

CITY OF BRIDGEPORT
ECONOMIC and COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT and ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

MONDAY, MAY 17, 2011

6:00 P.M.

ATTENDANCE: Council members: dePara; Co-chair, A. Ayala, Brantley, Martinez

NON-COMMITTEE: Council members: Brannelly, M. McCarthy

CITY STAFF: D. Coleman, OPED; A. McGoldrick, Central Grants; T. Grabarz, Public Facilities

Co-chair dePara called the meeting to order at 6:21 pm.

He stated that the agenda would be taken out of order to address the grants requests first.

65-10 Grant Submission: re: 2011-2012 Dial-A-Ride Program.

Ms. McGoldrick requested to table the item to obtain additional information from the State of Connecticut about the actual allocation they expect to receive.

**** COUNCIL MEMBER A. AYALA MOVED TO TABLE**
**** COUNCIL MEMBER MARTINEZ SECONDED**
**** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

73-10 Grant Submission: re: 2011 Neighborhood Assistance Act.

Ms. McGoldrick handed out information pertaining to the item

She stated that the Dept. of Revenue contacts them each spring with a list of qualifying organizations. There is no money involved, but the city council needs to approve the list of organizations and the business community is notified by the agencies to donate and receive a tax credit. They are required to legally advertise the grant and whoever wants City of Bridgeport

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to participate can refer to the list. Once it's approved at the council and state level, the organization will then receive the tax credit.

Council member Brantley asked if the organizations listed were asking for the amounts that were indicated. Ms. McGoldrick said yes.

Council member Martinez questioned how people find out about the money that is available. Ms. McGoldrick said the agencies listed initiate the fundraising effort to the business community and the business receives a 60% tax credit.

Council member Brantley asked who participated in the program. Ms. McGoldrick said the participants are LLC type businesses.

Don Coleman added that they're mostly businesses that have a certain amount to offset.

**** COUNCIL MEMBER BRANTLEY MOVED TO APPROVE**
**** COUNCIL MEMBER MARTINEZ SECONDED**
**** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**
***Consent calendar**

76-10 Grant Submission: re: State of Connecticut OPM – 2011 Municipal Plan of Conservation and Development (POCD) Grant Program.

Ms. McGoldrick updated that a few years ago, the state allocated dollars for a municipal plan for development, but the program never made it to the bond agenda. It finally made it to the bond agenda a couple of years ago and they were told they had \$12k to complete the plan. So they are looking to do additional mapping for city boundaries and the money can also be used to reimburse the city for the master plan. However, OPED is recommending that the funds be used for mapping.

Co-chair dePara asked if the funds could also be used for the parks master plan. Ms. McGoldrick said she thought it could be.

Council member M. McCarthy asked if the money could also go back into the general fund. Ms. McGoldrick said it could.

**** COUNCIL MEMBER BRANTLEY MOVED TO APPROVE**
**** COUNCIL MEMBER A. AYALA SECONDED**
**** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**
***Consent calendar**

77-10 Grant Submission: re: State of Connecticut DEP – 2011 Funding for the Development of Public Open Space along the Pequonnock River and for the Improvement of Washington Park.

Ms. McGoldrick said the state earmarked \$1 million to go towards improvements in Washington Park and for Knowlton Park. It will be a 70/30 split depending on how the funds are used.

Ted Grabarz, of Public Facilities stated that the item came from the Governor as a result of the tornado damage to address the areas that were hardest hit. He explained that right now, they were looking to upgrade Washington Park, fix the gazebo and make other improvements.

Steve Laden added that they will improve the gazebo, repair the fence, repair the sidewalk, put up signage and improve the bathrooms.

Council member A. Ayala asked when was the last time the bathrooms were open. He noted that when he attended tournaments and games in the past; the bathrooms weren't functional. Mr. Laden said they aren't currently functional due to some problems that occurred, so they closed them. However, they are looking to restore them.

Council member A. Ayala asked what they could do as a council to assure park policing to enforce the park rules. Mr. Grabarz suggested that he contact the Bridgeport Police Department to address that issue. He noted that area wasn't under the Public Facilities control.

Council member Martinez asked when the bathrooms would be fixed, noting that summer was coming. Mr. Grabarz said they should begin repairs within the next couple of weeks.

Council member Martinez said she spoke to someone about assigning a summer worker. She asked that Mr. Grabarz follow up on the request. Mr. Grabarz acknowledged that he would.

