

**CITY OF NORWALK  
PLANNING COMMITTEE  
MARCH 1, 2007**

ATTENDANCE: Matthew Miklave, Chair; Carvin Hilliard; William Krummel;  
Rev. Phyllis Bolden (7:48 p.m.); Douglas Hempstead (7:45 p.m.);  
Nicholas Kydes (7:45 p.m.)

STAFF: Timothy Sheehan, Executive Director; Jack Burritt, Assistant  
Executive Director; Munro Johnson, Senior Development Project  
Manager; Susan Sweitzer, Senior Economic Development Project  
Manager; Michael Moore, Sr. CDBG Project Manager

**PUBLIC HEARING: COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT BLOCK GRANT  
PROGRAM**

Mr. Miklave opened the public hearing at 7:35 p.m. Mr. Moore gave a brief overview of the program and explained the new strategies required to allocate the funds.

Mr. Miklave requested that those wishing to speak limit their comments to five minutes.

Mr. Neil Brodsky, Norwalk Housing Authority said that he was here to present the public facility application for a playground at Meadow Gardens.

Mr. Caleb Bailey spoke in support of the playground. He said that the equipment has been there since his mother was a child.

Mr. Jeremy Paul spoke in support of the playground. He said that the site is dangerous and that it may make it safer to have the Police there.

Mr. Chip Anderson, NEON said that there are over 300 people who come in for programs to prepare them for their GED and for job development services.

Mr. Hempstead and Mr. Kydes arrived at 7:45 p.m.

Mr. Anderson also spoke in support of the playground at Nathaniel Ely School.

Ms. Diane Reece-Tucker, Domestic Violence Center, said that they are seeking \$15,000 to break the cycle of domestic violence.

Rev. Bolden arrived at 7:48 p.m.

Mr. Krummel asked Ms. Reece-Tucker if this is a part time position. She explained that it is a full time position and would be funded with matching funds.

Mr. Hilliard asked if conflict resolution would be taught. Ms. Reece-Tucker said that it would be taught.

Ms. Laura Epstein, Senior Services, requested funding for the senior safety and crime prevention program. Mr. Kydes said that he supported this program and asked his fellow Council members to do the same.

There were no other members of the public who wished to speak and the public hearing was closed at 7:58 p.m.

Mr. Miklave noted that this is a very difficult procedure. All of the programs are incredibly worthy and have great value to the community.

### **CALL TO ORDER**

Mr. Miklave called the meeting to order at 7:59 p.m.

### **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

Mr. Miklave requested that speakers limit their comments to three minutes.

Mr. Ed Schmidt represented clients on Main Street and Wall Street who object to the extension of the date for exercising eminent domain.

Mr. Mark Blitzer, president of Devon Acura spoke about how the plan will impact his business. He asked the Committee to defer their consideration or vote on the conceptual plan subject to the Redeveloper either integrating the Devan Acura property uses into the proposed Plan or negotiating a relocation of the Devan Acura uses to another location within the City of Norwalk satisfactory to the property owner.

Ms. Debbie Greenwood, Executive Director YMCA spoke in support of the project.

Mr. David Westmorland, 50 Elmwood Avenue spoke in support of the West Avenue project, but said that he was concerned about the property owners who would be affected by the project.

Ms. Patsy Brescia submitted a statement in support of the West Avenue project by the Stepping Stones Museum for Children. She encouraged the Common Council to move the project forward.

Mr. Keal Evans, European Auto said that what he has been offered for his property by Mr. Seligson is 50 – 75% short of what he needs to relocate his business. He said that he applauded the Committee for having the developer talk to him, but that is still short. He said that he wants his property to be incorporated into the West Avenue project and wants to be treated fairly by the developer.

Planning Committee

March 1, 2007

Page 2 of 5

Ms. Nancy Esposito, 4 Merwin Street asked the Committee members to consider the words of the property owners with a little more weight. She said that she would like the Committee to think about the integration of the existing properties.

