

HARTFORD REDEVELOPMENT AGENCY

REGULAR MEETING

APRIL 2, 2009

**PLAZA LEVEL CONFERENCE ROOM
260 CONSTITUTION PLAZA
5:00 PM**

JOURNAL

CHAIRMAN CASARES: Good evening, everybody. Welcome to the Hartford Redevelopment Agency regular meeting, today, April 2, 2009 in the plaza level conference room, 260 Constitution Plaza.

I. Roll Call

CHAIRMAN CASARES: First item, roll call: Commissioner Arena is absent.

CHAIRMAN CASARES is here. Commissioner Harris is not here. Commissioner Leonard-Woods?

COMMISSIONER LEONARD-WOODS: Present.

CHAIRMAN CASARES: Commissioner Lopez-Hernandez?

COMMISSIONER LOPEZ-HERNANDEZ: Present.

CHAIRMAN CASARES: Commissioner Sierra?

COMMISSIONER SIERRA: Here.

CHAIRMAN CASARES: Commissioner Bonafonte is not here. We do have a quorum.

II. Approval of the Minutes of the March 12, 2009 Regular Meeting

CHAIRMAN CASARES: Next on the agenda is approval of the minutes of the March 12, 2009 regular meeting. In your packages is a copy of the minutes. Has everyone had time to look them over? Any comments, corrections? Being none motion to accept the minutes.

COMMISSIONER SIERRA: Second.

CHAIRMAN CASARES: All in favor? Opposed? Abstentions? Motion passes.

The motion to approve the minutes of the March 12, 2009 regular meeting passed 4-0.

III. Projects in Execution

A. North Meadows Industrial and Business Project

1. Consideration of a Resolution Granting Approval of a License Agreement for Parking with Connecticut Performing Arts Partners for Tracts C-3a(1), C-3a(2), C-3a(3), and C-3a(4)\

MR. GEATHERS: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. This is our annual parking lot agreement with Connecticut Performing Arts Partners, the operators of -- this year -- the Comcast Theater, for use of four parcels in our North Meadows Project on New Road for the 2009 concert season. A copy of their tentative schedule is in your package, as well as the site map relative to the project.

As you recall, a couple of years ago we increased the parking out there to about 1500 vehicles as a result of doing work; cutting down trees, things of that nature, adding a retention pond. Subsequently, we increased the fee to \$10,575 versus the normal \$6700 they were paying prior to that.

With me tonight is James Sandler, who is counsel for the Meadows Music Theater; as well as Randy McArthur, who is the general manager for the Comcast Theater; and event manager, Joe Mooney, for the Comcast Music Theater. They will answer questions, but we are recommending approval.

COMMISSIONER SIERRA: Is there any specific reason why it went up in price?

MR. GEATHERS: We did improvement to the property back in 2007 where we took down trees; brought in fill, process aggregate; put in a retention pond to reduce flooding. As a result that produced an increase in parking space by about 500 cars. And that increased the license agreement.

COMMISSIONER SIERRA: The condition when they have they're responsible for cleaning it, making sure it's taken care of?

MR. GEATHERS: Under the agreement they are responsible for the day-to-day maintenance of this for the four- to five-month period they have it; from May to might be August or September. During the months they have it they're responsible for maintaining it, insuring it, and holding the city and redevelopment agency harmless.

COMMISSIONER SIERRA: The insurance papers have been filed?

MR. GEATHERS: They have to show us proof of that before we execute the agreement. That has been done in cooperation with corporation counsel.

CHAIRMAN CASARES: Mr Sandler, any comments?

MR. SANDLER: Only to express our appreciation for the continued availability of the parking, which the chairman knows is vital to the continued success of the venue. We believe it makes a contribution to the economic as well as cultural vitality of the city.

CHAIRMAN CASARES: Any other comments, questions? Like to submit a motion to adopt resolution granting approval of a license agreement for parking with the Connecticut Performing Art Partners for tracts C-3a(1), C-3a(2), C-3a(3), and C-3a(4) in the North Meadows I&B Project.

COMMISSIONER SIERRA: Second.

CHAIRMAN CASARES: All in favor? Opposed? Abstentions? Resolution passes. Thank you.

The motion to adopt resolution granting approval of a license agreement for parking with the Connecticut Performing Art Partners for tracts C-3a(1), C-3a(2), C-3a(3), and C-3a(4) in the North Meadows I&B Project passed 4-0.

