

**ECONOMIC AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT OF THE COMMON COUNCIL  
SPECIAL MEETING  
WEDNESDAY, MARCH 7, 2024  
VIA TELECONFERENCE**

ATTENDANCE: Joshua Goldstein; Chair, Margret (Lisa) Shanahan, Heather Dunn, James Frayer, Jalin Sead, Sr., Barbara Smyth, Darlene Young (6:05 p.m.),

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

OTHER: Fred Eshraghi, Beatrix Lane, Amy Montimurro, Jennifer Flatow, Jenn Scanlon, Jenn Mason, April Jackson, Clinton Hamilton, Ruta Pakstas, James Travers, Julia Schwartz-Leep, Rev. Roosevelt Ewell, Brian Bidolli, Stephen Ivan, John-Michael Parker, Maria Palacios, Tamara Pardo, Sylvia Archibald, Tristan Fields, Sean O'Brien, Kim Carter, Mellodye Ragin, Richard Liverano, Alicia Sells, Adam Bovilsky, Michele Condorino, Cody Baird, Ed Spilka, Darrick Eason

**CALL TO ORDER**

The meeting was called to order at 6:04 p.m.

**ROLL CALL**

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

**PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

No one from the public wished to address the committee.

**ADMINISTRATION**

A. Approval of the Minutes from the February 1, 2024 meeting.

\*\* MS. SHANAHAN MOVED TO ACCEPT THE MINUTES.  
\*\* THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

**NEW BUSINESS**

A. TRANSPORTATION, MOBILITY, AND PARKING

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1. Authorize the Mayor, Harry W. Rilling, to execute an agreement with VHB consultant engineering to provide consulting engineering services for the design of the traffic signal system upgrade and transit signal priority implementation (Phase 5, Project # 102-369), for an amount not to exceed \$380,461.16.

ACCT: 0924 3750 5799 C0848

Mr. Travers described phase 5 which includes adaptive technology for streetlights and transit signal priority.

Ms. Young joined the meeting at 6:05 p.m.

**\*\* MR. SEAD MOVED TO AUTHORIZE THE MAYOR, HARRY W. RILLING, TO EXECUTE AN AGREEMENT WITH VHB CONSULTANT ENGINEERING.**  
**\*\* THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

## **B. REDEVELOPMENT AGENCY**

- 1a. Authorize the Mayor, Harry W. Rilling, to enter into any and all agreements related to the Municipal Brownfield Grant Program; and execute a first amendment to the Land Disposition and Development Agreement (“LDA”) together with any and all other agreements and documents required thereunder with SoNo TOD II, LLC (the “Developer”) for purposes of conveying a portion of 30 Monroe Street.

Mr. Bidolli discussed the funding arrangements and timeline for the cleaning up of the 30 Monroe Street property.

**\*\* MR. FRAYER MOVED TO AUTHORIZE THE MAYOR, HARRY W. RILLING, TO ENTER INTO ANY AND ALL AGREEMENTS RELATED TO THE MUNICIPAL BROWNFIELD GRANT PROGRAM.**  
**\*\* THE VOTE PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

- 1b. Be it further resolved that the Mayor is authorized to execute an assistance agreement, any amendments thereto and such other documents as may be required; to take such other actions as may be necessary or required to receive the grant; and to act as the authorized representative of the City of Norwalk for all purposes in connection therewith.

**\*\* MR. GOLDSTEIN MOVED TO VOTE AGAIN FOR THE REDEVELOPMENT AGENCY ITEMS 1A AND 1B.**  
**\*\* THE VOTE PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

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## 2. Community Development Block Grant – review and presentation of CDBG applications.

Mr. Sead recused himself.

The meeting was turned over to Mr. Ivan. Mr. Ivan described the role of the Norwalk Redevelopment Agency. He discussed the consolidation plan that guides spending and the Community Development Block Grant Funds. He stated there would be no actions taken. He said they were hosting three-minute presentations for all the presenters. Mr. Ivan noted that they had yet to receive their funding allocation from the Department of Housing. He indicated, as a result, their agenda would be subject to change. Mr. Ivan stated once the funding is received there would be 90 days to submit the annual action plan to HUD.

### **1. Amy Montimurro, Abilis**

Ms. Montimurro described the organization, its various services, and who benefits from them. She stated they were requesting \$16,224 for the installation of a generator at the new residence on East Rock Road in Norwalk. Ms. Montimurro stated the home housed three autistic men in their early twenties. The generator would prevent adverse results caused by having to leave the house due to power failures.

