

HARTFORD REDEVELOPMENT AGENCY

REGULAR MEETING

DECEMBER 11, 2008

**PLAZA LEVEL CONFERENCE ROOM
260 CONSTITUTION PLAZA
5:00 P.M.**

JOURNAL

MR. BARE: As the temporary chairperson I call this meeting of the Hartford Redevelopment Agency to order. And as my first order of business since the chairman and vice chairman are not physically present I'll take nominations for a temporary chairman.

COMMISSIONER LEONARD-WOODS: I nominate Arnaldo Sierra.

COMMISSIONER ARENA: Second.

MR. BARE: All in favor? Any opposed?

The motion to appoint Arnaldo Sierra as temporary chairman passed 4-0.

COMMISSIONER SIERRA: Welcome to the December 11, 2008 meeting of the Hartford Redevelopment Agency.

I. Roll Call —

COMMISSIONER SIERRA: On the phone we have Commissioner Casares.

COMMISSIONER CASARES: Here.

COMMISSIONER SIERRA: Commissioner Leonard-Woods?

COMMISSIONER LEONARD-WOODS: Here.

COMMISSIONER SIERRA: Commissioner Arena?

COMMISSIONER ARENA: Here.

II. Approval of the Minutes of the November 13, 2008 Regular Meeting

COMMISSIONER SIERRA: I would like to make a motion to approve the minutes of November 13, 2008 which was a regular meeting.

COMMISSIONER LEONARD-WOODS: Motion.

COMMISSIONER ARENA: Second.

COMMISSIONER SIERRA: Any objections? That does pass.

The motion to approve the minutes of the November 13, 2008 regular meeting was passed 4-0.

III. Projects in Planning

A. Parkville Municipal Development Plan

1. Introduction of the Draft Parkville Municipal Plan

COMMISSIONER SIERRA: No. 3 today we have Projects in Planning. This is the Parkville Municipal Development Plan. And this is the introduction to the draft Parkville Municipal Plan.

MR. PANAGORE: Mr. Chairman, you have before you tonight a memo from myself, David Panagore, dated December 5 describing the submission of draft, that we the agency's public hearing in January. We would request that the board vote this evening to have that public hearing at the next available agency meeting which we believe would be the 8th of January for presentation on this plan. I now turn the agenda over to Roger O'Brien for a brief overview of the plan.

COMMISSIONER SIERRA: One thing for the record, Commissioner Casares is on the telephone we want to mention. Can you hear us?

COMMISSIONER CASARES: I can hear you.

MR. MCGOVERN: We can do at the end, and set ahead the developer for Liebert Road that's on the agenda.

COMMISSIONER SIERRA: And why don't we go ahead and take it out of line of the agenda.

MR. BARE: You entertain a motion for the date you like.

MR. PANAGORE: January 8th for public hearing.

COMMISSIONER SIERRA: There's a motion before us that we adopt the January 8, 2009. Do I have a second?

COMMISSIONER ARENA: Second.

COMMISSIONER SIERRA: Any objections? So adopted.

The motion to hold a public hearing on January 8, 2009 for the Parkville Municipal Development Plan passed 4-0.

IV. Projects in Execution

A. North Meadows Industrial and Business Project

1. Consideration of a Resolution Approving the Selection of a Tentative Developer for 106 Liebert Road (Capital Auto Complex, LLC)

COMMISSIONER SIERRA: Now we're going to move right along and move to 106 Liebert Road in which there is a proposal given for a parking lot that will be done. I believe the parcel is 1.48 acres. And that proposal is from Capital Auto Complex, LLC; also Euro Performance Cars, Incorporated; and Mr. Valenti. So we have that proposal. Open the discussion on it.

MR. PANAGORE: Before you, Mr. Chairman and board members, you have a proposed resolution to the board nominating Capital Auto Complex, LLC as tentative developer of the property. And the further items 3, 4, and 5 would be the process we'd follow through after. In the event a designation is made we'd come back to the board within or by 120 days if we're able to reach agreement for an initial approval of a disposition agreement. If you have any questions Glenn is here to answer any questions of the board on this matter.

COMMISSIONER SIERRA: I did have questions regarding that. Is there a plan that has already been adopted? I saw a soft cost of a survey. Is that done yet or to be done?

