

**CITY OF NORWALK
REDEVELOPMENT AGENCY
REGULAR MEETING
MAY 8, 2018**

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

AGENCY COUNSEL: Joseph DaSilva, Esq.

STAFF: Timothy T. Sheehan, Executive Director; John Slovak, Comptroller; Susan Sweitzer, Senior Project Manager

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Serrano called the Regular Meeting to order at 5:37 PM

ROLL CALL

Chairman Serrano noted that a quorum was present.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Mr. Raymond Hilson, Board Member, NICE Inc. introduced himself.

I. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A. April 10, 2018 Regular Meeting

- ** MR. DEVINE MOVED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE APRIL 10, 2018 REGULAR MEETING OF THE NORWALK REDEVELOPMENT AGENCY.**
- ** MS. COOPER SECONDED.**
- ** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

II. FINANCE

Mr. Slovak reported on the NRA Statement of Revenues and Expenditures and Balance Sheets for all NRA Funds for nine months year to date March 31, 2018 as follows:

- Operating Fund 100 had revenues of \$1,175,205 versus budgeted revenues of \$1,316,921 with a variance of \$141,717. This is due to \$52,047 in revenue not received for the Economic Development Director in City Positions. There is also \$59,826 not needed to be drawn down from NRA Grants for City Projects.
- Actual operating expenditures are \$1,091,148 versus a budget of \$1,316,933 resulting in a \$225,786 favorable variance of which \$52,047 is due to no Economic Development Director salary expenses with the remaining favorable balance due to lower expenditures.
- There is an actual operating surplus of \$84,057 versus a budgeted operating deficit of \$12 resulting in a \$84,069 favorable net operating variance.
- Operating Fund 100 Balance Sheet has \$8,697,289 of cash, accounts receivable and due from other funds, and \$174,722 in net loans receivable and other assets. There are \$3,644,758 in Deferred Revenues which will be earned when expended, and \$4,323,035 in Net Assets.
- The GGP operating Fund 115 has revenues of \$183,668, expenditures of \$18,679, with a \$164,989 surplus. The balance sheet shows \$765,468 total assets, and \$600,479 in liabilities which includes \$550,000 for the circulator, resulting in \$164,989 in net assets on 3/31/18.

- CDBG Revolving Loan Fund 200 Statement of Revenues and Expenditures has \$25,425 of interest income from notes receivable and expenditures of \$4,921 resulting in a \$20,505 surplus. The CDBG Revolving Loan Fund Balance Sheet has \$521,320 net cash and due from other funds, \$483,960 net loans receivable, \$492,370 in liabilities, and \$512,910 in net assets.
- CDBG Non-Revolving Loan Fund 300 Statement of Revenues and Expenditures has revenues of \$529,244, program expenditures of \$618,102 resulting in a \$88,858 deficit which will be reimbursed by CDBG in the next drawdown which has already occurred in April. The Balance Sheet for CDBG (NRLF) Fund 300 has \$310,686 in cash, receivables, and due from other funds, \$119,147 in net loans receivable, and \$429,833 in liabilities and net assets.
- Norwalk Redevelopment Agency Project and Program Fund 500 Statement of Revenues and Expenditures include Capital Budget Grants from the City of Norwalk, grants from State DECD, and other grants. There was \$2,142,301 in revenue and \$2,354,844 in program expenditures resulting in a deficit of \$212,543 which will be reimbursed from the city capital budget billings. The NRA Project and Program Fund balance sheet contains \$445,429 in total assets, and \$445,429 in liabilities and net assets.

**** MS. COOPER MOVED TO APPROVE THE FINANCE REPORT AS PRESENTED.**

**** MR. DEVINE SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

II.A APPROVE GRANT FUNDING REQUEST FOR NICE FESTIVAL

Ms. Sweitzer said the Agency received an application from the NICE Festival, which is the Norwalk International Cultural Exchange Festival, for a budget request of \$2,000 to support the Festival performance program which is taking place on July 7th at Oyster Shell Park. The request is coming in under the single events, performances and/or concert series category that was approved last month.

Chairman Serrano asked if there is any other City support or funding for the program? Mr. Raymond Hilson, Board Member, NICE Inc., said they are a 501(c3) nonprofit organization and the festival is free to the public. They do have a co-sponsorship between NICE Inc. and the City of Norwalk.

