

CITY OF NORWALK
LAND USE AND BUILDING MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE
JUNE 18, 2009
NORWALK SENIOR CENTER

ATTENDANCE: Douglas Hempstead, Chair; Richard Bonenfant; Michael Geake; Nicholas Kydes; Laurel Lindstrom; Anna Duleep (7:03 p.m.)

STAFF: Alan Lo, Building and Facility Manager; Robert Maslan, City Attorney; Alexis Cherchetti, Conservation

I. ROLL CALL

Mr. Hempstead called the meeting to order at 7:02 p.m. and the Committee members introduced themselves to the public.

III. OLD BUSINESS

A. Acquisition of Crossland Property

Conduct public information session, review additional available information and refer the following recommendation to the Common Council for action:

“Authorize the Mayor, Richard A. Moccia, to execute any and all documents necessary for the acquisition of the balance of the Crossland Property, approximately 10 acres (D5-B14-L77) from Gary Crossland in the amount of \$40,000. Funds are available in existing Reserve for Open Space account #03-000-2640.”

Ms. Duleep joined the meeting at 7:03 p.m.

Mr. Hempstead explained that there is an opportunity to purchase this land. He noted that the land records were clear and that Ms. Cherichetti had walked the property seven years ago. She was unable to walk the property recently due to the heavy rainfall. Mr. Hempstead said that most of the land is undisturbed and there is not a lot out there except for a lot of water.

The City does not have any intention of developing the property. Mr. Kydes, noting that he lives nearby, said that he fully supports this acquisition. He pointed out the amount of open space that has been acquired by this Council and administration; it is a historical amount. He asked how much open space has been amassed by this administration to date.

Ms. Lindstrom agreed with Mr. Kydes and asked when the other parcel was purchased. Mr. Bonenfant said that he was not sure of the actual date, but it took place under his Chairmanship of the Committee.

Mr. Hempstead said that the purpose of tonight was to inform the neighbors.

Mr. Canevari asked about the appraised and assessed value of the property and the taxes. Mr. Bonenfant referencing the backup, said that the property was valued at \$1.1 million. Mr. Canevari said that his wife has been trying to give property to the City, but never got an answer. Mr. Kydes said that he never saw a letter. Mr. Hempstead said that the letter was presented to the former Chair. Mr. Canevari said that his wife wanted to donate the property as a pet friendly site.

Mr. Hempstead explained that the property was offered to the City. There is money in the City's account which is specifically for the acquisition of any wetland associated with the Crossland property. the Norwalk Land Trust is very happy with this.

Mr. Maslan said that he spoke with Mr. Crossland and he is aware of the option to donate the land; however, to use the tax benefit, he would have to have income to apply against. He said that he did not know Mr. Crossland's motivation to sell the property to the City. If he stops paying taxes on the property, it will go up for sale. If someone else takes title of the property, they may get something approved. Mr. Canevari asked if the property was high enough to build on. Ms. Cherichetti said that it was a legal building lot.

Mr. Canevari said that the best thing would be to let the property go. Mr. Hempstead asked Mr. Canevari if he was opposed to the City purchasing the property. He said that he was because they could get the property for free. Mr. Maslan said that the City was under no obligation to buy the eight acres, but they did.

An unidentified resident suggested that the City take the free dog park.

Mr. Hempstead said that City funds are not being used for this; the money was raised specifically to acquire this parcel. He said that the goal is to protect the wetland and the abutting property owners. This money was specifically raised by the Land Trust.

An unidentified resident said that she does not want to see trails on the property. She said that it is her property and wants to see the woodland and wetlands kept the way they are. She added that she does not want to see any building on the property or any people there.

Mr. Hempstead said that this parcel is primarily wet and unbuildable compared to the parcel next to it. However, he noted that it is public property and everyone has the right to access the property. As of right now there are no plans for the property.

An unidentified resident asked if the amount to be paid is equal to the amount in the fund. Mr. Maslan said that the money that was put into the account at the time of the first acquisition has been accruing interest. He said that the money could be used to put trails

on the eight acre parcel; the money was set up for the purpose of improving this particular watershed.

An unidentified resident asked if the money could be used to clean Wood's Pond. Mr. Maslan said that the money is for the purpose of this site and not Wood's Pond.

An unidentified resident said that he thought the City had purchased the entire property and was surprised there was more land. He said that he highly recommended taking the \$40,000 to buy the property.

Mr. Canevari noted that there is a tax bill coming up on July 1st. He asked if they are asking that the half year's taxes be forgiven. Mr. Maslan said that Mr. Crossland offered this property to the City last fall. There has been no request for tax forgiveness.

An unidentified resident requested that a stipulation be added that there will be no hiking trails placed on the property. Mr. Hempstead said that the Director of Public Works would rather the City not to take on this parcel, but Mr. Hempstead said that he feels it is important for the City to add it to its reserves.

An unidentified resident said that there was an issue with an aquifer. Mr. Canevari said that Mr. Crossland offered to sell the property to the First District Water Company, but they said it was not an aquifer. Ms. Cherichetti described an aquifer and said that the area appears to be an aquifer, but does not know what the yield would be. She said that the wetland are poorly drained.

There were no further comments and Mr. Hempstead thanked everyone for coming out on such a wet night.

**** MR. KYDES MOVED TO APPROVE THE ITEM**

Ms. Lindstrom said that this is a wonderful acquisition for the City and supports this item. Mr. Bonenfant said that he was here for the first acquisition and this is money well spent to know the parcel will be in good hands.

**** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

II. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING(S)

May 21, 2009

**** MS. LINDSTROM MOVED TO ACCEPT THE MINUTES AS PRESENTED**

**** MOTION PASSED WITH ONE (1) ABSTENTION (MR. KYDES)**

III. OLD BUSINESS

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7 Norden Place – Property Donation

Review additional available information and refer the following recommendation to the Common Council for action:

**** MS. LINDSTROM MOVED THE FOLLOWING ITEM:**

“Authorize the Mayor, Richard A. Moccia, to execute any and all documents necessary to receive donation of property located at 7 Norton Place (D2-B35-L148) abutting the rear of Flax Hill Park, from George DiScala, Jr. Trustee.”

**** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

IV. NEW BUSINESS

A Building Management

1. Review bid results for elevator maintenance services at various City buildings and refer the following recommendation to the Common Council for approval:

**** MR. BONENFANT MOVED THE FOLLOWING ITEM:**

“Authorize the Mayor, Richard A. Moccia, to execute an agreement with Kone, Inc. for the Elevator Maintenance Services at various City buildings. Agreement will be for five (5) years: FY 2009-10 \$12,900.00; FY 2010-11- \$13,416.00; FY 2011-12 - \$13,952.64; FY 2012-13 -\$14,510.64; and FY-2013-14 -\$15,090.96. Funding is available in various building operating accounts for FY 2009-10 and subsequent years will be subject to availability of funds.”

**** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

2. Review bid results for Roosevelt Center – U.S.A.G. Inc./Tumble Bugs Roof Replacement Project and refer the following recommendation to the Common Council for action:

Mr. Lo explained that the bids came in very well and they are doing their due diligence on them. Mr. Kydes expressed concern about the warrantee.

**** MR. GEAKE MOVED TO TABLE THE FOLLOWING ITEMS TO THE JULY MEETING**

“a. Authorize the Mayor, Richard A. Moccia, to execute a contract with (the lowest responsible bidder) for the Roosevelt Center – Tumble Bugs Roof Replacement Project for a total not to exceed \$(amount to be determined). Funds are available from U.S.A.G. Inc. Reserves for Replacement account #03-000-2633

b. Authorize the Office of Building Management to issue Change Orders on contract for a total not exceed (amount to be determined)”

**** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

V. MISCELLANEOUS/DISCUSSION ITEMS

A. Discussion of Day Street properties

Mr. Hempstead said that this item came out of the Planning Committee, therefore this Committee cannot take any action. Ms. Duleep wanted further information about the location of the property and if it had been taken by Eminent Domain. Mr. Bonenfant said that this is the site of L&L Evergreen. Mr. Lo said that he does not know how the parcel was acquired. He said that the parcel had been vacant and the Redevelopment Agency leases it on behalf of the City.

Mr. Hempstead said that he had asked the staff if the parcel had been actively marketed and they said that it had not. Mr. Kydes noted that there is a limited amount of industrial property in Norwalk. Redevelopment raised more questions than they answered. He said that Mr. Sheehan appeared to be unprepared. Mr. Kydes said that it appears that they are not giving them the entire story of what can be done. He said that if they are going to have affordable housing, they are going back to Spot Zoning. Mr. Kydes said that he feels uneasy with this and suspects there is more to it than they are being told.

Ms. Lindstrom said that they need an update before they can vote on this. She said that she did not understand fully enough to go ahead and support this. Ms. Lindstrom said that she was not sure which committee this will go back to.

Mr. Bonenfant said that he voted no on the master plan, but for those who voted yes, it is being thrown back at them.

Mr. Geake said that if they are going to do this, they have to put a restriction that will be explicit of what is expected here. He said that he does not just want to remove a restriction, he wants whatever is done there, that there is a property restriction for that. Mr. Geake said that he does not want the restriction to be removed and then have to figure out what to do.

Mr. Kydes said that he is concerned that there is something going on that they are not privy to.

Mr. Hempstead thanked Mrs. Duleep for her ideas for the parcel.

Mrs. Duleep said that she spent a lot of time talking to the residents; they told her that this was a bustling place in the 1970's. The promise was that an industry was supposed to come in and provide jobs. She said that the residents want jobs. She described a similar situation in Camden, NJ and the steps they took to create a childrens' educational park.

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Mrs. Duleep said that she looked at other attractions to determine what children like, and found that they like water features, a petty zoo and a butterfly garden. She suggested putting those features into this park with something that would generate jobs for the neighbors. This would teach the teenagers to be good employees; they would be producing something and selling it. This would bring in visitors. She said that she hopes that if something like this comes to the City that Norwalk residents could use it for free.

Mr. Hempstead said that this needs further study,

- ** MR. GEAKE MOVED TO SUSPEND THE RULES TO ADD AN ITEM TO THE AGENDA**
- ** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

Health Department Building – Lighting Retrofit Project

- ** MR. KYDES MOVED THE FOLLOWING ITEM:**

Authorize the Mayor, Richard A. Moccia, to execute any and all documents necessary with Connecticut Light and Power's (CL&P's) Small Business energy Advantage Program to implement the Norwalk Health Department building, lighting retrofit project. Reimbursement shall be made through energy savings. Payback period approximately 36 months.

Mr. Lo said that this item came up recently. The City will not put out any capital costs. This project was originally tied to stimulus money. However, with CL&P reactivated its incentive programs, the City can move forward immediately with CL&P and will save the City \$300 – 500 a month in the future.

- ** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

Mr. Bonenfant reported that the Duck Tour proposal was taken off of last night's Recreation and Parks agenda because the representatives from East Norwalk were at another meeting and not there to represent their district.

There was no further business and the Committee toured the Tumble Bugs facility.

- ** MR. KYDES MOVED TO ADJOURN**
- ** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

The meeting was adjourned at 8:25 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Rosemarie Lombardi, Telesco Secretarial Services

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