### **2. John Micheal Parker, Arts for Learning Connecticut, Jenn Scanlon**

Mr. Parker described his organization and its mission. He explained they were applying for funding for the HOT School Program (Higher Order Thinking Schools). He stated the program brings in teaching artists and provides hundreds of hours of programming. Mr. Parker requested \$15,000 which was a third of the total program costs.

Ms. Scanlon gave a further description of the HOTS program and its benefits. She presented various quotes from students.

### **3. Clinton Hamilton, COO, The Carver Foundation**

Mr. Hamilton made a request for \$100,829 for the purchase of a heating/cooling unit for their gymnasium.

### **4. Maria Palacios, Lead Immigration Councilor, Catholic Charities Immigration Legal Services**

Ms. Palacios explain their role in providing services for the growing immigrant population. She described the various services they offer. She stated they were the only DOJ-accredited representative and legal provider for the area. Ms. Palacio requested \$29,054 to cover expenses related to service delivery and operation.

Mr. Frayer asked if these programs served people awaiting disposition or those who already had their documentation. Ms. Palacios stated most of the clients they serve have a legal pathway. Those that don't have legal status they help transition to legal status.

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Mr. Goldstein asked if the legal work would be done in-house or if they would be hiring outside legal counsel. Ms. Palacios said they provide all the legal services using DOJ-accredited representatives.

#### **5. Tamara Pardo, Chief Advancement Officer, Domestic Violence Crisis Center**

Ms. Pardo stated they were the only state-certified domestic violence crisis center in lower Fairfield County. She stated she was requesting \$70,000 to expand their citywide youth violence protection program. Ms. Pardo stated the funding would prioritize schools in the LMI Tract.

Mr. Lopez had a question about how determining the success rate was calculated. Ms. Pardo explained surveys were taken at the end of the lesson program.

#### **6. Sylvia Archibald; Director of the East Norwalk Association Library**

Ms. Archibald gave a brief description of the various programs offered. She requested \$5000 to continue their work.

#### **7. Julia Schwartz-Leep; Executive Director, Elder House**

Ms. Schwartz-Leep gave a brief description of Elder House and the members of the community to whom they offer services. She requested \$30,000 to continue these services.

#### **8. Jenn Mason: Director Filling in the Blanks**

Ms. Mason described the program and its mission to fight childhood hunger. She explained the various services they provided including the Fresh Food Mobile Pantry. Ms. Mason requested \$12,850 to support the services of the mobile food pantry.

Ms. Smyth had a question about where the mobile food pantry would be located every month. Ms. Mason described the logistics.

#### **9. Tristan Fields; President, HELP**

Mr. Fields explained his organization was designed to increase college access for underrepresented groups of students. He described the methods they use to achieve their goals. Mr. Fields requested \$14,000 for the College Edge Program.

Mr. Lopez wanted to know what set the HELP organization apart from other similar programs. Mr. Fields stated his organization was not a part of another program and was dedicated to college

prep. He also noted that HELP was designed to create a support network for students once they entered college.

#### **10. Sean O'Brien; Executive Director, HomeFront**

Mr. O'Brien stated that HomeFront revitalized homes for low-income families at no cost to them. He requested \$20,000 to help keep the project free for those who qualify.

Mr. Frayer asked if HomeFront's programs focused on people with disabilities. Mr. O'Brien stated decisions were made based on household income.

#### **11. April Jackson; Founder/Executive Director, House of Darla**

Ms. Jackson described the mission of the House of Darla. She requested a grant of \$20,000. She stated the primary objective goal for the grant is their Wellness initiative.

Mr. Lopez asked about the credentials of those participating in the wellness summit. Ms. Jackson responded with the credentials of the various individuals involved.

Mr. Goldstein wanted clarification on how the grant money would be applied. Ms. Jackson explained how the funds would be applied.

Mr. Frayer asked how the program operated. Ms. Jackson held up a poster that outlined the process of the program. She stated that everything covered in the program was free to the participants.

#### **12. Kim Carter; Development Officer, Keystone House.**

Ms. Carter described the programs and services provided by Keystone House. She requested a grant for \$12,900 to upgrade the HVAC system at their St. John Street group home.

