

**CITY OF BRIDGEPORT  
ECONOMIC AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT  
AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE  
SPECIAL MEETING  
July 12, 2012**

**ATTENDANCE:** Council Member M. Brantley, Co-Chair; Council Member L. Martinez, Co-Chair; Council Member W. Blunt; Council Member M. Lyons; Council Member L. Colon

**ALSO:** Council Member S. Brannelly; Council Member A. DePara

**OTHERS:** R. Pacacha, Asst. City Attorney; D. Kooris, Dir. OPED; P. Kuchma

A tour of the properties re: item #94-11 was conducted prior to the start of the meeting.

**CALL TO ORDER**

Co-Chair Brantley called the meeting to order at 6:40 p.m. A quorum was present.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES FOR MAY 2, 2012,  
MAY 3, 2012, AND MAY 23, 2012**

**\*\*COUNCIL MEMBER MARTINEZ MOVED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF MAY 2, 2012  
\*\*COUNCIL MEMBER LYONS SECONDED  
\*\*THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

**\*\*COUNCIL MEMBER COLON MOVED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF MAY 3, 2012  
\*\*COUNCIL MEMBER MARTINEZ SECONDED  
\*\*THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

**\*\*COUNCIL MEMBER COLON MOVED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF  
MAY 23, 2012**

**\*\*COUNCIL MEMBER LYONS SECONDED**

**\*\*THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

**92-11 Grant Submission re: 2012-2013 Preventive Health and Health Services Block  
Grant for Bridgeport Health and Nutrition Education**

No one in attendance to present.

**\*\*COUNCIL MEMBER LYONS MADE A MOTION TO TABLE THIS ITEM.**

**\*\*COUNCIL MEMBER COLON SECONDED.**

**\*\*THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**95-11 Grant Submission re: State of CT DECD – City Canvass Grant Program.**

No one in attendance to present.

**\*\*COUNCIL MEMBER LYONS MADE A MOTION TO TABLE THIS ITEM.**

**\*\*COUNCIL MEMBER COLON SECONDED.**

**\*\*THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**96-11 Grant Submission re: State Department of Social Services for 2012-2013  
Retired Senior Volunteer Program.**

No one in attendance to present.

**\*\*COUNCIL MEMBER COLON MADE A MOTION TO TABLE THIS ITEM.**

**\*\*COUNCIL MEMBER LYONS SECONDED.**

**\*\*THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**94-11 Proposal to Exchange Certain Properties with Kuchma Corporation located  
at: 263 Golden Hill Street (Eisenhower Senior Center and Cabaret Theatre), 285  
Golden Hill Street (landscape rest area), 307 Golden Hill Street (former American  
Legion Hall) and 1208 Broad Street (vacant lot corner Elm St.).**

Mr. Kuchma, Principal of Kuchma Properties came forward to present the proposal. He thanked the Committee for their time and attendance at the tour earlier this evening and he hoped that it helped further explain the proposal. He wishes to share as much information as possible this evening and answer all questions. He referenced a packet he

furnished to all the attendees and said the drawings he was using in his presentation were the same ones in the packet. The buildings/lots involved in the proposal are 263 Golden Hill St., 285 Golden Hill St., and 1208 Broad St., all of which are owned by the City; and 307 Golden Hill St. which is owned by Kuchma Corp.

He is proposing building 2 apartment buildings; at 1208 Broad St. and 285 Golden Hill St. He stated that, even with the apartment buildings that currently exist; we still don't have a density to support businesses that residents and workers desire. Two things that people are looking for and a market and a fitness club. He would like to make as many of these available to the residents, particularly a fitness club. The Eisenhower Center was built in 1941 as a YWCA with a pool, basketball courts, and residential spaces on the top floor.

His proposal will:

1. Give the senior's a better facility than they have now – move to the renovated former American Legion Hall. Allows Kuchma to turn the former Sr. Center into a fitness center. Seniors will be able to use the pool and exercise facility.
2. The Broad Street stairway will be improved, adding a restaurant and landscaping improvements.
3. Allow Cabaret Theater to continue and improve their facility. He said he does not ever want that not to be a theater. Top floor could be residential space for Cabaret performers if they wish.

Council Member Lyons clarified the use of the residential space on the top floor.

Council Member Brannelly asked if the city would be responsible for the upkeep of the additional landscaping of the stairway. Mr. Kooris said he foresaw a partnership between the City and DSSD to maintain that area.

Ms. Brannelly asked if Mr. Kuchma will subcontract the Gym to someone. Mr. Kuchma said he would rent it out to someone to manage while maintaining services for the senior's. Details will need to be worked out.