**** MR. DEVINE MOVED TO APPROVE THE *NICE FESTIVAL* REQUEST FOR AN AMOUNT NOT TO EXCEED \$2,000 FROM THE ARTS AND CULTURAL SPONSORSHIP GRANT PROGRAM TO HELP FUND THE FESTIVAL ARTISTS PERFORMANCES ON JULY 7, 2018 IN THE OYSTER SHELL PARK IN SOUTH NORWALK AND TO APPROVE THE APPROPRIATION OF THE REQUIRED FUNDING FROM ACCOUNT 28200.**

**** MS. COOPER SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

II.-B REVIEW NORWALK NOW FUNDING REQUEST

Dick Brescia, Chairman of the Parking Authority, said the last time they met the Commissioners asked how they wrestled with the issue of funding what might be a limited number of businesses that joined this program. They went through the City Council, the Mayor and the Finance Department, and obviously when they put the budget together the Council had to look it over and understand what they were trying to do, which was to require the investment of some of the

businesses that were going to be included in their initial stance. They knew they weren't going to get all of the businesses to participate, and in talking with Linda Kavanagh they determined that they would need at least 15 of the businesses to go forward. When they reached that number they got a couple of events that created some excitement and a lot of publicity and PR for the City, and generated a lot of traffic both in SoNo and the Wall Street area, which was their goal. It is creating some energy about Norwalk that not only benefits the members who are paying the dues, it benefits everybody, and is filling an economic development void in Norwalk.

Chairman Serrano said understanding that there is a void in the economic development area, how do they envision this will be handed off as it moves forward? Would they eventually transition it to the Economic Development Department? Mr. Brescia said if that is the best way for the City to benefit, sure. They want this to become a self-governing body, something that will help the City. One of the concerns that everybody had was the Parking Authority has a bad rap because they are giving out tickets and charging for parking, so one of the first things he did was to suggest that they develop an outreach program that would not only take care of the parking issues, but go beyond that to deal with the neighborhood issues, and everybody said that's a good idea, let's outreach, and that was the beginning of this.

The outreach was initially just in SoNo, and what kept coming back to them from restaurateurs and the developers and some of the committees he was sitting in on was that people have been trying for years to put together a downtown district situation similar to what Stamford has, and it's never worked. They can't get the people to do it or they don't have the time to do it, so he went back to the Parking Authority and said they have the money from parking and from tickets and can they fund something as a startup business that will help the people in SoNo, and as the dialogue went back and forth they eventually included Wall Street and West Avenue.

Ms. Hebert read letters of support from Rob Moss, owner of Washington Prime; Mike Oz, Capital Equities Group; Thea Tsiranides, owner Salon Etre and SoNo Academy; Greer Fredericks, owner of Peaches; and Clay Fowler, Spinnaker Real Estate Partners. (Copies of the letters are attached.) She said she has had conversations with Mike Oz and Clay Fowler and they are obviously onboard with the concept and they are negotiating on their sponsorship.

Mr. Devine asked what is the money that is collected by the Parking Authority used for. Ms. Hebert said it was established in 2002 as an enterprise fund. It is an agency of the City of Norwalk and does not exist with any taxpayer funds. There are 11 facilities, such as the railroad station, the Maritime Garage, Haviland Deck and Yankee Doodle Garage. Their budget is almost a million dollars and all of it goes back into the community. Recently the main library at Belden Avenue had an issue with parking and the PA paid \$200,000 for improvements to the parking there. They just took Liberty Square under the PA's inventory and will be spending money to do infrastructure repairs and come up with a parking plan there. The PA put some money into the budget this year to help with some of the business mitigation in connection with the Walk Bridge project, as the PA felt it was important to help out the business community that will be impacted by the project.

III. ZONING – Approve finding that the South Norwalk Station Design District Zoning amendment supports the objectives of the TOD Redevelopment Plan

Ms. Sweitzer said the Agency approval of the TOD Redevelopment Plan was conditioned on approval of recommended zoning for the TOD area. The Zoning Commission approved the zoning but they approved it as an amendment to the SoNo Station Design District, so it is not TOD, it is SSDD, but the zoning that was put in place supports the objectives of the TOD plan

and this is just coming back to the Agency to make that finding. The stated purpose of the amendment is to establish the development environment necessary to induce economic investment, enhance pedestrian activity, improve urban form and design and reduce vehicle miles traveled and thereby implement the Plan objectives for the area.

Specifically the amendment provides an increase in permitted density from 43 units/acre to 87 units/acre; increases permitted building heights from 4 stories/45' to 6 stories/72'; reduces required open space from 30% to 15%; encourages the preservation of historic buildings; reduces parking requirements; and requires all multifamily developments of 12 units or more to provide a minimum of 10% as workforce housing with maximum monthly rents not to exceed 60% of State Median Income.