Mr. Tony Savas read a letter dated March 1, 2007 requesting that any resident being displaced have the option to occupy a similar space within the development. His letter was endorsed by Ms. Esposito and her brother Mr. Casey Onaitis.

Ms. Jennifer Herring, President, The Maritime Aquarium spoke in support of the West Avenue Project.

Mr. Doug Adam entered a letter of support from the Norwalk Hospital.

There were no further comments and the public participation segment of the meeting was closed.

### **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

- \*\* MR. HILLIARD MOVED TO TABLE THE APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES TO THE NEXT MEETING**
- \*\* MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

### **BUSINESS**

#### **A. WALL STREET REDEVELOPMENT PLAN**

##### **Approval of Plan Modification to the Wall Street Redevelopment Plan**

- \*\* MR. KYDES MOVED TO APPROVE THE ITEM**

Mr. Sheehan explained that under this modification, the power of eminent domain goes back to the Common Council. The Agency heard the outcry from the residents that they had taken down so many properties and then did not develop those properties.

Mr. Hempstead said that it was not fair to the property owners that this is going on for so long. Mr. Sheehan said that they should not determine the development needs for the next 15 years, today. This is a 20 year project.

Mr. Miklave said that the designated areas should proceed as quickly as possible. He said that the Committee cannot dictate the development. Mr. Hempstead asked Mr. Miklave if he envisioned the need for eminent domain within the PoKo development in the next 24 months. Mr. Sheehan said that the majority of the land issues are in the third phase. He said that it is going to take several years to do site assembly.

Mr. Krummel said that he has concerns for people who want to stay in the project area. Mr. Kydes said that it is imperative that the property owner's rights are protected. He told Mr. Sheehan that he has to be the negotiator who does not take sides. Mr. Hempstead said that he totally supported the plan amendment. Mr. Miklave requested a briefing at each meeting.

**\*\* MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

**B. WEST AVENUE CORRIDOR REDEVELOPMENT PLAN**

**Approval of the Concept Plan for Plan Area B and Development Team as submitted by Seligson Properties on January 10, 2007**

**\*\* MR. KYDES MOVED TO APPROVE THE ITEM**

**\*\* MR. KRUMMEL MOVED TO APPROVE THE FOLLOWING ACTION:  
ADVANCEMENT OF THE PRELIMINARY CONCEPT PLAN TO THE  
COMMON COUNCIL WITH NOTES AS STATED HEREIN APPENDED  
AND DEVELOPMENT TEAM AS PROPOSED BY STANLEY M.  
SELIGSON PROPERTIES FOR THE WEST AVENUE CORRIDOR  
REDEVELOPMENT PLAN AREA B ON JANUARY 10, 2007**

Mr. Sheehan provided an overview of the preliminary concept plan process. He said that there is nothing at this point that binds the Common Council to the preliminary site plan. Over the next six months, they need to plan how to address various concerns. Mr. Sheehan said that the Common Council is in control of the site plan.

Mr. Hempstead asked if the amendment would affect the overall time line. Mr. Sheehan said that it would not. Mr. Miklave said that he tried to make it clear that this Committee is a full partner an overseer in this process.

Mr. Hilliard asked Mr. Sheehan if there were any guidelines for the relocation of businesses. Mr. Sheehan said that they will operate under the federal guidelines which provide additional resources to those affected. He said that they are constantly talking about integration of businesses. The area has a high degree of zoning associated with it and that causes conflict within the development site.

Mr. Miklave said that it would not be his intent to amend the recommendation to require the integration of property owners. However, he would recommend exploring the concept.

Mr. Sheehan gave a power point presentation showing the plan. The intent of the plan is to encourage pedestrian activity.

**\*\* MOTION TO APPROVE THE AMENDMENT PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

Mr. Miklave thanked everyone involved for their diligence and hard work.

**\*\* MAIN MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

**OLD BUSINESS**

In response to Mr. Miklave's question, Mr. Sheehan said that the Washington Street group was not prepared to come back at this time.

**NEW BUSINESS**

There was no new business and the meeting was unanimously adjourned at 10:10 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Rosemarie Lombardi  
Telesco Secretarial Services