

CITY OF BRIDGEPORT
ECONOMIC and COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT and ENVIRONMENT

COMMITTEE

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 16, 2012

6:00 PM

ATTENDANCE: Council members: Brantley; Co-chair, Martinez; Co-Chair, Lyons, M. McCarthy

NON-COMMITTEE: Council members: Brannelly, dePara, Olson

OTHER(s): A. Kabel, Assistant CAO; R. Pacacha, Associate City Attorney; D. Kooris, Director, OPED; B. Coleman, OPED; M. Perez, OPED; A. McGoldrick, Director Central Grants; Kristin Dubay-Horton, Director Health Department; Tina Baptiste

REPRESENTATIVES: Jan Bimmerman, Jay Haverson, Tim Schipper,
for (Item 151-11) Chris Schipper

Co-chair Brantley called the meeting to order at 6:27 pm.

Approval of Committee Minutes of September 17, 2012 (Special Meeting).

** COUNCIL MEMBER McCARTHY MOVED TO ACCEPT THE MINUTES
** COUNCIL MEMBER LYONS SECONDED
** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY

Approval of Committee Minutes of September 18, 2012.

** COUNCIL MEMBER McCARTHY MOVED TO ACCEPT THE MINUTES
** COUNCIL MEMBER LYONS SECONDED

**** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

Co-chair Brantley stated that the agenda would be taken out of order.

148-11 Grant Submission: re State Department of Public Health for 2012-2013 Per Capita Grant.

Ms. McGoldrick stated that this was a grant from the State Department of Public Health. It involves an annual per capita grant to support the city's health department in various core areas. The funding amount is \$170,338 and there is no city match. The areas funded consist of two data coordinators, salaries for two employees, office supplies, health messaging, media public outreach and associated materials and equipment (portable printers and computers). A portion of the funding will be used for the match related to the Harlem Children's Zone Project Planning grant and \$30k will be used as a match.

Council member Lyons asked about the two data coordinators salary. Ms. McGoldrick explained that each salary is \$37,531 that became effective July 1, 2012 through June 30, 2013. Ms. McGoldrick added that the two data coordinators are two new hires.

Council member McCarthy asked if they could take the grant money and apply it towards the matching funds for another grant. Ms. McGoldrick replied yes.

Co-chair Martinez asked where the two data coordinators would be housed. Ms. McGoldrick said they would work out of the health department located on East Main Street and they will be supervised by Iris Molina. She noted that they will return before the committee every year with a new budget.

Co-chair Brantley asked the type of work that the data coordinators would conduct. Ms. McGoldrick said they will work on reporting to agencies that fund other programs, as well as doing regular data entry duties. She mentioned that they were hired by Human Resources.

Co-chair Brantley requested that Ms. McGoldrick submit any new hire names to the committee in the future.

**** COUNCIL MEMBER LYONS MOVED TO APPROVE
** COUNCIL MEMBER McCARTHY SECONDED
** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

*Consent calendar

150-11 Disposition of City Owned Property, 2836 Fairfield Avenue, Black Rock Bank & Trust.

Max Perez and Bill Coleman presented the item to the committee - *a rendering of the property was distributed.*

Mr. Coleman referred to the rendering of the property and oriented the committee to the property. He explained that there was an offer from Niall O'Neil to pay \$300k for the property and he put \$15k down leaving a balance of \$280k; he noted that the closing will be in thirty days. He stated that the property will have a restaurant and offices upstairs. The item was approved for an 8-24 referral and he said a public hearing wasn't required. Mr. Perez stated that a public hearing was conducted last time the item was before the committee approximately two years ago. Council member McCarthy clarified that that public hearing was held to dispose of the property and the terms have changed since then that will be more favorable to the city.

Co-chair Martinez asked for more information about the property. She questioned if the driveway will be left open. Mr. Coleman said the driveway wouldn't change.

Mr. O'Neil explained that it would be an upscale restaurant with office space upstairs. And there will be an outdoor café area.

Council member Lyons asked where the outdoor café area would be. Mr. O'Neil pointed out the area on the rendering. Council member Lyons commented that she was familiar with the The Field Restaurant. She said it has been an asset in Black Rock and it felt nice to have a good business owner in the city.

Council member Brannelly stated that she was in full support of the proposal. She expressed that the building is right in the epicenter of the retail area and it has been unused and underused for years with businesses that haven't worked out. She further relayed that the building is currently in bad shape and it needs a lot of work. She explained that her point was to clarify that the financial agreement wasn't excessive. She stated that she expected the establishment would be as well run as The Field Restaurant is run. Overall, she expressed that it's an opportunity for something tremendous.

Council member McCarthy echoed Council member Brannelly's comments and he added that the sooner the city gets off the liability column the better. He noted that the conditions will only be for the best and he was in full support.

