

CITY OF DERBY
REDEVELOPMENT AGENCY
September 1, 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, Ken Hughes, Michael Kelleher and Chairman Joseph Bomba.

Absent: Greg Russo

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 adopt the agenda by Mr. Hughes, second by Mr. Kelleher, all in favor, motion passes.

Approval of Minutes - August 11 2009

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

Public Portion:

Mr. Dan Waleski - 21 Elm Street. Mr. Waleski asked if after the presentation the public will have a chance to ask questions. Mr. Bomba said the agency will accept some questions and the public can ask questions at the next Redevelopment Agency meeting on September 8th.

Motion to close public portion by Mr. Stevens, second by Mr. Kelleher, all in favor, motion carries. Public portion closed.

Presentation and discussion of the Master Development Plan

Mr. John Geddes of the Primrose Companies with a specialization in design, development and construction is here tonight to present his idea for a master development plan. He is the architect and head of the development team for the river front in Shelton. The first phase has been completed which is the Birmingham. The asphalt plant was acquired and the environmental work completed.

Mr. Geddes has been following what has been going on in Derby. When the City put out an RFQ last year he met with various developers including Tom Hill and began to put together a plan for Derby. Then the financial crisis hit and became impossible to respond to a plan that many of the developers he was working with for a large project. Some continued to show interest. Mr. Geddes came up with a phase in program for it.

Mr. Hill put in an offer for the Housatonic and Life Touch properties. The bank prefers to auction off the property.

Some of the other developers are committed and strong, one is a theatre operator and restaurant operators. What has developed over the months are developers who are interested in pieces of it, not tackling the whole project.

He realizes in order for the City to spend funds there has to be revenue generated to carry it. The most viable approach is to have a two phase program starting with the property near the highway. The biggest problem is how the City will deal with the infrastructure improvements and provide a parking structure.

The schematic showed multiple buildings that could be developed by multiple developers and could be a combination of retail, office and residential. The parking structure would be hidden by the structures surrounding it. Along the riverfront would be prime residential townhouse condominiums.

A theatre would attract a lot of people along with attracting a bank and restaurants. The key is this could be done in multiple phases. There are environmental issues to be looked at along with the railroad right of way that cuts through the middle of the development. The existing businesses are an issue and how that is approached. Do we negotiate directly with the owners? The developers are interested in being part of a master plan.

The plan shows approximately 330 residential units, 1,300,000 square footage of total space, 250,000 square footage of commercial space, 113,000 square footage office and parking for about 2,500 cars.

There could be parking for the businesses using the parking garage or some business with their own parking.

Chairman Bomba opened up the floor for the public.

Mr. Waleski said he is impressed with the approach and is more appropriate than anything we have seen. The committee is on the right track and in the right direction. The redevelopment agency should be a permanent board for the City.

Mayor Staffieri said Mr. Geddes has taken into consideration the existing businesses as staying within the downtown in this plan. The last plan was a pipe dream, that in this day one developer would spend 200 or 300 million dollars and expect to get a return in a short period. This can be done in multiple pieces with interest right now.

Anita Duggato - Elizabeth Street, Derby. Ms. Duggato wanted to know where the current business owners would be relocated to. Mr. Geddes said he has created an area for them that could be utilized. Ms. Duggato wanted to know what type of business would be in the bottom corner. Mr. Geddes said there are two parties interested, one is a movie theatre complex and the other a food store. Ms. Duggato said the previous plan said big box was not acceptable. Mr. Geddes said this is not big box. This is a specialty food store, and a theatre is a nice compliment which creates nightlife and improves a downtown.

Agency member Hughes said four years were wasted due to a monster plan. This plan could be a solution to downtown redevelopment.

Mr. Waleski said he likes that we are not in competition with Shelton, but are in harmony with them and will make this successful.

Mayor Staffieri said Derby's identity is being re-established and parking is being addressed.

Mr. Geddes informed the public this plan is something he did voluntarily on his own with other developers and was not solicited.

Adjournment

Motion to adjourn by Mr. Kelleher, second by Mr. Hughes, all in favor, motion passes. Meeting ended at 7:23 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

*Denise Cesaroni
Recording Secretary*

***These minutes are subject to approval at the next Redevelopment Agency meeting.