PARKING AUTHORITY MINUTES

MARCH 24, 2004

ATTENDANCE: Urban Mulvehill, Chairman; Luis Garcia; Stephen Bentkover; Burt Shatz; Troy Jellerette

STAFF: Kathryn Hebert, Administrative Services Manager; Fred Gilden, Comptroller (left at 7:22 p.m.); Harold Alvord, Director DPW; Edmund Schmidt, Assistant to the Mayor (arrived at 7:22 p.m.)

OTHERS: Frank Del Monaco, LAZ Parking; Robert Cavello, Westview Group; Robert Koch, The Norwalk Hour; Jack Burritt, Redevelopment Agency

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Mulvehill called the meeting to order at 6:40 p.m.

ACCEPT THE MINUTES

The following corrections were made: on page 1, second line from the bottom of the page, change the word “station” to “entrance to the parking garage.” On page 2, first paragraph, line 14, change “man-hours” to “annual ticket purchases.” On page 3, first paragraph under Maritime Garage, line 6, add the word “budget” after the word “accurate.” On page 4, second paragraph under Status Report, line 3, change “1:00-2:00 p.m. to “10:00 am to 5:00 p.m.” In the last paragraph on page 4, line 2, add “and received parking permits” after the word “volunteered.” In that same sentence, change “non-Maritime parkers” to “Maritime permitted parkers” and add the following words at the end of the sentence “due to work schedules.” In the last sentence on the page, Mr. Del Monaco said that he would check on the number “32,000” and advise at the next meeting. On page 5, line 1, change “17th” to “21st.” In the third paragraph, line 4, change “2%” to “40” and at a cost of 2%.” In the fourth paragraph, line 5, add a sentence after Chairman Mulvehill’s question that reads “Mr. Del Monaco responded that evening usage was modest.” In the last paragraph on page 5, line 2, add the word “parking” before the word “properties.”

** CHAIRMAN MULVEHILL MOVED TO ACCEPT THE MINUTES OF FEBRUARY 25, 2004 AS CORRECTED.
** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

APPROVE REVISED RECOMMENDED OPERATING AND CAPITAL BUDGETS FOR FISCAL YEAR 2004-05

Mr. Schmidt spoke in general about the revised budgets and the role that LAZ played in them. He said that a complete assessment was done of the lots at Liberty Square, High Street and Merritt 7. Assessment of other smaller lots has been deferred. An operational plan with proposed improvements has been prepared for each lot along with a corresponding budget amount. Mr. Schmidt said that there has been a substantial increase in revenue and operating expenses but the plan provides for tremendous improvements to the lots. There would be a proposed increase in rates, but users would realize a greater value in terms of enhanced service. A public hearing on the proposed rate schedule was set for April 14th.

Mr. Schmidt said that in certain lots the rates would drop back to what they were in 1988, but would be structured differently to entice those parking to remain in the lots for longer period of time, ultimately at a cost savings to them but still providing good revenue to the City. He said that there would be a substantial cost to install the revenue control equipment but it would soon pay for itself in terms of increased revenue for the City. The Maritime Center has said they are in full agreement with their proposed rates. Mr. Schmidt said that during his meeting with the theatre, their concern related to increased security rather than to parking rates. He reiterated that the purpose of the equipment was not to increase revenue but rather to increase the City's control over its lots. Mr. Bentkover said that there should be a time restriction on those tickets that are validated so that everyone clearly understood. Chairman Mulvehill suggested that restaurant owners and other businesses consider offering the validation process to their customers.

Mr. Schmidt said that the Authority authorized about $300,000 this fiscal year 2003-04 to purchase revenue control equipment at the Maritime Garage and the SoNo Railroad Station as well as a parking lot sweeper. The Common Council authorized $880,000 to the Parking Authority this fiscal year 2003-04. To date, no bonds have been issued. The debt would be serviced in the same fashion as other bonds.

MARITIME GARAGE

Agreement with Merritt Contractors, Inc.

** MR. JELLERETTE MOVED TO AUTHORIZE THE CHAIRMAN OF THE PARKING AUTHORITY, URBAN S. MULVEHILL, TO EXECUTE AN AGREEMENT WITH MERRITT CONTRACTORS, INC., FOR PROJECT NO. PA 2004-1, MARITIME GARAGE PARKING SERVICES FIT OUT AREA FOR THE FIELD PERSONNEL PARKING OFFICE FOR A SUM NOT TO EXCEED $61,000. ACCOUNT NO. 21 40 83 5777.
** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

Orders on Contract to Merritt Contractors, Inc.

