

MINUTES OF THE WINDSOR LOCKS HOUSING AUTHORITY

Friday, January 29, 2016
120/124 Southwest Avenue

12:00 P.M.
Windsor Locks, CT 06096

The Windsor Locks Housing Authority met in a Special Meeting Friday, January 29, 2016 at 120/124 Southwest Avenue, Windsor Locks, CT, 06096 at 12:00 P.M., the date, time and place duly established for the holding of such meeting. The meeting was called to order at 12:01 P.M. by Carl Philbrick, Chairman.

ROLL CALL

The following were present: Carl Philbrick, Chairman; Michael Jordan, Sr., Vice-Chairman, Commissioner; William Hamilton, Commissioner; Jennise Matyskiela, Tenant Commissioner; Joyce Welch, Tenant Commissioner; Jaimie Mantie, Executive Director; Dana Steele, JR Russo and Associates, Engineer. Jennifer Rodriguez, Planning and Zoning; Chris Kervick, First Selectman and Patrick McMahon – EIDC Consultant for the Town of Windsor Locks

PUBLIC

N/A

NEW BUSINESS

At 12:01pm a motion made by Joyce Welch, Tenant Commissioner and second by Jennise Matyskiela, Tenant Commissioner to go into Executive Session.

At 12:31 pm a motion made by Carl Philbrick, Chairman and second by William Hamilton, Commissioner to leave Executive Session.

NEW BUSINESS

Jennifer Rodriguez – Presented maps of the current lay out of Chestnut Street and Main Street.

Jennifer Rodriguez stated “The Town of WL had a Transit oriented development study conducted. The study made recommendations for connectivity of various parcels and the relocation of the Train Station. The Town is applying for a transit orientated grant. There has been an interest in redeveloping Main Street properties. There are opportunities to have apartments with mixed use. The HA property is directly across from the Train Station. The partnership between the Town and the HA is critical and could benefit both parties.”

Chris Kervick - Pointed out where the new Train Station will be located.

Chris Kervick stated “The State Government is very interested in the new Train Station. The State Government needs this new Train Station to be successful. There are slum properties like the old Post Office and (the old) Dependable Appliances. This part of Main Street is a problem area for the Town. The State came to the Town of Windsor Locks and informed them that they have money available for the Town if the Town is willing to address items on Main Street. I said yes the Town wants the money.

By the first week in February the Town will be applying for grants. The Town is planning to narrow the road on Main Street closely located to Chestnut Street to calm traffic down. The Town is looking to put a traffic circle at the bottom of Chestnut Street. It will force cars to slow down. The Town has a preliminary plan but nothing done by an Engineer. The Town is looking to put angled and parallel parking on Main Street as it was in the old days and in Manchester. The Town is installing wide sidewalks on both sides of the street. There will be a brick cross walk across Main street. The Town asked for three-million dollars for the improvements to Main Street. In addition, we asked for \$500, 000 for restoration of the old Train Station. The old Train Station could turn into a coffee station. The new Train Station coming will not have bathrooms. The new Train Station will not be enclosed buildings. They will have elevated platforms with elevators. The Historic Train Station has bathrooms.

The Train Station will be a welcome center. The Town already entered into a contract to have the roof done. The third grant is in connection with East Windsor and the bridge that connects the two Towns. The Town needs East Windsor cooperation because of the increase in traffic because of the new Train Station. The state is giving money away for TOD projects. February 4, 2016 is the deadline for the Town of WL to submit a grant for 1.5 Million dollars. The Town is looking to provide incentives for surrounding areas located near the new Train Station. The Town of WL will be taking over the old post office building because it is in foreclosure. Then the Town would flip the property and market it for redevelopment of the property. Other complexes have figured out that they could be sitting on a gold mine because of all the changes happening. Then the value of the properties will increase a lot. The problem with the properties behind the old post office and Mike Barile's building is that there is a large hill, over growth of trees, series of retaining walls that are not working properly and need to be addressed. The Town is looking to redo the retaining walls. The Town is very interested in retail store front and apartments on top. The Town is in negotiations to acquire the Graziani property because it has been abandoned for many years. The Town is looking to create a parking lot on the property because it has access to Chestnut Street. A Developer came to the last meeting and is very interested in surrounding properties that have potential. The Developer has deep pockets and is very interested in the properties. Another investor contacted me to state he too is interested in the properties to build traditional housing. There are three developers interested in the Montgomery building. The Developers are very interested because they see the potential of the new Train Station. There is gradual hill on the HA property and the Town is looking to install a sidewalk that cuts through the HA property. There will be a need for retaining walls. The Town should work with the HA because there has been discussion that the HA is looking to develop their land on Main Street. I suggested that there could be potential to receive grant money to draw up plans and do some of the development work. Are these plans something the HA is interested in?"

