

**CITY OF NORWALK  
PLANNING COMMITTEE  
REGULAR MEETING  
APRIL 7, 2011**

**ATTENDANCE:** Douglas Hempstead, Carvin Hilliard, Laurel Lindstrom, Andrew Conroy, Clyde Mount, John Tobin

**STAFF:** Timothy Sheehan, Redevelopment Director

**CALL TO ORDER**

Mr. Hempstead called the meeting to order at 7:10 p.m.

**ROLL CALL**

Mr. Hempstead called the roll. A quorum was present. He introduced the members of the Committee to the public.

**PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

Mr. Hempstead reminded everyone that there had already been a public hearing on the capital budget. He said that while he did not want to block the public's free speech, but simply to remind them that the public hearing had already been held.

One of the women present came forward said that she had letters written by students at Jefferson asking for a new playground. She then gave copies of the letters to Mr. Hempstead. Another parent then came forward and said that he supported the playgrounds for the schools. Mr. Hempstead then asked for a show of hands of those who were present to support the new playgrounds at the schools. At least ten peoples raised their hands.

Mr. David Westmoreland, 50 Elmwood Avenue, came forward and said that he would like to clarify that the CDBG grant request was for the \$17,600 amount on the spreadsheet and not 15,000 as reported in the minutes.

Mr. Raoul Dupervil came forward and said that he was present as the Chairman of the Human Relations Committee in support of the request to bring Norwalk into ADA compliance. This would involve retention of an architect to conduct surveys of municipal owned buildings to determine their compliance with Section 504/ADA requirements.

Ms. Ruby Watson said that she was present to ask the Committee to consider upgrading Ryan Park with water and playground equipment.

Mr. Hempstead asked if there was anyone else who wished to speak to the Committee about Capital Budget items. No one else came forward.

### **CAPITAL BUDGET**

**Discuss any Committee recommended changes**  
**Vote to advance the Capital Budget to the full Council.**

Mr. Hempstead then said that there had been a request for funding for Wolfpit and Jefferson playgrounds and that the figures being discussed would be from the Mayor's recommended budget. Mr. Hilliard said that he would like to see additional funds for Ryan Park. Mr. Hempstead said that they would find the money from another source.

Mr. Hempstead said that the Committee would be considering Ryan Park next. Mr. Conroy asked if there were any accounts that had residual funds to be spent for Ryan Park. He pointed out that the GIS account. Mr. Hamilton said that Mr. Mocciae was very good about spending down his accounts for the specified projects. However, he would need to do a quick review of the GIS accounts, which were formerly in DPW but have been moved to IT. Discussion followed.

**\*\* MR. HILLIARD MOVED TO TRANSFER \$25,000 FROM THE CALF PASTURE LINE ITEM TO THE SCHOOL AND PARKS LINE ITEM SPECIFICALLY FOR RYAN PARK.**

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

Mr. Tobin said that there had been a number of discussions about footpaths and that they were the City's responsibility. He said that the paths, which are located in areas where there is not enough room to install sidewalks, were crumbling and needed maintenance. There was brief discussion about making the home owners responsible. Mr. Tobin said that the City used to use a small snowplow to clear them, but this hasn't been done in years. Mr. Hempstead said that he believed that the City put the footpaths in from where the last school bus stop was to the nearby elementary schools. He added that Mr. Alvord had mentioned having a study done on the sidewalks. Ms. Lindstrom said that she was in favor of maintaining these paths. Mr. Tobin agreed. Mr. Conroy said that Cudlipp Street was not wide enough to have a sidewalk, but that there were footpaths. Ms. Straniti said that having the footpaths was important because it encouraged people to walk and that last year, the funding had been put into the line item with sidewalks. Mr. Hamilton was asked to check with Mr. Alvord to see if there had been any work done on the footpaths. The discussion then moved to Safe Routes to School grant and whether it was connected to the Traffic Management Study.

