

**CITY OF NORWALK
REDEVELOPMENT AGENCY
REGULAR MEETING
OCTOBER 10, 2017**

ATTENDANCE: Felix R. Serrano, Chairman; Commissioners Lori Torrano, Lisa Cooper and Tom Devine

AGENCY COUNSEL: Marc Grenier, Esq.

STAFF: Timothy T. Sheehan, Executive Director; John Slovak, Comptroller; Susan Sweitzer, Senior Project Manager; Tami Strauss, Director of Community Development Planning; Sabrina Church, Assistant Director of Community Development Planning

OTHERS: William Collins, William Andriopoulos; Maria Genovese, Paxton Kinol; Jacqueline Kaufman, Esq.; Michael Lonzano; Attorney Liz Suchy; Christopher Cowan

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Serrano called the Regular Meeting to order at 5:34 PM

ROLL CALL

Chairman Serrano noted that a quorum was present.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

William Collins said, with regard to the Pinnacle project, he thinks eight restaurants in one spot in that location would be a rather dramatic and sudden change to the restaurant environment in Norwalk that could have some bad effects, and asked whether there had been any economic evaluation or whether the Agency has plans to have that reviewed by a consultant on what that would mean to the restaurant business in town.

With regard to the RPA contract which is for \$150,000, Mr. Collins said since this is a continuation of a contract, he wondered if there was some way the public could review RPA's prior work, and where would one look to see what their product is.

With regard to the Washington Village item, Mr. Collins noted that it seems as though the Agency is going to be putting up another big chunk of money and wondered where the money is coming from and what else would that money have gone for if it weren't going there. Chairman Serrano said there is no action on that item tonight, it is just being brought for the first time to the Commissioners for an initial conversation. The other items will be touched upon during that portion of the meeting.

I. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A. September 12, 2017 Regular Meeting

- ** MS. TORRANO MOVED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE SEPTEMBER 12, 2017 REGULAR MEETING OF THE NORWALK REDEVELOPMENT AGENCY.**
- ** MS. COOPER SECONDED.**
- ** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

II. FINANCE

Mr. Slovak reported on the NRA Explanation Statement of Revenues and Expenditures Year-to-Date August 31, 2017 as follows:

- Operating Fund 100 had revenues of \$287,601 versus budgeted revenues of \$292,649 resulting in a \$5,048 deficit.
- Actual operating expenditures are \$253,889 versus a budget of \$300,090 resulting in a \$46,200 favorable expenditure variance due to lower expenditures.
- There is an actual operating surplus of \$33,712 versus a budgeted operating deficit of \$7,440 resulting in a \$41,152 favorable net operating variance.

**** MR. DEVINE MOVED TO APPROVE THE FINANCE REPORT FOR AUGUST 31, 2017 AS PRESENTED.**

**** MS. TORRANO SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

III. DESIGN REVIEWS

1. Approve Pinnacle Project Design Review

Ms. Sweitzer said the Pinnacle project is located in the *Waypointe South Block* in what was the former Loehmann's Plaza. ADA Architects has been selected to do the third party design review.

Bill Andriopoulos, ADA Architects, said the developer proposes to abandon all previous approvals and redevelop the property with a new development which calls for the demolition and removal of all the existing buildings and the creation of a new seven story building called the Pinnacle, with a concealed integrated parking garage for 942 spaces with egress and access from both Orchard and Butler Streets. The new development consists of retail, restaurant spaces, indoor fitness center, a 40,000 SF IPIC movie theater, and a 14,500 SF through block pedestrian arcade which is open to the public year round and provides for pedestrian circulation through the Mid-Block.

