

**CITY OF NORWALK
ECONOMIC AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE OF THE COMMON
COUNCIL
REGULAR MEETING
MAY 2, 2024
VIA TELECONFERENCE**

ATTENDANCE: Joshua Goldstein; Chair, Jalin Sead, James Frayer, Barbara Smyth,
Heather Dunn, Melissa Murray

STAFF: Sabrina Godeski; Director of Business Development & Tourism,
Johan Lopez

OTHER: Anna Breault; Special Events Coordinator, Garrett Bolella; Asst.
Director of Transportation, Mobility and Parking, Darin
Callahan; Asst. Corporation Council, Jessica
Vonashak; Chief of Community and Economic
Development

CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Goldstein called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

ROLL CALL

Mr. Goldstein listed the members in attendance as reflected above.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

a. Diane Lauricella

Ms. Lauricella discussed the 55 MLK/Webster Street Lot. She noted at one point it was once under the authority of the Brownfield task force. She stated the lot had been turned over to the Redevelopment Agency. Ms. Lauricella described the current green infrastructure and expressed concerns about its status.

Ms. Lauricella thanked Ms. Godeski, Ms. Breault, and all the members who helped with Earth Day on the Green. She stated that for the 2025 events, they should look at things through the eyes of the taxpayer and include corporate and business sponsors.

**CITY OF NORWALK
ECONOMIC AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE OF THE COMMON
COUNCIL REGULAR MEETING
MAY 2, 2024**

b. Tanner Thompson

Mr. Thompson discussed the need for a resilient transportation system that doesn't rely wholly on driving. He said he envisioned a more diverse and high-quality transportation network that would provide options in the event of a crisis.

ADMINISTRATION

A. Approval of the Minutes of April 4, 2024 special meeting.

**** MS. SMYTH MOVED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES.
** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

NEW BUSINESS

A. TRANSPORTATION, MOBILITY, AND PARKING

**1. Presentation on the Norwalk Route 1 Corridor Master Plan Study. –
Garrett Bolella**

Mr. Bolella gave a slide presentation explaining the master plan study for the Route 1 Corridor. He noted that the study was funded by the FHWA. He discussed the various groups and partners who are participating in the funding process. Mr. Bolella stated this study would get both the state and Norwalk parties in the same room to discuss the situation.

Mr. Bolella presented a map showing the area in question. He also mentioned the areas the study would cover. He put up several images showing how the corridor has changed over the years. He discussed how the area has grown in a very auto-centric way citing the capacity increase for vehicles. He pointed out Norwalk lacks, sidewalks, true transit facilities, and connections.

Mr. Bolella presented a slide showing the Route 1 Planning Context featuring the following:
Safety Concerns

- Congestion Concerns
- Bike and Pedestrian Needs
- Transit Priority Measures
- Zoning Supporting Multimodal Transportation

He then presented a series of slides showing daily traffic, the prevalence of congestion, and major crash locations. Mr. Bolella then showed and explained a graphic of the new zoning. He added they were looking to do their first public engagement to introduce the project to the

**CITY OF NORWALK
ECONOMIC AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE OF THE COMMON
COUNCIL REGULAR MEETING
MAY 2, 2024**

community on May 20, 2024. Mr. Bolella stated they would be using the Summer to collect all the necessary data for analysis. He said the analysis could then be presented in September. Mr. Sead said he felt that emergency services should be part of the discussion. Mr. Bolella said they would make sure emergency services are included. He also talked about the benefits of the corridor plan to the area.

2. Complete Streets Update. – Garrett Bolella

Mr. Bolella presented his update on Complete Streets. He stated they were working on wrapping up the process by the end of the year. He also noted they would be making a presentation on Complete Streets to the Ordinance Committee in May. Mr. Bolella discussed a demonstration project they were bringing before the Traffic Authority in June.

Ms. Murray highlighted the mobility aspect of the project and how it would benefit her district. She also had concerns that the lights at the crossing were quick and seniors may not be able to get across in time. Mr. Bolella noted they have a draft of a flyer they were hoping to get out. He stated they would provide direct notification to any groups Ms. Murray suggested. Mr. Bolella explained how the various adjustments made would reflect both specific locations and a baseline across the city.