Patrick McMahon – Consultant for the Town of Windsor Locks.

Patrick McMahon stated “We are trying to recapture what is happening on WL Main Street. There has been a tremendous amount of work put into the redevelopment of Main Street. The residents of Windsor Locks would like to see Main Street as in the olden days. The Town is trying to create street front buildings that are close to Main Street with on street parking. I would like to see that the new buildings to continue onto the HA property. This would set the stage of changing the look and feel of Main Street. It would bring back a lot of vitality. I realize that the WLHA would have questions and concerns how it would impact current operations. As of right now we are looking to submit a grant application at this point. The maps presented are not the actual designs. These plans are preliminary and are just for the Town to apply for the grant.”

Dana Steele, JR Russo and Associates for Town of Windsor Locks Engineer.

Dana Steele stated “The plans presented are related to the grant and to prep the site so when developers come to view the site a lot of the infrastructure is already in place. One of the main things is to get the grading in place. One of the challenges is that there is 30-foot difference between Main Street and the top of Chestnut Street. The planners have come up with a cross-sectional plan to have retail on the bottom and residential on top with a sidewalk behind it. The new parking lot would butt up against the HA property. There will be 34 parking spaces. In order to make this work they would like to have a sidewalk connect from the new parking lot on Chestnut Street and go behind the HA buildings and connect to

Main Street. There will be a staircase going down to Main Street. This would provide pedestrian passageway. In order to do this, it would call for grading to be done on the HA property. This would call for sloping the lawn area. This plan is completely conceptual. The HA will have input as to what will be done and will have to approve the changes. At this point we are not looking for approval to do this. We are showing the concept. The Town is looking for a letter of support. This would call for temporary grading rights in the HA lawn area and will not disturb any of the current parking. The other option that is important is but is not essential is to have traffic connectivity to the HA exciting parking lot. This would be between building B and C. The current parking lot has parking on one side and is a dead end. This requires people to turn around to leave. The connectivity will need to be shown for grant approval. The overall picture is that the HA would need to give grading rights for the property along the lawn areas and a pavement connection to the parking lots to provide flexibility on where traffic can go.”

Chris Kervick stated “The new sidewalk would come out directly across from the Train Station and there will be a cross walk to the Train Station. This would provide direct access to the new Train Station. People could use this as a back way to access. Instead of having to go all the way around.”

Michael Jordan stated “What plans do you have for establishing a buffer to prevent noise and pollution for that site. This area is very close to the buildings and people can look out their windows.”

Dana Steele stated “Those items are designer’s issues. By giving a letter of endorsement this will not allow the HA to be out of the process. The HA will be in the process and will have to sign off on the final design. By providing some greens and planting will provide privacy.”

Michael Jordan stated “I have a problem with the plans without a sufficient buffer. Unless I see a specific plan to address the matter then I will be against this project.”

Carl Philbrick stated “I would like to cooperate however; I have one issue that the changes would create traffic into Grove because of the new parking lot. Years ago the HA use to access to Oak Street and then it was blocked off because there was too much traffic. The HA has a problem now with parking. The complex is 55 and older and disabled and they don’t move as fast. The tenants didn’t appreciate the extra cars and the general public using it as a short cut. This is going against the grain of what the HA has already done in the past. We are quick to say that we don’t want people passing through our parking lot.”

Chris Kervick stated “There will not be connectivity to Oak Street. If there is no connectivity to Oak Street I could see people wanting to cut through the HA property.”

Carl Philbrick stated “The HA has 30 parking spaces and the changes to Oak Street side would create a lot of additional parking problems.”

Dana Steele stated “The connectivity to the new sidewalk could create a problem with people cutting through the HA property. I don’t think this will happen very often.”

Chris Kervick stated “I think this is a conceptual thing as to whether or not the HA residents would like to feel as if they are included in the Main Street environment or do they want to be incorporated into all of things happening on Main Street. I don’t know exactly what the answer to that is but the HA is in a position to know. I don’t think they realize what will be coming. I think your residents are going to want to feel that they could have quick access to the new Main Street.”