Mr. Andriopoulos said there are eight restaurant spaces, but speaking to Mr. Collins' comment, those spaces could accommodate restaurants or they could accommodate personal business, service establishments or retail, so there is flexibility in who the tenants would be, but in the parking calculations proposed to Zoning the spaces were proposed as restaurants because that is the highest use for parking. There are 330 total residential units including 33 mandatory work force housing units in the development. The development includes a relocation and reconstruction of the former Young Hat Company building at 3 Quincy Street to 6 Butler Street. It is an historic structure in that it is very old and they have been working with Tod Bryant of the Norwalk Preservation Trust to see if they can get some historic significance placed on the building. It will probably be used as office space, and the parking will be located in the Pinnacle parking garage.

The proposed development incorporates mixed commercial, entertainment, restaurant and retail uses located generally within the first and second stories at grade with four stories plus lofts above for private residential occupancy which rises 85' above the adjacent sidewalks facing West Avenue. The development is anchored by opposing turrets, one at the corner of West Avenue and Orchard Street and one at the corner of West Avenue and Butler, which can be seen travelling north or south on West Avenue. They have created little bump outs along the sidewalk

and provided on-street parking for about four parking spaces in front of the building and about four or five street trees. The corner of Orchard and West Avenue has been bowled out to create a prominent corner where a small café with some outdoor dining might go. There are two entrances and exits to the parking garage and there will be wayfinding signage to direct people to the lot. Mr. Kinol said they are going to come back with an overall wayfinding sign package in conjunction with Waypointe I in the next month or two. He noted that unlike every other garage in Norwalk, parking is free in this garage.

Mr. Sheehan said there is more than sufficient parking to handle all of the existing businesses that are in the Mid-Block and there is on-street parking that handles ancillary short term parking, so there shouldn't be any problem finding a parking space while the project is in construction. Mr. Kinol said they have moved their residential lobby to the middle of the block and put their delivery alley between the building and the church so FedEx and UPS can pull over there and come in the front lobby and deliver. Starting at 8:30 in the morning you will see the US Post office delivering groceries, and all day long there is an unbelievable amount of packages coming in and people coming in and out, so the street is going to be activated.

Mr. Andriopoulos said the majority of finishes on the buildings are all different. On the Orchard Street façade alone there are probably five or six different building finish configurations creating what appear to be different buildings. The project serves to unify the surrounding neighborhoods, the Mid-Block areas to the north and Stepping Stones and Lockwood Matthews Museum to the south, and will encourage pedestrian traffic between these developments. A pedestrian plaza goes through the building, and on the Butler Street side there is going to be a sculpture or water feature, and something similar just inside the recess to provide some visual relief for the pedestrians in that area.

Mr. Kinol said they hope the Agency will vote tonight and that Zoning will vote on October 18th. They answered Zoning in a letter a week ago and agreed to make all the requested changes. They have the elevations showing the changes, which will be turned into renderings. Mr. Andriopoulos briefly went through the proposed changes requested by Zoning.

Chairman Serrano said he thinks it is important that staff has the opportunity to see the renderings to make sure that the changes are consistent with the feedback coming back. Mr. Sheehan said the agreement was that the revised drawings would be submitted at the end of last week so that Mr. Andriopoulos would have time to review them before he was in front of the Commission, and that didn't happen. He thinks if they can offer comment back to Zoning that they are ultimately advancing the approval of what Mr. Andriopoulos has submitted, recognizing that there are a few outstanding points that need further review that will be taken up by the Commission at its next meeting, that they would be comfortable with a conditional approval. Attorney Grenier suggested that the Commissioners do a tentative approval of what has been presented subject to final approval at the Agency's next meeting in November so they can give some assurances to P&Z that they have tentatively approved what has been presented.