** MR. JELLERETTE MOVED TO AUTHORIZE THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS TO ISSUE ORDERS ON CONTRACT TO MERRITT CONTRACTORS,

INC., FOR PROJECT NO. PA 2004-1, MARITIME GARAGE PARKING SERVICES FIT OUT AREA FOR FIELD PERSONNEL PARKING OFFICE FOR A SUM NOT TO EXCEED $6,100. ACCOUNT NO. 21 40 83 5777.
** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

Status Report on Project Completion

Mr. Cavello said that glass for the ticket booth as well as equipment for the blue light system was ordered and expected to be received by the end of the week. The installation would be coordinated with Mr. Del Monaco. Combining the 16 phone lines into three receptors would help reduce the overall cost, and Mr. Cavello said that they should be operational by next week as well. Since the weather has been so inclement, mulching and placement of sod remain to be done. The three trees which had been vandalized would be replaced. Their cost would be taken from the contingency. Mr. Cavello said that final payment would be made at the end of the month for the work completed by Klewin. He said that 90% of the punch list items were complete. Shop drawings would be submitted to the DPW. The as-built drawings have been compiled. Site survey work was completed last week.

Mr. Cavello said that the aquarium ticket space is finished; the C/O should be received this week. The contractor’s contingency remains at $42,000. The C/O for the garage would be received once the as-built drawings were submitted. The engineer of record will sign off on the civil work. All inspections on the entire building have been done.

Maritime Garage Request for Validated Parking

Chairman Mulvehill said that the Maritime Garage will hold a fund raising dinner on May 5th and has requested that attendee parking be validated. He said that he asked Ms. Hebert to get feedback from the Mayor’s office on this because the City may decide to absorb the cost of the parking for employees. Because Ms. Hebert had not received the feedback yet, Chairman Mulvehill said that further discussion of this item should be deferred to the next meeting. Mr. Del Monaco said that once the number of attendees to the event has been determined, he may decide to close the parking garage to public parking and leave the surface lot open. Mr. Bentkover thought that opening the surface lot was a good idea; Mr. Del Monaco said that he would do that. He added that evening traffic is getting busier. Chairman Mulvehill said that decision on this item would be held off until the next meeting.

WEBSTER STREET PARKING LOT

Approve Proposed Business Terms for the City / Assignment of Lease/Assumption of Obligations / Amendment to Lease with Bedin Realty

Mr. Burritt showed pictures of the site which showed the driveway access from Washington Street into the Webster Street parking lot. He said that the City is proposing to enter into a lease arrangement for a strip of land (part of the driveway) along the easterly side of 17 Washington Street with the owner. The 4,300 sq.ft. area would be appended to the existing lease between the City and Bedin Realty. The purpose of the lease arrangement would be to preserve the right of way while the study continues regarding what the Webster Street lot would ultimately look like. Mr. Burritt said that Bedin Realty has the right to develop in the area but thus far has not done so. In lieu of this lease arrangement, Bedin Realty would be granted nine additional parking spaces at no cost; Bedin already has 39 parking spaces for their use, none of which are assigned. The existing lease expires June 30, 2005, and from now until then the City could continue to pursue options as to what should happen with the Webster Street lot. Ms. Hebert said that the information could be viewed on the website. Mr. Burritt said that the lease arrangement appears as a draft document. The City would discuss future development with various bodies. Mr. Del Monaco said that LAZ would implement procedures for better control of the lot as well as alternate revenue control systems. There would be two cashiers at the Martin Luther King access to the facility, and two traffic lanes would be added. Mr. Schmidt said that it would be a type of “easy pass” system with a prox card. All cars would be encouraged to enter and exit off Washington Street. This would be a major improvement.

Mr. Burritt summarized the proposal by saying that execution of the lease arrangement would mean that the City preserves an important access to the single most important parking lot in SoNo while keeping an opportunity alive for future development. Mr. Schmidt said that the movie theatre has said this would not be a problem for them. There is an agreement on the land records that those who park in the lot after 6:00 p.m. to view a movie do not have to pay because their ticket is validated by the theatre. He said that it was important that the City do something to regulate the lot. If the owner were not agreeable to this arrangement, the City would be left with few if any other practical options.

