

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

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

**STAFF:** Munroe Johnson, Redevelopment Agency; Susan Sweitzer, Redevelopment Agency, Timothy Sheehan, Redevelopment Agency Director (7:50 p.m.)

**OTHERS:** Sherri McCready, Housing Authority, Emil Albanese, Redevelopment Agency, Atty. Greiner, Redevelopment, Ken Olson, POKO Partners.

**ROLL CALL**

Mr. Hempstead called the meeting to order at 7:03 p.m.

**PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

Ms. Smith said that she was present about a separation of two lots on Bouton Street. Mr. Johnson explained directed her to the correct room.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES – MAY 24, 2011 JOINT SPECIAL MEETING**

**\*\* MR. TOBIN MOVED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF MAY 24, 2011 JOINT SPECIAL MEETING AS SUBMITTED.**  
**\*\* THE MOTION PASSED WITH (HEMPSTEAD, TOBIN, AND MOUNT) IN FAVOR AND FOUR ABSTENTIONS (CONROY, HILLIARD, LINDSTROM AND STRANITI).**

**BUSINESS**

**Request for Community Development Block Grant Program Certificate of Consistency**

- 1. Norwalk Housing Authority Section 3 Program Coordinator - Authorize Mayor to execute a Certificate of Consistency**
- 2. Norwalk Housing Authority Capital Fund Education and Training Community Program – Authorize Mayor to execute a Certificate of Consistency**

**\*\* MR. HEMPSTEAD MOVED THE ITEMS.**

Mr. Conroy asked for clarification on consistency, which Mr. Johnson reviewed with the Committee. The plan is consistent with Norwalk's Consolidate Plan for 2010-2014 in addressing supporting efforts to increase income stability and efforts that assist people to be more appropriately trained for jobs that are available; and also by supporting organizations that are trying to reduce the impact of the current economic depression on families through intervention.

Mr. Hempstead asked about the Capital Funding. Ms. Sherri McCready said that last year, the Housing Authority had applied for this grant for the building across the street from the Open Door Shelter at 24 ½ Monroe Street. This was just a re-application for funding.

**\*\* THE MOTION TO APPROVE THE FOLLOWING ITEMS:**

**1. NORWALK HOUSING AUTHORITY SECTION 3 PROGRAM  
COORDINATOR - AUTHORIZE MAYOR TO EXECUTE A CERTIFICATE OF  
CONSISTENCY**

**2. NORWALK HOUSING AUTHORITY CAPITAL FUND EDUCATION AND  
TRAINING COMMUNITY PROGRAM – AUTHORIZE MAYOR TO EXECUTE  
A CERTIFICATE OF CONSISTENCY**

**PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**Transit Orientated Development Pilot Program Grant Funds**

**1. Authorization to submit an application for a Transit-Orientated Development Pilot Program Grant in the amount of \$1 million; and**

**2. Authorization for the Mayor to execute all documents required to advance the application and administer the grant.**

Mr. Johnson explained that he could not speak about the program in detail or to specifics of the grant.

**Connectivity Master Plan**

**Review and discussion.**

Mr. Johnson then gave an overview of the connectivity plan, which is available online at:

<http://www.connectnorwalk.com/final-plan-presented/>

He said that it has become evident that there were a number of projects going on in the City and that the Plan was focused on coordinating the projects. Mr. Johnson said that the demographics showed that Norwalk was losing the 18-25 demographic group and gaining in the 65+ group. The plan is focused on the development itself in mind. People who do not live and work in downtown will continue to transport themselves to their jobs via cars, but it is hoped that the downtown residents will use alternative means of transportation.

Mr. Hempstead said that he believed that the draft was almost in the final stages. Mr. Johnson agreed. He added that the group would like to commence the final draft as soon as possible. Mr. Hempstead suggested that this be scheduled for a Saturday morning and that a bus be provided for the Committee to tour the area.

Discussion followed about the two study groups, one that is focused on the downtown area and the overall connectivity plan. One of the plans contains a bus bump lane where a bus could bypass the cars waiting at a traffic light.

Mr. Hempstead asked if scheduling this trip in September would be better than August. Mr. Johnson said that he would speak with Mr. Schulman about this.

Mr. Johnson said that on the day of the presentation, most of the audience questions centered on how the program would work. There are some outstanding edits that remain to be done. The plan will be presented to the various entities for their feedback before the final draft is compiled. Mr. Conroy said that there were some concepts such as new methods for pedestrian crossings that would not be visible from a bus. Mr. Conroy asked if there was any video on the new round about in West Haven.