Mr. Goldstein discussed several municipalities that have already adopted Complete Streets. He clarified they would be doing a presentation to the Ordinance Committee in May. He also stated the implementation of the ordinance and the design guide are two separate documents.

B. REDEVELOPMENT AGENCY

1. RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE MAYOR TO PARTICIPATE IN THE BROWNFIELD MUNICIPAL GRANT PROGRAM TO SUPPORT THE ENVIRONMENTAL REMEDIATION REDEVELOPMENT OF 55 MLK DRIVE

**AND
(WEBSTER STREET LOT)**

WHEREAS, pursuant to C.G.S Section 32-763 the Connecticut
Department of Economic and Community Development is authorized to
extend financial assistance for economic development projects;

and

WHEREAS, it is desirable and in the public interest that the City of
Norwalk & Norwalk Redevelopment Agency make an application to the
State for \$3,000,000 in order to undertake the 55 MLK (Webster
Brownfield Cleanup Project and to execute an Assistance

Street Lot)
Agreement.

**CITY OF NORWALK
ECONOMIC AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE OF THE COMMON
COUNCIL REGULAR MEETING
MAY 2, 2024**

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE COMMON COUNCIL
OF NORWALK

1. That it is cognizant of the conditions and prerequisites for the state financial assistance imposed by C.G.S Section 32-763
2. That the filling of an application for State financial assistance by the City of Norwalk & Norwalk Redevelopment Agency in an amount not to exceed \$3,000,000 is hereby approved and that Mayor Harry Rilling is directed to execute and file such application with the Connecticut Department of Economic and Community Development, to provide such additional information, to execute such other documents as may be required, to execute an Assistance Agreement with the State of Connecticut for State financial assistance if such an agreement is offered, to execute any amendments, decisions, and revisions thereto, and to act as the authorized representative of the City of Norwalk

**
**

**MS. SMYTH MOVED THE RESOLUTION FORWARD.
THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

2. RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE MAYOR TO PARTICIPATE IN THE COMMUNITY INVESTMENT FUND 2030 PROGRAM TO SUPPORT THE REDEVELOPMENT OF 55 MLK DRIVE (WEBSTER STREET LOT)

WHEREAS, pursuant to C.G.S Section 32-285a the Connecticut Department of Economic and Community Development is authorized to extend financial assistance for economic development projects; and

WHEREAS, it is desirable and in the public interest that the City of Norwalk & Norwalk Redevelopment Agency make an application to the State for \$8,000,000 in order to undertake the 55 MLK (Webster Street Lot) Community Investment Fund Project and to execute an Assistance Agreement.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE COMMON COUNCIL OF
NORWALK

1. That it is cognizant of the conditions and prerequisites for the state financial assistance imposed by C.G.S Section 32-285a

**CITY OF NORWALK
ECONOMIC AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE OF THE COMMON
COUNCIL REGULAR MEETING
MAY 2, 2024**

2. That the filling of an application for State financial assistance by the City of Norwalk & Norwalk Redevelopment Agency in an amount not to exceed \$8,000,000 is hereby approved and that Mayor Harry Rilling is directed to execute and file such application with the Connecticut Department of Economic and Community Development, to provide such additional information, to execute such other documents as may be required, to execute an Assistance Agreement with the State of Connecticut for State financial assistance if such an agreement is offered, to execute any amendments, decisions, and revisions thereto, and to act as the authorized representative of the City of Norwalk.

Mr. Bolella discussed the Webster lot plans for redevelopment of the existing surface parking lot into a mixed-use residential village. He noted the state assistance for the project, \$3 million from the Brownfields Program. He also stated they received \$8 million from the Department of Economic and Community Development. Mr. Bolella explained there was a history of contamination on the site. He indicated there was a \$5 to 5.5 million dollar price tag to clean it up. He said they had received the funding they needed through DCD and an EPA grant. Mr. Bolella indicated that the only way they could access those funds was to have the assistance agreement referenced in the resolution. He stated the funds would be put in an escrow account pending a land disposition agreement. He also remarked that the funds mentioned in the resolution were focused more on on-site infrastructure.

