

**REDEVELOPMENT AGENCY
SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES
MARCH 28, 2011, 7:30 A.M.
LINCOLN CENTER HEARING ROOM**

Members Present: Tim Devanney, Chairman Phil MacVane
 Robert Schneider Thomas Tomko
 Terry Bogli Sue O'Connor
 Barbara Weinberg Gary Sweet
 John Topping Mike Darby
 Michael Farina Aaron Wlochowski
 Aaron Ansaldi

Also Present: Scott Shanley, General Manager
 Mark Pellegrini, Director of Neighborhood Services
 and Economic Development
 Gary Anderson, Senior Planner

Discussion of the Broad Street Reconstruction Project Status

Mr. Schneider made the following motion:

In the spirit of community partnership, even though many believe that the Broad Street reconstruction should be re-prioritized due to the recent successful events and developments that this Redevelopment Agency has accomplished over the last 27 months, I move that the RDA, even though reluctantly, approve an allocation from the November 2009 \$8,000,000.00 referendum question of \$500,000.00 for the Broad Street reconstruction project in question. The balance needed to match the requested \$2,000,000.00 should be garnered from other revenue bearing sources, examples such as the Town of Manchester General Fund, Board of Education Fund and/or the Sanitation Fund. Or whatever other funds may be applicable.

This is a town wide community effort to “clean up” the Parkade area thus all community entities and assets should be financially employed in this huge challenge. The total financial burden should not be shouldered by one agency whose community expectations of them are to enhance and wisely and prudently properly use the funds that were entrusted to them.

Mr. Topping seconded the motion for discussion.

Mr. Darby asked Mr. Shanley to provide an update on the Broad Street reconstruction project in order to frame discussion on the motion.

Mr. Shanley said the reconstruction of Broad Street has been the top priority of the Board of Directors for several years. Approximately five years ago, the State provided the

Town with a \$400,000 grant to complete engineering plans for the reconstruction. The State Legislature subsequently approved two separate \$2 million appropriations for construction of the project. These funds, however, were never put on the Bond Commission Agenda by then-Governor Rell and so were not available to the Town. At one point Governor Rell moved to eliminate the \$4 million, but the Legislature passed a separate, \$3 million appropriation for the project.

Mr. Shanley said he and representatives of the Board, the Agency, and other Town staff met with the Governor's staff in August 2010 to encourage the Governor to place the item on a Bond Commission agenda.

A week ago, Mr. Shanley said he received a call from the State Office of Policy and Management (OPM) asking if the project was ready for bidding and if local funds to complete the project were available. He said he was asked to provide an answer to OPM as soon as possible. Mr. Shanley arranged a meeting with Mr. Devanney, Mr. Schneider, Mayor Spadaccini and Deputy Mayor Diana. Mr. Schneider could not attend. He said the Board members supported telling OPM the funds needed to complete the project were available in the Redevelopment bond account. Mr. Devanney was asked about the Agency's comfort level with using \$2 million in Broad Street bond funds for this purpose, he said. Mr. Devanney called the Agency members to advise them of the situation and asked them their opinions. There was a difference of opinion among the members on using the local bond funds for the street project. In the end, the project did not end up on the March 25 Bond Commission agenda.

Mr. Shanley said the Broad Street bond was the only source of funds currently available for the reconstruction project. Also, he noted that street improvements were listed specifically in the referendum question as items for which the bond money could be spent and the Broad Street reconstruction plans were indeed in the adopted plan. He said it is possible the infrastructure bond being considered for this November could include between \$1 million and \$2 million for Broad Street.

Mr. Schneider asked if the Broad Street reconstruction was still the Board's number one priority. Mr. Shanley said that until the Board instructs him otherwise, he considers it the priority.

Mr. Farina said he thought the motion on the floor was out of order because the posted purpose of the meeting was a discussion of the street reconstruction, not an action. He said the Agency should meet with Manchester's federal legislative delegation to seek money for the project in an upcoming appropriations bill. He said he would be in favor of using \$2 million in Broad Street bond funds for the street reconstruction project if it were replaced through a future bond referendum. Mr. Tomko asked if the situation Mr. Farina suggested could be guaranteed. Mr. Shanley said any referendum question is ultimately up to the voters. Mr. Shanley said the Mayor and Deputy Mayor indicated they would support adding funds for the reconstruction to the referendum question.

Mr. Wlochowski asked where the Town expected to get the additional \$2 million for the reconstruction project before the \$8 million Broad Street passed. Mr. Shanley said there was discussion of a separate public works bond referendum, but that idea was superceded by the redevelopment bond question.