MR. VALENTI: We have a plan here of the site that you're referring to. This is the entrance here onto Liebert Road, directly across the street. We're scheduled to purchase two parcels from Tony March, formerly Mazda and Mitsubishi dealership, currently vacant. Euro Performance Cars, Inc. actually owns VW West Hartford which is at the corner of New Park and Flatbush Avenue. In September of '07 the State of Connecticut took the dealership under eminent domain for the proposed bus station for the New Britain Hartford busway. So since November 2007 we've been renting month-to-month from the State of Connecticut Department of Transportation. And they would like us to relocate.

We had found another location in the area. It didn't work out after six or seven months of trying. That location had a lot more parking, was a much larger site. The parcels across the street from this only total roughly 2 acres. And Volkswagon of America has optimistic plans to triple their sales in ten years. And they're currently starting construction on a facility in Chattanooga, Tennessee so they can build cars in the U.S. So in appointing us a dealer in Hartford in relocating from West Hartford they want to be sure we have sufficient space and capacity for their future needs. And that brings us to the parcel across the street which we would use for employee parking, parking for vehicles that get returned to us off lease from customers, loading and unloading of car carriers in the rear portion of the lot, and also any excess new car inventory that builds up across the street would flow onto this site.

COMMISSIONER SIERRA: I was looking at this early this morning, there's a couple of things I'd like to ask. It seems to me you're going to be putting a fence around it; is that correct?

MR. VALENTI: Yes.

COMMISSIONER SIERRA: You also have something in here, \$15,000 is going to be dedicated to a security system. What type of security system are you proposing?

MR. VALENTI: Cameras.

COMMISSIONER SIERRA: Those cameras would be monitored through the main office across the street?

MR. VALENTI: I'm not sure how they would be monitored. I don't currently have cameras.

MR. PANAGORE: Is that a big concern the board would be looking at during the designation period?

COMMISSIONER SIERRA: Only because it's a piece of property that's isolated. I wonder how lighting is going to be.

MR. VALENTI: We are lighting it.

MR. GEATHERS: Lighting is shown on the plan.

MR. VALENTI: We currently have cameras at other dealerships, but they're not monitored offsite. They're set up with a recording system onsite. I don't have any experience with monitoring cameras. But if that is what is customary in the area that is what we would do. The site is a short distance from the police headquarters.

MR. GEATHERS: And the actual parking lot site entrance is across the street from the service entrance and the corner of Jennings Road, the old Liberty Mazda center. And as you know, we just moved Liberty Mazda across the highway.

MR. VALENTI: There's also an extra showroom on the property that would allow us to acquire another brand which we are looking to do.

COMMISSIONER SIERRA: I believe there's another property under the sign there, under the billboard.

MR. GEATHERS: That's the old Mazda dealership.

COMMISSIONER SIERRA: Open up to discussions, commissioners.

MR. GEATHERS: We are recommending approval.

COMMISSIONER SIERRA: A lot of people have called on that piece of property, but nothing really ever seemed to pan out. But this seems to be the best fit for it.

MR. GEATHERS: During the tentative developer period we'll be updating the environmental study. It's about ten years old.

COMMISSIONER SIERRA: That piece of property was actually a golf driving range. So I'm sure there's a couple of golf balls still there. Might find some Titleists. Any other discussion? Okay, I guess we'll put it to a vote. Somebody like to make a motion? Here we go: Resolution to grant approval of a licensing agreement for -- I'm sorry, resolution approving the selection of Capital Auto Complex, LLC as tentative developer for 106 Liebert Road in the North Meadows Industrial and Business Project.

COMMISSIONER ARENA: Second.

COMMISSIONER SIERRA: All in favor?

Any objections? So that passed then.

The motion to approve a resolution approving the selection of Capital Auto Complex, LLC as tentative developer for 106 Liebert Road in the North Meadows Industrial and Business Project was passed 4-0.

MR. PANAGORE: Thank you very much.

B. Sigourney/Homestead Project,

1. Consideration of a resolution granting approval of a license agreement or equipment and material storage for Coastline Construction Corporation at 140 Homestead Avenue.

MR. PANAGORE: Judy, would you make the presentation?

MS. REYNOLDS: At the November meeting the agency granted approval of a license agreement by Coastline Construction. We anticipated that the site would be cleared and the building would be demolished in December. However, the demolition contractor did not apply in a timely fashion. And that building will not be demolished before the end of the year.

COMMISSIONER SIERRA: I'm sorry, if you could just hold on one second.

COMMISSIONER CASARES: I'm going to have to break out of here.

MR. PANAGORE: Ed, if you could hold on just, just a minute.

COMMISSIONER CASARES: I have one more interview to conduct, and I'm running two minutes late. They're on a tight schedule here.