Mr. Callahan discussed the changes in the ECDC granting process. He described the financial assistance agreement. He referred to it as the cost of accessing the funding. He also described what was required by ECDC when securing financial assistance.

Mr. Goldstein requested information on formally unlocking the funds. Mr. Bolella stated it would be a notification, but the funds wouldn't be released until they had a full land disposition agreement approved.

Mr. Frayer wanted to make sure the escrow account would prevent them from being exposed in any way until they went ahead with the full deal. Mr. Bolella responded in the affirmative. There was a discussion on whether there would be a termination date on the escrow account. Mr. Callahan explained that had yet to be determined. He stated the proposal does require the funds to be spent within a certain period.

** MR. FRAYER MOVED THE RESOLUTION FORWARD.
** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

CITY OF NORWALK
ECONOMIC AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE OF THE COMMON
COUNCIL REGULAR MEETING
MAY 2, 2024

C. BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT & TOURISM

1. FY2025 Special Events Presentation. – Sabrina Godeski & Anna Breault

Ms. Godeski provided an overview of the items the presentation would be covering.

Ms. Breault provided a PowerPoint presentation on the Special Events and their objectives.

- Enriching the art
- Empowering small business
- Advancing Education
- Celebrating diversity

She then showed a slide listing goals they hope to achieve.

- Increased event attendance
- Local entrepreneur support
- Encouraging community participation
- Engage a young audience
- Reinforce neighborhood activation
- Sustainability and environmental awareness
- Economic development

Ms. Breault's next slide discussed the Arts and Economic Prosperity Study. The study showed event attendees will put an average of \$32.21 into the local economy per person, per event.

Ms. Breault presented the next slide. She discussed first-time events from the 2023 season and the ROI for the various events. She next went on the 2024 calendar and the goal of increased attendance using:

- A mailed calendar
- A bigger Social Media Presence
- Collaborations with local businesses and organizations

Ms. Smith wanted to know if there had been an increase in attendance for events started in 2022. Ms. Breault indicated there was a small increase in attendance for those events in 2023.

Ms. Breault presented her next slide that discussed:

- Local entrepreneur support and
- Encouraging active community participation

She described how the larger events allow for local small business and vendor pop-ups. She stated they wanted to increase the number of vendors and organizations as time went on. She also discussed the goal of fostering community participation. She stated their aim was an 85% or higher satisfaction rate with the community. She stressed the need for free and affordable

activities and events. Ms. Breault said this year they would be focusing on post-event surveys for feedback.

Ms. Breault presented the next slide that discussed:

- Engaging young audiences specifically with program activities for youth and families at all events through:
 - ◆ Outreach to the school system and youth programs
 - ◆ School and youth program performances
- Reinforcing Neighborhood Activation through:
 - ◆ Community projects, partnerships, and working with neighborhood stakeholders and groups.

Ms. Breault presented the next slide which discussed:

- Sustainability and environmental awareness which includes:
 - ◆ Reduced carbon emissions from transportation to events by encouraging public transportation, carpooling, and renewable energy resources
 - ◆ Diverting event waste from landfills to recycling by strongly implementing recycling through strategic placement of recycling bins throughout an event.
- Economic Improvement to include:
 - ◆ At least a 15% increase in sales tax revenues for defined districts.
 - ◆ Quantifying economic impact of events on the local economy in including:
 - spending by attendees
 - revenue generated for local businesses.
 - employment opportunities

Ms. Breault's next slide discussed event partnership stressing:

- Organizational support
- Market Support
- Measurable increases for event success
 - ◆ Higher attendance
 - ◆ Seamless coordination with City departments
 - ◆ Increased event out reach.

Ms. Breault presented a series of slides showing some of the partnerships already in place. She highlighted Eco Evolution on Washington Street. The collaboration places vendors and activities in vacant storefronts once a month.

