

**REDEVELOPMENT AGENCY
MEETING MINUTES
7:30 A.M., THURSDAY, OCTOBER 15, 2009
LINCOLN CENTER HEARING ROOM**

Members Present: Timothy Devanney, Chair Susan O'Connor
Barbara Weinberg Robert Schneider
Gerald Cope Thomas Tomko
Phil MacVane Aaron Wlochowski
Terry Bogli Gary Sweet
Michael Darby

Also Present: Mark Pellegrini, Director of Neighborhood Services
and Economic Development
Gary Anderson, Senior Planner

Adoption of Minutes of October 1, 2009

Mr. Wlochowski moved to adopt the minutes as written. Mr. Cope seconded the motion and all members voted in favor.

Main Street Update

Mr. Schneider reported he, Mr. Darby, Mr. Pellegrini and Mr. Anderson met with Mr. and Mrs. Tong on October 2nd. He said they discussed options for agreeing on jointly marketing the Town parking lot and their Main Street property for development. Mr. Darby said he doubted the private market would yield the price the Tongs are insisting upon. Mr. Pellegrini suggested he could speak with developer contacts and ask them what scale of development would have to be built in order for the properties to justify what the Tongs are seeking. Mr. Darby reminded the Agency that the deed restrictions provide the Tong property with 25 deeded parking spaces for employees, and further the Tong's must approve any development on the Town parking lot. That restriction will be in place for the next 20 years.

Some members suggested making an offer for a sale price to the Tongs. Mr. Pellegrini said the tongs have indicated their asking price is non-negotiable.

Broad Street Update

Mr. Devanney said staff and several Agency members participated in a site walk on October 8th to visualize how Center Springs Park could be extended to Broad Street. Mr. Devanney said for him, the visit illustrated how close the park is to Broad Street and how opening the park to the street would increase its usage. He said the park is currently underutilized and often suffers from

a bad reputation, but could be a beautiful asset. He reminded the Agency the Board of Directors does have a fund for acquisition for open space for municipal purposes. Mr. Pellegrini said there is approximately \$800,000 in that fund.

Mr. Tomko said he especially likes the possibility of a park entrance at the current China Garden property which includes a large tract of land at the back, which is adjacent to the rail line and includes a section of Bigelow Brook. He suggested the existing building, which is post and beam construction, could be a good asset for the park.

Ms. Weinberg asked if staff heard anything recently about the Nichols estate. Mr. Devanney said he received a call last week indicating there was an offer on the property. Ms. Weinberg asked if it would make sense for the Town to make an offer on the property if only to eliminate the current blighted conditions. Ms. Bogli said making an offer before the referendum question decision would be premature. Mr. Pellegrini added the Town would be held to a stricter standard in terms of due-diligence in assessing the environmental conditions and probably could not move as fast as a private purchaser. Ms. Weinberg suggested it might be wise to simply ask the owners of the estate to delay taking action for now. Mr. Pellegrini said he would contact the real estate agent to try to get an update on the offer.

Mr. Schneider asked what the cost to the Town for the right-of-way on the rail line would be. Mr. Pellegrini said it is not currently being marketed but the owners had been asking around \$175,000 for the portion of the line from Center Street to Middle Turnpike, as he recalled. He said the Town could partner with the Manchester Land Trust which is in contact with the owners and trying to acquire the line.

Mr. Devanney said he received two phone calls from members of the Local Carpenter's Union who favored the passage of the upcoming referendum.

Mr. Pellegrini said Mr. Shanley has contacted the Journal Inquirer about a meeting with the editorial board on the Broad Street Plan. The Agency agreed Mr. Devanney, Mr. Schneider and Mr. Pellegrini should meet with the Editorial Board on October 21, 2009 at 11:00 a.m.

Mr. Sweet reported he contacted approximately 10 local organizations and clubs. He said most of those organizations have either one or no meetings before the November election and would not have time to arrange for the Agency to make a presentation on the plan.

Ms. Bogli said she has spoken with many individuals and asked about their feelings on the upcoming referendum. She said those who did not favor the referendum question felt as though they did not have enough information. She said the majority did not understand the redevelopment project and there is a misconception that the Town planned on owning the Parkade property. She said although there is limited opportunity to correct these misconceptions before this referendum, there will be opportunities to do so in the future.

Mr. Anderson said he arranged dates and times for the Agency members to present the redevelopment plan to the Youth Commission, Chamber of Commerce, and at the Senior Center. The meeting with the Youth Commission will take place on October 20, 2009 at 5:00 at the new Youth Services Bureau. Mr. Devanney, Mr. Schneider, Ms. Bogli, Mr. Wlochowski and Mr. Anderson will present the plan to that commission. The presentation to the Chamber will take

place on October 21 at 7:00 p.m. at the Greater Manchester Chamber of Commerce on Hartford Road. Mr. Devanney, Mr. Schneider, Mr. Cope, Mr. Tomko and Mr. Anderson will present the plan on that date. The Agency is also scheduled to present to the Senior Center on October 29, 2009 at 1:30 p.m. Ms. Weinberg, Mr. Devanney, Mr. Sweet and Mr. Pellegrini will be doing that presentation. Mr. Anderson said staff will be coordinating those presentations and will be in contact with those presenting.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:00 a.m.

The next meeting of the Manchester Redevelopment Agency will take place on ***Thursday, November 5, 2009***. The meeting will take place in the ***Manchester Room of Town Hall***.

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