

**REDEVELOPMENT AGENCY
AUGUST 18, 2011, 7:30 A.M.
LINCOLN CENTER HEARING ROOM**

Members Present:	Tim Devanney, Chair	Bob Schneider, Vice Chair
	John Topping	Barbara Weinberg
	Michael Darby	Gary Sweet
	Aaron Ansaldi	Aaron Wlochowski
	Michael Farina	Jim Perras

Also Present: Scott Shanley, General Manager
Mark Carlino, Director of Public Works
Gary Anderson, Senior Planner
Judith Schuberth, Senior Administrative Secretary

Chairman Devanney began the meeting by welcoming the Agency's newest member, Jim Perras. Agency members introduced themselves. Mr. Perras said he is a lifelong Manchester resident and is excited to be serving the community as a member of the Agency.

Adoption of Minutes of August 4, 2011

Ms. Weinberg moved to adopt the minutes as written. Mr. Schneider seconded the motion and all members voted in favor.

Possible Bond Question for Edgerton Street Culvert/Center Springs Park Expansion

Mr. Carlino requested this item be postponed until General Manager Shanley arrived. The Agency agreed to move to item 3 of the agenda.

Priorities Workshop

Mr. Anderson said the purpose of this exercise was to address a request from Ms. Bogli to review the Agency's priorities. He began by reviewing the Agency's charge and its progress to date in implementing the Broad Street Redevelopment Plan. Mr. Anderson suggested the major implementation activities the Agency is currently engaged in are:

- Parkade demolition
- Parkade developer solicitation
- Activities related to the Nichols estate properties
- Creation of Bigelow Brook Greenway and extension of Center Springs Park
- Broad Street reconstruction
- Creation of signs and public information

In response to a slide highlighting Phase I activities outlined in the redevelopment plan, Mr. Farina asked what progress has been made in packaging possible financial incentives for a potential developer of the Parkade. Mr. Anderson said the Agency has not yet accomplished that task, but it could be accomplished in conjunction with other developer solicitation activities.

In terms of Parkade Demolition activities, Mr. Darby said completing Phase I and Phase II of the demolition was the top priority and the other members agreed.

Ms. Weinberg said determining interim uses could be a lower priority. Mr. Sweet disagreed and said the deed restrictions on the Parkade property could mean development will not occur for five years or more. He said the public will become frustrated with a large, vacant lot in such an important part of Town and that the Agency should think about possible interim uses between demolition and development. Ms. Weinberg said she feared if temporary recreational or other public assets were included as interim uses, they could be viewed as permanent by some members of the community. Future efforts to redevelop the property could be viewed by some as taking existing assets away.

Mr. Darby said he did not think finding interim uses for the site was imperative. Chairman Devanney said he did not believe the Town would own the property for five years so he does not believe any interim uses would be needed. Mr. Sweet reiterated that with land covenants in place any development will be delayed and people will become dissatisfied with an empty lot.

At 7:50 a.m. Mr. Shanley arrived and apologized for his delay. The Agency agreed to move back to agenda item 2.

Possible Bond Question for Edgerton Street Culvert/Center Springs Park Expansion

Mr. Shanley said he wanted to address the possible bond referendum question for the Edgerton Street culvert and Center Springs Park, including why the question was being considered for this fall and how staff and the Board of Directors arrived at the \$1.5 million figure. He said when the Agency voted to include \$2 million in Broad Street Bond funds for the Broad Street reconstruction project earlier this year, he and the Board of Directors also committed to finding additional future funding for the Agency's priorities within the Broad Street Redevelopment area. He said this portion of the bond question is intended to repair the Edgerton Street culvert and begin work towards extending Center Springs Park to Broad Street.

Mr. Shanley said the Board of Directors has made it clear that repairing the Edgerton Street culvert is a priority. He said the Board will include funding for that work in the Public Works bond. The estimated cost of only repairing the culvert is \$700,000. However, Mr. Shanley said, that drainage work would be less expensive if it were paired with work that would grade down the rail line and allow the culvert to be "daylighted." Cutting down the rail line would also facilitate a connection between Broad Street and Center Springs Park, as called for in the Broad Street Redevelopment Plan. He said the additional \$800,000 of the \$1.5 million would be used for improvements for the park extension. These dollar amounts are based on the engineering concept plans presented to the Agency and Parks and Recreation Advisory Board and include some additional funds for land acquisition. He said the Board would like guidance from the Agency as to whether the referendum should include this additional \$800,000. If the Agency decides it is not ready to receive funds for the park expansion, the Board would only include the \$700,000 for the culvert work.

Mr. Topping said he was concerned that \$1.5 million is not an accurate figure and \$2 million is a more accurate amount needed to complete the project. Mr. Shanley said that without more specific design plans, it would be difficult to include more than the \$800,000 for the park at this time.