**\*\* MS. STRANITI MOVED TO TRANSFER \$75,000 FROM SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOLS AND \$75,000 FROM BIKEWAYS TO FOOTPATHS FOR REPAIR.**

Mr. Conroy said that he would like to see the Cudlipp project moved forward. Mr. Tobin said that this would be constructing a new footpaths. He said that in his area, the footpaths have been fairly well maintained by the home owners, but at Cudlipp, the pedestrians are walking in the street. The discussion then moved to the SRS funding.

**\*\* THE MOTION TO TRANSFER \$75,000 FROM SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOLS AND \$75,000 FROM BIKEWAYS TO FOOTPATHS FOR REPAIR PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Mr. Mount asked what the watercourse expenses were. Mr. Hempstead said that it was for a study on the ponds, streams and retention ponds related to flooding.

**\*\* MR. TOBIN MOVED TO TRANSFER \$75,000 FROM THE EAST AVENUE PROJECT AND MOVE IT INTO CUDLUPP AVENUE FOOTPATH PROJECT.  
\*\* THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Ms. Straniti said that during the past few years, there had been two very significant purchases of open space, and she would be pleased to see some funding transferred into the account to build it back up. Mr. Conroy said that he agreed, but that he did not think that this would be the year to do this. Ms. Lindstrom asked if it would possible to do a special appropriation if a prime piece of land became available. Mr. Hamilton said that this could be done, but finding the funding would be difficult. Ms. Straniti said that she was very happy with the past few year's acquisitions along with the police department demolition.

**\*\* MR HEMPSTEAD MOVED TO APPROVE THE PROPOSAL THAT CITY WIDE I.T. PROJECTS MUST INCLUDE UPGRADES PRESENTATION CAPACITY AND WIRELESS ACCESS TO THE COMMON COUNCIL CHAMBERS, COMMUNITY ROOM AND THE MEETING ROOMS.  
\*\* THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**\*\* MR. TOBIN MOVE TO ADVANCE THE CAPITAL BUDGET AS AMENDED TO THE FULL COUNCIL FOR APPROVAL.  
\*\* THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

### **PY37 COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT BLOCK GRANT PROGRAM**

**Discuss staff recommendations for the CDBG PY37 Annual Plan and related comments made at the March Public Hearing.**

**Vote to advance the CDBG PY37 Annual Plan to the Common Council.**

Ms. Laura Epstein, a Director for Senior Services for the City of Norwalk came forward and said that her department services the low income elderly. She said that there was an easy way to increase the income for the seniors through a supplemental program that would reduce the Medicare Part B payments. She then outlined the benefits of the proposed program. She said that there was a proposal to have collaboration between two agencies to reach the low income elderly, many of whom are living on between 8 to 10 thousand a year. Those who qualify, they would not have to pay their \$100 a month for Medicare Part B and would give these residents a substantial increase in their available income.

Ms. Sheri McCready from the Norwalk Housing Authority came forward and said that there was a proposed renovation for Roodner Court that would allow the after school projects to function there and also give space for a wellness clinic.

Mr. Raoul Dupervil, the Chair of Human Relations Committee, came forward and said that he had requested funding to bring the City in compliance with Federal ADA regulations. He expressed concern about fact that the City was not in compliance with ADA for municipal buildings. The City did a study in 1993, but never enacted any of the recommendations. Some of the building have been made accessible and not in compliance, but not all of them.

Mr. Hilliard said that he had reviewed the applications and that he was familiar with Serving All Vessels Equally (S.A.V.E) because of his concerns about gang activity in South Norwalk. He said that he felt that the S.A.V.E program and the mentoring program were important to keep the youth from joining gangs. He said that he would like to see them fully funded. He then asked who decided which organization would receive the funds. Mr. Sheehan said that it was done by the staff according to the methodology.

Mr. Sheehan then said that the staff had used the formula to allocate the funding and that \$17,000 was the largest amount that was being awarded. Mr. Hilliard said that he was disappointed that the recommendation for the Teen Fatherhood Program was zero.

Mr. Hilliard then asked about the police grant. Mr. Sheehan said that the police program was in Public Service and there was a cap from HUD that limited the amount to 15%.

The discussion then moved back to the Teen Fatherhood Program.