**** MS. TORRANO MOVED TO AUTHORIZE AGENCY SUPPORT FOR THE PINNACLE AT WAYPOINTE ZONING PERMIT REQUIREMENT INCLUDING BICYCLE IMPROVEMENTS IN THE PROPOSED WEST AVENUE PUBLIC INFRASTRUCTURE CONSISTENT WITH THE FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF *THE NORWALK CONNECTIVITY MASTER PLAN DATED MARCH 27, 2012, CDM SMITH SOUTH NORWALK TOD PILOT***

PROGRAM DATED APRIL 24, 2014 AND THE CDM SMITH BICYCLE SAFETY AND ENGINEERING STUDY DATED MAY 1, 2014

**** MS. COOPER SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**** MR. DEVINE MOVED TO TENTATIVELY APPROVE THE PROJECT SITE DESIGN FOR THE PINNACLE AT WAYPOINTE SOUTH BLOCK AS RECOMMENDED BY THE THIRD PARTY DESIGN REVIEWER ADA ARCHITECTS IN THEIR REPORT PRESENTED ON OCTOBER 10, 2017 SUBJECT TO FINAL APPROVAL BY THE AGENCY OF THE FINAL SITE DESIGN PLAN FOR THE PINNACLE AT WAYPOINTE SOUTHBLOCK.**

**** MS. TORRANO SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**** MR. DEVINE MOVED TO TENTATIVELY APPROVE THE PROJECT SITE DESIGN FOR 6 BUTLER STREET AS RECOMMENDED BY THE THIRD PARTY DESIGN REVIEWER ADA ARCHITECTS IN THEIR REPORT PRESENTED ON OCTOBER 10, 2017 SUBJECT TO FINAL APPROVAL BY THE AGENCY OF THE FINAL SITE DESIGN PLAN FOR 6 BUTLER STREET.**

**** MS. COOPER SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

2. Approve Maritime Aquarium Design Review

Mr. Sheehan said the Walk Bridge replacement project is going to have significant implications to existing development in the South Norwalk neighborhood. One of the most impacted properties is the Maritime Aquarium, and they have proposed changes to the structure both with the relocation of the theatre and also changing the front entrance. Liz Suchy is there representing the applicant and Christopher Cowan is there from the architectural firm of Beyer Blinder Belle to review the plans. The project is also being reviewed by the City's Building and Land Use Committee of the Common Council, and it is scheduled to go up for approval on October 24th. He reminded the Commissioners that their review is directly in relationship to the Reed Putnam Urban Renewal Plan design guidelines. The review of the project in and of itself is really the purview of the City of Norwalk via the Common Council.

Attorney Liz Suchy said the Maritime Aquarium is approaching its 30th year next year. It opened in 1988. It has about 140,000 SF. It sees over 500,000 visitors annually and contributes about \$20M to the Norwalk economic scene and over \$40M to the State of CT.

Mr. Cowan went through the architectural renderings and pointed out the 25,000 SF that will be removed. The square foot that is left is about 14,000. The IMAX Theater will be replaced by a 4-D theater on the north side of the existing structure, which will be smaller. There will be a new entry and an expanded lobby to the north directly opposite the main entrance to the parking garage. The seal tank will now be enclosed to protect the seals from the work that will be ongoing on the bridge, and will be deeper so you now can see the seals from two levels. They have introduced two north facing skylights which will bring in a lot of natural light. At the main entry they are going to add some street trees, and are going to develop seal sculptures sitting on rock formations as kind of an entry icon to the Aquarium, which will act as seating as well.

In their rear they are going to do some basic pathways and plantings in the east courtyard, but it will be temporary because the bridge needs some of the area for laydown. There will be picnic

tables and benches, and there will probably be a fence along the easement line to protect the public. There was a comment that the street lighting at the existing building is a little dim on the sidewalk, so they are replacing the light to increase the illumination. Once the bridge project is done, there will be an opportunity to go back and look at the service area and the layout of the existing building and how it works in terms of loading dock location, and to bring back a better relationship to the river and improve the connection there.