Mr. Farina said he has issues with the process for developing the \$1.5 million number and felt a newspaper article on the subject unnecessarily built up the public's expectations for what \$1.5 million could accomplish. However, he said, doing both projects at the same time does make sense and he did not want the Agency to miss an opportunity to fund at least a portion of the park extension. Although the situation is not ideal, he said the Agency should move forward. Mr. Farina asked where the money would have come from to fix the culvert if the park extension was not an issue. Mr. Shanley said it would still have appeared in a referendum question, most likely in the public works bond.

Mr. Darby said although the \$800,000 is likely not enough to complete the park extension, he felt the Agency needed to provide the Board of Directors a unified message. He said while work still needed to be done in terms of where exactly the park entrance would be, the \$800,000 would be a good start and that the Agency appreciates the Board's support in implementing the Redevelopment Plan.

Mr. Perras asked what the consequences of not completing the culvert work in a timely manner would be to residents on Edgerton Street. Mr. Shanley said residents would continue to be inconvenienced by having to take a more indirect route into and out of the neighborhood. Mr. Perras asked if there would be a large difference in cost if the culvert work was put off. Mr. Carlino said it was likely costs would be similar, but that doing the projects together would allow the town to save perhaps hundreds of thousands of dollars on the culvert work.

Mr. Schneider asked Mr. Shanley what the highest amount the Town has ever included in a bond referendum was. Mr. Shanley said \$12 million would be the most if all the projects currently being considered are included. The current list of projects is long, including things like the culvert work and repairing the Spring Street bridge.

Mr. Sweet asked about the cost of the planned extension of the Charter Oak Greenway from Wyllis to Porter Street. Mr. Carlino said that project will cost approximately \$400,000, which includes design, construction and inspection. Mr. Sweet said the Agency should be concerned with how to fill the shortfall if \$1.5 million does not end up being enough to complete the culvert work and park extension. He asked about the possibility of securing federal or state funds for that purpose. Mr. Shanley said the Town can pursue state and federal funds in the future, but a clear and defined concept plan will be needed.

Mr. Shanley said the Agency's prioritization exercise will be important in conveying major priorities to the Board of Directors. The Board could then support a priority like the park expansion possibly by completing smaller pieces of the larger project over the coming years.

Mr. Topping said it is important the Agency and Board of Directors make it clear that the \$1.5 million would fix the culvert and accomplish some major pieces of the park extension, but would likely not be enough to complete the entire park project.

The Agency asked Mr. Shanley when he would need a recommendation. Mr. Shanley said that he would prefer the Agency make a recommendation today based on the time it takes for bonding referendums to be reviewed and approved. The Agency agreed to vote on the issue after executive session.

Executive Session to Discuss Possible Broad Street Real Estate Transactions

At 8:23 Ms. Weinberg moved to go into executive session for the purpose of discussing possible Broad Street real estate transactions. Mr. Sweet seconded the motion and all members voted in favor.

The Agency came out of executive session at 9:02 a.m. No decisions were made.

Possible Bond Question for Edgerton Street Culvert/Center Springs Park Expansion (continued)

Mr. Sweet asked if the \$1.5 million would accomplish the grading work to bring down the rail line between the Redevelopment Area and park, fix the culvert problem through “daylighting” the brook, construct a roadway and multi-use path from Broad to Edgerton Street and complete the associated landscaping work. Mr. Carlino said the \$1.5 million should accomplish those goals according to current estimates.

Mr. Farina moved that the Agency support including a \$1.5 million bond question for repair of the Edgerton Street culvert and work related to an extension of Center Springs Park to Broad Street.

Mr. Farina asked Mr. Carlino how the bond question is currently worded. Mr. Carlino said there are several iterations at this time and once the Agency decides whether to pursue the additional funding for park expansion it would then be reviewed by the Town’s bond counsel.

Mr. Sweet asked if the bond question could be worded so voters will understand that the \$800,000 will only accomplish a portion of the project and not the entire park project. He said the wording of the question should indicate the funds would be used toward getting the project started. Mr. Carlino said he would provide bond counsel and the Board of Directors the request and language for review.

Mr. Farina withdrew his motion.

Mr. Sweet moved that the Agency support including \$1.5 million in this fall’s bond referendum to be used to repair the Edgerton Street culvert and towards creating a connection between Center Springs Park and Broad Street. Ms. Weinberg seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously, 8-0. Mr. Darby and Mr. Wlochowski were not present for the vote.

Mr. Sweet voted to adjourn. Ms. Weinberg seconded the motion and all members voted in favor. The meeting adjourned at 9:23 a.m.