

[NOTE: These minutes are made available to the public prior to Redevelopment Agency acceptance.]

Minutes
Redevelopment Agency
Wednesday, May 14, 2007
5:00 pm - Town Hall
Town Manager's Conference Room

1. **Call to Order** - Chairman Lee Kuckro called the meeting to order at 5:00 pm.
2. **Roll Call/Attendance** - Members in attendance: Lee Kuckro - Chair, Dan Camilliere - Vice Chair, Joe Soja, Paul Thompson and Mike Zaleski. Also in attendance: Town Planner/Economic Development Manager, Peter Gillespie.

Members absent: none.

3. **Public Comments** - No one from the public was present.
4. **Approval of Minutes** - [May 2, 2007](#) - Mr. Kuckro asked if there were corrections needed for the draft minutes, and none were requested. Mr. Camilliere motioned to approve the minutes, Mr. Soja seconded the motion and the vote showed all members in favor.
5. **Discussion of Upcoming Agency Meeting with Planning and Zoning Commission (PZC) and Economic Development and Improvement Commission (EDIC)** - Mr. Gillespie said the meeting is scheduled for May 25 at 8:30 AM. The latest meeting plan is to gather only the chairs of the three commissions: PZC, EDIC and Redevelopment. Trying to get all members of all three commissions together would be too difficult at this time. In addition, fewer people in attendance better reserves confidentiality of the real estate matters to be discussed. It will still be necessary in the future to get all of the members of the three commissions together for a meeting. All Redevelopment Agency members are invited to attend. In case there is a quorum of Redevelopment Agency members, the meeting will be publicly noticed as a special meeting with invited guests.
6. **Discussion of Referendum Process and Timeline** - Mr. Gillespie said he met with the Town's Bond Counsel, Attorney Gillette, along with Mayor Adil, and Town Manager Therrien. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss the timeline, content and language that would be best for a resolution question. Mr. Gillespie said that the Bond Counsel advised it would be best if the resolution question is worded broadly so as to give the Agency the flexibility it will need to carry-out a redevelopment plan.

Mr. Gillespie distributed to the Agency members copies of a referendum timeline titled "2007 Redevelopment Agency Referendum Timeline". Mr. Gillespie said that he drafted the timeline based on the meeting with the Bond Counsel. Mr. Gillespie said the timeline showed that a final draft of a resolution question would have to be ready by the beginning of July. Mr. Camilliere said that he felt the question should be drafted as soon as possible to allow time to make changes if needed, or for resolving any unforeseen problems that may come up.

The first set of dates in the timeline pertained mostly to drafting the resolution question. It is planned to submit the question to Bond Counsel on July 2, 2007. The second set of dates pertained to the process by which the Town Council would finalize and approve the question. State law requires a 30 day public notice period for such a question. The public notice period is scheduled to begin with the Town Council meeting on August 6th. The question would then come up for a Town Council vote September 4, 2007, which is the Council meeting at the end of the public notice period.

Mr. Kuckro said he noted the use of the acronym "PR" (for public relations) in the second set of dates on the

timeline. He said he felt that "PR" can have a somewhat negative connotation of selling something or pressuring someone. He said the Agency is trying very hard to conduct its business as objectively as possible, and wanted to convey that objectivity to the public. He said that he preferred a phrase like "public information". Mr. Gillespie said he agreed and that the firm Keiler and Company could help with the best way to get the information out to the public. Keiler is under contract with the town through the EDIC. Mr. Kuckro said that the Agency may have received some funding from the Town Council for this purpose by that time.

Mr. Kuckro asked the members if they felt it is best to disclose in the public information which parcels are being considered by the Agency. Mr. Thompson said that he felt disclosure would be best since accountability was an important issue raised at the time the Redevelopment Agency was chartered. Mr. Gillespie said that the Agency should emphasize in its upcoming meeting with the PZC and EDIC that the process before and after the referendum is an open one. That is, information will be shared with the public, and the public will have advance notice and opportunity to comment at multiple points in the process. Mr. Soja agreed that disclosure of the specific properties would be a good idea. He also said that the Agency should tell the public that it does not harm the town to disclose the parcels. That is, developers will not be able to raise prices for the town after finding out which parcels are targeted. The town can only work with the fair market valuation of the parcel and not one a potentially inflated one from a developer.

