

STAMFORD PLANNING BOARD
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES #3569
TUESDAY, DECEMBER 22ND, 2009
7TH FLOOR CONFERENCE AREA
888 WASHINGTON BLVD., STAMFORD, CT

Stamford Planning Board Members present were: Duane Hill, Theresa Dell, Claire Fishman, and Jay Tepper. Present for staff were Robin Stein and Todd Dumais.

Regular Meeting

The chairman, Mr. Duane Hill, called the meeting to order at 7:35 pm. He announced that prior to the discussion on the Capital Budget the Board would discuss the Metro Green Apartments II – City Gap Funding Request.

Metro Green Apartments II – City Gap Funding Request

Mr. Stein explained that the Board received a letter from Caroline Vary, Jonathan Rose Companies, which outlined the request. He added that Mrs. Vary was in attendance tonight to answer any questions that the Board may have. Mr. Stein explained that the Metro Green Project is seeking LEED Gold certification for Phase I and the developer is ready to proceed to Phase II. He added that Phase II of the project will be another 50 units of mixed income residential housing and that the developer is asking for a \$2 million dollar bridge loan from the City to start the project.

Caroline Vary of Jonathan Rose Companies, stated that the financing plan was based on obtaining \$2 million in funding from City of Stamford. She said that they have a funding gap and are seeking alternative funds. Mrs. Vary explained that the letter is a request to encourage the City to support the project with financial funding. She added that they would be receptive to any reduced amount.

Mr. Tepper asked how much out of the total project cost is \$2 million part of? Mrs. Vary responded \$28 million. Ms. Vary noted these 50 units are critical to anchor the site in the South End.

Mr. Hill thanked Ms. Vary for her presence and presentation.

Mrs. Dell asked how long the bridge loan would be spaced out for? Mr. Stein said that is uncertain at this time but one scenario would be once the Zoning Inclusionary Funds become available they could be used. Mr. Tepper asked where the Planning Board's role in this was? Mr. Stein answered that all requests would have to come back before all the boards.

Mr. Tepper then asked if this is something the Board needed to vote on. Mr. Hill answered no that this presentation was for informational purposes only.

Mr. Hill explained that ZBA 005-10, Stacey Leydon would be moved up in the agenda and discussed next.

Zoning Board of Appeals Referrals:

ZBA 005-10 - requesting variance of parking requirements to allow for two parking spaces in lieu of four required for a Professional Office – Accessory Use on a property located at 222 Roxbury Road in the RA-1 district.

John Leydon, attorney for the applicant explained the requested variance. He stated that the zoning regulations allow for a home office but require four parking spaces including those for home use and that a professional office with home accessory use requires a total of 6 parking spaces. Mr. Leydon explained that the property doesn't have a legal six but has a usable six or more. If variance is denied the applicant would have to construct two additional parking spaces in the front yard as-of-right.

After a short discussion, Mrs. Dell moved to recommend approval of the application. Mr. Tepper seconded the motion and it passed unanimously with the members present voting, 4-0. (Hill, Dell, Fishman and Tepper)

Planning Board Representative to SWRPA

Mr. Stein explained that there are four people appointed to represent Stamford at SWRPA meetings, three appointed by the Mayor and one by the Planning Board. He added that it was time for the Board to nominate a new member. By consensus, the Board agreed that Mr. Jay Tepper should remain the Planning Board's appointed representative to SWRPA.

Mrs. Dell moved to nominate Mr. Tepper as the Planning Board's representative to SWRPA. Mrs. Fishman seconded the motion and it passed unanimously with the members present voting, 3-0. (Hill, Dell, Fishman, and Mr. Tepper abstaining)

Capital Budget FY 2010/11-2017:

Mr. Stein stated that the printed budget version dated December 9, 2009 is the most current version and this version incorporates all changes made to date. He explained that the budget is in the ballpark of prior years and that the Board tried to keep it under \$50M. Mr. Stein noted that they are hearing additional requests to add or move up funding for sidewalks throughout the City and also explained why it may be prudent to increase some of the funding for the Mill River project. Mr. Stein then said the Board can make final draft adjustments during the first few meetings of January 2010.

Mr. Stein explained that the recommended Safe Debt limit this year is going to be \$40M versus the \$50M of past few years, with the message being that that we are experiencing tough economic times so the City should be more conservative.

Mrs. Fishman asked if the City received any Stimulus money from the Federal Government. Mr. Stein replied yes around \$2 million.

Mrs. Dell asked if keeping the debt limit at \$40M or below helped keep taxes down. Mr. Stein replied it does but it's over time and not direct. Mrs. Dell asked how the Planning Board's Capital Budget last year compared to this years draft projected budget. Mr. Stein replied the Board's recommendation for last year was lower.

Mr. Stein said interest rates are historically low for City Bonds, contractors are hungry and the capital budget should be viewed as an investment in city infrastructure.

Mrs. Dell stated it's the Planning Board's mission to determine, from a planning perspective what infrastructure is needed.

Mr. Stein stated he will do a rough draft of a budget message similar to previous years and have it ready before year's end and that a hearing is set for first Tuesday in February.

Zoning Board of Appeals Referrals:

ZBA 001-10, Frank Mastrone & Romona Spinelli, requesting variances of front yard setbacks, building coverage, and to allow an accessory structure to be located in a front yard in order to allow preexisting structures to remain in place on a property located at 204 Alpine Street.

Mr. Dumais briefly described the request. After a short discussion, Mrs. Dell moved to recommend approval of the application. Mrs. Fishman seconded the motion and it passed with the members present voting, 3-1. (Hill, Dell, and Fishman in favor and Tepper opposed)

ZBA 004-10, Fancisco Romero, requesting variances of building coverage, side yard (one side and both side) building setbacks and accessory structure setbacks to allow shed, deck and carport additions, already constructed, to remain in place on a property located at 90 Ridgewood Avenue in the R 7-½ district.

Mr. Dumais briefly described the request. After a short discussion, Mrs. Dell moved to recommend approval of a portion of the application. She stressed that her recommendation applied only to the carport and that the other structures should be removed. Mrs. Fishman seconded the motion and it passed unanimously with the members present voting, 4-0. (Hill, Dell, Fishman and Tepper)

ZBA 006-10, Rahul Mathur, requesting variances of front yard setbacks, side yard setbacks and building coverage in order to permit the construction of an approximately 477 s.f. addition to an existing single-family home located at 147 Fifth Street in the R 7-½ district.

Mr. Dumais briefly described the request. Mr. Tepper moved to recommend approval of the application. Mrs. Fishman seconded the motion and it passed unanimously with the members present voting, 4-0. (Hill, Dell, Fishman and Tepper)

ZBA 007-10, Henry Silverstein, requesting variance of rear yard setbacks and building coverage to permit the construction an approximately 138 s.f. addition to an existing single-family home located at 129 Dannell Drive in the R-10 district.

Mr. Dumais briefly described the request. After a short discussion, Mrs. Dell moved to recommend approval of the application. Mrs. Fishman seconded the motion and it passed unanimously with the members present voting, 4-0. (Hill, Dell, Fishman and Tepper)

There being no further business to discuss, Mr. Hill adjourned the meeting at 8:55 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,
Duane Hill, Chairman

Note: These proceedings were recorded on tape and are available for review in the Land Use Bureau located on the 7th floor of Government Center, 888 Washington Boulevard, during regular business hours.