

**CITY OF NORWALK
PLANNING COMMITTEE - SPECIAL MEETING
FEBRUARY 6, 2013**

ATTENDANCE: Nicholas Kydes, Chair; Michael Geake; Douglas
Hempstead; Matthew Miklave; Warren Pena; David
McCarthy (7:30 p.m.); Carvin Hilliard (7:38 p.m.)

STAFF: Timothy Sheehan, Executive Director; Mary Grace
Webber, Special Projects Manager

OTHERS: Bruce Kimmel and David Watts, Common Councilmembers;
Gayle Epp, EJP Consulting Group, LLC

CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Kydes called the meeting to order at 7:05 p.m. and called the Roll. A quorum was present.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Mr. Kydes set the ground rules for public participation and asked each speaker to keep their comments to three minutes. He also asked that the speakers not repeat what was already said by a previous speaker.

Ms. Ganga Duleep asked that the Committee hold a public hearing on the Choice Neighborhood Transformation plan.

Ms. Diane Cece said that to her knowledge there have been no public hearings on the Choice Neighborhood Transformation plan to learn about the plan. She said that there have been community events at Washington Village and taskforce/strategy meetings, but they have been held during the day. Ms. Cece said that she is very concerned when people are saying that there have been a number of public meetings. She said that she got a copy of the Memorandum of Understanding today. She said that she has a number of concerns.

Ms. Cece said that a letter went out to the residents of Norwalk from Mr. Kydes in **response to Ms. Duleep's letter where he offered to meet with her. She said that** when Ms. Duleep asked if Ms. Cece could accompany her, she was told by Mr. Kydes that was unacceptable.

Mr. Kydes told Ms. Cece that she is inaccurate. He told Ms. Duleep that the meeting was between Mr. Sheehan, Ms. Duleep and himself. He said that he did not want to turn it into a forum or a public hearing. It was a meeting to address the concerns outlined in her letter. Mr. Kydes said that Ms. Duleep cancelled the

Planning Committee - special meeting

February 6, 2013

Page 1

meeting.

Ms. Cece said that Ms. Duleep wanted her to accompany her as one of the original members of the Friends of Ryan Park. Ms. Cece said that Mr. Sheehan told her that the 8-24 does not require a public hearing. She said that the Committee should consider holding a public hearing.

Mr. Kydes asked Ms. Webber who owns the property. Ms. Webber said that the property is owned by the City of Norwalk. Ms. Cece asked the Committee to table this item until they get more information from the public.

Mr. Kydes asked if anyone else wished to speak. Hearing no one, he closed the public participation.

**** MR. PENA MOVED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF JANUARY 10, 2013 AS SUBMITTED
** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

BUSINESS

CHOICE NEIGHBORHOODS PLANNING GRANT WASHINGTON VILLAGE

**** MR. GEAKE MOVED TO APPROVE THE WASHINGTON VILLAGE/SOUTH NORWALK CHOICE NEIGHBORHOODS TRANSFORMATION PLAN**

Mr. Hempstead asked who will maintain the units. He said that this is a new concept where the units are not under the control of the Housing Authority and he wants to be sure there is a formal outlet that is consistent with other housing projects. He said that he is not opposed to having a private management group. **Ms. Epps said that all of the units will be managed by the owner's management company.** She said that all of the residents will go to Trinity and they will have the ability to go to a grievance committee.

Mr. Hempstead said that for his part in the process, he felt the public meetings were well attended when this was first presented. He said that this plan went through several Planning Committee chairs. He said that this is a forward thinking project and encompasses all of the things talked about on both sides of the aisle. He said that he has no problem with this.

Mr. Kydes said that he knows the history of the parcels and that he was the only Council person to vote against the Zone change from light industrial to residential. He said that a Light Industrial zone in Norwalk is a precious commodity.

Mr. Kydes said that now the Zoning allows for development for that area. He said what better usage to bring people from all walks of life together; ownership gives people a sense of pride. It gives people a desire to push ahead. This area has the potential to become a showcase. He said that he would like to see some modifications incorporated such as having townhouses. Mr. Kydes said that this is a well thought out plan and the City is protected by the Agreement.

Mr. Sheehan said that the Committee is being asked to review and advance the terms.

Mr. Kydes said that no one is giving land away. Mr. Sheehan said that any **changes would have to go back to the Common Council. He said that the City's consideration goes back to Mr. Miklave's chairmanship and then to Reverend Bolden and then Mr. Hempstead.** The City has been looking at this site for a mixed income development. He said that the Redevelopment Agency has been encouraging the Housing Authority to work with HUD to bring this transformation to the oldest public housing project in Connecticut.

Mr. McCarthy joined the meeting at 7:30 p.m.

Mr. Sheehan noted that Washington Village is located in the 100-year flood plain and will continue to flood until the units. He said that the Agency has been working with the Housing Authority and there have been 4-5 Housing Authority sites, but it was determined that the Washington Village told the best story. Norwalk was the only community in the State to receive the Choice Neighborhoods Planning Grant.

Mr. Sheehan said that Norwalk needs to show its commitment to the concept and the transformation that is anticipated in this plan.

Mr. Kydes said that the commitment that the City is making is paramount to making this happen. He said that he was opposed to the Zoning change, but is now 100% behind this plan.

