

**CITY OF NORWALK
PLANNING COMMITTEE
MAY 3, 2007**

ATTENDANCE: Matthew Miklave, Chair; Carvin Hilliard; William Krummel

STAFF: Jack Burrirt, Assistant Executive Director; Munro Johnson, Senior Development Project Manager; Michael Moore, CDBG Project Manager

CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Miklave called the meeting to order at 7:36 p.m. and announced that they did not have a quorum.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Ms. Diane Witkowsky, Spring Hill Association said that she wanted to bring to the Committee's attention the massive cutting of trees at Mathews Park and near Union Park. She said that she did not object to the concept of the bike path. She said that when the plan was established during the 1970's, Norwalk did not have a Tree Advisory Committee. Environmental issues were not addressed to perhaps produce a better plan. The bike path goes near Pine Island Cemetery and the Historical Commission should have been notified.

Ms. Diane Lauricella, League of Women Voters said that not enough people know where the bike trail will go. City departments and commissions also need more information about the trail. Ms. Lauricella said that the Conservation Commission should sign off on the plan. Ms. Lauricella said that as a member of the Brownfields Taskforce she would afford herself to any Councilmember that wishes to chat about any of the sites.

Mr. Krummel said that it was important to re-visit the old bike path plan with new people. Mr. Miklave said that he was surprised when he heard about the trees being removed. He said that the City needs to do a better job of coordinating departments so they can all pull with the same oar in the same direction. He said that they can't have an intelligent discussion without a clear understanding of the location of the bike path. Mr. Miklave stressed that his comments are not meant as a criticism to anyone.

Mr. Al Raymond, Spring Hill Association said that he did not feel that one-bedroom condominiums should be eliminated. He said that regarding the bike path, he wanted people to be aware of what is going on. It was devastating that 100's of trees were cut. He said that he did not want to see anything like this happen in the future.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

There was no action taken because of the lack of a quorum.

BUSINESS

A. REED PUTNAM URBAN RENEWAL PARCELS 1, 2 & 3

Mr. Burritt presented a conceptual site plan. He said that the work this Committee had done is to set the stage for what is to follow. The process is a modification of the LAD agreement.

Mr. Burritt called the Committee's attention to his memo dated April 11, 2007, which outlined the essential changes to the agreement. The first area of change deals with the infrastructure. The plan will revisit the traffic study. If a new traffic study is required, the cost will be borne by the developer.

Mr. Miklave asked if there was an escape clause in the event the traffic study came back with numbers that were too high. Mr. Burritt said that there is one in the existing agreement. The developer has a plan to provide funds to under take the project in exchange for tax relief. In addition, the City is able to phase the project and will seek grants and capital funding. Mr. Burritt said that he did not expect the passage of time to erode these resources.

Mr. Burritt said that he wanted the Committee to understand that there are not a lot of changes in the document. Mr. Miklave said that they discussed the conceptual changes and have gone over the bigger items over the last six months, but the driveways have been excluded from the plan. Mr. Miklave said that he would like to know the increase in the cost to the city that is reasonably anticipated due to the change in LDA. Mr. Burritt

Mr. Burritt said that the Conceptual Master Site Plan is a substitute document. He said that once the Common Council approves that plan, the developer will have 60 days to submit construction plans. The plan must be submitted along with a statement from the redeveloper and the architect. This is very important for the City because it allows the City to know what it will be getting. Construction plans have to be submitted 45 days prior to the next scheduled meeting. Under this, any substantial changes will have to go back to the Common Council.

The construction plans are reviewed at the Redevelopment level and that goal is to bring a third party design review expert. Mr. Burritt emphasized that any substantial changes will bring the plan back before the Common Council.

Mr. Miklave said that the next meeting of the Planning Committee is on June 7th and he is not comfortable that they will have a sufficient opportunity to get all of their questions answered. It was suggested that the June 7th meeting be dedicated to reviewing the LDA

and the public hearing scheduled for June 18th. The developer and the Committee members agreed with the proposed schedule.

The Committee discussed housing issues in the community. Mr. Krummel said that he wanted to see affordable units in the development rather than moved off of the site.