Ms. Straniti said that she was not in favor of any traffic circle or roundabout because she had traveled a great deal and found them all to be confusing and difficult. Mr. Hempstead said that he remembered the round about outside of the Big E.

### **Norwalk Brownfield Initiative**

#### **Update Regarding Municipal Brownfield Pilot Grant - 30 Monroe Street**

Ms. Amy Valencourt, the consultant for the project came forward and introduced herself. Mr. Hempstead said that he understood that this had to do with the railroad station. The \$300,000 in grant funding from Connecticut State Department of Economic and Community Development (DECD) was from a newly created Brownfields Municipal Pilot Program. The Parking Authority, the Redevelopment Agency and DPW were involved in coordinating the effort. Concerns were expressed regarding what would happen if material had to be removed from the area and who would be responsible to pay for it.

Ms. Valencourt said that a bid was ready to go out. She said that base was used was from a project that had been done last year and it averaged out to \$282,000. The firm numbers won't be available until after the bids are in. The \$300,000 from the State is a grant to jump start the project and to remediate the pockets of fill material so that the site can be prepared for the upcoming Transit Orientated Development.

Ms. Valencourt said DECD and the DEP had agreed in writing that the City could go back and remove pockets of contamination as financially possible. This means that the bids would be structured as alternatives. Ms. Valencourt then distributed an aerial view of the railroad station with the locations of the contamination marked via GPS. She said that she estimated the project would take 14 work days. When the test bores were done, the crews would cone off three or four parking spaces, boring, backfilling and then patching was completed. Then the crews moved on to the next location.

The discussion then moved to when this could be done without disrupting too many commuters.

Ms. Straniti asked if there was any problems with air borne pollutants. Ms. Valencourt said that there is a health and safety plan in place but she did not believe that the public would be in danger at all. The safety plan includes dust suppression and there is monitoring. It is not hazardous, but it is polluted. The contractors must be licensed and trained for this type of removal.

**\*\* MR. CONROY MOVED TO SUSPEND THE RULES TO ADD THE ITEM THAT IS IN THE BACKUP MATERIAL OPTION A .**

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

**\*\* MR. CONROY MOVED THE FOLLOWING:**

**AUTHORIZE THE REDEVELOPMENT AGENCY TO BID THE  
REMEDATION PLAN FOR 30 MONROE STREET IN ITS ENTIRETY WITH  
NO AUTHORIZATION TO PROCEED WITH THE REMEDIATION WORK  
BEYOND BROWNFIELD MUNICIPAL PILOT PROGRAM FUNDING  
AVAILABLE.**

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

### **Transit Orientated Development Pilot Program**

**1. Authorization to submit an application for a Transit-Orientated Development Pilot Project Program Grant in the amount of \$1 million; and**

**2. Authorization for the Mayor to execute all documents required to advance the application and administer the grant.**

Ms. Sweitzer gave an overview of the project. Mr. Hempstead asked what the City's obligation would be if the grant was awarded. Ms. Sweitzer said that there would not be matching funds needed.

*Mr. Sheehan joined the meeting at 7:50 p.m.*

Mr. Conroy asked for clarification on what the specific project would be. Ms. Sweitzer explained that it was a planning grant. It would pay for the engineering, streetscape and design for pedestrian accessibility adjacent to the South Norwalk Railroad Station.

Ms. Lindstrom said that she did not have any information. Ms. Sweitzer said that there was no back up at all, because that the brownfield backup presented most of the information. Ms. Sweitzer said that she would like to have approval for the planning and design.

**\*\* MS. STRANITI MOVED TO APPROVE THE FOLLOWING:**

**1. AUTHORIZATION TO SUBMIT AN APPLICATION FOR A TRANSIT-ORIENTATED DEVELOPMENT PILOT PROJECT PROGRAM GRANT IN THE AMOUNT OF \$1 MILLION; AND**

**2. AUTHORIZATION FOR THE MAYOR TO EXECUTE ALL DOCUMENTS REQUIRED TO ADVANCE THE APPLICATION AND ADMINISTER THE GRANT**

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

### **Norwalk Brownfield Initiative CONT'D**

Mr. Sheehan said that he would like to speak about the brown fields. Mr. Hempstead said that it was already approved. Mr. Sheehan said that the Mayor was supportive of putting this out to bid, but that it would be good to have some inter-departmental discussions. Mr. Hempstead said that he would submit this for the July 26th Council agenda.