#### **13. Mellodye Ragin; L.I.F.T. Foundation**

Ms. Ragin presented a description of the L.I.F.T. Programs. She requested a grant (amount not mentioned) for help to fund payroll and student services.

Mr. Lopez wanted to know what percentage of the grant would go to funding payroll and what percentage would go towards funding student services. Ms. Ragin stated that the primary use of the funds would be for payroll.

#### **14. Richard Liverano; Manager of Institutional Giving and Impact, Liberation**

Mr Liverano explained they were a substance use treatment, prevention, and harm reduction agency. He discussed the Families in Recovery Program. Mr. Liverano requested a grant of \$15,000 for a childcare coordinator.

#### **15. Alicia Sells; Asst. Director of Advancement, Maritime Aquarium**

Ms. Sells described the various education programs and their partnership with the Norwalk public school system. She stated they have added new conservation initiatives. Ms. Sells requested \$10,000 to pay the insurance deductible for facility repairs needed after flooding caused by the HVAC system. Ms. Sells explained the grant would only be going to pay the insurance deductible.

#### **16. Adam Bovilsky; Executive Director, Norwalk Housing Authority**

1. Mr. Bovilsky described the various programs which include public housing that fall under the housing authority. He requested \$50,000 to replace the ramp at the senior development at 20 West.
2. Mr. Bovilsky outlined the request by the Connecticut Housing Finance Authority for Mutual Housing to reconstitute its board. He explained that the Mutual Housing Board voted to become a subsidiary of the Norwalk Housing Authority. Mr. Bovilsky stated they disbanded their board. The new board became the Board of Mutual Housing. Mr. Bovilsky requested \$50,000 to repair the siding on the building at 30 Chestnut which is a Mutual property.

#### **17. Beatrix Lane; Executive Director, Norwalk Senior Center**

Ms. Lane gave a description of the center and the services it offers. She requested \$72,000 to repair or replace an exterior patio located at 11 Allen Road in the old Roosevelt School.

#### **18. Michele Conderino, Executive Director, Open Doors**

Ms. Conderino described all the programs available through Open Doors. She requested \$35,000 to support their financial opportunity center.

#### **19. Ruta Pakstas; Development Officer for Grants, Person to Person**

Ms. Pakstas described the organization and its services. She requested \$50,000 as public services grant to help fund the salaries of three full-time Norwalk Pantry Staff.

## **20. Reverend Roosevelt Ewell, Serving All Vessels Equally**

Rev. Ewell explained the mission and described their initiatives at Serving All Vessels equally. He requested \$30,000 to support their summer school enrichment program.

## **21. Cody Baird; Head of Development, Rowan Center**

Ms. Baird described the mission of the Rowan Center and its role in dealing with sexual violence. She requested \$20,000 to support their work in Norwalk.

## **22. Ed Spilka; Board Member, Wheel at Ford**

Mr. Spilka gave a description of the organization. He stated it was a lending library for durable medical equipment. Mr. Spilka requested \$35,000 to continue their work.

## **23. Darrick Eason; Executive Assistant, Youth Business Initiative**

1. Funding for new carpeting and flooring.

Mr. Eason described the situation in the building on Van Zant that the organization has moved into. He requested \$50,000 to replace the carpet and flooring.

Mr. Goldstein required clarification on a possible conflict of interest issue. Mr. Eason provided the necessary clarification.

2. Service application for Staffing

Mr. Eason described the services that are offered by YBI. He requested \$30,000 to help meet their staffing needs.

## **24. Stephen Ivan; Housing Development Project Manager, Norwalk Redevelopment Agency**

Mr. Ivan explained that every year the agency presents an application for administrative funds and city neighborhood funds. He stated the administrative funds go towards program management and soft cost activities. He then explained that the city neighborhoods funding, funds serve to facilitate real projects.

There was a discussion about funding recommendations. Mr. Frayer had questions about the process that was clarified by Mr. Ivan. Ms. Smyth noted that the funds were not meeting the need. Mr. Frayer asked if funding could be denied to an applicant. Mr. Ivan indicated yes.

### **OLD BUSINESS**

There was no old business discussed.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

**\*\* MS. SHANAHAN MOVED TO ADJOURN THE MEETING.  
\*\* THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

The meeting was adjourned at 8:06 p.m.

Respectfully submitted.  
China Mayhew  
Telesco Secretarial Services