

CITY OF DERBY
REDEVELOPMENT AGENCY
September 8, 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, Ken Hughes, Michael Kelleher 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:

Mr. Bomba has an addition - there will be discussion on the Master Plan after Public Portion.

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

Mr. Bomba has a deletion to the agenda - item #7 which was a misprint. **Motion** to delete item #7 on the agenda by Mr. Kelleher, second by Mr. Stevens, all in favor, motion passes.

Approval of Minutes - September 1 2009

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

Public Portion:

Sam Rizzitelli - 26 Prindle Avenue. He is trying to understand the procedure and process behind where we are tonight. There was an RFP that went out for proposals and there were none at that time. Now we have a proposal from John Gueddes. He is interested in the origin of how it got to this board. Also, the resolution, is there an adoption or a change of a resolution?

Mr. Bomba said the resolution has been struck from the agenda and was a misprint. Mr. Bomba said the City will entertain anything and will listen to anyone who is willing to talk to the City. There was interest from this developer prior to the RFP, then the economy hit the tank.

Mr. Rizzitelli said it sounds kind of mushy right now as Mr. Gueddes is looking to work with a group of developers. He asks the board to flush that out pretty thoroughly. Mr. Gueddes is a reputable developer. It sounds like Mr. Gueddes doesn't want to develop this, rather he wants to bring others to develop this. What does that mean? Also, please flush out financing before getting serious with any development project. Has any of that inquiry been done?

Mr. Bomba said the public should continue to attend meetings to hear the progress on any project.

Tom Lionetti - 79 Sunset Drive. Mr. Lionetti wanted to know if there will be any action on the master development plan. Mr. Bomba said it will be discussed only tonight.

Dan Waleski - 21 Elm Street. He is glad to see Mr. Rizzitelli here tonight and he hopes in the future we can keep politics out of this important aspect. Things should be discussed on an intellectual level and stay away from politics.

Also, Mr. Waleski said there was an interesting commentary in the Sunday paper about redevelopment in the State of Connecticut. He gave the agency a copy of the article.

Mr. Waleski would also like to see a hotel incorporated into the redevelopment plan.

Carl Yacobacci - 10 Lombardi Drive. Mr. Yacobacci wants to thank the agency for incorporating him into the plan. As this comes down Route 34, Main Street looks to be expanded for about 20 feet. In short term it calls for the elimination of 39 parking spaces. Does the new plan include parking spaces along Route 34?

Mr. Bomba reminded everyone this is not an accepted plan.

Mr. Yacobacci said the Route 34 study should be completed by July of next year. There was talk of adding four lanes down the middle of town. Mr. Yacobacci said this plan includes the elimination of four or five buildings on lower Main Street. Would these buildings be included in the relocation possibility?

Mr. Bomba said this is not an accepted plan of the City of Derby.

Mr. Yacobacci said this would affect him and he is trying to read the plan.

Mr. Kelleher said the plan includes store front retail.

Mr. Yacobacci said the traffic flow study will be finished in the short term, and that would concern him. If Derby does not have a four lane highway going down the middle of it, that would be really good. Does the state plan for Route 34 affect any timelines for this plan? Mr. Bomba has no answer to that at this point.

Anita Duggatto - Elizabeth Street. Ms. Dugatto brought up at the last special meeting, the issue of the walkway across 34. Does this plan let this still be possible? Also, the people in the redevelopment area still have not been consulted.

Arlene Yacobacci - 10 Lombardi Drive. The prior regular meeting started prior to the stated time at 6:30 p.m. Although the public was told the meeting started at 6:33 p.m. The members of the public could not speak. She requests the board be cognizant of the actual time and not by an inaccurate clock.

She read excerpts from the Connecticut Post editorials. She feels there are similarities and parallels to the redevelopment of Steel Point in Bridgeport to the redevelopment of downtown Derby.

Sam Rizzitelli - Mr. Rizzitelli asked what the board is doing about the current litigation? How is it possible that another developer could come in and start working on this now, while in the throes of litigation? Mr. Rizzitelli said the public wants to know the status of the litigation and how that affects any reality of moving forward.

Carl Yacobacci - he believes a judge issued an order the City can go forward with another developer and would not affect the redevelopment of downtown Derby. He believes a plan with smaller developments is better and on the right path. We still have the special taxing district. Tom Hill has potential tenants and can start building. This is a much better plan than anyone has laid out.

Marc Garofalo - 95 Academy Hill Road. He asks the board to listen to what he has to say. We are all here as people of Derby. These are pictures we have seen before. You can't read a lot of print on the website. There was a public process and this developer chose not to participate. This is not a master plan, it is a concept. The developer is not here to be questioned. There is no way this is workable. It is still the same plan as before and please not give the community any unrealistic expectations. It is a complicated process.

The financing part of this is critical. We need to deal with the existing business owners. There is no guarantee that with more developers, there will be more state money. He feels the board should not entertain anything, there should be some discussion as to what will be entertained. Some things are appropriate and some are not. Low income housing is problematic. The number of houses proposed is low to invigorate the economy. There has to be a public process to select this developer. It should be evaluated with other proposals.

The developers are more interested in the Lifetouch and Housatonic Lumber zone and want to put in big box development and will not serve Derbyites. The traffic generated by a supermarket is heavy in all parts of the day. He doesn't think a movie theatre will encourage people to stay in downtown after a movie. The developers will not give any guarantee for the other area of redevelopment. He encourages the board to not vote on this tonight.

Dan Waleski - Elm Street. Mr. Waleski said Derby is different from other communities. The area has great potential. We have wonderful assets. Our aim should not be to come up with an exact plan. We should move carefully and to come up with a solution that serves the town and its people exceptionally well.

