

**CITY OF NORWALK
REDEVELOPMENT AGENCY
REGULAR MEETING
MARCH 8, 2016**

ATTENDANCE: 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, Elizabeth Stocker, Director of Economic Development

OTHERS: Mayor Rilling, Former Mayor William Collins, Kim Morton, Norwalk Transit District; Douglas Adams, GGP; Robert Jakubik, GGP

CALL TO ORDER

The Meeting was called to order at 5:31 P.M by Acting Chairman Torrano.

ROLL CALL

Acting Chairman Torrano noted that a quorum was present.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Acting Chairman Torrano opened the public participation portion of the meeting. There were no members of the public present who wished to speak.

I. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A. February 9, 2016 Regular Meeting

**** MS. COOPER MOVED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE FEBRUARY 9, 2016 REGULAR MEETING OF THE NORWALK REDEVELOPMENT AGENCY.**

**** MR. DEVINE SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

II. FINANCE

A. January 31, 2016 year to date financial statement for NRA

Mr. Slovak reported on the Financial Statements as follows:

- Operating Fund 100 had actual revenues of \$910,483 versus budgeted revenues of \$913,696 for a \$3,213 revenue deficit.
- Actual operating expenditures are \$840,705 versus a budget of \$920,295 resulting in a \$79,590 favorable expenditure variance.
- There is an actual operating surplus of \$69,778 versus a budgeted operating deficit of \$6,599 resulting in a favorable net operating variance of \$76,377.

- ** MS. COOPER MOVED TO APPROVE THE FINANCIAL REPORT AS PRESENTED.**
- ** MR. DEVINE SECONDED.**
- ** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

III. BUSINESS

A. REED PUTNAM URBAN RENEWAL AREA

1. Review and approve the SoNo Collection documents as evidencing that the CMSP has met the conditions of approval. Such approval is independent of the overpass activation approval and the Public Realm approval.

Mr. Sheehan said when the Conceptual Master Site Plan was approved by the Redevelopment Agency and the Common Council, there were a host of conditions put on the approval. GGP and their team have been working with Agency staff in addressing these concerns and they are at a point in terms of the design that the conditions can be removed from the project. Two additional pieces will be coming back to both the Agency and the Common Council, which are the public realm plan and the final design of the underpass area, and Agency staff is working with GGP's lead design people as well as the Cecil Group and Tighe and Bond on the various design issues. It is anticipated that the design review of the entire project as well as the review relative to the underpass and the public realm plan will be back in front of the Commissioners and the Common Council for approval prior to going to public hearing with the Zoning Commission, which is anticipated for May.

- ** MR. DEVINE MOVED TO APPROVE THE SONO COLLECTION DOCUMENTS AS EVIDENCING THAT THE CMSP HAS MET THE CONDITIONS OF APPROVAL. SUCH APPROVAL IS INDEPENDENT OF THE OVERPASS ACTIVATION APPROVAL AND THE PUBLIC REALM APPROVAL.**
- ** MS. COOPER SECONDED.**
- ** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

B. TRANSIT ORIENTED DEVELOPMENT REDEVELOPMENT PLAN

1. Approve scheduling the statutory Public Hearing on the TOD Redevelopment Plan for April 12, 2016 at 5:30 PM
2. Authorize staff to release the TOD Redevelopment Plan and the recommended zoning to the Norwalk Planning Commission seeking their written comments for the Redevelopment Agency's consideration
3. Authorize staff to release the TOD Redevelopment Plan and the recommended zoning to the Norwalk Zoning Commission seeking their written comments for the Redevelopment Agency's consideration

Mr. Sheehan said the TOD plan has been before the Agency a number of times, and was actually approved to go for public comment. Concerns were raised relative to the plan meeting certain aspects of the City's Master Plan of Conservation and Development, which the Agency sought to work through with the Planning Commission, and at this point they are advancing the redevelopment plan back to the Planning Commission and the Zoning Commission for written comment for the Agency's consideration. The Planning Committee approved the requested actions at their meeting this month. The Commissioners are being asked to advance it at their meeting. Hopefully the Agency will get written comment back for consideration and the

Planning Committee will hold a public hearing on this, the Agency will hold a public hearing on it, so there should be opportune time for public comment.

**** MS. COOPER MOVED TO (1) APPROVE SCHEDULING THE STATUTORY PUBLIC HEARING ON THE TOD REDEVELOPMENT PLAN FOR APRIL 12, 2016 AT 5:30 PM; (2) AUTHORIZE STAFF TO RELEASE THE TOD REDEVELOPMENT PLAN AND THE RECOMMENDED ZONING TO THE NORWALK PLANNING COMMISSION SEEKING THEIR WRITTEN COMMENTS FOR THE REDEVELOPMENT AGENCY'S CONSIDERATION; AND (3) AUTHORIZE STAFF TO RELEASE THE TOD REDEVELOPMENT PLAN AND THE RECOMMENDED ZONING TO THE NORWALK ZONING COMMISSION SEEKING THEIR WRITTEN COMMENTS FOR THE REDEVELOPMENT AGENCY'S CONSIDERATION.**

**** MR. DEVINE SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

C. SOUTH NORWALK HOMEOWNERSHIP PROGRAM

1. Authorize program amendment to include single family homes

Ms. Strauss said the South Norwalk Home Ownership Program allows the Agency to purchase small multifamily homes, rehabilitate them and sell them to low and moderate income landlord entrepreneurs, and they are seeking an amendment to the program guidelines to include single family homes. This was spurred by an issue regarding 24 Haviland Street where Zoning stated they want it rehabilitated as a single family home, and they saw this as an opportunity to expand the number of potential properties in the program.