**** COUNCIL MEMBER McCARTHY MOVED TO APPROVE
** CO-CHAIR MARTINEZ SECONDED
** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY
*Consent calendar**

151-11 Disposition of City Owned Property, 1163 Main Street and Ordering a Public Hearing relative to same.

Mr. Coleman stated that this proposal is to develop a tulip museum in downtown Bridgeport at the corner of Main Street and Golden Hill Street – *denoted in green on the map*. He explained that they came across the proposal through the RFP process that involved a five block area. And although they were in discussion with other developers, none of them have come forward with a specific proposal; noting that the developers that were present tonight have come up with a proposal. He mentioned that there is a tulip museum located in Amsterdam and he thought it would be a unique addition to the city.

Mr. Schipper stated that although they were attracted to the grittiness of the building and it's a nice building; it is in bad shape and will require many upgrades, as well as asbestos removal. However, it was felt that they can take it and develop it over time within the next five years due to the agriculture involved.

Mr. Coleman clarified that they were looking to upgrade the building within the two years. He stated that the price for the building is \$17,420 and they were looking to invest in the property and develop it at a cost of at least \$80k. He commented that they will eventually become a tax paying entity.

Co-chair Martinez questioned how they plan to make money with the tulip museum. Mr. Schipper responded that there would be an entrance fee and the gift shop will generate money. They will also develop their Internet business that will allow the distribution of their products. It was noted that they also plan to divide the space to construct two offices.

Co-chair Martinez asked the number of people they planned to employ. Mr. Schipper said he wasn't sure yet because it will depend on the success of the Internet business and the shipping volume expectations. He said they have two to three people working at the Amsterdam museum, but they aren't open daily and there may be seasonal days and hours of operation.

Council member Lyons asked about the sale of the building for \$17,400; she questioned if the price was the real estate value of the building as it currently is. Mr. Coleman said the assessed value will be approximately \$300k, however; he cautioned not to set the bar too high for this property based on the surrounding properties. Mr. Perez added that the building will require electrical, plumbing and a new roof; as well as plenty of environmental issues to address, such as mold and water damage.

Mr. Schipper explained that the business consisted of wholesale flower bulbs from the Netherlands. He mentioned that they currently have a business on Helen Street and the museum will add credibility to that flower bulb business, i.e., the flower bulb business will subsidize the museum business. He emphasized that they were serious about operating the museum.

Council member Lyons commented that it would be good to bring some culture to the city. She asked about the possibility of installing windows on the upper level of the building to allow for a nice visual effect of the flowers. Overall, she said she felt it would be a good project for the city.

Co-chair Brantley stated she was in 100% support of the proposal and she expressed that there is some excitement about it in the community, noting that it will be good to bring an international flair to the city.

**** COUNCIL MEMBER LYONS MOVED TO APPROVE**

**** CO-CHAIR MARTINEZ SECONDED**

**** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

***Consent calendar**

142-11 A Resolution concerning Disposition of City Owned Properties to Habitat for Humanity and ordering a Public Hearing relative to same.

Mr. Perez stated that there are seventeen (17) city-owned lots of various sizes and they were looking to sell the lots to Habitat for Humanity.

The representative present from Habitat for Humanity Bruce gave some background information about what the organization does. He mentioned that Bridgeport has been a great partner to their organization. He relayed that they have built (140) homes in Bridgeport and he explained that they are also a bank that provides mortgages to the homeowners and they provide financial planning classes. He stated that currently, Habitat for Humanity homeowners pay \$500k cumulatively among the (140) homes. The new proposal will add to the tax stream and he stated that one property will be developed for a family that requires a handicap accessible home (for two disabled sons). He noted that a generous donor has been very charitable to the organization's endeavor.

Council member Lyons questioned once the house is built, who gets the property after; she asked if it would go to the real estate agency. Bruce replied no, he explained that there is a selection process to identify potential homeowners. For example, a family of four (4) will have a \$50k-55k limit; the house is sold and Habitat for Humanity provides the mortgage to buy the home. He clarified that there is no predatory lending involved and flipping of the home isn't allowed. He further noted that the house has to remain affordable and if it's ever vacated, Habitat for Humanity buys it back and the home goes to another eligible family.

Council member Lyons commented that fixing up the homes adds value to the surrounding neighborhood. She questioned if the value of the home(s) increase. Bruce stated that they sell the homes for between \$100k and \$130k and an assessor also conducts an evaluation.

Council member McCarthy asked if they include property tax and insurance and if Habitat for Humanity pays those expenses on behalf of the homeowner. Bruce explained that once the home is sold, there is an escrow fund for those expenses.

Council member McCarthy asked if the property was offered to any abutters. Mr. Perez said no, they offered the property directly to Habitat for Humanity, noting that all the properties were foreclosures.

