

CITY OF DERBY

REDEVELOPMENT AGENCY

March 10, 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, Michael Kelleher, Ken Hughes and Chairman Joseph Bomba.

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

**Additions, Deletions, Corrections and Adoption of Agenda:**

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

**Public Portion:**

Carl Yaccobacci - 10 Lombardi Drive. He wanted to know if there will be an opportunity to speak after the presentation. Mr. Bomba said there will not be that type of a presentation this evening. In the near future after tonight's discussion there will be a public hearing and public input given at that time.

Carmen DiCenso - 7 Jeanetti Drive. He knows kids and sports in Derby, having been involved in it for most of his life. A sports complex is a tremendous idea and would love to see it happen. There is a need for it, need for local teams in town, we have no gym space, no field space - Ryan Field is a disaster.

Carl Yaccobacci said he does not know the scope of the project, but a baseball field and things of that nature, if that's what it is going to be, is not appropriate for the downtown area. The DOT property would be a better location. Cars going in and out dropping off kids would not be a good idea. Downtown should be more of a business and less of a recreation space.

John Izzo - 12 Shortell Drive Ansonia. He is the listing agent for the Life Touch property and owns several rental properties in Derby. He read about the possibility of a sports complex and he concurs with Carmen as this would be a fabulous asset to the City of Derby. When you drive down the River Road in Shelton you see a very successful sports complex. He has been taking his kids there for the past five years. The place is a major attraction and people come from all over Fairfield county. He thinks there is plenty of support from the lower Naugatuck Valley that would

support such a facility. A draw would be to add a restaurant component and a mixed use of residential and commercial. He would hope that a few of the local businesses in that district would work with this developer so he can demonstrate the wherewithal that he can carry out a project like this. Mr. Izzo's client has asked the he attend this meeting as well because he is interested in the project.

Chantal Gerckens - Vice President of the Derby Soccer program. Witek Park is a beautiful park, but space is still an issue. This could be a great thing for Derby.

Anita Duggato Coscia - 69 Elizabeth Street. She is not sure if this project is privately owned or part of a club. The current karate club next to Archie Moore's has a lot of traffic. She feels there would be a better location for a sports complex. She spoke with the recreational director in Trumbull who had a gym there and it went out of business.

Arlene Yaccobacci - 10 Lombardi Drive. She is not against the project but she is against where it is going. The DOT property is better suited for this project. If you drive to Shelton on the River Road you see parking all along the road. She thought downtown was to be redeveloped for residential and retail. We should not limit ourselves to a sports complex. We are supposed to be taking advantage of the river.

Mr. Dan Waleski, 21 Elm Street. He wanted to know if a market survey has been done in regard to that property as to what would be most suitable, profitable and practical. There is an enormous potential recreational wise as well as business wise. It might be advisable to talk to some experts for leads or suggestions as to what might be done. He would like to see some statistics from experts and give the public an educated opportunity to properly assess the area.

Public Portion closed.

**Approve Addition of Jan 12, 2010 to the Adoption of Meeting Schedule 2009**

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

**Approval of minutes -**

February 10, 2009 Regular Meeting – **motion** to accept the minutes by Mr. Russo, second by Mr. Stevens, all in favor, motion passes.

**Discussion of bids**

Ms. O'Malley addressed the agency. The City put out a request for qualifications and were due back on March 3 2009. There were 22 developers that picked up packages. There was discussion with a number of developers who were interested and excited about various mixed use projects.

Initially the RFQ's were due back in November. However, given the economic climate things changed dramatically. The deadline was extended to March 3 2009. Some of the developers were more hesitant in moving in this kind of climate.

The City did receive a letter of intent from the Salce Companies which was handed out to the agency. It is an approximate 80,000 square foot indoor sports complex and approximately 100,000 square feet of retail, commercial, possibly residential use.

The DOT site at its widest point is 267 feet and would not suffice for an indoor sports complex.

The proposed area has a greenway and O'Sullivan's Island which we hope to turn into a field, thereby playing on the river, not so much from a retail perspective but from a recreational perspective. She maintains the letter of intent points to a development that is quite similar from the other developers ideas. There is no master development plan, but somewhere down the line with the past developer, the City determined they would like to see mixed use. She maintains this is a letter of intent for mixed use. She is asking the agency to allow the City to continue to talk to the developer and put something together to bring back to the agency.