**** MS. COOPER MOVED TO APPROVE THE FINDING THAT THE
AMENDMENT TO ZONE 118-506 SONO STATION DISTRICT ENACTED BY
THE ZONING COMMISSION APRIL 18, 2018 SUPPORTS THE OBJECTIVES
OF THE TRANSIT-ORIENTED DEVELOPMENT REDEVELOPMENT PLAN
AS APPROVED BY THE REDEVELOPMENT AGENCY SEPTEMBER 27, 2016.
** MR. DEVINE SECONDED.
** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

IV. TRANSPORTATION – Review Microtransit Proposal from Transloc Inc.

Mr. Sheehan said they have been looking at trying to provide a circulator in the urban corridor for almost seven years. In the meantime, transportation has completely changed and the fixed route system is becoming somewhat obsolete. Riders want more convenience and greater flexibility getting from Point A to Point B. The Norwalk Transit District and the CT DOT have been exploring the potential for a microtransit pilot in Norwalk, and Transloc Inc., which is owned by Ford Smart Mobility, has been selected as the preferred pilot vendor. The proposal has three main components; (1) Set up – establish service area, configure operating hours based on data, establish vehicle assignments; (2) Operation – intuitive dashboard configured, operator software and equipment programed, administrators establish historical data points in real time and access in-depth reporting; (3) Execution – Book rides, On Demand optimizes efficiency and economics, passengers stay in the know with real time tracking and alerts.

The pilot microtransit service being considered is for six months. The total cost of the pilot is \$64,175 of which \$39,175 is being covered by Ford Smart Mobility. The remaining \$25,000 is being considered as part of the GGP contribution to improve public transit in and around the SoNo Collection Mall currently under construction. GGP had made a \$550,000 contribution to improve the transportation services in the urban core when the mall was getting approved. They have discussed this whole concept with GGP, and Doug Adams has indicated that GGP is fully supportive of utilizing their funding source for this test pilot. If we approve this evening it would give Transloc the ability to begin in July and we would be able to roll out the services in the fall as opposed to the winter period. The real advantage to this is getting an understanding as to what the parameters are in terms of the services and how much it is going to cost and how many vehicles they will need to have. All of those answers get built into the simulator system.

Mr. Devine asked would buses or cars be used for the transportation. Mr. Sheehan said it will be bigger than a personal automobile but much smaller than a city bus, and the routes will be compact and can be adjusted based on where the passengers are located and where they want to go.

Ms. Morton said they will be using assets that are either existing through the Transit District or they will apply for other federal funds as the project develops. The landscape of how we are providing services is changing. There is lots of talk about autonomous vehicles and on demand type of transportation, which has been in response to the Lyfts and the Ubers, and the microtransit service doesn't mean that they would not ultimately become a partner in that whole project as an additional contractor.

Mr. Sheehan said most of the bus service down in SoNo ends around 7:00 PM, and their whole issue has been how do you deal with folks living in Wall Street that want to come out for dinner in SoNo without having to get in their car. This service has the potential to be able to deal with that. The same with people that are down in South Norwalk that want to come up to Wall Street without having to have a big bus circulating around and the cost associated with that.

Chairman Serrano said so as this moves forward the first phase is the data aggregation, and then move into the pilot during the fall. Mr. Sheehan said the first step is to define the geography in which the service is ultimately to be, so they are laying that out with them and getting feedback on that, and then they get into the data, and then it gets into how best can we deploy the vehicles to deal with what we see as demand. Then his sense is that there would be a recommendation back to both the District and the State DOT that this has proven that it can be successful, and then comes the funding issue associated with that from DOT.

Mr. Sheehan said this is the first time in terms of these discussions that the Redevelopment Agency, the Transit District and the DOT have all been at the table saying this is something that should be explored, and quite frankly the folks from DOT are pretty revved up and excited about this.

Ms. Morton said they are. The State is also looking at autonomous vehicles and it is something they are supporting across the state, but she felt that this proposal was the one that had the best chance at being very successful. Chairman Serrano said it is an exciting proposition, and he looks forward to seeing what comes out of it.

**** MR. DEVINE MOVED TO APPROVE FUNDING FOR THE MICROTRANSIT PILOT IN THE AMOUNT OF \$25,000 FROM FUND 115.**
**** MS. COOPER SECONDED.**
**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

IV. NEW BUSINESS
None.

V. OLD BUSINESS
None.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further New or Old Business, upon motion of Ms. Cooper and second of Mr. Devine, the Norwalk Redevelopment Agency meeting was adjourned at 6:47 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,
Karen Pacchiana



To whom it may concern,

As a long time, restaurateur in the area, having owned and operated several restaurants, not only in Norwalk but in Pound Ridge, NY, the Norwalk Now business collaborative marketing organization and effort is long overdue. It is proven to be an effective marketing tool and economic development driver in the district and for Norwalk. I have been here long enough to know that there have been many attempts to create a business improvement district or a special services district that may have helped. But this collaborative marketing organizational structure is what we need. We are all working together to create a vibrant community. It is essential that Norwalk Now be a long-term effort that includes collaboration and investment from everyone. I am looking forward to being part of this great community in the long term. Thank you to those who are behind Norwalk Now, who have created this incredible, well branded, well thought out & organized outlet for folks to recognize all of the amazing businesses and interests throughout our city. As an independent business owner, it means so much to have this built in support system.