Council member dePara asked the rationale behind selling the property to Habitat for Humanity in relation to the highest and best gain for the city. Mr. Kooris stated that there were two objectives: 1) homeownership 2) expedite the process to build attractive buildings. Bruce added that the Mayor expressed that a cluster of homes in a specific area tends to spur improvement of fixing up other homes in the surrounding area.

Mr. Kooris stated that they deemed the selling of the properties as a package that was the best financial option.

Co-chair Brantley asked how long it would take to develop. Bruce said he expected the target date would be at the end of 2014.

Co-chair Martinez asked how they came up with the (17) lots. Mr. Perez said they were foreclosure homes. He commented that there is a need to produce higher tax based properties and he expressed the concern of providing housing for renters as well.

Council member Olson quoted Andrew Carnegie and expressed that Habitat for Humanity does a real permanent good in the city. He said when Habitat for Humanity acquires the lots, there is a guarantee that the houses will be built.

**** COUNCIL MEMBER McCARTHY MOVED TO APPROVE WITH THE EXCEPTION OF THE PROPERTY LOCATED ON PRINCETON STREET**

He commented that he believed this particular property could generate much more tax dollars and be more of a gain to the city. Mr. Perez said it was a 50x100 size lots and they would need a waiver to put in a multi-family house.

Co-chair Brantley commented that felt building a home on the property would be a good opportunity to give a homeowner a chance to move to another neighborhood and a better life.

Co-chair Martinez stated that they already committed to Habitat for Humanity to give them the lots and she felt they should honor that commitment. She said she would vote to approve the lots; however, she repeated that in the future she would like to recommend that larger lots be sold to allow more a tax gain to the city.

Council member dePara stated that the Director of OPED and personnel need to come up with a better "rule brick" i.e., screening process, when it comes to properties in Bridgeport. He said he thought they need to develop a very detailed and specific process where properties are involved.

Council member Olson said he disagreed with Council member dePara. He stressed that Habitat for Humanity couldn't exist without their partnership with the city and although he agreed that the administration may need more of a "rule brick"; he reiterated that the city should honor the commitment.

Co-chair Brantley said she wasn't in favor of moving a property off the listing. She expressed that Habitat for Humanity provides and builds excellent homes for families that otherwise may not have had the opportunity.

Council member McCarthy withdrew the motion. He clarified that he wholeheartedly believes in Habitat for Humanity. However, he explained that he was familiar with the property on Princeton Street and he reiterated that he would have liked to see the highest dollar return to the city.

Council member Lyons commented that as the process goes along, she requested that the council members be informed of any properties that are up for sale. Mr. Perez acknowledged the comment and request.

**** COUNCIL MEMBER LYONS MOVED TO APPROVE**

**** CO-CHAIR MARTINEZ SECONDED**

**** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

***Consent calendar**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER LYONS MOVED TO SCHEDULE A PUBLIC HEARING**

**** CO-CHAIR MARTINEZ SECONDED**

**** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

146-11 A resolution concerning Disposition of City Owned Property by Auction, Sale to Abutter, Housing Authority of the City of Bridgeport or by RFP and Ordering a Public Hearing relative to same.

Mr. Perez made a request to pull four (4) property from the list of fourteen (14) properties that will go to the Housing Authority as follows:

- 119 Johnson Street
- 106 Clifford Street
- 25 Orange Street
- 131 Columbia Street

The properties on the listing were reviewed and openly discussed among the committee.

Mr. Perez explained that the four properties pulled from the list are eligible for a land swap in exchange for properties located on Wayne Street.

Mr. Kooris further explained that they were pulling the lots from the list because it will give them a chance to assess the properties to bring in the best revenue and development outcomes.

Co-chair Brantley polled the committee to find out if they were in favor of pulling the four properties mentioned. Council member McCarthy stated he was in support of pulling the properties, noting that he was aware that Council member T. McCarthy was working on the matter.

**** CO-CHAIR MARTINEZ MOVED TO TABLE FOR THE PURPOSE OF OBTAINING CLARIFICATION FROM COUNCIL PRESIDENT McCARTHY REGARDING THE FOUR (4) PROPERTIES TO BE PULLED FROM THE LIST
** COUNCIL MEMBER LYONS SECONDED
** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

149-11 Request concerning Modification of Development Agreement with M.O.V.E. Yacht Club in connection with its relocation from SteelPoint to Waterview Avenue.

Co-chair Brantley recalled the nature of the request. She stated that Mr. Kooris, OPED was there to request a motion to accept the information dated October 16, 2012 as part of the original submittal for item #149-11.

