CITY OF NORWALK
NORWALK REDEVELOPMENT
AGENCY
FEBRUARY 11, 2020

ATTENDANCE: Felix Serrano, Chair; Lisa Cooper, William Speirs, David Westmoreland (via telephone)

COUNSEL: Marc J. Grenier, Esq.

STAFF: Brian Bidolli, Executive Director; Eugenia Lupinski,

OTHERS: Robert Gryzwacz, DeCarlo &Doll; Harrison Gill, Gill & Gill; Michael Rodor, Gill & Gill

I. CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Serrano called meeting to order at 5:30 p.m.

II. ROLL CALL

A quorum was present

III. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

There was no action on this item.

IV. ADMINISTRATION

1. Approval of Minutes

i. Approve minutes of the January 14, 2020 Regular Meeting

Mr. Serrano noted that there was not a quorum of those commissioners who had attended the meeting to approve the minutes

****MS. COOPER MOTIONED TO TABLE THE APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES**
****MR. SPEIRS SECONDED**
**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

2. Finance

i. Approve Norwalk Redevelopment Agency Quarterly Revenue and Expenditures Statements and Balance Sheets for all funds for Year-to-Date December 31, 2019

Ms. Lupinski gave a report for all funds, she said;

- The Operating Fund had revenues of $706,000 versus a budget of $744,000 which resulted in an unfavorable variance of $38,000 which was due to lower CBDG drawdowns which was being resolved.
- Actual legal expenses were $171,000 versus a budget of $9600 which resulted in an unfavorable variance of $161,000 due to the Wall Street litigation.
- Total operating expenses were $792,000 versus a budget of $744,000 which resulted in an unfavorable variance of $38,000.
- The Operating Deficit of $76,000 versos the break-even of the bottom line, resulted in an unfavorable variance of $76,000.
- The balance sheet had $6,500,000 in cash, accounts receivable due from other funds and property and equipment. Loans receivable and other assets totaled $219,000.
- There was $2,349,000 in deferred revenue, which would be earned when expensed and $3,586,000 in total net assets.
- The Brookfield Operating fund had $86,000 in both revenues and expenses which resulted in a break even.
- The balance sheet for the Brookfield Operating fund had $520,000 in both assets and liabilities.
- The CDGB revolving loan fund had $14,400 in interest income from notes receivable and $3,500 of expenses which resulted in an operating surplus of $10,900.
- The balance sheet had $749,000 in cash and due from other funds, $280,000in net loans receivable, $526,000 in liabilities and $503,000 in total net assets.
- The CDGB non-revolving fund had revenues of $151,000 and program expenses of $322,000 which resulted in an operating deficit of $171,000. This amount had been reimbursed and drawn down from CDGB in January.
- The balance sheet had $196,000 in cash and due from other funds, $92,000 in net loans receivable and $288,000 in total liabilities and net assets.
- The Agency Project and Program fund had $1,995,000 in revenue and $2,000, 064 in expenses which resulted in an operating deficit of $70,000. This would be a break even after grant billing
- The balance sheet had $676,000 in cash, receivables and due to other funds; and $676,000 in total liabilities and net assets.

****MS. COOPER MOTIONED TO APPROVE THE NORWALK REDEVELOPMENT AGENCY QUARTERLY REVENUE AND EXPENDITURES STATEMENTS AND BALANCE SHEETS FOR ALL FUNDS FOR YEAR-TO-DATE DECEMBER 31, 2019**
****MR. SPEIRS SECONDED**
**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

ii. Renew Agency's $2 million secured line of credit with People's United Bank

Mr. Bidolli stated that the Agency had had a business line of credit with Peoples United bank since 2011. He has requested that it be renewed for a three-year term until February 8, 2023. The line of credit would only be used for Agency capital expenses as needed and after approval by the Commissioners. All terms and conditions remained the same.

Mr. Speirs asked how often the Agency has used the line of credit, and Ms. Lupinski said that the Agency used the line of credit once in 2011 regarding the purchase of condominiums. She said that the only time there would be a fee was if the Agency utilized the line of credit and that there was no fee involved in renewing it.

****MS. COOPER MOTIONED TO APPROVE RENEWAL OF THE AGENCY'S SECURED LINE OF CREDIT WITH PEOPLE'S UNITED BANK TO FEBRUARY 8, 2023.**
****MR. SPEIRS SECONDED**
**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

IV. BUSINESS

1. Leonard Street design review

i. Approve the final project site design for 9-13 Leonard Street as consistent with the design guidelines set forth in the Wall Street-West Avenue Redevelopment Plan, as recommended by the Third-Party Design reviewer, DeCarlo & Doll.