### **Wall Street Redevelopment Plan Area 2A**

- 1. POKO Partners, LLC's request to extend for a period of one year the provisions under Section 3.12 Commencement and Completion of Construction of the LDA, dated November 14, 2007, related to the Phase I Improvements of the development**
  - a. Review and consider information provided by POKO to the Redevelopment Agency per its request of March 30, 2011.**

Mr. Sheehan reviewed the details of the project and said that the Agency was concerned about the financing. He added that the Agency had just denied a one year extension, and approved a six month extension instead. This was calculated by going back to the date when the extension was first requested in March 21st. The extension will expire on September 21st.

Mr. Albanese explained the details regarding the September deadline being met before the October meeting. Mr. Hempstead said that it was a tri-party agreement and that when September comes, there would have to be some discussion.

Mr. Olson said that his organization was in the process of underwriting and that he believe that the Agency wanted to make sure that the developer continues to move forward with this. Mr. Albanese pointed out that the developer had already made significant progress in this area.

Mr. Hempstead said that he would contact Corporation Counsel about attending the September meeting to advise the Committee.

Mr. Olson said that December was the first time that the financing could move forward. He said that he had been in contact with the Planning Committee about this. An application takes about 45-65 days to complete and there were four application that had been submitted. The economy and the banking environment had been stalled and now Citibank was engaged with his company in a meaningful way. One additional application for CHFA is about to be submitted. The agencies are all looking at the project seriously.

Mr. Conroy said that it seemed like by the late fall it will be clear as to whether or not the financing was available. Mr. Olson agreed.

A discussion followed about a letter from Citibank dated July 22nd, 2010 that had inaccurate information. Mr. Olson said that there was a later letter with corrected figures. The newer letter is less than a month old. Atty. Greiner said that he had a copy of the most recent letter. Copies of the letter dated June 2, 2011 from Citi Community Capital to POKO Partners, LLC were distributed to the Committee members.

Mr. Hempstead said that he had no problem with approving a six month extension, but would not necessarily agree to an additional six months beyond that.

Atty. Greiner said that the Agency had denied POKO's request for a one year extension submitted on March 21, 2011 but approve a six month extension.

**\*\* MS. STRANITI MOVED TO ADD THE FOLLOWING ITEM AS AN ACTION ITEM:**

**POKO PARTNERS, LLC'S REQUEST TO EXTEND FOR A PERIOD OF ONE YEAR THE PROVISIONS UNDER SECTION 3.12 COMMENCEMENT AND**

**COMPLETION OF CONSTRUCTION OF THE LDA, DATED NOVEMBER 14, 2007, RELATED TO THE PHASE I IMPROVEMENTS OF THE DEVELOPMENT**

**A. REVIEW AND CONSIDER INFORMATION PROVIDED BY POKO TO THE REDEVELOPMENT AGENCY PER ITS REQUEST OF MARCH 30, 2011**

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

**\*\* MR. HEMPSTEAD MOVED TO DENY THE FOLLOWING ITEM:**

**POKO PARTNERS, LLC'S REQUEST TO EXTEND FOR A PERIOD OF ONE YEAR THE PROVISIONS UNDER SECTION 3.12 COMMENCEMENT AND COMPLETION OF CONSTRUCTION OF THE LDA, DATED NOVEMBER 14, 2007, RELATED TO THE PHASE I IMPROVEMENTS OF THE DEVELOPMENT**

**A. REVIEW AND CONSIDER INFORMATION PROVIDED BY POKO TO THE REDEVELOPMENT AGENCY PER ITS REQUEST OF MARCH 30, 2011**

**\*\* THE MOTION PASSED WITH SIX IN FAVOR (LINDSTROM, STRANITI, MOUNT, TOBIN, HEMPSTEAD, AND CONROY) AND ONE OPPOSED (HILLIARD).**

**\*\* MR. HEMPSTEAD MOVED TO GRANT A SIX MONTH EXTENSION FROM MARCH 21, 2011 TO SEPTEMBER 21, 2011.**

**\*\* THE MOTION PASSED WITH FIVE IN FAVOR (LINDSTROM, STRANITI, MOUNT, HEMPSTEAD, AND CONROY) AND TWO OPPOSED (TOBIN, HILLIARD).**

**\*\* MR. HEMPSTEAD MOVED TO SCHEDULE A PUBLIC HEARING REGARDING THE CDBG FUNDS ON JULY 26, 2011 AT 7:00 P.M.**

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

**ADJOURNMENT**

**\*\* MR. CONROY MOVED TO ADJOURN.**

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

The meeting adjourned at 8:29 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Sharon L. Soltes  
Telesco Secretarial Services