Mr. Miklave said that he would vote in favor of this item. He said that he is a long time proponent of expanding housing opportunities in Norwalk.

Mr. Hilliard joined the meeting at 7:38 p.m.

Mr. Miklave said that he was pleased to see what he thinks is a good plan. He said that he believes there are adequate protections.

Mr. Pena said that he was fully in support of this project. Mr. Watts said that he was also in support of it and that the people who have the facts will also support this. Mr. Hilliard said that he supports this project; it will improve the look of

Planning Committee - special meeting

February 6, 2013

Page 3

South Norwalk and will help the residents of Washington Village by bringing various services to them. He said that this is progress for the people of Washington Village. Mr. Geake said that he fully supported this project and said that it was about time to have integrated housing in South Norwalk.

Mr. Watts said that from the residents and the representatives of the area, they fully support this. He thanked the Housing Authority for reaching out to the residents. He said that Washington Village is from another time and it is time to put that behind us. He said that the mixed use will stabilize the area. Mr. Watts said that he did not want to leave out the Friends of Ryan Park and thanked them for adopting the space. He said that he will vote in favor of this at the Common Council meeting. He asked the Agency if they could work with the Friends of Ryan Park. He thanked this Committee and Mr. Kydes.

Mr. Hempstead asked if the property was purchased with State funding. Mr. Sheehan said that it was part of a State grant that the Agency went after. Mr. Kydes said that he and Mr. Sheehan discussed all of the different perspectives that people had. In the interest of getting the facts out, he encouraged people to go to the website. He said that there was a proactive effort to let people know the facts about this and other development projects. Mr. Kydes said that Ryan Park could benefit from this plan and that no one is going to try and do away with the Park.

Mr. Sheehan said that it is recognized that Ryan Park is a public asset and will never be transferred into private ownership. Mr. Kydes said that he wants that myth dispelled.

Mr. Kimmel said that he supports this project 100%. He said that the value of the Day Street properties is miniscule compared to the overall project that and how it will benefit the community. He said that it could be a model for other towns and cities and hopefully there will be a spillover into the rest of the area.

Mr. Geake said that Ryan Park was transferred to the City by the Second Taxing District and there were restrictive covenants to keep it as a park. He said that it will remain Ryan Park. Mr. Kydes said that he wants the public to understand this and that no one will infringe on its borders. He said that it is a park and will remain a park.

**** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

**** MR. HEMPSTEAD MOVED TO APPROVE AND ADVANCE TO THE COMMON COUNCIL THE TERMS OF THE DAY STREET OPTION AGREEMENT. UPON COMMON COUNCIL APPROVAL OF SUCH TERMS CORPORATION COUNSEL WILL PREPARE THE FINAL LEGAL FORM OF THE OPTION AGREEMENT**

**** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT BLOCK GRANT

Committee review of the CDBG PY39 applications and its program recommendations for advancement to the Phase II application (advisory only)

Mr. Miklave said that the staff has done an outstanding job, and understands the challenges the sub grantees feel.

**** MR. MIKLAVE MOVED TO ADVANCE ALL REQUESTS TO THE NEXT LEVEL**

Ms. Webber explained the structure and said that it is a very time intensive application. She said that after last year there were organizations that felt disenchanting and felt that if there were indications that their request was not going to be granted they would not have moved forward to Phase II. Mr. Sheehan said that if it is the recommendation to advance all of the requests, he suggested not having the preliminary application.

The Committee discussed the requests. Ms. Webber said that there was significant outreach to the applicants.

**** MR. MIKLAVE WITHDREW HIS MOTION**

**** MR. MCCARTHY MOVED THAT ALL APPLICANTS ARE WELCOME TO MOVE FORWARD; THE APPLICANT WILL BE INFORMED OF THEIR SCORE AND THAT A SCORE OF 70% OR BETTER IS MORE LIKELY TO RESULT IN FUNDING**

**** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

Request for Approvals of Mayoral Signature on Consolidated Plan Certificates of Consistency

**** MR. MIKLAVE MOVED TO APPROVE ADVANCING THE NORWALK REDEVELOPMENT AGENCY'S REQUEST FOR COMMON COUNCIL APPROVAL FOR THE MAYOR TO EXECUTE THE REQUIRED CONSOLIDATED PLAN CERTIFICATES OF CONSISTENCY ON BEHALF OF THE MID-FAIRFIELD AIDS PROJECT'S APPLICATION FOR HOUSING OPPORTUNITIES FOR PERSONS WITH AIDS (HOPWA) FUNDING**

AND TO APPROVE ADVANCING THE NORWALK REDEVELOPMENT

**AGENCY'S REQUEST FOR COMMON COUNCIL APPROVAL FOR
THE MAYOR TO EXECUTE THE REQUIRED CERTIFICATES OF
CONSISTENCY ON BEHALF OF THE GREATER NORWALK
CONTINUUM OF CARE'S RESPONSE TO THE U.S. DEPARTMENT
OF HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT'S SUPER NOFA**

**** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

OLD BUSINESS

There was no old business.

NEW BUSINESS

There was no new business.

ADJOURNMENT

**** MR. PENA MOVED TO ADJOURN
** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

There was no further business and the meeting was unanimously adjourned at 8:35 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Rosemarie Lombardi
Telesco Secretarial Services