

CITY OF DERBY
REDEVELOPMENT AGENCY
July 14, 2009 - 6:30 P.M.
DERBY CITY HALL – ALDERMANIC CHAMBERS
MINUTES

Call to order:

Chairman Joseph Bomba called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

Pledge of Allegiance:

All rose and pledged allegiance.

Roll Call:

Present: Glenn Stevens, Greg Russo, Ken Hughes and Chairman Joseph Bomba.

Absent: Michael Kelleher

Also present: Mayor Anthony Staffieri, Director of Economic Development Sheila O'Malley, and Corporation Counsel Joseph Coppola.

Approval of Minutes - May 12 2009

Motion to approve by Mr. Hughes, second by Mr. Stevens, all in favor, motion passes.

Additions, Deletions, Corrections and Adoption of Agenda:

Mr. Bomba has an addition to the agenda - Valley Council of Government & U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Assessment Funds for the City of Derby.

Motion to approve by Mr. Hughes, second by Mr. Stevens, all in favor, motion passes.

Public Portion:

Carl Yacobacci - 10 Lombardi Drive. Mr. Yacobacci read from an article published in 1927 from the Evening Sentinel on downtown Derby. He believes the story parallels today's situation in our downtown as the powers that be seem to be repeating history.

"Derby's Shipping History is now Closed as R.R. Co. Buys Dock.

During a period following the War of 1812 extensive trade was carried on between Derby and the West Indies, rum and molasses being the chief imports. Derby harbor was far more important than either Bridgeport or New Haven at the time, and the town was a trading center for towns as far north as Newtown and Mattatuck or Waterbury. Local interests, believing that Derby would get more trade if a road were completed to New Haven backed the scheme for all they were worth. When the road was opened it appeared that the judgment of the local men were poor, for the greater part of the trade went to the Elm City, which soon out-grew Derby in population and importance.

The railroad when first put through cut away most of the Derby docks and gradually froze out the shipping interests. Now that the New Haven road has got possession of the last surviving docks, Derby has no waterfront. It is with extreme reluctance that many Derby people view the passing of this property into the hands of the railroad company, for many see the closing of the docks as another step backwards for Derby and another boost for the younger but more progressive and wide awake city of Shelton.

Some optimistic Derbyites believe, however, that the railroad company may at some future time develop the dock, and operate it should the deepening of the channel to 15 feet increase steamer traffic on the river.

Mr. Yacobacci feels fields are better suited for the outskirts of towns or open spaces and downtown should be for growing businesses. He is asking the committee to look harder at the development and not by one person or company. We are in a unique position to take advantage of a special taxing district. There are local businesses that still wish to stay in downtown, himself included.

His second point is that of the agenda citing Executive Sessions agenda of negotiation, discussion, property valuation, property acquisition in downtown area. He has not been contacted by anyone from the City to sit and talk. He has contacted the State Ombudsman office to discuss this development and will continue to talk with his State Representatives and Senator.

Brian Calvert - 40 Caroline Street. Two years ago we started knocking buildings down and put barriers and blocked off the sidewalk. He has seen people everyday come up and we are very close to having an accident. There was someone with a stroller who got off the sidewalk, get on Route 34, go twenty feet and get back on the sidewalk. It is about time the City do something. He wants to go on record as having said something. This is extremely dangerous.

The Mayor said he has already been in touch with the Public Works and will be getting rid of all the jersey barriers.

John Izzo - Weichert Realtor, Orange CT and owner of multiple properties in Derby, and listing agent for Life Touch Studios. He wants to commend the administration and this commission for taking their time. Many people in the public and local businessmen have the impression the City is dragging its feet. The redevelopment by and large is out of your control with the present economy and business climate. He commends the City for not jumping at the first offer that comes across the table. Life Touch has a couple of offers on the table. The owners are willing to work with the City to get the best use of the property.

Arlene Yacobacci - 10 Lombardi Drive. Mrs. Yacobacci wanted to know how the City would fund the purchasing of properties and clean up of contamination per the Triple Play proposal. She thought Life Touch had contamination at their site. She feels the only favorable comments from the last meeting when Triple Play submitted their intentions for downtown was in favor of having fields for the City to use with no cost. People were in favor of it because we had fields to use. The soil testing has not been done in the redevelopment site to determine if it could even hold large scale buildings and a parking garage.

John Izzo said Life Touch commissioned a 30,000 Phase II environmental study and the site has been certified as clean, there is no soil contamination. They are considered a small unit generator by state code, they generate less waste.

Public portion closed at 6:43 p.m.

Valley Council of Government & U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Assessment Funds for the City of Derby

Ms. O'Malley said through the E.P.A. the Valley Council of Government has made available to the City of Derby approximately \$12,000.00 for Phase I and Phase II Environmental. We requested that for the downtown development area. A letter and a proposed agreement is going to go out to property owners in the downtown area asking if they'd like to grant access for Phase I and II. A draft letter and proposed agreement is available for the public to look at. It is an opportunity to do updated Phase I's and II's and also to secure some remediation funding for down the line if need be. The end of August is the cutoff date and if there are no responses the City forfeits the money.

Triple Play

Sheila O'Malley explained Triple Play gave the City 60 days to provide information on the tax district, access to bond counsel. Mr. Iannucci is still very interested in it and they are doing their due diligence.

Mr. Hughes feels the commission needs to look at every proposal. Mr. Bomba agreed and said every proposal will be looked at seriously.

Ms. O'Malley stated Triple Play has an understanding that this downtown piece needs to be mixed use.

Discussion of Master Plan for Downtown Development

Ms. O'Malley's office was approached by a broker for a developer (Tom Hill - Realty). They are interested in the Life Touch and Housatonic Lumber properties. They are interested in a pharmacy, grocery store, possibly a cinema, bank, affordable elderly housing etc. They would like to be part of a mixed use development working together with other components. Ms. O'Malley asked the agency to give Mr. Hill the concept of what a mixed use development.

Mr. Hill explained he is running with a pharmacy and a grocery store right now, he is two weeks away from a meeting with a movie theatre chain. He also has another development company that specializes in affordable elderly housing. They want to come in on the back side when the stores are open and a clean, friendly nice place to live. Derby does meet their requirements. The bank has indicated and will get back to him at the end of the month, he would like to buy the property privately if possible.

Ms. O'Malley will look at the Master Plan for downtown.

Executive Session

Negotiations, discussion of property valuation, acquisition in downtown area.

Ceruzzi litigation.

Motion by Mr. Stevens with a second by Mr. Hughes to go into Executive Session at 6:58 p.m. inviting the Mayor, Corporation Counsel and Sheila O'Malley, subject to adjournment, all in favor, motion passes.

Adjournment

Meeting ended at 7:35 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

*Denise Cesaroni
Recording Secretary*