Mr. Randall Collette - 7 Minerva Street. It would be great to see the pictures online better by scanning them in.

Motion to close public portion by Mr. Stevens, second by Mr. Hughes, all in favor, motion carries. Public portion closed at 7:16 p.m.

Master Development Plan discussion

Motion to hold public comment until after the board's discussion by Mr. Stevens, second by Mr. Kelleher, all in favor. Motion passes.

Mr. Kelleher said what was presented one week ago was a concept as to what Mr. Gueddes feels could be what can happen. He suggests we seek out a consultant such as Tom Corso to discuss the possible phasing in. At no time, last week was there anything said of low income housing. He does not want to vote on this tonight.

Mr. Stevens agrees with Mr. Kelleher and another step needs to be taken before going to Mr. Corso. We need to designate areas for the relocation for the small businesses. Mark out an area for the gravy portion, high end residential and mixed use. We should mark out a map with the different usages, with public input and get the advice from several different expertise's.

Mr. Hughes said we will not rush into anything because it is an election year. This is too big a project. We also are not going to not do anything. We just continue on with the process and be very diligent in what we are looking at.

Mr. Russo was not at the special meeting, but in looking at the project, it is a breath of fresh air. As a board we need to address issues, ie. the development zone. We have to do that as part of the current process. Mr. Bomba will look into this to see if anything was approved previously.

Mr. Russo feels more comfortable with breaking the project down into components and going out to bid for those components. Mr. Hill had people willing to come to the table sooner rather than later with small box ideas. We still need to evaluate the DOT property and move forward with that. Finally, the biggest part of the gap is infrastructure. We need to rethink how to handle that.

Mr. Kelleher said the goal is to get people living in downtown and spending money.

Mr. Stevens said the only way to accomplish this in smaller pieces.

Mr. Bomba said it is a good idea to remind the public and the citizens of Derby, that this board is very open and receptive to ideas and comments. The board meets once a month and he believes City involvement is important in this plan and likes the idea of separating parts of the plan.

Mr. Stevens said maybe we could direct staff to present us with a map similar to that to designate areas to include relocation, and have discussion with Mr. Corso.

Mr. Hughes does not feel he has the expertise to designate what should go where. Mr. Russo feels the same. Mr. Hughes said we should listen to a developer in terms of positioning a project. Mr. Stevens said we could bring in the real estate agent Mr. Hill, Mr. Geddes and Mr. Corso and have a discussion.

Ms. O'Malley said her role is to attract new business and expand businesses. There are very interested potential tenants in the parcel by the highway. It would be in the best interest of the City to move on sections we know we have definitive potential partners.

Mr. Russo said it might be helpful to have a workshop and invite Mr. Geddes, Mr. Corso etc. Ms. O'Malley said this is mixed use concept of what this board and the City of Derby would like to see in their downtown area. How you cut it up or arrange it depends on the feasibility of the cost for the developer. If it is financially viable for him he will come to you with a proposal.

Mr. Kelleher feels we should bring in Mr. Corso, Mr. Hill and some real estate developers from the valley area who are good at this and successful in this.

Mr. Bomba agrees. We waited long and patiently and we are in the right direction. We should set up and schedule a meeting with public opinion.

Motion to direct staff to set up a workshop to designate areas as what the board would like to see by Mr. Stevens, second by Mr. Kelleher, all in favor, motion passes.

Mr. Hughes asked if the board has the ability to send out certain phases. Attorney Coppola said yes.

Public Portion

Carl Yacobacci - asked if the meeting will be a public workshop. Mr. Bomba said yes. Mr. Yacobacci feels the process is right with the supermarket and pharmacy to show people we can get something done. Now you have something to bring someone downtown.

Mr. Collette - Mr. Collette said power energy is the crux of all industry and how we survive and will be very important in the future. We should put some requirements in as to be partially green. The Cityscape looks like the downtown we had, if we could include into the plans so it looks like the downtown did as far as style, awnings, signs etc.

Al Misciewicz - 171 Derby Avenue. We have a plum location for mixed retail with the housing above that. If you are on the riverwalk you can walk to the restaurant, it is right there.

Mr. Waleski - Mr. Waleski said you could take advantage of the extreme lower end of Derby offering a tremendous recreational facility to be incorporated into this development.

Arlene Yacobacci - Ms. Yacobacci said the Mayor of Anaheim California invited different developers for their redevelopment and wasn't given to one person. You may want to look at how they did it.

Marc Garofalo wanted to know what the relationship is with Primrose and Mr. Geddes. Mr. Bomba said he is a developer in Shelton and has an interest in our downtown. Mr. Geddes was interested previously, but at the time the economy hit the tank.

Mr. Garofalo wanted to know who paid for the drawings. Mr. Geddes did. Mr. Garofalo suggests the board go to the tax board for an allocation of funds to hire your own consultant for your own renderings going forward and the process is transparent.

Mr. Garofalo agrees with Mr. Kelleher to go to someone like Mr. Corso.

Mr. Garofalo said regarding potential tenants, a developer always have potential people, do we want these types of tenants?

If you have a workshop and if there is a quorum, then it is a meeting, and you need to have it taped with a transcript. Mr. Bomba said yes.

Mr. Garofalo said the only way to get this project done is if we work together regardless of politics. Mr. Bomba said this agency strives for this City to work together and move forward. Mr. Hughes said it does transcend everyone's time and we have to work together.

Mr. Waleski said maybe a program could be initiated with the press, Ms. O'Malley, the Board of Aldermen and others, put out fliers and invitations to get people interested in this development to come up with the best possible plan.

Adjournment

Motion to adjourn by Mr. Kelleher, second by Mr. Hughes, all in favor, motion passes. Meeting ended at 8:02 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

*Denise Cesaroni
Recording Secretary*

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