COMMISSIONER SIERRA: In light of the fact he's going to have to leave in two minutes I guess we're going to have to table this one.

MR. MCGOVERN: That's going to cause a major problem.

COMMISSIONER ARENA: Why is this property being held up?

MS. REYNOLDS: It's being held up because the demolition contractor did not apply in a timely basis. Coastline Construction which needs a place to stage for the MDC sewer project is going to be left out in the cold.

COMMISSIONER ARENA: What condition?

MS. REYNOLDS: He assures me it will be meticulous, and anything disturbed will be replaced. And it will be left exactly the way it's found.

COMMISSIONER ARENA: Is there some kind of security deposit of some sort in case that has to be redid that way?

MR. BARE: We don't typically take one.

MS. REYNOLDS: We think this will be approximately three weeks.

COMMISSIONER ARENA: So the 12 months is just something you're doing just in case.

MS. REYNOLDS: That's standard.

COMMISSIONER SIERRA: In light of the rush I'm under I'm going to put this to a vote, because we're going to lose our quorum if we don't. Whereas resolution granting approval of a license agreement for equipment and material storage with Coastline Construction Corporation for 140

Homestead Avenue in the Sigourney/Homestead Project. Do I have a second?

COMMISSIONER ARENA: I second.

COMMISSIONER SIERRA: Any objections? Motion passes.

The motion to approve a resolution granting approval of a license agreement for equipment and material storage with Coastline Construction Corporation for 140 Homestead Avenue in the Sigourney/Homestead Project passed 4-0.

COMMISSIONER SIERRA: That's fine. That's all set for him then. Appreciate you hanging in there for us, Ed.

COMMISSIONER CASARES: Thanks a lot.

COMMISSIONER SIERRA: Safe travels, Ed.

MR. PANAGORE: I believe at this juncture the meeting not having a quorum could continue for the purposes of discussion, but no action could be taken to receive reports and discuss.

III. Projects in Planning

A. Parkville Municipal Development Plan

1. Introduction of the Draft Parkville Municipal Plan

COMMISSIONER SIERRA: Did we want to go back to the Parkville and discuss that, or did you want to table that?

MR. PANAGORE: If the board wishes staff is here to provide an overview to the board.

COMMISSIONER SIERRA: To be honest with you I'd like to hear it, unless you want to table until you feel have more of the commissioners here.

MR. MCGOVERN: At the January 8 public hearing we're going to have our consultant here to make a more formal detailed presentation similar to what Phil Michalowski has done; different consultant. But that

hearing would run similar to what the others. Today we were just going to refresh people's memories, answer general questions about what you have in front of you, set the agenda, go over the boundaries and goals, et cetera. If you'd like to go ahead we can do it.

COMMISSIONER SIERRA: Why don't we have that done?

MR. O'BRIEN: Members of the commission, Roger O'Brien, Director of Planning. I know several months ago you got the executive summary which is a nice little summary. So this is the short little executive summary that puts you into the ballpark.

Again, this is a community based planning effort led by the Parkville community group. It goes back several years now. It is an area of Parkville adjacent to I-84, down through Hartford, and extending to Flatbush Avenue. It addresses such issues as --

If members of the board recall trucks going along Park Street have a hard time getting underneath that bridge overpass. And that does present somewhat of a problem in terms of keeping the industrial area there. And trucks often have to take a circuitous route around. So the Parkville business district has been working on that. And one of the strategies that came up in addressing this, and a number one goal in this plan was to run a roadway underneath 84 and down to Flatbush Avenue, which would provide a direct access into the area, but also accomplish a second strategic economic development objective which is to open up land off Flatbush for further development.

The goals of the plans have achieved a tremendous boost recently when the economic development division was able to bring off the relocating of the metal dealer that was there to the North Meadows. I'm sure you're familiar with that deal. And Mark, that's about to take place any day now if I recall.

MR. MCGOVERN: They've already executed the 25-year lease for that property and the Advo property. It will take them 18 months, at least, to relocate.

MR. O'BRIEN: This plan builds on that. We're capitalizing on one success and moving forward. So with that success of relocating that business it would transform that area. So in some regards we're dealing with an industrial area and making improvement, but also recommending opening up an area opposite Flatbush for further extension of the Charter Oak Marketplace.

So overall there's roughly \$20 million plus or minus designated for various projects. All of the money would be state money. If this plan was approved and went forward it would then require the commissioner of DEDC to ask the governor to put on the bond commissioner's agenda specific projects. The first project would be the road extension, believing that's the most pivotal; then a series of other projects located in your executive summary; creating improved parking areas, improved signage. We will go through nine or ten. Gerry?