Ms. Brantley said the seniors are concerned that they will have access to the pool and facilities. Can Mr. Kuchma guarantee they will be able to use the pool going forward? Mr. Kuchma said the current building is in a precarious situation. There is no guarantee that the City can keep it open in perpetuity. This arrangement allows them to continue in a facility better than they have right now

Atty. Pacacha said guarantees for the senior's are one of the essential elements in the agreement to be entered in to with Mr. Kuchma; that guarantees are in place in the event that the club closed up, that there are provisions for a replacement facility. Guaranteeing

Bridgeport Senior's the right to use the club is critical and an essential part of the agreement.

Ms. Lyons said she was worried about losing open space, and asked if the seating area would move to the other side of the street, in the park behind City Hall. Mr. Kooris said the idea is to offset the loss of current open spaces by improving adjacent open spaces, incrementally improving other areas by engaging the community for ideas.

Mr. Blunt said we should try to utilize open space efficiently with input from the community. Mr. Kuchma said increasing density while retaining open space is not realistic.

Ms. Brannelly asked if there has been consideration for a green roof on bldg. #1208. Mr. Kuchma said that is a relatively small roof with limited access, but they will look at all concepts and possibilities as they move forward with plans should the City agree to the proposal.

Mr. DePara said taking into consideration the supplanting and improvements of the Senior Center and other improvements shown in the plan he asked Mr. Kooris if this is the best deal for the City. Mr. Kooris replied yes, with improvements to public land, and increased density adding tax revenue. He stated that given the overall strategy for downtown this is the most intense use of this site that is appropriate.

Mr. DePara asked if Mr. Kuchma will be coming back to the City Council for tax relief. Mr. Kuchma replied they will be looking for nothing apart from the Federal Enterprise Rights as exists in the City ordinances. Mr. Kuchma then discussed impact on taxes relative to the current assessments of the city owned properties, which he felt are somewhat high, and bringing them more in line with current values.

Mr. DePara said Mr. Kuchma's presentation has been thorough but he does have some concerns. This is a good starting point but felt that a better deal for the City can be made. He asked if there has been an agreement on the purchase price for the 2 properties included in the proposal. Mr. Kuchma stated that the agreement is outlined in the packet provided to the City Council.

Atty. Pacacha stated that on June 12 he furnished a second letter with a more developed concept of the project along with a letter of intent that elaborated more on the structure of the agreement to the City Clerk's office for distribution to all City Council members. Copies were provided to those in attendance.

Mr. DePara said he would review the most current information. He asked if there is an agreement of the current property values that are being considered for exchange.

**\*\*COUNCIL MEMBER LYONS MADE A MOTION TO ENTER 94-11- Exhibit 1 INTO THE RECORD.**

**\*\*COUNCIL MEMBER MARTINEZ SECONDED.**

**\*\*THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Mr. DePara asked Mr. Kuchma to review Section 5, page 3- Phasing of Property Transfer. Mr. Kooris and Mr. Kuchma followed with the explanation. Note: the City will replace the roof and perform remediation on the Eisenhower Center prior to the transfer.

Mr. DePara asked Mr. Kuchma to review Section 5, page 3- Phasing of Property Transfer. Mr. Kooris and Mr. Kuchma followed with the explanation.

Mr. Blunt said he believed this was a well thought out plan, Mr. Kuchma has a proven track record and he is invested in and has had positive results in Bridgeport and has a vision for this area. He fully supports this project.

Ms. Brannelly agreed and asked to get back to the phase-in discussion so they can completely understand the agreement.

Mr. Kooris said:

- Developer begins improvements on American Legion
- City remediates and replaces roof on Eisenhower Center
- City transfers control to Developer on 1208 – city puts a mortgage on American Legion (307) equal to value of 1208
- When 1208 completed developer gets ownership
- When developer makes additional improvements to 307 City adds 2<sup>nd</sup> mortgage
- When 307 is complete and the seniors move in City takes ownership and owe nothing.

Ms. Brannelly asked when Eisenhower construction starts and will pool be unavailable? Mr. Kuchma said access to the pool, stairwell, and locker rooms will be available, perhaps under a somewhat limited schedule. Ms. Brannelly, thinking operationally, asked how you keep a building under construction open. Mr. Kuchma said the expectation is that this will be accomplished; there is an obligation to Cabaret as well to keep all common areas available.

Ms. Brannelly asked who is responsible when our seniors are in your building, who is responsible to maintain the pool, etc. Mr. Kuchma said all these details need to be addressed contractually. Ms. Brantley said Rose Hoyt is in agreement with this plan. Mr. Kuchma said he understands that all of these details – updating the heating system,

any asbestos remediation - need to be addressed in a reasonable fashion, just as they would if the City was doing the needed updates.