Mr. Sheehan said the modification allows the Agency to deal with a broader segment of the market and impact more units as the homeowner will not have the challenge of managing a rental unit. He noted that the project has received an amazing level of governmental support.

Ms. Strauss said they received the original \$600,000 from the Connecticut Housing Finance Authority, \$875,000 from the Choice Neighborhoods Program, \$850,000 of DOH Funding which is going to Bond Commission this month, and they have put in a request for Capital Budget funds that have been earmarked for the program for ten houses over the next five years.

Mr. Sheehan pointed out that it all stemmed out of the Commissioners supporting a request for \$200,000 to start the program, and it is pretty amazing that from that they have gotten well in excess of two million dollars in support.

Ms. Strauss said an open house is scheduled the first week of April for 68 Lexington Avenue. HDF has had many inquiries and are processing potential purchasers. A lottery will be held on April 6th if needed. Choice Neighborhoods and Department of Housing have approved expanding the guidelines to single family homes based on the Commissioners' approval.

**** MR. DEVINE MOVED TO APPROVE AMENDING THE SOUTH NORWALK HOMEOWNERSHIP PROGRAM GUIDELINES TO INCLUDE SINGLE-FAMILY HOMES IF LOCATED IN THE CHOICE NEIGHBORHOOD.**

**** MS. COOPER SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

D. **WASHINGTON SOUTH MAIN IMPROVEMENT AREA II**

1. Approve Agency staff to put out to bid a restoration project for benches located in South Norwalk and to award the work for a sum not to exceed \$12,000

Ms. Strauss said there are eight benches in South Norwalk that were installed in the 1980s that have seen their share of deterioration. The manufacturer is no longer in business. They received quotes for potential replacement benches that range from \$900 to \$1,000 each, but did not look as nice as the existing benches. The City of New Haven recently undertook a restoration of the same 1980s benches, and awarded nearly \$30,000, or less than \$1,400 a bench, for the project. The Agency has previous years unspent CDBG City Neighborhoods funds of \$12,000 that are earmarked for sidewalk improvements, so they are seeking approval to put out to bid a bench restoration project for a sum not to exceed \$12,000.

**** MS. COOPER MOVED TO APPROVE AGENCY STAFF TO PUT OUT TO BID A RESTORATION PROJECT FOR BENCHES LOCATED IN SOUTH NORWALK AND TO AWARD THE WORK FOR A SUM NOT TO EXCEED \$12,000.**

**** MR. DEVINE SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

E. **COMMUNITY ARTS AND CULTURAL SPONSORSHIP PROGRAM GRANT APPLICATIONS**

1. Approve the Norwalk Arts Commission request for \$2,000 to fund 20% of the development costs of the *Norwalk Cultural Tourism Mobile App*

Ms. Sweitzer said as part of a project the Agency funded last year, the Arts Commission has identified an estimated 60 cultural arts and recreational points of interest for which they would like to develop a mobile app which would be available to anyone, but of particular interest to visitors and student groups. They are requesting 20% of their project budget of \$10,000, which is in alignment with the program guidelines. Mobile apps are increasingly popular and offer the Arts Commission an opportunity at a fairly low cost level to provide a resource of information that makes the whole visit far more interesting.

Mr. Sheehan suggested that they put a time limit on it and that the Commission have matching funding in place within six months of approval.

**** MR. DEVINE MOVED TO APPROVE THE NORWALK ARTS COMMISSION REQUEST FOR \$2,000 FROM THE ARTS AND CULTURAL SPONSORSHIP GRANT PROGRAM TO FUND 20% OF THE DEVELOPMENT COSTS OF THE *NORWALK CULTURAL TOURISM MOBILE APP* SO LONG AS THEY HAVE THE MATCHING FUNDS WITHIN SIX MONTHS OF THIS APPROVAL.**

**** MS. COOPER SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

F. **ADMINISTRATION**

1. Approve Request for Proposals for Landscape Maintenance Services

Mr. Sheehan said the Agency has taken on the enhanced maintenance responsibility for a number of public assets, as well as holiday trimming, flower baskets in both Wall Street and Washington Street and maintenance of the traffic islands on West Avenue in an effort to make sure that the area they are trying to encourage development and business in is up to snuff as far as its physical appearance. As the amount of this responsibility and the associated costs have grown, it is time that the work be put out for public bid, which will ensure appropriate insurance levels are met so that both the Agency and the City that owns the asset are protected. They have prepared a proposed RFP to go out this month with responses due back in April and then hopefully have an award to present at the May meeting so that the work can commence this spring. They anticipate that the contract will be awarded for a two year term.

**** MS. COOPER MOVED TO APPROVE RELEASING THE REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL FOR LANDSCAPE MAINTENANCE SERVICES.**

**** MR. DEVINE SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

IV. NEW BUSINESS
(None.)

V. OLD BUSINESS
(None.)

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further Old or New Business, upon motion of Ms. Cooper and second of Mr. Devine, the Norwalk Redevelopment Agency meeting was adjourned at 6:01 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Karen Pacchiana