2. Consideration of a Resolution Rescinding the Nomination of Capital Auto Complex, LLC as Tentative Developer for 106 Liebert Road

CHAIRMAN CASARES: Next on the agenda is consideration of a resolution rescinding the nomination of Capital Auto Complex, LLC as tentative developer for 106 Liebert Road.

MR. GEATHERS: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. At our December meeting the agency approved tentative developer status with regard to acquisition and development of 106 Liebert Road to be developed in conjunction with the old Liberty Mazda building at the junction of Liebert Road and Jennings Road. Capital Auto Complex, which is the former VW Motors of West Hartford and former Bill Barry Volkswagon, their property was acquired by the state in West Hartford as part of the Hartford to New Britain busway. As a result they had to move. They negotiated an agreement with Tony March to buy the property where the former Liberty Mazda was located. And now the new VW Motors is there as well. The land is still owned under a lease agreement by the Liebert family. The tie in for this project at the time was they needed additional land for parking and vehicle storage, which 106 Liebert Road was going to serve as that.

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During that time they actually bought the property and moved the dealership from West Hartford to Liebert and Jennings. In addition at that time they acquired the former Thomas Jaguar business and moved into the old Mitsubishi building, which they also purchased.

We got appraisals done. It came back at a figure of \$670,000. Subsequently, the owner got their own appraisal, and has come back with \$450,000. In addition to environmental work we are looking to do on the site we thought in order for them to not jeopardize their deposit they would withdraw without prejudice and work with us behind the scenes to come to an agreement on the land price and how that would tie into the environmental, things of that nature.

They're going to withdraw without prejudice. We're going to return their deposit, work with them on the issues of environmental and land price, as well as the actual financing for the project. They made it clear they're looking for a certain number relative to the land cost. We haven't gotten there yet. And the land cost would possibly be a deal breaker if they don't see the number. Without jeopardizing that and having their deposit go hard they decided to withdraw. And we'll work through the remaining issues.

He's going to finance the land acquisition as well as the construction of the lot; fencing, lighting, bringing it to parking lot standards. He's going to finance that out of pocket. He didn't think he'll get the financing elsewhere.

Once we decide to move forward we'll bring it back before you and move quicker.

COMMISSIONER SIERRA: Why wasn't there leeway instead of letting the money go hard?

MR. GEATHERS: They could have the option of asking for a waiver of the tentative developer policy at that time. As an agency we've only traditionally done that for nonprofits. They're a for-profit entity. Instead of taking that gamble they decided to pull out.

COMMISSIONER SIERRA: Does that prejudice us in any way to get that property up and running?

MR. GEATHERS: They're the only entity that's come before us in the last few years with interest in the property. They had an immediate interest. Some of that has gotten mitigated with regard to them purchasing the Mitsubishi property. But he still

has indicated to us that he needs that property, because they are negotiating on other parcels. And he still is looking to bring in two more dealerships with regard to that complex. A lot of things occurred during the tentative developer due diligence period; moving, trying to close on land. They still have expressed interest in the land.

MR. MCGOVERN: I just wanted to make a point. The major reason why is because the project he's working on now is different than the project he proposed to you four months ago.

COMMISSIONER SIERRA: Okay.

MR. MCGOVERN: He presented to the agency that he needed that additional space to satisfy the requirement of Volkswagon. Based on his acquisition of the dealership next door he has met Volkswagon's requirement and has opened up two dealerships. He may still want our property, but it's predicated on other dealerships.

COMMISSIONER SIERRA: If somebody else comes along and shows interest in the property we would move forward on that?

MR. GEATHERS: Absolutely, without prejudice. Tonight if this passes successfully, the resolution passes; technically we've severed our ties with him through the resolution process. And if someone comes to us tomorrow and has interest in the property technically we're open and interested to talk.

COMMISSIONER SIERRA: He's still in good standing to get the deposit back?

MR. GEATHERS: Yes. That's why they had to do it by this meeting. The 120-day period is ending, four months.

CHAIRMAN CASARES: Any questions? Like to put forward a motion rescinding the nomination of Capital Auto Complex, LLC as tentative developer for 106 Liebert Road in the North Meadows Industrial & Business Project. Is there a second?

COMMISSIONER SIERRA: Second.

CHAIRMAN CASARES: All in favor? Opposed? Abstentions? Motion passes.

The motion rescinding the nomination of Capital Auto Complex, LLC as tentative developer for 106 Liebert Road in the North Meadows Industrial & Business Project passed 4-0.

COMMISSIONER SIERRA: That property seems to be everybody's girl but nobody's sweetheart.

MR. GEATHERS: Property has been vacant since 1968.