B. REQUEST FOR ADDITIONAL HOTEL SQUARE FOOTAGE

Mr. Burritt distributed a document that addressed questions that were asked regarding the proposed hotel.

Mr. Clay Fowler said that they wish this to be a public space hotel with public meeting rooms. He said that they have been contacted by hotel operators. Mr. Burritt said that the Common Council provision is that if the hotel is not feasible, the space will revert to office space. Mr. Miklave verified that this is not an increase to the mass, but a reallocation of space.

Mr. Miklave said that he would add this item to the next Common Council agenda.

WALL STREET REDEVELOPMENT PLAN

A. REDEVELOPMENT PARCEL 2A-POKO

Mr. Johnson said that they were looking to the Committee for an indication that the general design concept is agreeable. This project will have a third party design reviewer, Steve Cecil. He will work with the Committee and the public to gather a sense of what the public concerns are related to the design.

Mr. Ken Olsen, PoKo, presented a digital movie that took the view through the proposed site.

Mr. Bill Krasky gave a power point presentation showing the building profiles and respective heights. He presented the proposed streetscapes. Mr. Krasky talked about the "canyon effect" that can take place if the buildings are high and the street is not designed properly.

Mr. Krummel said that he was not comfortable enclosing the semi public space and would prefer the opening to the space be a through block green space. Mr. Olsen responded that the public space is for the people who live there. There is a lot of open space overall in the uptown area. He said that the space was equivalent to a back yard.

Mr. Johnson said that there was a question about the number of bedrooms at the last meeting. The Zoning ordinance said that not less than 70% of the dwelling units shall be efficiencies and or one bedroom units. He said that there is no attempt to eliminate one bedroom units.

Mr. Hilliard asked if there is any supporting documentation showing that two bedroom units increase the number of school children. Mr. Miklave said that Mr. Monroe presented this data 2 – 3 years ago. Mr. Hilliard said that he did not think there were be a significant impact from this development. Mr. Johnson said that the Planning and Zoning office said that there would be 115 school children in a development with 1,000 units. The Wall Street development plans to have 538 units which will result in 58 school children.

The Committee discussed parking. The residential developments will have their own parking based on Zoning regulations.

Mr. Miklave asked Mr. Burritt to think about long range tax revenues from the projects. Mr. Burritt said that he has that information from some of the projects.

Mr. Johnson said that he heard two concerns about the design and asked if it would be fair to suggest that a third party reviewer address those concerns. Mr. Miklave said that the balconies at the corner of Wall and Isaac Streets struck him as potential dangerous. He said that none of the comments expressed should take away from what he feels is an overall exciting project.

Mr. Miklave urged everyone to think about the inclusion of diverse population groups and to make this inviting to everyone.

A recess was called at 10:45 p.m.
The meeting resumed at 10:50 p.m.

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT BLOCK GRANT PROGRAM

A. REQUEST SUPPORT TO ADDRESS HUD INITIATIVES OF REGULATORY BARRIERS FOR AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Mr. Moore refereed to the memo in the packet that explained this item. Mr. Miklave said that he would like to serve on this. Mr. Krummel said that he was not in favor of this because it is a Bush administration buzz word. Mr. Miklave said that people have to make alternative housing arrangements because there is no affordable housing. He said that they have to identify impediments to the housing for working families. Mr. Krummel said that he was not comfortable with this because of where it is coming from.

Mr. Miklave said that out of respect to Mr. Krummel he will not put this on the Common Council agenda.

WATER STREET INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT PROJECT

A. **APPROVAL OF LEASE RENEWAL – L&L EVERGREEN**

This item was not discussed and will be further reviewed by Staff.

DISCUSSION ITEM

A. **CONNECTION BETWEEN DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS,
INCORPORATION OF SURROUNDING NEIGHBORHOODS** (no action
required)

Mr. Miklave said that he would like to invite Chief Rilling, Mayor Moccia and Oliver Gilham to talk about Mathew's Park. He said that there is a lack of direction with the former police station building at Mathew's Park.

Mr. Miklave said that he would like to find out who is responsible for the bike path and the tree cutting and invite them to the next meeting.

OLD BUSINESS

There was no old business.

NEW BUSINESS

There was no new business.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 11:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Rosemarie Lombardi
Telesco Secretarial Services