**** MR. DEVINE MOVED TO APPROVE THE MARITIME AQUARIUM'S PROPOSED EXTERIOR BUILDING DESIGN OF THE NEW ENTRANCE AREA AND THEATER AS BEING CONSISTENT WITH THE REED PUTNAM URBAN RENEWAL PLAN DESIGN GUIDELINES.**

**** MS. TORRANO SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

3. Approve Globe Theater Marquee Sign

Ms. Sweitzer said they received an application from the Globe Theater to review and approve their proposed marquee sign, and in the Commissioners' package is a series of historic photographs that look at how the signage on the theater was previously installed, both from the original construction of the theater in 1915 and then as the theater moved into some redesign in the 1930s, and the intent is to recreate the signage on the marquee as well as the standing sign. Currently, no marquee signage is permitted in the City and there is a text amendment before the Zoning Commission in order to permit this sign, so they are requesting that the approval for the sign be conditioned upon the receipt of final zoning approvals and would be subject to any conditions that would be included in that zoning approval.

Attorney Kaufman, representing the applicants, said the theater is actually open and running, but not many people know that because there is no signage. They did try for quite some time to avoid having to make a text change by having a legal nonconforming use established, however as part of the renovation of the theater the signage was removed before it was verified in writing by staff, so they had to go back and reinvent the wheel, so to speak, with the text change. The signage itself will be internally illuminated, but the blue casing will not be lit. Zoning and Planning felt it would be appropriate to have it at a soft glow all through the night, so long as the digital component of the sign was shut off one hour after closing.

Mr. Sheehan said usually they wouldn't be bringing signage to the Commission, but this is a little different than the normal standard in terms of looking at the historic character and what it adds to the street character and that it favorably activates the street, so they made the determination to bring it to the Commissioners as part of the design review for the sign.

**** MS. TORRANO MOVED TO APPROVE THE WALL STREET THEATER COMPANY SIGNAGE PACKAGE FOR THE WALL STREET THEATER SUBMITTED OTOBER 10, 2017 AND DATED AUGUST 17, 2017 CONDITIONED ON RECEIPT OF FINAL ZONING APPROVALS AND SUBJECT TO ANY CONDITIONS INCLUDED THEREIN.**

**** MR. DEVINE SECONDED.**

*** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

B. CONTRACTS

1. Approve RPA Contract Extension and authorize Chairman, Felix Serrano, to execute contract and all related documents.

Ms. Strauss said about a year ago the Agency contracted with the Regional Plan Association to provide on-call planning services in the amount of \$150,000. That contract expired on September 30th and they are requesting to extend the contract for another twelve months for the same amount of money. Over the last year the RPA has primarily undertaken the task of updating the redevelopment plans for Wall Street, West Avenue and the Washington South Main Urban Renewal Plan. To address Mr. Collins's question, meeting agendas, minutes, etc. are all posted on the Redevelopment Agency's page of the City's website under the West Avenue-Wall Street Redevelopment Plan Update. In the past twelve months they have had five working group meetings with about 15 members of the community from different areas, they have distributed a business survey to all the businesses in the West Avenue and Wall Street area and had about 30 of them returned, they have had several meetings with industrial property owners, developers, banks, nonprofit organizations, religious institutions, and Waypointe residents, and they have had about a dozen different stakeholder interviews. A meeting is scheduled on October 18th with the Norwalk Library where kids can get involved in designing what their community looks like through legos and toys.

In the past year the Agency has benefited from RPA's comprehensive expertise in land use, transportation, resiliency issues, housing, economic trends and demographic analysis. Over the last ten months, RPA has billed the Agency about \$46,000, and will be ramping up their hours and their work towards the approval of the redevelopment plans, which are on track to be approved in the spring, and they recommend extending the contract for a twelve month period at a cost not to exceed \$150,000.

Chairman Serrano said in comparing this to bringing on more staff, they are getting the equivalent of almost two full time people working on this project as well as all the expertise that RPA has to offer, and they don't have to pay any benefits or payroll taxes or anything associated for that.