Ms. Weinberg said all Manchester taxpayers are contributing to the Broad Street bond fund. She asked if it would be prudent to include \$2 million in the November public works road bond question if the State Bond Commission did not act by then. Mr. Shanley said the Board of Directors has final say on what is included in Town referenda.

Mr. Devanney said the Town would have essentially lost \$3 million from the State if the Broad Street funds were not used.

Several members said they did not feel they had all the facts about project and the details of the Bond Commission agenda until this discussion. Mr. Shanley said he regretted any miscommunication but it was necessary to get an idea of where the Agency stood on the issue before he responded to State officials.

Mr. Darby said although he has been uncertain in the past about spending Broad Street bond money on the street reconstruction before major redevelopment occurs, the Agency was charged with improving the entire Broad Street area and the street reconstruction is part of that charge. He said the Agency should not be responsible for turning down \$3 million in State funds. He also said the Board of Directors has been very supportive of all of the recommendations the Agency has made up to this point and said the Agency should support the Board on this issue.

Ms. Weinberg said the reconstruction of the street would be a great benefit to the town and it would not be practical to turn down \$3 million. She also said it was important for the Agency to speak with one voice on this issue. She urged Mr. Schneider to reconsider his motion.

Ms. Bogli said the Agency needs to move forward in a cohesive manner and that the street reconstruction, greenway and park connection could all be helpful in enticing one or more developers to Broad Street. She thanked the Chair, Vice Chair and General Manager for doing the best they could under difficult circumstances.

Mr. Tomko said he thinks the Agency's current priorities should be to demolish the Parkade buildings, clear and maintain the site, complete the form-based zoning regulations, and work to have the land use restrictions removed. He said he was concerned the Agency would run out of money and not be able to carry out its charge.

Mr. Farina suggested the motion on the table was out of order and should be struck from the record.

Mr. Schneider said he thought a master developer would want to redevelop the Parkade property before the street reconstruction was complete. He said the overhead power lines continue to be a large concern and burying them should be included in the reconstruction.

Mr. Shanley said Broad Street continues to deteriorate and the Town will have to repave the road at considerable cost, regardless of whether the streetscape reconstruction is completed. Mr. Ansaldi said he would not want to see the Town waste money by repairing the road instead of completing the street reconstruction. He said the current condition of the street would not be enticing to a developer.

Ms. O'Connor said reconstructing the street prior to redevelopment is not ideal, but timing would never be perfect. She said the Agency should trust its own leadership and Town staff regarding this issue. Mr. Topping said a developer may want to have input on where to put curb cuts on Broad Street. He also agreed with Mr. Tomko that the Agency should focus on getting the land use restrictions on the adjacent properties amended or removed. Mr. Sweet said the Agency should make its best guess as to how redevelopment will exist with a redesigned street and proceed from there.

Mr. Tomko asked what would happen if bids for the reconstruction came in higher than the \$5 million which would potentially be available. Mr. Shanley said that was unlikely because the Town has been receiving very favorable bids for road projects recently. If that did occur, however, he said the Town would either have to reduce the scope of work or find more money.

Mr. Tomko asked why the Town's state legislative delegation could not ask for more money to be placed on the bond agenda to cover the entire reconstruction cost and bury the power lines. Mr. Shanley said only the \$3 million already appropriated by the legislature could be bonded.

Mr. Topping moved to amend the motion on the floor to read as follows:

In the spirit of community partnership, even though many believe that the Broad Street reconstruction should be re-prioritized due to the recent successful events and developments that this Redevelopment Agency has accomplished over the last 27 months, I move that the RDA, even though reluctantly, approve an allocation from the November 2009 \$8,000,000.00 referendum question of \$2,000,000.00 for the Broad Street reconstruction project in question in the hope that sufficient monies will be added in order to complete the project.

Mr. Devanney seconded the motion.

Mr. Sweet called the question. There was no second.

Mr. Ansaldi said the best course of action at this time was not to take an official stance on the issue.

Ms. Bogli moved to table the motion and the amendment on the floor.

Mr. Darby seconded the motion and all members voted in favor.

Ms. Weinberg moved that the Agency support the use of \$2 million of Broad Street bond funds for the purpose of carrying out the Broad Street reconstruction project if it is required to match the \$3 million in funding from the State.

Ms. O'Connor seconded the motion.

Mr. Darby said the Agency does not have to vote on the issue at this time and should instead carefully look at the streetscape design in anticipation of this becoming an issue again.

Ms. Weinberg withdrew her motion.

Mr. Sweet moved to adjourn.

Ms. Weinberg seconded the motion and all members voted in favor.