Patrick McMahon stated “I am hoping to have a couple restaurants and additional retail opportunities. These changes are happening through the United States. The younger generation and the empty nesters want to be in these more active downtown location.

Joyce Welch stated “We are not empty nesters. We are far beyond that. We have already raised our grandchildren. A lot of our residents are elderly and disabled. Using walkers, canes and are not in a hurry. They will not be able to afford sandwiches because they are on a limited income. I am concerned about the extra traffic and I can promise you that you would have to hire two more full time cops just to handle the phone calls from people in their 70’s, 80’s and 90’s just because people are throwing water bottles, screaming and yelling. This will give people the excuse to call the police. I am very concerned that there will be more traffic with the connectivity. We sit out front in the summer and we really don’t want people promenading by. I don’t see a lot of benefit to the connectivity. I am fearful of the type of foot traffic that will come by. I don’t think you realize what we go through on a daily and nightly basis. Especially at night, it’s not very nice and it’s scary.”

Jennise Matyskiela stated “Has anyone studied at night what goes on at the buildings.”

Chris Kervick stated “I have not done a study but I am aware of the problems. This is why we need to get Main Street back to something that is not scary and dark at night. We need activity with people around this way people of questionable activity will not be around as much. You can only police so much but Main Street is still a rundown deserted area. If we don’t make changes it will not matter how much police patrol can control. We need to bring Main Street back to life. We are putting full on effort to get money from the State to start making these changes. This has to be done. We want to make you aware of the changes taking place. We are only asking for a Grant at this point. This is a good concept. The planners have put a lot of work in. The hard details still need to be worked out.”

William Hamilton – stated “Are you submitting the grant Tuesday or Wednesday.”

Chris Kervick stated “If the HA wants they could be included on the map showing the HA Main Street Property. To do some engineering work and to do a study about grading. We could use grant money to do this. This is up to the HA.

Carl Philbrick stated “I feel we should wait on the HA Main Street property. My problem is that it might perceive as resistance. We have an overloaded parking lot now. This could mean we would have to surrender current parking. The tan area on the map shows a parking lot to be constructed however this area already has a parking lot.”

Patrick McMahon stated “One of the benefits to applying for the grant is that we could use some of the preplanning already done to show the HA that the plan to expand on Main Street could work.”

Carl Philbrick stated “We are here today just for the sidewalk being constructed on the HA land.”

Dana Steele stated “We are only looking at the sidewalk and grading. All that we are asking for now is that.”

William Hamilton stated “As long as the parking lot does not connect to the new sidewalk.”

Chris Kervick stated “The area on Main Street is the HA land and can be develop on the HA discretion. We are not asking for any control of the property.”

Michael Jordan stated “The bottom line is that the Town is asking for the HA to say that in the future development of the sidewalk would we be liable to agree to the sidewalk.”

Chris Kervick stated “No you will not be obligated and I am perfectly happy to submit the grant without the HA letter. The letter only needs to state that we meet with the Town and we have reviewed the plans for the area in subject of the grant and we endorse the grant application and will cooperate with the town with working out any of the design. We could send an engineer out to the site and discover that the future sidewalk may not even work. These are concept plans.”

Carl Philbrick stated “At this point you are looking for the HA to write a letter on the Towns behalf.”

Chris Kervick stated “All I need is a one or two paragraph letter that states that we meet with the First Selectman and he has explained the grant proposal and we endorse the grant proposal and we will work with the Town now and in the future with any details that involve any HA property. The Town would need easement rights to install retaining walls. The legal work is a long time in the future. We will have to configure lot lines or we may enquire property.”

At 1:26 PM a motion made by Carl Philbrick, Chairman and second by Michael Jordan, Sr., Vice-Chairman to go into Executive Session.

At 1:51 PM a motion made by Joyce Welch, Tenant Commissioner and second by Michael Jordan, Sr., Vice-Chairman to leave Executive Session.

Matters Voted on During Executive Session: A motion made by Michael Jordan, Sr., Vice-Chairman to have the HA write a letter to the Town of Windsor Locks second by Joyce Welch, Tenant Commissioner.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before the meeting, upon a motion by William Hamilton, Commissioner, and seconded by Jennise Matyskiela, Tenant Commissioner the meeting was adjourned at 1:53 P.M.