**** MS. COOPER MOVED THAT THE REDEVELOPMENT AGENCY COMMISSION APPROVE TO EXTEND THE TERMS OF THE RPA CONTRACT FOR A PERIOD OF 12 MONTHS AND AUTHORIZE THE REDEVELOPMENT AGENCY CHAIRMAN TO EXECUTE THE CONTRACT AND ALL OTHER RELATED DOCUMENTS.**

**** MS. TORRANO SECONDED.**

*** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

2. Authorize the Executive Director to enter into a contract with Stantec for the survey of Freese Park, Mechanic Street Esplanade and Klondike Park for \$10,000 to be funded from Fund 500 (Norwalk Center).

Ms. Strauss said a few months ago the Common Council approved a master plan for Freese Park, and as they move into construction, a site survey is needed of Freese Park including the neighboring Mechanic Street Esplanade and Klondike Park. The First Taxing District owns Klondike Park but has indicated its interest in quitclaiming Klondike Park to the City so that we can incorporate that parcel into the larger Freese Park master plan, improving public access to Klondike Park and the waterfront and really extending Freese Park beyond that little triangle. In order to move that along, they need a survey of the three parcels, and Stantec, who developed the Freese Park Master Plan, has provided a quote of \$10,000 to do an A-2 T-2 Survey of the three parcels

- ** MS. TORRANO MOVED TO AUTHORIZE THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR TO ENTER INTO A CONTRACT WITH STANTEC FOR THE SURVEY OF FREESE PARK, MECHANIC STREET ESPLANADE AND KLONDIKE PARK FOR \$10,000 TO BE FUNDED FROM FUND 500 (NORWALK CENTER).**
- ** MS. COOPER SECONDED.**
- * THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

V. GRANTS

1. Discuss capitalization structure of a grant to Trinity Financial for Washington Village Phase II.

Mr. Sheehan said the first phase of the Washington Village redevelopment is under construction, and Trinity, the developer, is in the process of putting together the capital stack for Phase II which will ultimately include 85 units of multifamily housing, 42 public housing units, 23 workforce low income housing tax credit units and 20 market rate units. Total development cost is estimated at \$47,664,727, and CHFA came back with a determination not to consider the project as a bifurcated tax credit deal, which had a negative impact on the project and increased the gap associated with the project significantly. Subsequently, the gap was reduced by using project based section 8 vouchers, and was brought down from \$7M to \$3.7M, so the current remaining project gap is \$3,268,000. Fund 500 has traditionally gotten \$250,000 of grant money on an annual basis, which doesn't allow for a huge impact because you can't create a housing unit for \$250,000. It does allow for limited rehab repair or some educational programs for affordable housing, but you're not going to be able to effectuate the creation of 85 low moderate income housing units with an investment cost of a little over \$15,000 per unit and significant leverage to the degree that we have here.

Obviously there are some risks associated with this. Should the grant funding not come in, we would go into a subordinate position and have a longer wait time on the return of our capital. We also have a concern of advancing a significant amount of the loan prior to the project having a CO, so we have structured it so that there would be the potential to have a limited amount, 10% to 20%, of the total debt advanced, but the bulk of it, 80%, would come into the project after it had secured its CO.

We anticipate that we would have three years of the grant funding available that we would be earmarking for this. We have a line of credit with People's Bank that is a fully secured line and has a very reasonable interest rate associated with it. We would take the interest payments and have it prepaid at the time of closing, so that the interest associated with the project would be accounted for. The rehab program issues can move into CDBG. If HDF wanted a grant for affordable housing on a first time homebuyer training, we wouldn't necessarily have those funds available, but the issue for the Commissioners to focus on is that you are actually creating bricks and mortar here and the amount of affordable housing that you are bringing forward is far more significant than we have ever been able to bring forward in terms of dealing with an annual allocation and trying to spend it down in one given year.

