CITY OF NORWALK
REDEVELOPMENT AGENCY
SPECIAL MEETING
FEBRUARY 25, 2019

ATTENDANCE: Felix R. Serrano, Chairman, Tom Devine and William Speirs (via teleconference) and David Westmoreland (in person).

AGENCY COUNSEL: Marc Grenier, Esq.

STAFF: Timothy T. Sheehan, Executive Director, Susan Sweitzer, Senior Project Manager

OTHERS: Dave Davidson

CALL TO ORDER

The Special Meeting of the Norwalk Redevelopment Agency was called to order at 12:01 PM.

ROLL CALL

Chairman Serrano noted that a quorum was present.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Chairman Serrano opened the public participation portion of the meeting.

Dave Davidson, 16 Betmarlea Road, West Norwalk, said he is there speaking as a Norwalk citizen and not as a member of a commission or board. He said the City Charter calls for a detailed and thorough procedure in the development of capital budgets, including a Finance recommendation, a Planning Commission recommendation, a recommendation from the Mayor, and a final review by the Common Council. Amounts are allocated for specific projects. There is also a procedure for modifications and a special appropriation procedure for a project that requires additional funds or new projects between budgeting cycles. When projects have excess funds, those funds are required to be returned to the capital budget process and returned to the Director of Finance. When a project needs additional funds or a new project comes up, they are processed through a special appropriation procedure. This project has 60% of the funds required for the project coming out of an appropriation from 2003, and he asks that the Commissioners do their fiduciary responsibility before approving this project to be sure that the funds from the 2003 appropriation are appropriate funds being transferred or used in this project. Funds are not permitted to be used for projects if they were not included in the appropriation at the time.

Chairman Serrano asked if anyone else wished to address the Commission. Hearing none, Chairman Serrano closed the public participation portion of the meeting.

I-A. 50 WASHINGTON STREET PLAZA

Ms. Sweitzer said the project went out to bid earlier this month. The low bidder was Deering Construction in the amount of $1,245,609. Two other bids were also received; one from Vitti Excavators for $1,713,826, and one from Vaze Quality Works of Bridgeport for $1,368,957. Funding for the project is allocated in the capital budget accounts listed in the memo. The project has been in the works for approximately three years from design, including an exhaustive public participation process. The action requested is to approve the award of the Washington Street Plaza Improvements contract to Deering Construction, authorize a project contingency, and authorize the Chairman to execute all documents necessary to implement the project.

Chairman Serrano asked for clarification regarding the capital budget account that was drawn upon for this. Mr. Sheehan said Bob Baron, the City Finance Director, reviewed the account and made the determination that the objectives listed under the account were broad enough to include this project and approved the allocation of the funds in a written communication, which he will forward to Agency counsel and Corporation counsel and get their determination as well.

Mr. Westmoreland said he had emailed staff his concerns regarding the ongoing dumpster use of the plaza as well as parking cars there, and has gotten assurance that that will not continue once the park improvements are done. He also spoke to Ken Hughes, Parks Director, who said Mike Mocciae had approved the dumpster and parking in the past and that he would not approve that going forward, nor approve parking cars for various events.

Mr. Sheehan said they will have something formally recognized by Parks and Rec and Counsel that no one can make those authorizations for the park, and parking will not be allowed and dumpsters will be prohibited. Mr. Westmoreland said Mr. Hughes said he would call Mike Oz, owner of the building, to make sure he knows that the tenants will need to make other arrangements when moving in and out and when renovating and need a dumpster. Mr. Sheehan said in previous discussions with Mike Oz, he indicated that they will be moving the dumpster to the back once the park is in.

Mr. Westmoreland said the City is about to invest between $1.2M and $1.3M which is going to dramatically improve the value of 50 Washington and their private property. The building is an eyesore, and they indicated several years ago that they were going to paint the building. They have done a tremendous job renovating the first floor and the lobby, and he would like to know if they are going to go ahead with painting the façade. It concerns him that we are making these investments and not requiring the developers or the beneficiaries to step up on their side.

Ms. Sweitzer said Mike Oz represented to her that the paint project was scheduled to begin this spring. Mr. Sheehan suggested that they get something from Mike Oz in writing stating that his intention is to start the paint project in the spring.

Chairman Serrano said he wants to be clear that the improvements are to a public park, so he doesn't want the action item contingent on something with regards to requiring private property owners that abut the building to have to do anything. It sounds like they have already discussed the dumpster issue with Ken Hughes, which would be for that City department to take up, so it sounds like that's already understood.

Mr. Sheehan reiterated that they plan to have it formally recognized by Counsel that there will be no parking allowed in the park and that dumpsters will be prohibited.

Mr. Speirs noted that the restaurant at 14 North Main currently has outdoor seating, and asked if they would be precluded from having that. Mr. Sheehan said the intent is to have them enter into an agreement to utilize a portion of the park area for that outdoor dining as they want that area be as activated as possible.

** **MR. WESTMORELAND MOVED TO APPROVE THE AWARD OF THE WASHINGTON STREET PLAZA IMPROVEMENTS CONTRACT TO DEERING CONSTRUCTION INC. PENDING AGENCY COUNSEL AND CITY OF NORWALK CORPORATION COUNSEL REVIEW OF THE CITY FINANCE DIRECTOR WRITTEN APPROVAL OF THE FUNDS TO BE ALLOCATED BY CAPITAL BUDGET ACCOUNTS FOR AN AMOUNT NOT TO EXCEED $1,245,609.**
** **MR. DEVINE SECONDED.**
** **THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

** **MR. WESTMORELAND MOVED TO APPROVE THE PROJECT CONTINGENCY IN AN AMOUNT NOT TO EXCEED 15% OR $186,841, AND TO AUTHORIZE FELIX R. SERRANO TO EXECUTE ALL DOCUMENTS NECESSARY TO IMPLEMENT THE APPROVED PROJECT CONTRACTS, WHICH FUNDS ARE FROM CAPITAL BUDGET ACCOUNTS #90309105777CO277 AND 091809105777CO499 AND NORWALK REDEVELOPMENT AGENCY OPERATING FUND 100.**
** **MR. DEVINE SECONDED.**
** **THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

IV. ADJOURNMENT

Upon motion of Mr. Westmoreland, the Norwalk Redevelopment Agency meeting was adjourned at 12:26 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,
Karen Pacchiana