

**STRATFORD REDEVELOPMENT AGENCY
REGULAR MEETING OF JULY 18, 2019 Amended***

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The Stratford Redevelopment Agency conducted a regularly scheduled meeting on Thursday, July 18, 2019 in Room 213 of Stratford Town Hall, 2725 Main Street, Stratford CT, pursuant to notice duly posted.

MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE: Mary Beth Bigley; Anthony Nizzardo; George Perham; Randy Vidal; and Richard Whalen

ECONOMIC & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE: James Bensen; Frank Bevacqua; Mark Calzone; John Dobos – Chairman; and Randy Vidal

EXOFFICIO MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE: Mary Dean – Director, Economic and Community Development; and Karen Sportini – Supervisor, Economic and Community Development

OTHERS IN ATTENDANCE: Susmitha Attota – Town Planner; Tina Batoh (via telephone); Greg Cann – 5th District Councilman; Tom Dillon – Shakespeare Property Task Force Co-Chairman; Mayor Laura Hoydick; and Bruce Jackson -- Assistant Town Attorney

I. CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Perham called the meeting to order at 5:30pm, at which time the Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

II. PRESENTATION OF THE SHAKESPEARE PROPERTY TASK FORCE RESULTS

Shakespeare Property Task Force Chairman Anthony Nizzardo introduced Co-Chairman Thomas Dillon, who read his letter to Mayor Hoydick regarding the results from the roundtables, online survey and written feedback received. Suggestions included improving the property to allow more benches for the public, as well as signage to Shakespeare. Mr. Nizzardo distributed and discussed a handout entitled Shakespeare Property Summary of Findings.

Ms. Attota noted the Shakespeare Property Task Force was formed by Mayor Hoydick. They conducted five workshops, an online survey, email correspondence, and accepted written feedback. In total, they received nearly 700 responses. Additionally, the Town created a Shakespeare vision web page. Mr. Dillon stated the questions were open-ended, which is why the pie charts had a high percentage of “Other” for responses, adding that there was much overlap in the roundtable responses. Ms. Attota noted everyone seemed to agree with the deed restrictions on the property.

- Question 1 – What is unique about the property? History, location and amenities were the top three answers.
- Question 2 – What is the Town missing? The most frequent answers were a multipurpose function facility, a theater, and open space/recreation.
- Question 3 – What should the Town use the property for? Open Space/Recreation, Black Box/theater, and Events were the top three answers.
- Question 4 – Who should be responsible for it? The most frequent answers were a nonprofit 501(c)3 organization, Town oversight, and a professional organization.
- Question 5 - How do you envision the Town financing it? Corporate and private funding, fundraising, and grants were the top three answers.

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- Question 6 – How can other Town projects and visions be incorporated in the project? – The most frequent answers were to connect to the Greenway, increase access, and make the public more aware of the site.
- Question 7 – What could be the short and long term uses for the site? For short term uses, the public suggested a space that the community can enjoy (e.g. festivals and a farmers market); a theater, stage or black box; an outdoor theater venue; and parks and recreation. For long term uses, people suggested a multiuse space, as well as a theater/black box.
- Question 8 – How can the Town incorporate the local arts community? The most popular answers were involving existing arts groups, post events, involve youth, make engagements, and educational opportunities.
- Question 9 – How can the public be informed of the results? Email, social media, and posting on the website were the most popular answers.
- Conclusions – Most people suggested a destination for local talent and arts. They want to improve/increase accessibility to the site, and would like to host events, festivals, and concerts for the short term. There is an opportunity for the Town to develop the site as a local and/or regional attraction. There is the ability to address various community needs outlined in the workshops and online surveys. The Town can link the property to other areas of Town through the Greenway and Complete Streets, allowing better pedestrian access. Ms. Attota noted they need to look at what is marketable and what the residents want.

Mayor Hoydick discussed the next steps and explained how in 2006 the former Birdseye School was redesigned to become a municipal complex. She suggested members look at what various other towns have done, adding she is confident the ECDC and RDA will determine creative ideas to eventually present to the Town Council. Mr. Nizzardo added that the next step should be a feasibility study.

III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Mr. Perham accepted a motion by Mr. Vidal to approve the minutes of the 6/20/2019 meeting. Mr. Whalen seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

IV. TINA BATOCH REPORT

- Contract Plating -- Ms. Batoh reported the PCB cleanup plan for Contract Plating has been approved by the EPA. Per Ms. Batoh, Standard Demolition Services can begin removal of the slabs but will wait until after the July 23rd Raymark Community Advisory Group meeting. She added that when the slabs are removed, the EPA can begin work to develop the haul road. Per Ms. Batoh, it will take approximately 8-12 weeks to remove the slabs. Attorney Jackson stated he received easements from the United Illuminating Company for this location, and there are some conflicts with the work being done by the UI. He and Town Engineer John Casey are meeting next week with the UI to discuss this matter. Ms. Batoh will inform Harley Langford (Tighe and Bond, Senior Environmental Scientist) of such.
- Center School Redevelopment RFQ – Ms. Batoh reported ~~she will~~ **DECD*** will be paying for the school demolition portion of the building. She noted there has been a partial hazardous material investigation on the BOE building, and asked if there was an end-use planned.

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- 952 East Broadway – Per Ms. Batoh, the next step is HBMI. Mayor Hoydick stated both projects should be moving forward concurrently.

V. BRUCE JACKSON REPORT

- Stratford Avenue Railroad Tracks – Attorney Jackson reported that \$150,000 is due in taxes. Although American Premium Underwriters owned the fee ownerships, it is only a few yards. The Tax Assessor will look into the matter
- 91 Wood Avenue – Per Attorney Jackson, this property went into foreclosure and is now owned by the Town since there were \$30,000 in back taxes due. He suggested going through a realtor to sell it. Upon discussion, Mr. Perham accepted a motion by Mr. Nizzardo to authorize DeLibro Realty to inspect the property for the Town and report to the RDA a market analysis/property value for this location. Mr. Vidal seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.
- Mercer Towers – Attorney Jackson stated the DOT is only using 145 feet for storage. Ms. Dean noted there is still a significant amount of space available to rent. Mr. Vidal questioned what materials the DOT is storing there. Attorney Jackson will look into the matter.
- Kramer’s Autobody, 11 Old South Avenue – Attorney Jackson explained the Town won the bid, and it is going on the court calendar for approval.

VI. OLD BUSINESS

- A. Center School Redevelopment RFQ – Ms. Dean explained the RFQ was submitted on July 12th, and will be accepted until August 8th. Interviews will be done August 26th – 30th. This will be on the September RDA agenda and on the Town Council agenda in October.
- B. RDA Budget – Ms. Dean reported the Town Council gave the RDA a \$75,000 budget this fiscal year. From that, MetroCog will be paid \$7,500 for their work on Center School, and \$23,000 for their work with the Shakespeare Property Task Force. Ms. Dean noted there is \$54,525.47 in one account and \$67,500 in the other one. She suggested RDA funds could be used for a marketability and feasibility study. Ms. Dean will discuss with Mayor Hoydick getting survey done for the property.

VII. NEW BUSINESS

No discussion was held.

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Perham accepted a motion by Mr. Nizzardo, seconded by Mr. Vidal, to adjourn at 7:15pm. The motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully Submitted,
Aileen Marsh
Acting Secretary