MR. MAINE: I believe it's ten.

MR. O'BRIEN: When we come back through for the public hearing in January we'll go through each one for you. That's a general broad overview.

There was a project several years ago which is something the Parkville neighborhood undertook themselves called "Picture It Better Together." And this came out of that. And the state legislature gave the City of Hartford a grant to prepare the application. So the good thing about this program is the monies were made available from the state. It's been heavy community and stakeholder involvement in partnership with the city. And it's going to capitalize on things you folks are already doing. We're excited about it. We hope you're as excited about it. It's a little different procedure than the three development projects you approved. It goes a different approval route, but ultimately this board would be managing the project.

Gerry, did you want to say anything at all that I left out?

MR. MAINE: Bartholomew Avenue, the end closer to Park Street has been totally rejuvenated. The work that has gone on in those old industrial buildings is amazing. There's lofts, people living in the lofts. They have been very involved in this plan. They're very excited about

extending Bartholomew Avenue all the way down to Flatbush Avenue. That opens up a lot. A few years ago we had a federal grant to do that planning around the bus stations where the busway goes through, which goes right through the area. We have here three stops; along Park Street, up at Stop & Shop, and

New Park Avenue. There was a meeting about the busway last night. Someone from DOT was there. He said they're going forward. They've gotten a lot of bad press lately, but they're going forward.

We had a grant from DEP to fix up Pope Park. There's a lot of good things in this. And next month the consultant will be here to give a much more detailed explanation of it. Thank you.

COMMISSIONER SIERRA: Just something for the record; on Bartholomew there's a restaurant called Barca, b-a-r-c-a. It's great. \$10 buys you a great meal. I love development in the city of Hartford. There's furniture outlets and artwork in that building, a lot of positive things going on on that street.

MR. MAINE: Barca, most of the tables came from the basement. They recycled a lot of stuff from the basement.

COMMISSIONER SIERRA: Beautiful artwork.

MR. MAINE: In the other building they have Pilates and yoga classes.

COMMISSIONER SIERRA: I believe Phil San Antonio has a factory there. It makes curtains. It's impressive. I'm excited about that street, and excited about this project.

MR. O'BRIEN: The City of Hartford was involved years ago, about five or six now, doing a side grant for the Veradyne (phonetic) building. The financing plan came in for that. It had one value. Three years ago they refinanced. And every time they refinance -- The value of the building was listed at 10 million. They recently refinanced, and the bank is listing the building at 17 million.

MR. MAINE: Arbor Street is also included in this, not just Real Art Ways, but that whole building, a lot of artists. Those owners have put a

lot of money in the Real Art Ways building; new windows, new heating system.

COMMISSIONER SIERRA: Any other questions?

MR. MCGOVERN: I'd like to make a comment if I could to the board. I'd like to publicly thank Gerry Maine for all his work on this project. It's been a multi year effort on this project working with the state department of economic development. And Gerry is retiring. This is his last month here with the city. I feel badly that we didn't get this out and approved prior to December 31, 2008. But I'd like to say thank you for your good hard work on this project, not only on this project, but what you've done for the city.

MR. MAINE: I'll come to the hearing. I spent so much time on this one.

MR. O'BRIEN: He's my main guy.

V. Executive Director's Report

COMMISSIONER SIERRA: What else do we have on the agenda? Did we discuss the Homestead Project? We already did that. So that's done. The executive director's report is now next in line.

MR. PANAGORE: Since we're out of session when we're receiving reports there's no action to bring before the board this evenings. For this evening's executive director's report I have nothing to share except I have enjoyed becoming acclimated to the department these last two months.

MR. MCGOVERN: The three redevelopment plans were introduced to the city council Monday night, referred to the economic development committee as expected. They will hear that on January 6. In all likelihood it will be up for discussion at the next redevelopment meeting.

COMMISSIONER SIERRA: How has your transition been?

MR. PANAGORE: Very good. I think we're starting to make headway in terms of the way we're working as a team internally. And I think moving these four plans along is critical. I see these plans as moving forward on what was done on the

Greenberg plan, the tridents. The department is a very good working team. I think you're going to see as you go forward better integration of the department.

COMMISSIONER SIERRA: Any other business to discuss at this time? Anybody make a motion for adjournment?

MR. PANAGORE: I believe you're already out of session.

VI. Adjournment

The meeting was concluded at 5:40 p.m.

Respectively submitted



David B. Panagore
Director/Secretary