**\*\* MR. HILLIARD MOVED TO TRANSFER \$7,000 FROM LINE 22, THE NORWALK REDEVELOPMENT AGENCY - IMPEDIMENTS TO FAIR HOUSING TO LINE 19 SERVING ALL VESSELS EQUALLY (S.A.V.E) - BUILDING FUTURES THROUGH MENTORING FOR A TOTAL OF \$24,000.**

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

Mr. Tobin asked about Elderhouse and the proposed projects. Mr. Sheehan reviewed the details of the projects.

**\*\* MR. CONROY MOVED TO ADVANCE THE CDBG ALLOCATION AS AMENDED TO THE COMMON COUNCIL.**

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

A brief discussion regarding possible deduction in funding followed.

**\*\* MR. TOBIN MOVED TO APPROVE THE CDBG BLOCK GRANT FUNDING REQUESTS REGARDING THE ANTICIPATED DEDUCTION.**

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

### **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

#### **Regular Meeting March 3, 2011**

Mr. Sheehan then said that he had several corrections to the Minutes of March 3, 2011. He then distributed copies of his requested changes to the minutes to the Committee.

**\*\* MR. CONROY MOVED TO TABLE THE MINUTES OF MARCH 3, 2011.**

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

### **BUSINESS CONT'D**

#### **Waypoint Development**

Mr. Paxton Kinol, who is a local developer, was introduced by the Waypointe developer. Mr. Kinol explained that he had involved in the initial Avalon project development in Norwalk. Now, after working on several other projects in Stamford and in Wilton, Mr. Kinol said that he was now focused on Norwalk. Final site plan applications will most likely be submitted to Zoning on this Friday. He went on to outline the upcoming meetings with various groups including the neighbors. Mr. Kinol explained that the plans can change and that the Waypointe development is geared towards moving forward as fast as possible. The portion that is being discussed is 20% of the total project, and is about 4 acres. Mr. Kinol then gave a brief run down of the calendar for the Committee.

A PowerPoint presentation was then given on the section of the plan between Orchard and Butler Streets. Mr. Hempstead asked about financial assistance. Mr. Kinol said that he understood that there was a grant from the State for infrastructure.

Mr. Tobin then asked how Mr. Seligson was involved. Mr. Kinol said that Mr. Seligson was still a partner, but that there were other partners now. He said that his method was to work on bite sized pieces and that one of the reason the project stalled was because of the overall size.

Mr. Conroy expressed concern about the uniform height of the buildings. Mr. Knowles said that it is not possible to vary the roof line too much, because the fire stairs wells become cost prohibitive. However, most people who are walking or driving down the street only see the first two stories. However, due to the slope of the actual land, there will be a full story decrease in the roof line.

Mr. Hempstead said that the schedule was fairly aggressive. Mr. Kinol said that the dates were ones that were determined by Zoning, not by him. Mr. Hempstead then asked Mr. Sheehan about whether the Committee needed to do anything at this stage. Mr. Sheehan said that there was nothing at this point, and reviewed the upcoming procedure.

Mr. Hempstead asked if the additional units would over saturate the market. Mr. Sheehan said that there was a window of 700-900 units that would be needed and pointed out that the multi-family units had been suppressed in Norwalk for a number of years.

Mr. Hempstead asked if there could be an understanding regarding the State grant funding passing through the Committee to the project.

*Mr. Tobin left the meeting at 9:22 p.m.*

Mr. Conroy asked for demographics and said that he had concerns about the number of school children that would be added to the District. He said that the focus of this would be "Families in Transitions" such as families who are just starting out, couples who are downsizing from a house, single parents and others. Mr. Kinol said that the children would be using the playground by Stepping Stones, so an additional playground would not be included. Thirty three of the units will be work force housing. Mr. Hempstead said that Mr. Seigelson was not able to attend the meeting due to a conflict in his schedule.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

**\*\* MR. MOUNT MOVED TO ADJOURN.**

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

The meeting adjourned at 9:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Sharon L. Soltes  
Telesco Secretarial Services