Sincerely,

Greer Fredericks

Owner/Operator

Peaches Southern Pub & Juke Joint

7 Wall Street

Norwalk, Ct 06850

Hebert, Kathy

From: Thea Tsiranides <thea@sonoacademy.com>
Sent: Tuesday, May 08, 2018 11:54 AM
To: Hebert, Kathy
Subject: Norwalk Now

Hello Kathryn,

I would have liked to been present this evening to answer any questions about my experience with the Norwalk Now program. Instead I can give you some insight as a small business owner in SoNo for 10 years.

As long as I remember, many different groups of owners, managers and employees have tried to gather to help each other with cross promoting and bringing awareness to the public about what our businesses provide. This sense of community and support is what brought us into SoNo and inspired us to open a second store down the block. Unfortunately anyone running their own business has a small amount of extra time and smaller budgets, so none of these efforts ever proved successful.

SoNo has been through a lot in recent years, construction, empty storefronts and parking issues. Our luster has dulled. In the past we were the place to stroll, eat and play and there really wasn't much in the surrounding area that had what we did. That is no longer the case, our surrounding towns have great restaurants, good shopping and many free parking. So now more then ever it is imperative that we let people know that we are still vibrant and friendly and fun.

When approached with the concept of Norwalk Now, like many other owners I was skeptical. I liked what was being said, but at the time it was talk. The imagery is clean and eye catching, the message invites action, the marketing is cohesive and Linda's company delivers. In addition to the website, social media and radio spots, I have also had 4 lifestyle bloggers come and write about our salon. Two of them are now clients and one hired us to do her wedding. Norwalk Now also put together in a very short time two really great events (with a handful of participating businesses) City Limits, bringing music back downtown, something that ALWAYS gets people out and City Hunt a scavenger hunt that brought over 100 people running through the Urban Core, many who stayed to eat and hang out.

I am very excited to see what the future brings with more business participation and better funding. A vibrant downtown will attract not only more customers, but business big and small strengthening Norwalk as a town people looking to move to this area will want to be. Together and with support this concept can quickly become reality.

All my best to this great campaign!

Thea Tsiranides

SoNo Academy and Salon Etre

Hebert, Kathy

From: linda@maxexposure.net
Sent: Monday, May 07, 2018 5:18 PM
To: Hebert, Kathy; Dick Brescia
Subject: quote from Rob
Attachments: Linda Kavanagh.vcf

As a long-time restaurateur and no stranger to the business landscape in Norwalk, the implementation of Norwalk Now as a collaborative effort and support arm for the businesses in the neighborhood is not only long overdue, it has proven to be an effective marketing tool for our business. As Norwalk Now continues to grow and we, as a group, grow along with it, we anticipate great things for the area and look forward to putting Norwalk back on the map as a popular destination.

Rob Moss
Washington Prime

Linda Kavanagh
MaxEx Public Relations, LLC
www.maxexpr.com
Norwalk Now
www.norwalknow.org
New England Culinary Group
www.newenglandculinarygroup.com
203-561-9878

From: Mike Oz [mailto:moz@capitaleq.com]
Sent: Tuesday, May 08, 2018 2:14 PM
To: Hebert, Kathy <KHEBERT@norwalkct.org>
Subject: RE: Norwalk now

Hello Kathy

Being a developer in the Norwalk market for the past 25 years, I can certainly identify the marketing is very much needed.

I believe that Norwalk Now with its marketing plan can assist Norwalk in building the great reputation it deserves and with it help support the business and the resident community.

Thanks

Mike Oz



50 Washington Street, Fl 7th | Norwalk, CT 06854
Cell 203-984-7818 Office 203.939.1075, ext. 4533
✉: moz@capitaleq.com | 🌐: www.capitaleq.com

Hebert, Kathy

From: Clay Fowler <Clay@spinrep.com>
Sent: Tuesday, May 08, 2018 4:51 PM
To: Sheehan, Timothy
Cc: Clay Fowler; Kimberly McCormack
Subject: Norwalk Now

Tim,

I am writing to express my support of Norwalk Now as a highly effective mechanism for marketing and PR for the city, and a critical component to the economic development and sustainability of the area. I am in full agreement that a \$250,000 investment over 5 years is important and justified.

Regards,

Clay Fowler

Spinnaker Real Estate Partners
1 N. Water Street, Ste 100
South Norwalk, CT 06854
203-354-1555