Mr. Bidolli said that they were looking at the design which had been reviewed by a third party, he noted that they recommended approval based on the consistency with the plans.

Harrison Gill of Gill and Gill Architects introduced himself and Robert Gryzwacz of DeCarlo and Doll who had been retained to act as the third party. He noted that his company formerly conducted design reviews, and that they found this process different and more through because of the involvement of Planning and Zoning.

He said that the building was located on Leonard Street behind the Isaac Street Parking Lot. He said it was a marginal through street with a lot of light industrial and old housing stock. He said this proposed building would be an improvement to the area.

Mr. Gill said the building was smaller than the one on the corner of West Avenue and Leonard Street. He also noted that because of the review, his client had upgraded the materials substantially for the building.

He noted that zoning would allow for 32 dwelling units, and this design proposes 26 dwelling units. He said that the Floor Area Ratio was 3.0, which based on the 16,000 square footage for this which meant a 48,000 square foot building could be built rather than the proposed 40,000 square foot building. He said that the site was difficult because of the shape of the lots.

Mr. Gill said that the building met the affordable housing standards, and that the building was designed to create a more generous sidewalk to meet landscaping suggestions. He discussed the design of the canopy over the main entrance.

Mr. Serrano asked Mr. Gryzwacz to talk about his review process. Mr. Gryzwacz referred to his report which went systematically through the review process, including compliance with Planning and Zoning as well as the Wall Street-West Avenue Design guidelines.

Mr. Gryzwacz went over his report and noted that the application met the Agency Design Guidelnes.

Mr. Serrano asked if there was anything still pending. Mr. Gryzwacz said that there was some clarification that would need to come from the building permit process.

Mr. Serrano asked who monitored the building to ensure that the materials in the design would be used during the building project. Mr. Bidolli said the building inspector would be responsible to ensure compliance with what is being approved

Mr. Speirs asked about parking and asked if it extended behind the building.

Mr. Gill noted that it was a mixed-use building with 1000 square feet of retail space. He said that there was a double loaded parking lot behind the building, with one vehicle entrance and exit. He said the assumption was that the residents would not be parked there during business hours, so the businesses could use the spaces in accordance with the Zoning regulations.

Ms. Cooper asked if parking was assigned. Mr. Gill said that it would be a decision made by building management.

Mr. Westmoreland asked about the use of the space on the fifth floor where the design stepped back. Mr. Gill said there were two apartments, as well as space for a gym, gathering space and bathrooms. He said that his client had removed front windows, because of a terrace on the fourth floor. He said the fifth floor would get natural light from the north and west sides.

Mr. Westmoreland asked if the exterior light fixtures were dark sky compliant? Mr. Gill said yes, full cutoff.

****MR. COOPER MOTIONED TO APPROVE THE PROPOSED DESIGN FOR 9-13 LEONARD STREET AS CONSISTENT WITH THE DESIGN GUIDELINES SET FORTH IN THE WALL STREET-WEST AVENUE REDEVELOPMENT PLAN, AS RECOMMENDED BY THE THIRD PARTY DESIGN REVIEWER, DECARLO & DOLL.**
****MR. SPIER SECONDED**
**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

2. LEASEHOLD IMPROVEMENTS

i. Approve budget allocation for Leasehold Improvements in the amount of $25,000.

Mr. Bidolli noted that the first floor of the building needed some aesthetic and functional improvements and he further discussed the scope of proposed work.

The Agency was requesting $25,000, to cover the $21,000 scope of work, with a small contingency. He indicated the work would be completed before the next Agency meeting.

ii. Approve the Executive Director to execute a contract with selected vendors for office Leasehold Improvements.

****MR. SPEIRS MOTIONED TO APPROVE THE BUDGET ALLOCATION FOR LEASEHOLD IMPROVEMENTS IN THE AMOUNT OF $25,000 AND THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR TO EXECUTE A CONTRACT WITH SELECTED VENDORS FOR LEASEHOLD IMPROVEMENTS.**
****MS. COOPER SECONDED**
**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

3. Review of strategic plan work program

Mr. Bidolli discussed his thoughts on a strategic plan for the Agency. He said that the work program would follow a discovery, design and deployment strategy, with City and community input.

He provided an overview of the project scope, and indicate the effort would be focused on implementation and performance monitoring of previously identified redevelopment projects. He said that his goal was to have the planning program complete by the end of June, and requested the Commissioners provide input regarding key individuals to reach out to during the planning process.