Co-chair dePara questioned if the park improvements would be done for the summer season. Mr. Grabarz said yes.

**** COUNCIL MEMBER BRANTLEY MOVED TO APPROVE
** COUNCIL MEMBER MARTINEZ SECONDED**

Council member Brannelly asked about the allocation split. Mr. Grabarz said the split will be 75% for Washington Park and 25% for Knowlton Park - *he passed around a sketch to show the new schemes that were incorporated into one.*

Mr. Grabarz explained that they will demolish a couple of the buildings and develop a waterfront park. They will start at 405 Knowlton Street for phase-I and create a new entrance. He said they will start to bring in fill material within the next month. The total amount of 75% will go towards the first phase-I to get the project underway.

Council member Martinez asked what was planned to deter vehicles from going through the property. Mr. Grabarz said they were working on a fence line at the street line to prevent any cars from entering as a safety measure.

Council member A. Ayala asked what the park will entail. Mr. Grabarz pointed out the park closest to the street located near Bridgeport Paving, will have a basketball court and there will be a central entrance at Arctic Street. There will also be access along the waterfront.

**** COUNCIL MEMBER A. AYALA MOVED TO APPROVE**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER BRANTLEY SECONDED**

**** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

***Consent calendar**

78-10 Grant Submission: re: U.S. Department of Transportation, Federal Highway Administration Ferry Boat Discretionary Grant.

Mr. Grabarz stated that this item had to do with the work they are doing at Pleasure Beach. The \$1.9 million grant was given as a federal earmark and they needed approval to continue forward. For any transportation work related to Pleasure Beach, there was a discussion as to what they could use the money for and it was determined it would be used for water taxis and a floating dock that will be attached to the fishing pier at the end of Central Avenue. They are also fixing up the piers at Pleasure Beach and they will construct a visitor's center. They are working on the final approval to use the money. He stated that there is also a \$500k match required that has been defined in the capital budget. Co-chair dePara asked what line item the money was coming from in the capital budget. Mr. Grabarz said he thought it was coming from a parks related fund. Council member Brannelly researched her budget information to try to find the information.

Co-chair dePara called for a recess at 6:50 pm to give Council member Brannelly a few minutes to locate the information. Council member Brannelly got Tom Sherwood on speaker phone to address the capital budget line item question.

Co-chair dePara reconvened the meeting at 6:52 pm.

Mr. Sherwood addressed the committee via speaker phone. He said the money was in the capital plan under a designated accessibility account for Pleasure Beach. \$1.2 million has been earmarked for that purpose and his department is just waiting for approval to release the funds. He noted that information was outlined in the budget report with all the project codes submitted. **He clarified the amount is identified in the capital budget under line item #1749 in the amount of \$1.222 million.**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER BRANTLEY MOVED TO APPROVE
** COUNCIL MEMBER MARTINEZ SECONDED**

Council member A. Ayala asked if there will be a cost to the public to ride the water taxi. Mr. Grabarz said there wouldn't be a fee; the rides will be given based on residency.

Council member A. Ayala asked if any safety measures were planned to protect the vehicles that will be parked when people ride the water taxi. Mr. Grabarz said there will be a secure parking lot constructed for safety.

**** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

***Consent calendar**

85-10 Communication from Central Grants and Community Development re Grant Submission: 2011 DPH Medical Reserve Corps Capability Building Grant

Co-chair dePara recalled that item 85-10 was referred back to committee during the city council meeting last night. He stated that the item needed to be added to the agenda.

**** COUNCIL MEMBER BRANTLEY MOVED TO ADD THE ITEM TO THE AGENDA 85-10 Communication from Central Grants and Community Development re Grant Submission: 2011 DPH Medical Reserve Corps Capability Building Grant**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER MARTINEZ SECONDED**

**** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

Ms. McGoldrick offered some brief details about the item. She stated the item involved a \$15k grant, no city match from the State Department of Public Health to train for a Medical Reserve Corp of Volunteers to conduct training and outreach. And they are looking to do this over the course of the year. She explained the urgency was that they have to spend the funds by Jun30th, noting that the grant year was changed from August 2011 to August 2012; the program will begin on August 1, 2011. They are currently recruiting volunteers and working with Homeland Security and Scott Appleby to prepare for any emergency that may occur.

Council member M. McCarthy said the program involves disaster preparedness to City of Bridgeport

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provide support during an emergency, such as a tornado etc.