Atty. Pacacha said to address the operational issues language can be added to the agreement to accommodate these concerns: The City will work with the developer and Senior Center not to unreasonably disrupt their programs while addressing the needed maintenance, and address responsibilities and the shifting of responsibilities. He suggested adding language to tonight's motion would give authorization to incorporate it in to the final agreement.

Mr. Kuchma added that unforeseen circumstances could interrupt the access. Mr. Pacacha will address that issue as well in the proposed language for tonight's motion.

Ms. Martinez asked if construction on 285 will interfere with 307 daily activities. Mr. Kuchma replied no. Mr. DePara asked how much money the City will get for 1208. Mr. Kooris replied 0 cash transfer. Mr. DePara asked the same question for 285, and Mr. Kooris replied 0 cash transfer.

Mr. DePara asked how many square feet in 1208, reply was about 4,200 sq. ft., and same question for 285, reply was about 9,000 sq. ft. Mr. DePara stated we are getting 1 building in exchange for 3, and he felt the City should be getting more for the swap. Mr. Kooris suggested it is like getting \$1.3 Million and then turning around and spending it on a much improved Senior Center.

Ms. Lyons said she is usually cautious in these instances but sees that we are addressing open space, the seniors get a new center and still have use of the pool, the Cabaret gets improved, you are adding a restaurant, the walkway will be redone, all of which will contribute to the attractiveness of downtown. She did say she had concerns before the explanation and information presented tonight, and that Mr. Kuchma has a good track record with his projects. She restated the major concerns of the constituents are the Senior Center, Cabaret Theater and open space.

Mr. Kuchma noted that the value of the Sr. Center/Cabaret Bldg. is influenced by the fact that the Cabaret pays only \$300 a month rent.

Ms. Brantley asked Mr. Pacacha to read in to the record the proposed language he drafted to be made part of the motion this evening, and she thanked Mr. Kuchma for taking on this project and supporting the future of the Cabaret Theater.

Mr. Pacacha offered the following language as an amendment to tonight's motion "The City, the Developer and representatives of the Senior Center will work together in the best interests of Bridgeport Seniors to use every reasonable effort to continue the Seniors' use of the Eisenhower Center recreation facilities and pool without unreasonable

interruption, except for instances where environmental remediation, public health and safety concerns arise, or other unanticipated factors arise in which case the City and the Developer will work cooperatively to ensure that the Seniors' use of the Eisenhower facilities is restored at the earliest possible time, and the parties will address operational responsibility and liability during various phases of the Eisenhower Center Renovations.

The City and the Developer agree to work cooperatively with representatives of the Cabaret Theater to enter into an amendment to the Cabaret Theater lease that extends its term of years and creates other incentives designed to enable it to present more events in the future and to become an important and essential element of the planned development and enhancements to the area”.

Ms. Brannelly asked if the agreements are not finalized would this approval tonight be null and void. Atty. Mr. Pacacha said the City Attorney's office would have to come back to this committee and say it could not accomplish what the committee approved tonight.

Atty. Mr. Pacacha said the committee tonight will vote on a Letter of Intent to allow the City the ability to negotiate and enter into a final Land Disposition Agreement that is consistent with what you approved tonight.

**\*\*COUNCIL MEMBER LYONS MADE A MOTION TO APPROVE ITEM 94-11 PROPOSAL TO EXCHANGE CERTAIN PROPERTIES WITH KUCHMA CORPORATION AMENDED TO INCLUDE THE FOLLOWING LANGUAGE:**

**The City, the Developer and representatives of the Senior Center will work together in the best interests of Bridgeport Seniors to use every reasonable effort to continue the Seniors' use of the Eisenhower Center recreation facilities and pool without unreasonable interruption, except for instances where environmental remediation, public health and safety concerns arise, or other unanticipated factors arise in which case the City and the Developer will work cooperatively to ensure that the Seniors' use of the Eisenhower facilities is restored at the earliest possible time, and the parties will address operational responsibility and liability during various phases of the Eisenhower Center Renovations.**

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**\*\*COUNCIL MEMBER MARTINEZ SECONDED  
\*\*THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

**\*\*COUNCIL MEMBER LYONS MADE A MOTION TO ADJOURN  
\*\*COUNCIL MEMBER BLUNT SECONDED  
\*\*THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

Meeting was adjourned at 8:12 p.m.

Jill Kuzmich  
Telesco Secretarial Services