Ms. Breault then showed a slide discussing their partnership with the Earth Day Festival. She noted unlike previous years the attendance was over two thousand. She then showed several images of people participating in the event.

Ms. Breault then described another partnership for the Pride in the Park Event. She stated they would be partnering with Triangle Community Center for: Family hour programming

- Parking, bus routes, Wheels2U

Ms. Breault noted that Market Place on Washington would be taking place on the same day. The hope being it would foster a better connection between SoNo and Veterans Park.

Ms. Breault next slide described Silent Book Club. She then described some other event they've put on including:

- Dungeons and Dragons Game Night at the Washington Street Plaza, partnered with Battlegrounds Gaming.
- Kareoki Night at 314 Beer Garden sponsored by the city of Norwalk.
- New Resident Meet up at Eco Evolution, partnered with Tony Bacigalupo of the Belongfulness Project.

Ms. Breault then discussed bringing back the SoNo Harbor Splash. She then brought up the topic of sponsorships with businesses and organizations. Ms. Breault then showed a slide showing the various sponsorship levels available.

Ms. Breault then presented a slide describing special events and coordination management. Her final slide listed plans to create events with remarkable outcomes.

2. Authorize the Mayor, Harry W. Rilling to execute a contract with Placer Labs, Inc. for a data software unlimited license in the amount of \$34,000 via sole source procurement. – Sabrina Godeski & Anna Breault
ACCT: 0924 3710 5777 C0773

Ms Godeski described the software, its benefits, and the license. Mr. Goldstein asked if other local municipalities used the same/similar services and if they could share the data. Ms. Godeski said no. Ms. Murray was curious about working with the state Convention and Visitors Bureau to get the necessary data. Ms. Godeski stated they had no means of getting the data at this time. Ms. Murray suggested partnering with local hotels to get the information.

**** MS. SMYTH MOVED TO PASS THE MOTION.**
**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

3. Authorize the Mayor, Harry W. Rilling to execute a 3-year contract with two 1-year extension options with ARC Sound, Stage,

**CITY OF NORWALK
ECONOMIC AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE OF THE COMMON
COUNCIL REGULAR MEETING
MAY 2, 2024**

Lighting,
\$97,585 for year two,
Project: 4341R Stage,
Sabrina Godeski & Anna Breault

LLC in the amounts of \$92,510 for year one,
and \$102,760 for year 3 for Purchasing
Lighting, and Sound Services. –

ACCT: 0925 3780 5777 C0680
0924 3710 5777 C0773
0925 3710 5777 C0773

Ms. Godeski described the RFP process. She stated ARC had the best pricing and was a Norwalk-based company. She also noted they had worked with ARC previously.

Ms. Smyth had questions about the contract. Ms. Godeski said once the contract was in place they wanted to have a meeting to discuss event options. Mr. Goldstein had questions about flex events. Mr. Sead had concerns about locking in the contract for three years. Ms. Godeski explained the contract had the option of canceling based on funding availability. Ms. Dunn suggested getting budgets from other event operators for comparison. She stated that the sponsorship levels are way too low. She also suggested taking a long-range look at foot traffic. Ms. Godeski explained they were making a concerted effort to increase sponsorship. Mr. Frayer stated he felt the key was the Placer software. Ms. Murray explained the pros and cons of sponsorship and in-kind donations. She noted the type outside was situational. Ms. Dunn wanted a list of the sponsor-level deliverables. Ms. Dunn had contract concerns. Ms. Godeski said the three years were to ensure they would have to go to the RFP every year. She also pointed out the contract terms were dependent on funding.

**** MR. FRAYER MOVED TO PASS THE MOTION TO TAKE THE ITEM
TO THE FULL COUNCIL.
** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

OLD BUSINESS

There was no old business to discuss

ADJOURNMENT

**** MS. DUNN MOVED TO ADJOURN THE MEETING.
** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

The meeting was adjourned at 9:05 p.m.

**CITY OF NORWALK
ECONOMIC AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE OF THE COMMON
COUNCIL REGULAR MEETING
MAY 2, 2024**

Respectfully submitted
China Mayhew
Telesco Secretarial Services

DRAFT