Chairman Mulvehill questioned the variances obtained by the owner, saying that from experience he knew that variances have time periods and do expire. He said that if the owner did not build within the prescribed time period of the variance it was the equivalent of abandoning his right to do so. Mr. Burritt said that Michael Greene of P & Z confirmed that the owners’ right continued unabated even though he did not develop the property. Mr. Schmidt said that the owner pulled his permit when an addition was added to their existing structure. Chairman Mulvehill felt strongly that the owner abandoned his rights; Mr. Schmidt said that he would check further with P & Z on this. Mr. Burritt said that if the City had to acquire the land it would be far more expensive than the cost of nine parking permits, or approximately $2,100 annually. To his way of thinking, this was a small price to pay for the opportunity of keeping the City’s options open.

** MR. BENTKOVER MOVED TO APPROVE THE FOLLOWING:

PROPOSED BUSINESS TERMS FOR THE CITY/PARKING AUTHORITY’S LEASE OF PROPERTY OWNED BY BEDIN REALTY, LLC (AS DEPICTED ON A SURVEY

OF 17 WASHINGTON STREET, NORWALK, CT PREPARED BY B. G. ROOT SURVEYORS, DATED AUGUST 3, 1999 AND REVISED MARCH 13, 2004) COMPRISING AN ACCESS WAY FROM WEST WASHINGTON STREET TO WEBSTER STREET MUNICIPAL PARKING LOT;

AUTHORIZE THE NORWALK PARKING AUTHORITY TO EXECUTE SUCH "ASSIGNMENT OF LEASE" AND "ASSUMPTION OF OBLIGATIONS" AGREEMENTS AS MAY BE NEEDED TO ASSIGN THE RESPECTIVE RIGHTS AND OBLIGATIONS OF THE LESSEE, FROM THE CITY OF NORWALK TO THE NORWALK PARKING AUTHORITY, AND OF THE LESSOR FROM BEDIN REALTY ASSOCIATES TO BEDIN REALTY LLC, UNDER A LEASE AGREEMENT DATED JUNE 30, 1995 AND RECORDED AT PAGE 3085, IN VOLUME 109, OF THE NORWALK LAND RECORDS; AND

AUTHORIZE THE CHAIRMAN OF THE NORWALK PARKING AUTHORITY, URBAN S. MULVEHILL, TO EXECUTE AN AMENDMENT TO THE LEASE AGREEMENT WITH BEDIN REALTY, LLC FOR A PORTION OF PROPERTY SITUATED AT 17 WASHINGTON STREET TO PROVIDE FOR A PUBLIC ACCESS WAY TO THE WEBSTER STREET PARKING LOT. THE TERM OF THE LEASE WILL EXPIRE ON JUNE 30, 2005.

** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

EAST NORWALK RAILROAD STATION

Reject All Bids / Agreement with Westview Group

Mr. Schmidt said that $58,000 was put into last year's capital budget for the repair work to the 450 sq.ft. steel concession stand at the East Norwalk railroad station. A private Engineering firm projected the cost would be approximately $96,000. Bids came in between $166,000 and $220,000, well in excess of what was budgeted. It was realized that there was a problem with the design and the way the bids were structured and that the repair would need to be redesigned and rebid. The foundation, electrical and mechanical systems are fine as is. He said that the cost of steel increased 10%-20% since December 2003. A recommendation was being made to reject all bids that had been received, and the project rescoped to bring the cost down to a more reasonable level. He said that the building has no residual value.

** MR. BENTKOVER MOVED TO AUTHORIZE THE PARKING AUTHORITY TO REJECT ALL BIDS IN CONNECTION WITH PROJECT NO. DPW 2003-1, EAST NORWALK RAILROAD REPLACEMENT AND FURTHER MOVED TO AUTHORIZE THE CHAIRMAN, URBAN S. MULVEHILL, TO EXECUTE AN AMENDMENT TO THE AGREEMENT WITH THE WESTVIEW GROUP, TO PROVIDE ARCHITECTURAL SERVICES IN CONNECTION WITH THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE EAST NORWALK STATION BUILDING

CONSTRUCTION SPECIFICATIONS, FOR A SUM NOT TO EXCEED $3,000. ACCOUNT NO. 0904 40 95 5777 C0303.

Mr. Schmidt said that the Westview Group would work closely with DPW on this and provide the original plans which the project would be based on.

** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

WAYFINDING SIGN PROPOSAL

Chairman Mulvehill said that discussion of this item would be moved to the April meeting.

DISCUSSION – Complaint/Appeal Process

Mr. Del Monaco said that LAZ was developing a preliminary policy to handle any form of complaint it received. It would be closely tied to the City's commitment to provide superior customer service. Comments would be tracked and followed up on. Mr. Bentkover asked if LAZ's resolutions could also be traced to which Mr. Del Monaco said a report would be presented to the Parking Authority on a regular basis and include recommendations as necessary. Discussion continued of the signage about complaints and/or comments, and it was the sense of the meeting that the word "business" should be changed to "patronage."

DISCUSSION – ACS Status Report

Transition of Data and Startup Date

Mr. Del Monaco said that the transition should be complete in mid-May; the process was very complicated.

Draft Proposal

Mr. Del Monaco said that the Parking Authority approved a draft manual on June 25, 2003. Chairman Mulvehill said that he found about 40 inconsistencies in the report which he would pass along to Ms. Hebert. Issues of due process should be given to Corporation Counsel. He said that discussion of this item would be carried over to the next meeting.

DISCUSSION – Update Parking Audit

Ms. Hebert said that she has not heard from Central Parking and Corporation Counsel sent their letter on March 17th. About $70,000 is being withheld from their final payment. Mr. Jellerette said that he was surprised a letter was sent; he recalled that the Authority would ask Corporation Counsel for their input but didn't recall asking them to send a letter. Mr. Schmidt said that the Law Dept only mentioned one facet of the situation in its letter, and Central Parking did not respond. This non-response might work to benefit the City in the long run. Chairman Mulvehill suggested that Ms. Hebert pursue this with Corporation Counsel and ask for their further recommendations regarding all the points that Central Parking seemed to be in default of. Mr. Schmidt asked that this information be provided at the next meeting. Withholding payment would cause Central Parking to chase the City, which was a good position for the City to be in.

DISCUSSION – ADA Requirements for On-Street Parking

Ms. Hebert said that she had not been able to obtain any additional material and that there were no federal requirements for on-street handicapped parking. She said that the City's senior engineer suggested that further study was necessary before the City could take any action. Mr. Jellerette asked if other towns were moving toward providing handicapped access; no one seemed to have any knowledge if they were or not. Ms. Hebert said that on-street ADA parking is rare. Mr. Schmidt suggested that Ms. Hebert contact CCM. Mr. Bentkover asked what the federal guidelines stated as a ratio for handicapped spaces. Mr. Schmidt said that all the parking lots could be inventoried to determine how many total parking spaces were available and compare that to what the federal number was for handicapped. Mr. Garcia said that for every 100 available parking spaces, four were required to accommodate handicapped persons. Chairman Mulvehill said that the Authority would need to determine how three additional parking spaces could be made available at the Mechanic Street lot. He asked that DPW inventory all of the City's lots and provide this information at the next meeting.

DISCUSSION – South Norwalk Railroad Station Trash Receptacles

Chairman Mulvehill said that there were large plastic bins on the sidewalk at the South Norwalk railroad station, and these caused an interference with those walking to the station. He said it was an inappropriate place for the receptacles and asked that Mr. Del Monaco have them moved closer to where the police vehicles park. He said that a larger bin, with fencing around it, should be placed outside the station. The area could be power washed to make it look more presentable. Additionally, he asked that Mr. Del Monaco take responsibility for the "sad" looking gardens surrounding the station. Mr. Del Monaco said that it was LAZ's responsibility for all of the above.

ACTION ON ANY ITEM DISCUSSED HEREIN

There were no items that still required action.

NEXT MEETING

Chairman Mulvehill said that the next meeting date would be Wednesday, April 28th at 7:30 p.m. in the DPW Conference Room.

Mr. Garcia announced that he would be stepping down from the Parking Authority at the end of March when his term expired. He said that he enjoyed his association with everyone and wished them well in their endeavors. Chairman Mulvehill said that working with Mr. Garcia was a pleasure; Mr. Jellerette said that Mr. Garcia would be missed.

Mr. Jellerette said that he was very concerned about the youth that was recently attacked at the Webster Street lot during the early morning hours. This was further proof that security is imperative.

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

The meeting was adjourned at 9:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Carol A. Wiggins for
Telesco Secretarial Services