COMMISSIONER SIERRA: There's been five or six developers. I was hoping it was going to get developed.

IV. Executive Director's Report

MR. PANAGORE: At the March meeting the board received a letter identifying an interest in 167 Warwarme Avenue from a partnership of ASF Construction / American Steel proposing a steel fabrication shop. At this time we're still working on the proposal. It is nearly complete, but not complete. And staff is providing assistance to the development team for meetings with state agencies and private financing. We mentioned we hoped to be before the board at this meeting. We now expect to be before the board for proposal and review at the May meeting if that's acceptable.

A couple other items so you're aware: Development services will have its city council budget meeting May 4 at 8 p.m. We have not identified any relevant redevelopment agency items to bring to your attention in the budget, in the capital budget. We have put forward capital related funding to the Parkville Municipal Development Plans, and the urban renewal plans. We are seeking now to find potential sources within the stimulus act to fund these activities. It's a challenge. The stimulus act was not designed for that, but there are opportunities working with the Metro Alliance and department of commerce in their EDA grant program. Right now those are in the capital improvement plan. They're not scheduled on a particular year. If we were able to identify stimulus dollars --

In the meantime we have talked to the finance department about the urban renewal plans, about selection of appraisers to do that work. That is a short-term cost to move the urban renewal plan forward. The critical question for the city would be to have sufficient capital ability if we do eminent domain or acquisition. We're going to move forward and keep updating the board on our progress on the plans. Our priority is the Downtown North urban renewal area.

In addition to that the Parkville MDP is scheduled to be introduced to the city council for final approval at the April 13 city council meeting.

One last item to mentioned, I'm informed that elections for the chairman and vice chairman, to be aware that would be needed at the July board meeting of the board. That concludes my executive director's report for this evening.

COMMISSIONER SIERRA: I was glad you hit that topic of the stimulus package. What are we as Hartford doing to ensure we get our fair share of the pie?

MR. PANAGORE: Right now we're tracking 43 active grants. The act itself is 407 pages long. We're tracking 43 of them. So far we have about nine formula grants we've been awarded. The city gets funding because of existing federal programs; community development block grants, funding for housing authorities, funding for emergency shelter grants, funding to the police department for public safety. These programs we've already gotten award letters on. But the stimulus act has competitive grants and funding that goes to the state and might wind up going to cities and towns, and funding that goes directly to cities and towns, and funding that goes directly to specific programs; Medicaid insurance, unemployment insurance.

In terms of that there are 12 city staff members meeting on a weekly basis, identifying grants, tasking folks. Everything is happening in a quick process. Even with the formula grant which you're essentially guaranteed to get you are still required to submit a plan to the relevant federal agency. It's very much on the fast track.

There's a lot of reporting, transparency, bureaucracy around this. We're working with the finance department. Public safety complex, workforce development, public improvement, streetscapes, school construction, and economic development; these are the mayor's priority. We're trying to seek discretionary programs, competitive programs that would allow us to seek funding. There are two or three programs that may allow us to seek funding for the public safety complex.

There's money that we're getting for things that we did not anticipate. The federal government has identified \$1.5 million for Hartford for emergency shelter grants for families whose homes have gone into foreclosure, they might go on the street. Great program, good idea, not something we were anticipating money for. We're partnering with Journey Home, CRT, Community Workforce, others in the community. So it's a very robust activity and a lot of moving pieces across the city.

COMMISSIONER SIERRA: Did your office put someone in charge of that? It doesn't happen every year.

MR. PANAGORE: Every city in the U.S. is required to have a single point of contact.

And the mayor appointed me to be the single point of contact. But the work is being done by a lot of staff. So in essence I'm playing traffic cop. there's at least a dozen people working on that.

V. Other Business

CHAIRMAN CASARES: Any public comment?

VI. Adjournment

CHAIRMAN CASARES: Motion to adjourn is in order. Is there a second?

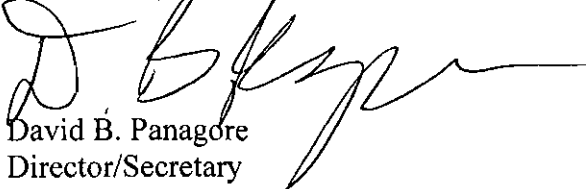
COMMISSIONER LEONARD-WOODS: Second.

COMMISSIONER CASAERES: All those in favor? Opposed?

The motion to adjourn the meeting passed 4-0.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:25

Respectively submitted,



David B. Panagore
Director/Secretary