Mr. Serrano asked the Commissioners to email Brian regarding any thoughts and/or ideas that they may have about the process

Ms. Cooper said that she appreciated the community participation plan, because that was crucial.

Mr. Westmoreland asked if Mr. Bidolli was comfortable running this process or if he needed consultants. Mr. Bidolli said that he thought it can be done internally given his experience, and the plans focus on implementation of existing plans which are the result of significant level public outreach. He indicated an a la carte approach to consulting services would be favorable to support plan development to manage costs while expanding the existing capacity of the agency.

Mr. Westmoreland said that he wanted to ensure that they step back and look at how the Agency relates to the City and vice versa. He said he wanted to ensure that they stepped back and looked at it objectively. Mr. Bidolli said he had considered that, and intended to utilize the technical advisory committee to obtain such input.

Mr. Bidolli said that at the March meeting he would bring a revised approach with specific proposals for consideration.

4. Wheels 2u

i. Approve the extension of the Marketing and Communications Contract with Silver Creative Group for the Microtransit program in an amount not to exceed $60,000 through June 30, 2020 from Fund 115.

Mr. Bidolli said that as part of the mall project, there had been a budget allocation to provide marketing for Wheels 2u. He said the contract would have to be renewed, and that he met with the vendor in advance of the meeting to review the contract to examine the budget in detail.

He said additional review would be necessary to determine the marketing support they were receiving, but in order to not disrupt marketing efforts in the interim, he was recommending a six-month extension, for $60,000.

Mr. Serrano noted that it would be helpful to get metrics and other feedback from this review in the six month extension.

****MR. SPIER MOTIONED TO APPROVE THE EXTENSION OF THE MARKETING AND COMMUNICATIONS CONTRACT WITH SILVER CREATIVE GROUP FOR THE MICROTRANSIT PROGRAM IN AN AMOUNT NOT TO EXCEED $60,000 THROUGH JUNE 30, 2020 FROM FUND 115.**
****MS. COOPER SECONDED**
**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

III. EXECUTIVE SESSION

i. Discussion and update on litigation titled City of Norwalk and City of Norwalk Redevelopment Agency vs. ILSR Owners, LLC and Wall Street Opportunity Fund LLC, which is currently pending in the Stamford-Norwalk Judicial District at Stamford and Discussion related to Agency personnel matters/claims

ii. Discussion related to Agency personnel matters/claims

****MR. SPIER MOTIONED TO GO TO EXECUTIVE SESSION FOR DISCUSSION AND UPDATE ON LITIGATION TITLED CITY OF NORWALK AND CITY OF NORWALK REDEVELOPMENT AGENCY VS. ILSR OWNERS, LLC AND WALL STREET OPPORTUNITY FUND LLC, WHICH IS CURRENTLY PENDING IN THE STAMFORD-NORWALK JUDICIAL DISTRICT AT STAMFORD AND DISCUSSION RELATED TO AGENCY PERSONNEL MATTERS/CLAIMS**
****MR. COOPER SECONDED**
**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

The meeting went into executive session at 6:30pm.

****MS. COOPER MOTIONED TO COME OUT OF EXECUTIVE SESSION**
****MR. SPEIR SECONDED**
****THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

The meeting came out of executive session at 7:15pm. No action was taken in Executive Session.

V. NEW BUSINESS

Mr. Grenier stated that the executive director had requested a new business item be added to the Agency agenda regarding the authorization of the 6 Arch Street rehabilitation project. He noted that a 2/3 vote of the Commissioners present to approve adding the item to the Agenda.

****MS. COOPER MOTIONED TO ADD THE AUTHORIZATION OF CONTRACT EXECUTION FOR 6 ARCH STREET REHAB PROJECT TO BE ADDED TO THE AGENDA**
****MR. SPIERS SECONDED**
**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

Mr. Bidolli said this was a time sensitive item. He said it was a request for architectural services for the proposed rehabilitation. He said an authorization was needed to approve architectural services in the amount of $8,240, and he suggested that the Commissioners approve $10,000 to cover any minor contingencies

****MR. SPEIR MOTIONED TO AUTHORIZE THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR TO EXECUTE THE PROPOSED CONTRACT WITH GILL AND GILL ARCHITECTS, LLC NOT TO EXCEED $10,000.**
****MR. SPIERS SECONDED**
**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

VI. OLD BUSINESS

There was no action on this item.

****MS. COOPER MOTIONED TO ADJOURN**
****MR. SPEIR SECONDED**
**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

The meeting adjourned at 7:20 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

L. Grassilli
Telesco Secretarial Services