There were examples presented of an indoor bubble complex, however it is very preliminary. It is a letter of intent.

There was only one response from the 22 developers.

Attorney Coppola had advised Ms. O'Malley not to withdraw or cancel the opening of the bid when the market changed. This response is not a direct bid it is a letter of intent to bid.

**For the record** - Mr. Hughes read the concept of the project:

The complex will consist of various sports activities including baseball, football, basketball, swimming pool, ice skating rink, lacrosse, soccer etc...This facility will be used all year long with indoor and outdoor fields. The outdoor fields will consist of 4 to 6 fields and the indoor complex would be around 80,000 sq ft in conjunction with the sports complex, we would also be able to accommodate approximately 100,00 sq ft of commercial and residential space with an attached parking garage.

There was a market study done in Stratford. It can draw not only Connecticut but outside Connecticut.

Professional teams have built these type of complexes.

The concept and the letter of intent was available for the public. Mr. Bomba stated this will be a transparent effort on the City's part.

Mr. Iannucci of Salce Companies said there is an adequate number of acres and the route 8 corridor is an asset.

Mr. Iannucci would have to sit with the City to expand on the 100,000 sq ft of commercial and residential use.

Attorney Coppola said the developer would need data and square footage along with the dimensions of O'Sullivan's Island. O'Sullivan's Island can only be used for recreational purposes for the City.

Attorney Coppola said there are two choices tonight. One is to reject the offer as not complying with the RFQ and the other is to direct staff (Sheila, Atty Coppola, Building Department) to further what the letter of intent is requesting and then a presentation can be held for the agency.

Attorney Coppola said the bidding is over. Anyone can approach the City for the same opportunity.

Mr. Iannucci said Derby residents will have special considerations. Attorney Coppola said if there is something built on O'Sullivan's Island which is City owned property, there will have to be a contingency in place.

Mr. Kelleher thinks the City should give the information to the developer that they need.

Mr. Stevens feels they need to be open-minded.

Mr. Kelleher does not want to say no to something they don't know really anything about.

Mr. Russo said the letter of intent is outside the scope of the request. Would there be an opportunity or chance for some of the other developers to piggy back the project as far as the commercial/retail/office with this project so they each have a piece?

Ms. O'Malley said many of the developers have asked and she has offered to share the list of developers for partnering.

**Discussion and possible action regarding Downtown project, bid acceptance or rejection**

**Motion** to direct staff (Mayor, Sheila O'Malley, Corporation Counsel Joseph Coppola) to provide information requested by this group, direction to discuss a project once they receive the requested data and then to make a presentation to this agency by Mr. Kelleher **discussion:** would this information be made public, yes, second by Mr. Russo, **discussion:** would there be a timeline. Attorney Coppola said when they expand Route 34 with how far are they expanding....we don't know. But we do know the City has every right to attend those meetings and set forth what we would like. Another example is the taxing district and how we can use it. If you build a parking garage with one car space you can't use it, but at what number can you use it? Ms. O'Malley said two months would be acceptable to get the information requested. Ms. O'Malley reiterated the letter of intent is non-binding. All it does is say let's begin the due diligence process.

**Ammend the motion:** motion to direct staff (Mayor, Sheila O'Malley, Corporation Counsel Joseph Coppola) to provide information requested by this group, direction to discuss a project once they receive the requested data and then to make a presentation to this agency and add a 60 day time period for staff to provide the information to the concerned party by Mr. Stevens, second by Mr. Russo, all in favor, motion carried.

Mr. Bomba feels this is a good thing for the City to take a look at what this developer has to offer to the City. The City has waited many, many years for someone to take interest in our downtown and he believes this company is more than deserving of a chance to help Derby right our wrong of a downtown.

**Executive Session - Status of litigation regarding Downtown redevelopment project - with no action to be taken**

Motion to go into Executive Session at 7:27 p.m. and invite Mayor Anthony Staffieri, Corporation Counsel Joseph Coppola and Director of Economic Development Sheila O'Malley, subject to adjournment by Mr. Stevens, second by Mr. Kelleher, all in favor, motion carries.

- a. Status of litigation regarding Downtown redevelopment project

**Adjournment** Meeting ended at 7:56 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

*Denise Cesaroni*  
Recording Secretary

These minutes are subject to the approval of the Redevelopment Agency at their next regularly scheduled meeting.