

DRAFT MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING
CITY OF STAMFORD, CONNECTICUT
URBAN REDEVELOPMENT COMMISSION
THURSDAY, DECEMBER 11, 2008

1. At 6:08pm, Chairman Stephen C. Osman called the meeting to order. The following were in attendance:

Commissioners:

Stephen C. Osman, Chairman
James I. Nixon, Vice Chairman
Joel P. Mellis, Secretary/Treasurer
Robert S. Robins
Jackie Heftman

Staff:

Christopher L. Bergstrom, Executive Director
Rachel A. Goldberg, General Counsel
Durelle Alexander

2. Approval of Minutes

- (a) **September 11, 2008 Annual Meeting** – Commissioner Nixon made a motion to approve the minutes. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Mellis and carried by unanimous vote.
- (b) **September 11, 2008 Regular Meeting** – Commissioner Heftman made a motion to approve the minutes. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Nixon and carried by unanimous vote.
- (c) **October 10, 2008 Special Meeting** – Commissioner Mellis made a motion to approve the minutes. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Heftman and carried by unanimous vote.

3. Correspondence

None at this time.

4. Announcements

None at this time.

Commissioner Nixon made a motion to address the remaining agenda items out of order. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Mellis and carried by unanimous vote.

6. Mill River Corridor

- (a) **Archstone/Re-Use Parcel 21** – Attorney Goldberg reported that Archstone had retained a new local attorney to review the pending agreement.

5. Southeast Quadrant

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- (a) **Park Square West Phase II** – Executive Director Bergstrom reported that discussions with the redeveloper to resolve outstanding issues are on-going.
- (b) **Re-Use Parcel 36** – Attorney Goldberg reported that: (i) the Settlement Agreement has been fully executed; (ii) the releases have been exchanged; (iii) funds were transferred, and (iv) \$105,000 was delivered to the F.D. Rich Company on December 4, 2008.

7. Old Business

- (a) **Master Plan Project with DSSD** - Executive Director Bergstrom noted that the Commission had previously discussed spending up to half of the Settlement Agreement money to fund half of the Master Plan Rezoning Project in partnership with the Stamford Downtown Special Services District. He said, “We are still negotiating a contract with the Consultant but I think the cost of the project may be less than anticipated. The purpose of this study is to take a look at the downtown Master Plan and zoning and work with a consultant to engage a broad group of stakeholders in reviewing, in a comprehensive way, the zoning for downtown Stamford.” Executive Director Bergstrom said that this has never been done. He also noted that they are close to finalizing an agreement, with a potential launch anticipated in January 2009.
- (b) **Reinventing Stamford Initiative** – Executive Director Bergstrom reported that the effort to create a position for Stamford both internally and externally as a resilient city currently involves a partnership with about a dozen organizations. A core group has emerged, consisting of The Stamford Partnership, the Planning Board, the Economic Development Commission and the URC – along with their corresponding directors/chairs. These four representatives are meeting on December 12th to finalize plans for the launch of the initiative, which will be centered around an event that The Stamford Partnership has been planning for some time in mid-January. Executive Director Bergstrom said, “What I’d like to do is get some help in the initial three months of the Reinventing Stamford Initiative from Larry Quick, who I worked with in Rhode Island and I think is the top strategist globally in working with cities to reposition themselves in the face of emerging conditions. He is based in Australia but will be in the United States during the time that coincides with the first three months of our launch.” The Executive Director asked for authority to engage Mr. Quick for approximately \$12,000 of his time during this period. He continued, “This would help me drive the initiative through a series of events on two tracks – one, having to do with innovation and human capital development primarily, and the other around place making, particularly in positioning Stamford as a Green City and a transit-oriented City. The way we plan to do this is through a series of events, perhaps six a year, each with an outside speaker to provoke conversation among a broad and diverse group of Stamford stakeholders.” Executive Director Bergstrom explained that the key is not just to have a group of speakers and an audience, but to get the attendees talking to each other and circulating ideas.

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The Executive Director distributed a matrix outlining potential reinvention opportunities, attached as part of these official minutes. Discussion ensued. Executive Director Bergstrom continued, “There is another piece of this puzzle. While we’re having this conversation about Reinventing Stamford, we ought to be connecting with other cities around the country that are having the same conversation at the same time. The best forum for that, in my view, is an organization called CEO’s for Cities. We’ve talked about getting these Stamford organizations to be a cluster within CEO’s for Cities. It would cost us a total of \$25,000 as a group and I’m in the process of raising funds from various sources to do this. The head of CEO’s for Cities, Carol Coletta, is coming to Stamford next week to meet with these organizations, which in addition to the URC, include the Office of Economic Development, Planning/Land Use, The Stamford Partnership, the Stamford Downtown Special Services District, the Business Council of Fairfield County, the Stamford Chamber of Commerce, UConn/Stamford, Norwalk Community Technical College, Stamford Public Schools, CTE, the Urban League, Charter Oak Communities, RBS, UBS and Stamford Hospital. The Executive Director asked for authorization to contribute \$5,000 of URC funds to the Cluster Group.

Following further discussion, Commissioner Nixon made a motion to authorize the expenditure of a maximum of \$5,000 toward the total \$25,000 cost for annual membership in CEO’s for Cities. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Robins and carried by unanimous vote.

Commissioner Heftman made a motion to authorize the engagement of Larry Quick for an amount not to exceed \$12,000 for consulting services. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Nixon. Discussion ensued. Commissioner Mellis asked, “What would be the measurement by which we could evaluate Mr. Quick?” Chairman Osman responded, “By going to the meetings.” Executive Director Bergstrom added, “It will be successful if the civic conversation we are trying to engage happens.” Commissioner Heftman asked, “Will he be the facilitator?” The Executive Director responded, “Yes, along with Carol Coletta, who has been helping frame the effort and suggesting potential speakers.” Attorney Goldberg noted it will be necessary to draw up a written agreement with Mr. Quick that meets the Commission’s requirements. The Chairman Osman asked Commissioner Mellis to oversee this process. There being no further discussion, the question was called and the motion was passed by unanimous vote.

At 6:53pm, Commissioner Nixon made a motion to go into Executive Session to specifically discuss the status of negotiations re: Park Square West (agenda item 5a) and Archstone (agenda item 6a). The motion was seconded by Commissioner Robins and carried by unanimous vote. Executive Director Bergstrom and Attorney Goldberg participated in the discussion. No motions were made and no votes were taken. At 8:20pm, Commissioner Heftman made a motion to return to Open Session. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Nixon and carried by unanimous vote.

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At 8:25pm, Commissioner Nixon made a motion to return to Executive Session to specifically discuss negotiations pertaining to the contract for downtown rezoning (agenda item 7). The motion was seconded by Commissioner Robins and carried unanimously. Executive Director Bergstrom participated in the discussion. No motions were made and no votes were taken. At 8:35pm, Commissioner Nixon made a motion to return to Open Session. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Mellis and carried by unanimous vote.

Chairman Osman left the meeting at 8:35pm and turned the Chair over to Vice Chairman Nixon.

8. New Business

None at this time.

9. Adjournment

There being no further business before the Board, Commissioner Robins made a motion to adjourn. The motion was carried by unanimous vote and the meeting was adjourned at 8:37pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Joel P. Mellis
Secretary/Treasurer