Mr. Zaleski said that the Agency should begin sharing information with the public as soon as possible, perhaps in the form of "talking points". He feels that those reading the meeting minutes would know a referendum is planned, and didn't want the public to begin to feel that a referendum is being planned without any information. Mr. Kuckro suggested that the subject of the talking points could be "What will the referendum process be?" Mr. Gillespie said that he could prepare some "frequently asked questions" along those lines. Mr. Kuckro said such "FAQs" should include what will be the range of things that redevelopment funds could be spent on. Mr. Soja said it should also include a summary of the criteria the Agency used to evaluate parcels. That is, what are the pluses and minuses of a parcel.

Mr. Camilliere said that the Chamber of Commerce would be a good group to share the public information with, perhaps at one of their meetings. Mr. Thompson said that he would check the Fire Department's media relations plan for ideas. He said the plan could help the Agency map out when to contact the various media in relation to the milestones in the resolution question and redevelopment plan drafting processes.

Mr. Gillespie said the two critical upcoming dates are: August 6, 2007, when the Town Council would begin the public notice period for the resolution question; and September 4, 2007, when the Town Council would vote on whether to approve the resolution question. Mr. Gillespie said that after the September 4th vote, the Agency would be barred by law from promoting the question. Other individuals and groups can stimulate public discussion, but not the Agency. He said that a meeting could be held June 6, 2007 with the Bond Counsel to get advice on what the Agency can and cannot say or do during this phase of the process.

Mr. Gillespie said that during the time between approval of the resolution question and the referendum (September and October), the Agency can concentrate its efforts on the individual parcels being considered.

- 7. Discussion of Redevelopment Plan Process** - Mr. Gillespie said that there are principally two chapters of the Connecticut General Statutes that govern the redevelopment process: Chapter 130, Section 8-124-139; and Chapter 132, Section 8-186-200b. Chapter 130 mainly provides municipal authority for general economic development; and Chapter 132 provides municipal authority for blighted property. Mr. Gillespie distributed to the Agency members a summary table that compares the provisions of Chapters 130 and 132. Mr. Gillespie said that the Bond Counsel advised that the resolution question should incorporate reference to, and language from, both Chapters 130 and 132. This would help build flexibility for the Agency into the resolution.

Mr. Gillespie said that the public notice processes are similar for both Chapters 130 and 132. That is, PZC approval, involvement of Housing Authority if housing is being built, etc. Town Council involvement is required for one of the statutes. Mr. Kuckro said that issuance of bonds also requires public notice, and that the Agency should get such information on "checks and balances" in the process, out to the public.

Mr. Gillespie said that he met May 11, 2007 with Mayor Adil and the Deputy Commissioner and other staff of the Connecticut Department of Economic and Community Development (DECD). He said the Commissioner could not meet with Wethersfield officials because he is a Wethersfield resident. Mr. Gillespie said that the DECD representatives told them that DECD has the interest and ability to assist the town, but usually gets involved with larger projects. Mr. Gillespie said he felt that the Wethersfield projects were not a good fit for the DECD assistance criteria. He said the DECD tends to back projects with a longer history and those in an economically distressed community (Wethersfield is not listed by DECD as a distressed community). Mr. Gillespie said that DECD funding comes with "strings attached" that the town may not want anyway. He said the funding for DECD ultimately comes from federal sources, which usually restrict how the funding can be used. Mr. Gillespie said that contact would be maintained with DECD even though their assistance does not appear likely at this time.

8. **Executive Session To Discuss Real Estate Matters** - Mr. Zaleski motioned to go into executive session at 5:25 p.m. to discuss real estate matters. Mr. Soja seconded the motion and the vote showed all members in favor. During the executive session, the Agency members discussed real estate negotiations, and no votes were taken. Mr. Camilliere motioned to come out of the executive session at 5:50 p.m. and return to the regular agenda, Mr. Soja seconded the motion and the vote showed all members in favor.
9. **Next Meeting Date** - June 6, 2007 at 5:00 pm. (regularly scheduled meeting). It is planned for the Bond Counsel to attend this meeting. For the June 20, 2007 regular meeting, it is planned for Keiler and Company representatives to attend.
10. **Correspondence** - none.
11. **Call to Adjourn** - Mr. Soja motioned to adjourn the meeting at 5:58 p.m., Mr. Zaleski seconded the motion, and the vote showed all members in favor.

Respectfully Submitted,

Kevin T. Sullivan
Agency Recording Secretary