**** COUNCIL MEMBER LYONS MOVED TO ACCEPT
** COUNCIL MEMBER McCARTHY SECONDED
** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

Mr. Kooris gave an update on the negotiations with the M.O.V.E Yacht Club. He stated that they have an existing agreement with the yacht club and they will receive a contribution of \$375k. He explained there was a commitment to develop a parcel and they were supposed to relocate during February 2007, however; that date has expired. He further updated that there are numerous soil containments on the site and M.O.V.E

Yacht Club is asking for an extension beyond November 30, 2012 with the following conditions:

- completion of the site and remediation work that will include a cap, pilings and sub-surface work – **they are asking the city council to allocate \$175k that was previously budgeted by the city for the site work to the contractor of M.O.V.E instead of the city's contractor.**
- \$260k request for additional funds is requested due to the delay and the increase in construction costs, and the need to get them off the peninsula with the winter coming. The source of funds will be available through a state grant for \$400k and they are asking to use a portion of that grant to make the additional contribution to M.O.V.E.

Mr. Kooris further explained what the city would ask for in return:

- There is an absolute commitment to engage in the eviction process to continue with the redevelopment process. If they stay with the current contractor until the end of June 2013, they will be evicted if they don't vacate within sixty days. And if they don't, at the end of September 30, 2013, then the housing court stipulation will give them the authority to evict at that time.
- There will be a walking path down to the waterfront.

Council member dePara asked for clarification of what the \$250k grant was for. Mr. Kooris said the funds were allocated for the remediation for the site.

Council member dePara questioned if the \$250k was the best guesstimate. Mr. Kooris said it wasn't a guesstimate. He emphasized that M.O.V.E. was cautioned to negotiate wisely with their contractor because no additional funds would be forthcoming.

**** CO-CHAIR MARTINEZ MOVED TO APPROVE THE SUBMISSION AS AMENDED**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER LYONS SECONDED**

**** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

***Consent calendar**

154-11

Co-chair Brantley She stated that Tyler Ferguson, Alana Kabel and Ernest Swiger were present to address the item.

Ms. Kabel stated that HUD required a 5-year plan for the consolidated plan. The item involves CDBG and HOME allocations.

Co-chair Brantley stated that she didn't appreciate receiving the item at the last minute. She further stated that this item was approved before the full city council on Monday to be added to the agenda tonight. She made a request that in the future, the information must come before the committee prior to the meeting so that the committee is kept apprised.

She went on to emphasize that she wanted some specific information before an approval was considered.

Co-chair Martinez echoed Co-chair Brantley's comments that the council members want to see more people that represent the minority, in response to Co-chair Brantley's comment regarding the number of minority firms that responded to the RFF. It was noted that Mr. Swiger, Swiger Consulting was present from Strasburg, PA.

Council member dePara stated that it was a lengthy document to ask the committee to vote on without thoroughly reviewing it.

There was some discussion as to whether or not the item was officially added to the agenda for a vote tonight.

Co-chair Brantley stated she would recommend tabling the item to ensure that everything was done properly. Ms. Kabel response was that she hoped they would have time to at least draft a consolidated plan.

Co-chair Brantley asked Mr. Swiger, Swiger Consulting to give the committee some background information.

Mr. Swiger stated that he has been doing consolidated plans since the year 2000. He has conducted them for various municipalities throughout the country; he said he had a lot of experience and he knows what HUD wants and what's required to meet their standards, which consists of a lot of statistical work. He emphasized that one of his techniques is to hold public meetings within the community and conduct focus groups.

He said he also uses varied methodology to engage the community and he also involves service and housing providers. Overall, he has a process in place to meet HUD's deadline and he knows how to get the job done.

Co-chair Martinez asked Mr. Swiger if his firm ever makes recommendations for improvements. Mr. Swiger replied yes. He relayed how he did this for Albuquerque, New Mexico, noting that it is crucial to streamline the outreach process.

Co-Brantley asked who on Ms. Kabel's staff would work with Mr. Swiger. Ms. Kabel said Tyler, Kathy and Jennifer would do cross-training.

Ms. Kabel clarified that a draft is really needed to devise and formulate the consolidate plan.

Co-chair Brantley asked what the cost of the plan would be. Ms. Kabel said it would cost \$36k. Tyler added that the cost has been allocated in the budget. And that approximately (200) hours would be dedicated to the project.

Co-chair Brantley questioned how they planned on addressing the public. Mr. Swiger said he would request assistance from the city to get the word out. He noted that four meetings total would most likely be held in conjunction with involvement from the service providers and program providers.

**** CO-CHAIR MARTINEZ MOVED TO APPROVE
** COUNCIL MEMBER McCARTHY SECONDED
** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

***Consent calendar**

ADJOURNMENT

**** CO-CHAIR MEMBER MARTINEZ MOVED TO ADJOURN
** COUNCIL PRESIDENT McCARTHY SECONDED
** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

The meeting adjourned at 9:10 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Diane Graham
Telesco Secretarial Services