what the economic impact would be for the existing businesses. Mr. Sheehan said that they would have to do the project in phases because the businesses lose their parking all at one time. The original plan was done in the 1980s. He said that when the City's property is isolated from the surrounding privately owned parcels, there is not enough to entice a developer to build the garage for free. He said that the City will have to determine how they would finance the parking garage. Discussion followed.

Mr. Giosa said that if they marketed permits for the garage, it would have to be over \$100 a month to amortize the cost. Currently, the permits are between \$70-\$80 a month. Discussion followed about potential concepts.

Mr. Kimmel asked what the long term goal was for the City. Mr. Sheehan said that the current tenants have expressed concerns for the amount of commuter parking that was in the lot. The current situation has many people parking in the commuter lots that do not live in Norwalk.

Mr. Hempstead asked Mr. Sheehan how many spaces 50 Washington Street needed for parking. Mr. Sheehan said that he had spoken with the owner of 50 Washington Street and that the owner rents a certain number of spaces. He was reluctant to reduce the number of spaces he rents because he might need them for tenants in the following month or so.

Mr. Simms said that he had several concerns about the small businesses. Mr. Sheehan said that there would need be room for circulation around the perimeter of the garage for the small businesses.

Ms. Bowman said that looking at the proposals, it was a difficult situation and that they would have to be mindful of what they do in the area. Mr. Sheehan agreed with her and said that the lot was highly utilized every day.

Mr. Sheehan was asked if it was even worthwhile to consider this. Mr. Sheehan said that it was clear that the Agency needed to get more information for the Committee. He said that when 50 Washington Street was built the original plans included decking the parking lot. Discussion followed about the possible orientation of a garage.

OLD BUSINESS

There was no old business to consider at this time.

NEW BUSINESS

There was new old business to consider at this time.

ADJOURNMENT

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

The meeting adjourned at 7:35 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

S. L. Soltes
Telesco Secretarial Service