Mr. Michael Lonzano of Trinity said they have a viable plan to get all of the phases for this project financed. They have run into some complications as a project of this scale may. One of the issues that they have been dealing with is some changes to the low income housing tax credit, which, other than the choice neighborhoods implementation grant, is by far the largest financing source for the project. There are two components to it; a 9% credit and a 4% credit. The 9%

credit is allocated by a state housing finance agency, CHFA, and is a competitive process and there is a limited amount of those credits available on an annual basis. The 4% credit is a much shallower subsidy source, so it typically is harder to utilize on a project of this nature, so we have been able to utilize a condominium structure to split the project into two components. It's still one project, but we bifurcate the project financially which allows us to access both the 9% credit and utilize the excess basis that would otherwise be left on the table to capture some more tax credit equity utilizing the 4% credit and tax exempt bond financing, which is something that would bring approximately \$7M more to the table to get the project fully financed.

We have been working with CHFA for well over a year on this and just learned over the summer that they were not going to be able to modify their regulatory structure in time for this upcoming tax credit round. Also, the tax credits are strongly affected by the corporate tax rate, so when November of last year occurred, the value of all of the low income housing tax credits plummeted, so that instantly cost the project between \$1.3M and \$2M overnight. So the combination of those factors lead us to where we are now, and we've been working hard to come up with alternatives. We are planning to go before CHFA for their next tax credit round on November 1st, and we have all of the other financing sources identified and lined up. We've been working very closely with CHFA and we are hopeful that we will be successful in this round, but as Mr. Sheehan has brought before you, every bit of additional financing that we can bring to the table to help them help the project is valuable.

As to the capital stack, the largest piece and component of the financing stack is the 9% low income housing tax credit. That will generate approximately \$19M of private tax credit equity. The next largest piece is the CNI dollars, which is between \$9M and \$13M, depending on if we are successful in raising some of the other state level funds that we have been working on. We also have an actual deadline by which we have to complete the project. If we do not expend those dollars by that point, they will be recaptured by the Treasury.

Last year we had gotten a commitment from DOH for \$6M for this phase of the project, and we have gotten indications that if we are allocated the 9% credit by CHFA that we will get that \$6M reallocated to us. They have \$2.7M of anticipated commitment from DECD for a Brownfields remediation. And then as Tim mentioned, this is a mixed income deal. We have a market rate component, a workforce component and the public housing component. We have a plan right now to integrate some project based section 8 that would allow us to increase the permanent debt on the project to accommodate the rest of it. So really right now the gap is about \$3M. This would go a long way towards closing that gap and then we have multiple other avenues working with the state to close the rest of it.

Mr. Sheehan said, assuming that the Commissioners wanted to advance, we would bring to you next month a formalized term sheet so that they could submit to CHFA in their application evidence that they have got committed terms for the loan. Nothing would be released until the project was fully financed. The RAMP program and some of the other programs can go through an allocation from CDBG for affordable housing, but with this annual allocation of \$250,000, you are never going to be able to create the volume of units that we are talking about as affordable, and there is a concern within the Commission whether we are doing enough for affordable housing, and this is an opportunity for you to leverage your resources in order to insure that 65 units of truly affordable, because it's public housing units and low moderate income tax credit units, ultimately get developed. In addition, it is going to enhance Trinity's application going into CHFA to understand that there is a local commitment for a million dollars into this project.

Chairman Serrano said they will have Agency counsel review it to make sure we are dotting the i's and crossing the t's so when it comes back to them we can hopefully have something vetted.

2. Community Development Block Grant – Authorize Chairman to execute resolutions permitting Timothy Carney, Housing Development Project Manager, to execute CDBG PY43 contracts and associated documents.

Ms. Strauss said the Redevelopment Agency is the administering agent for the City's annual CDBG entitlement grant. The grant program year began July 1st, 2017 and runs till June 30th, 2018. Among the nearly million dollars that the City received this year and some reprogrammed money that was unspent from last year, the City granted the money to thirteen Norwalk agencies, including two grants to the Norwalk Redevelopment Agency for CDBG planning and administration in the amount of \$208,000 and City Neighborhoods for \$351,000. The planning and admin money is basically staff time towards administering the program, writing reports and processing payments, and we use all of that and more every year. The City Neighborhoods money is for delivering the program for Brownfields redevelopment, technical assistance to businesses and other community development initiatives that the staff does in-house.

