

**CITY OF NORWALK  
PLANNING COMMITTEE OF THE COMMON COUNCIL  
SPECIAL MEETING  
APRIL 17, 2017**

**ATTENDANCE:** John Kydes, Chair; John Igneri; Tom Livingston; Shannon O'Toole-Giandurco;  
Doug Hempstead

**OTHERS:** Council Member Bruce Kimmel

**CALL TO ORDER**

Mr. Kydes called the meeting to order at 7:00 p. m. A quorum was present. Mr. Hempstead recused himself and exited the meeting at 7:03 p. m.

**PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

Mr. Kydes stated that members of the public would be invited to come forward after GGP makes its presentation to the committee.

**I. BUSINESS**

**A. REED PUTNAM URBAN RENEWAL PLAN AREA**

**1. Review approve advancing to the Common Council the proposed modifications requested by Norwalk Land Development LLC to the Reed Putnam Urban Renewal Plan and Amendment #4 of the Land Disposition Agreement**

**\*\* MR. IGNIRI MOVED TO APPROVE ADVANCING TO THE COMMON COUNCIL THE PROPOSED MODIFICATIONS REQUESTED BY NORWALK LAND DEVELOPMENT LLC TO THE REED PUTNAM URBAN RENEWAL PLAN AND AMENDMENT #4 OF THE LAND DISPOSITION AGREEMENT.**

Mr. Douglas Adams, Mr. William Hennessey, and Mr. Paul Madden came forward in favor of the item.

Mr. Adams stated that under the current LDA, if the hotel part of the plan becomes infeasible, GGP is entitled to request that the hotel part of the plan can be changed and office space or residential use can take its place. He stated that nowhere in the LDA is it specified what would happen if all three – hotel, office, and residential use are infeasible. He stated that the return on investment on a hotel would be about 4.4%, the return on investment on office space would be about 4.29%, and the return on investment for residential space would be about 3.3%. He stated that in all three cases, the return is too low to justify an investment.

Mr. Adams stated that the current plan requires anchors of high quality. He stated that GGP would like the definition of high quality broadened. He stated that the definition would be expanded to include high end grocery stores and movie theaters.

Mr. Adams stated that GGP would like to build the retail and public realm portions of the SoNo Collection as currently proposed and approved, but not to include a hotel, office, or residential use. 5% of the project would be dedicated to public realm space. He stated that, in its place, GGP would like to contribute \$3.5 million to the City with the intention that the funds be used to benefit the community. He stated that the \$3.5 million is in addition to the \$550,000 circulator payment which was received by the City last week and the \$1,022,500 payment for City easements necessary to receive a building permit.

Mr. Paul Madden provided pictures of the proposed site and showed the layout of the proposed project.

Mr. Hennessey stated that GGP wishes to amend the LDA to allow for the elimination of hotel, office space, and residential requirements from the plan. He stated that the URP must be amended so it is consistent with the proposed changes to the project. He stated that City Zoning Regulations need to be amended and approvals need to be given as necessary to accomplish the proposed changes to the project. Mr. Hennessey stated that GGP wishes to complete the retail and public realm components of the SoNo Collection to allow for occupancy in October 2019. He stated that in order for all of this to occur, GGP requires all necessary revisions and approvals to be completed within 60 days.

### **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

Ms. Margaret Kozlar came forward in opposition to the item. She stated that the timeline should not be driven by the need to get the high end department store leases signed. Once the shovels hit the ground, things become more complicated. She stated that it is not clear why a high end mall would be feasible if the hotel and residential parts of the plan are not feasible. She stated that the \$3.5 million payment will be a one-time payment. It is not enough to justify a project that will impact Norwalk for decades. She stated that there are high end shopping areas in surrounding towns. Norwalk is not a city that will support high end shopping. An outlet mall would be a better fit for Norwalk.

Ms. Ann Kehoe came forward in opposition to the item. She stated that an outlet mall would be better than an upscale mall. She stated that outlet malls attract customers from a wide area, and would add value to the city.

Mr. Bill Nightingale came forward in favor of the item. He stated that the city should not be micro managing the mall development. We should not be subsidizing private investment and giving property tax abatements to specific businesses. Once one business gets a subsidy, other businesses will expect them, too. There should be a level playing field.

Ms. Melody Ragin came forward in favor of the item. She stated that we should be happy that someone has come in to make an investment in Norwalk. She stated that the city will support a high end mall. She stated that we have high end shoppers that do not wish to go to surrounding towns to shop.

Ms. Diane Cece came forward in opposition to the item. She stated that pending litigation could hold us hostage with this project. It seems that the mall has become too big to fail. She stated that removing the hotel from the plan reduced revenues and reduces job creation. She stated that if this project was

brought forward from the beginning in this current form, it would not have been approved. She stated that the \$3.5 million payment should be at least \$6.8 million.

Mr. Kydes closed the public participation.

**\*\* THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**ADJOURNMENT**

**\*\* MR. IGNIRI MOVED TO ADJOURN.**

**\*\* THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

The meeting was adjourned at 8:39 p. m.

Respectfully submitted,

Tom Blaney  
Telesco Secretarial Services