Council member Martinez asked who would conduct the volunteer training. Ms. McGoldrick said it would be conducted by Region-I, the Homeland Security team and they will contract out to a service to do the training with citizen volunteers.

Council member Martinez commented that many in the Latino community are concerned about what to do in case of an emergency. She relayed that she would be meeting with the health director on Wednesday and she will mention the details of this item to her.

**** COUNCIL MEMBER BRANTLEY MOVED TO APPROVE**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER MARTINEZ SECONDED**

**** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

***Consent calendar**

66-10 Disposition of 60 Circular Avenue; Offer to purchase from Brennan's Shebeen Irish Bar and Grill

Mr. Coleman briefed the committee about the property located on Fairfield Avenue. He stated there was a paved lot at the corner of Fairfield Avenue and Circular Avenue. The property was acquired by foreclosure during spring 2010 and it was appraised at \$75k, it was a court ordered foreclosure by auction. The city bid the value of the tax in arrears at \$30k and thereafter; they received two offers by an abutting owner and a neighboring owner: Tom Smith, the owner of the adjacent property submitted an offer to buy the property for \$20k and Mr. Brennan offered to buy the property for \$30k for the same lot. Max Perez conferred with him on the offer and it was suggested that the property be appraised. The appraisal came in at \$34k and it was determined that they would go with the \$30k offer from Mr. Brennan. The annual taxes on the property are \$4,700.00; so they will put the property back on the tax role at the appraised value.

Council member Brannelly said she has been working with Max Perez for the last couple of months. The matter was researched to make sure there weren't any problems with the condominium and the end result will be putting the property back on the tax role. It was felt that to some extent, they will achieve the same effect; because due to the businesses nearby, the matter if there not being any municipal parking shouldn't be an issue. However, they will work on constructing a crosswalk, since the site is in the middle of the block.

Council member M. McCarthy echoed his full support for the plan. He mentioned that the abutter Mr. Smith was at the auction and he tried to talk Mr. Brennan out of bidding on the property. He emphasized that Mr. Smith had ample use of the property and he

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never maintained it. Overall, he felt the plan would be a way to have a safer and more aesthetically pleasing property.

Co-chair dePara asked if the proposed purchaser planned to do any site improvements. Mr. Coleman said yes, any improvements will be subject to zoning compliance as far as landscaping. He will also be required to submit a financial plan for the improvements. He intends to pave the lot and do some landscaping that will cost roughly \$20,000. He noted that he plans to have a discussion with Mr. Brennan prior to the closing.

Co-chair dePara asked about plans for lighting, to avoid vagrancy to the vehicles. Mr. Coleman said lighting could be included in the proposal.

Council member Brantley stated it was a good idea for Mr. Brennan to purchase the property since he made a higher offer than Mr. Smith. She asked if Mr. Smith was still interested in purchasing another property. Mr. Coleman said he didn't think so.

Council member M. McCarthy reiterated that Mr. Smith had ample time to clean up the lot, but he never made an attempt to do that.

Co-chair dePara asked how much the taxes were on the parcel. Mr. Coleman said the total appraisal value for the 2007 assessment was \$115k. The lot was assessed as a parking lot attached to a condominium.

Co-chair dePara asked if the new appraisal would change the inherent value of the property. Mr. Coleman said yes, but it's up to Mr. Brennan to address that matter with the Tax Assessor. He stated the taxes on the property would amount to \$4,600 per year.

**** COUNCIL MEMBER BRANTLEY MOVED TO APPROVE**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER MARTINEZ SECONDED**

**** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

***Consent calendar**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER BRANTLEY MOVED TO SCHEDULE A PUBLIC HEARING PRIOR TO THE NEXT CITY COUNCIL MEETING**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER A. AYALA SECONDED**

**** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

Approval of Public Hearing Minutes of March 22, 2011.

Approval of Public Hearing Minutes of March 23, 2011.

Approval of Public Hearing Minutes of March 24, 2011.

Approval of Committee Minutes of April 12, 2011 (Special Meeting).

Approval of Committee Minutes of April 19, 2011.

**Co-chair dePara stated that the minutes needed to be tabled, because there were some amendments to be made.*

ADJOURNMENT

**** COUNCIL MEMBER A. AYALA MOVED TO ADJOURN
** COUNCIL BRANTLEY SECONDED
** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

The meeting adjourned at 7:25 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Diane Graham
Telesco Secretarial Services

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