**** MS. TORRANO MOVED TO AUTHORIZE THE CHAIRMAN TO EXECUTE RESOLUTIONS PERMITTING TIM SHEEHAN, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, OR TIMOTHY CARNEY, HOUSING DEVELOPMENT PROJECT MANAGER, TO EXECUTE CDBG PY43 CONTRACTS AND ASSOCIATED DOCUMENTS FOR "CDBG PLANNING AND ADMINISTRATION" AND "CITY NEIGHBORHOODS"**

**** MS. COOPER SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

3. Review Outreach Strategy and approve expenditure of \$30,000 from Fund 500 to be used to fund a portion of the new citizen participation application.

Ms. Strauss said this item is about improving citizen participation and public outreach in Agency and Citywide planning efforts, and came as a reaction to three citywide planning efforts going on at the same time; the POCD, the redevelopment plan updates and the citywide parking capacity study, where they felt the need to coordinate our citizen engagement and community outreach to make the planning process more responsive to community needs. We want to provide an easy to use interactive website and mobile based responsive platform so that citizens are able to quickly retrieve data, calendars, reports and minutes and submit forms or surveys and be able to comment on drawings and renderings so they don't have to come to city hall on a Tuesday at 5:30. They want to fashion a comprehensive communication strategy that will include reaching out and broadcasting to citizens on a routine basis via email, text, social media and in person meetings, because they are required by law to have these meetings and to have public hearings.

Ms. Strauss said she and Sabrina Church worked in consultation with the Parking Authority, who is doing the parking plan, and with Planning and Zoning to solicit proposals from media marketing and website companies to develop a digital citizen participation program for Norwalk, and the most qualified and cost competitive proposal came from the Snyder Group for \$60,000. The Parking Authority has approved \$30,000 for the planning phase development and design of the program, and Snyder is underway with the expected completion of the phase in November.

We have a facebook page, a twitter account and an instagram account to really get this going and make it more modern and more accessible to people, and we are requesting \$30,000 to effectuate the subsequent and ongoing communication and outreach strategy for planning efforts going forward. The program is called *Norwalk Tomorrow*. That name was voted on by the POCD committee. The City has already let us host that page on their website, and they have provided technical consultation, so they have been an integral part of it. Next year they will submit an operating budget request to the City to support it.

David Snyder of the Snyder Group said there is an opportunity to leverage the content that is coming in now from three different studies; the ten-year study which is being looked at as kind of the umbrella, a parking study currently in place and a Redevelopment Agency study that is going on, so this data is coming in and the idea was to put together a platform so you could consolidate all that information into a two-way platform so that it is at one place where everybody can go to get information, but also a place where your community can come and engage and provide input, look at things, give comments and things like that. It will have its own identity, but it is tied into the City's identity. The logo has been created and is aligned with the City branding. There will be a link on the Redevelopment Agency website. The City's site is huge, so this is a way to make a much simpler portal specific to these studies and keep it limited to planning studies and planning efforts. It is a planning tool

**** MS. COOPER MOVED TO APPROVE THE EXPENDITURE OF \$30,000 FROM FUND 500 ACCOUNT #090309105777C0277 TO BE USED TO FUND A PORTION OF THE NEW CITIZEN PARTICIPATION APPLICATION.**

**** MS. TORRANO SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

IV. NEW BUSINESS

None.

VI. OLD BUSINESS

Mr. Sheehan said he forgot to mention when they were discussing the marquee sign, that there were two letters of support from the Norwalk Preservation Trust and the Chamber of Commerce.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further New or Old Business, upon motion of Ms. Cooper and second of Ms. Torrano, the Norwalk Redevelopment Agency meeting was adjourned at 8:10 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,
Karen Pacchiana