

**REDEVELOPMENT AGENCY  
MEETING MINUTES  
NOVEMBER 3, 2016 – 7:30 A.M.  
LINCOLN CENTER HEARING ROOM**

Members Present: Terry Bogli, Secretary; Aaron Ansaldi, Michael Darby, Gary Sweet, Michael Farina, Louis Spadaccini, Tricia McMann, Aaron Wlochowski, Stephanie Knybel, Jim Williams

Members Absent: Timothy Devanney, Chair; Robert Schneider, Vice-Chair; Steve Carter

Also Present: Gary Anderson, Director of Planning & Economic Development; Kyle Shiel, Senior Planner; Katie Williford, Administrative Secretary

Adoption of Minutes of October 20, 2016

Mr. Sweet moved to adopt the minutes of October 20, 2016 as written. Ms. Knybel seconded the motion and all members voted in favor.

Executive Session to Discuss Real Estate Negotiations

Ms. Knybel moved to enter executive session at 7:34 a.m. to discuss real estate negotiations. Mr. Darby seconded the motion and all members voted in favor. The Agency came out of executive session at 7:45 a.m. No decisions were made.

Discussion of Proposed Rezoning Along Middle Turnpike West

Mr. Anderson explained that the discussion of rezoning along Middle Turnpike West arose because the owner of Center Motors approached the Planning and Zoning Commission (PZC) about proposed improvements to his property that the Form Based Zone (FBZ) regulations would not allow. The PZC discussed whether this stretch of Middle Turnpike West should be FBZ or possibly General Business based on the existing uses in the area, which include gas stations, a package store, Town Fair Tire, and banks. He said the PZC hoped to determine whether the FBZ was necessary and productive in this area, or if it was hindering businesses. The PZC wanted to hear the RDA's opinions because the area was within the Redevelopment Area.

Mr. Farina felt the zoning on Middle Turnpike closer to Broad Street and the Parkade area should not be changed because it was part of the Redevelopment Plan. He thought it would be acceptable to change the zoning for one outlying property whose owner was having difficulty developing his business because of burdensome requirements.

Mr. Sweet noted that the FBZ disallows drive-throughs, but the Mobil station on the corner and the car dealership next to it fit with an existing pattern of drive-throughs along Middle Turnpike. He agreed with Mr. Farina that there was no reason to inhibit what Center Motors could do, because that Mobil station would always be there as a gas station.

Mr. Farina asked if Center Motors could request a variance from the Zoning Board of Appeals. Mr. Anderson confirmed that they could, but the bar would be higher for that request to be approved.

Mr. Anderson suggested that the PZC could hold a workshop, and any RDA members who were interested in participating could attend.

The general consensus was that members did not see a problem with rezoning the Center Motors property. Mr. Anderson explained that the PZC was interested in the RDA's thoughts about rezoning properties further west. Mr. Farina said he felt strongly that the zoning for those properties should remain FBZ.

Mr. Darby asked for Mr. Anderson's opinion. Mr. Anderson thought the FBZ was critical for the Parkade pieces, and ideally these properties on Middle Turnpike West would be included in the FBZ as well. In reality, however, it was more likely that the auto uses on those properties would continue, and the FBZ regulations would make it more difficult for those businesses to make some types of improvements to their properties. Mr. Anderson thought the area could also be changed to General Business, but if the agencies involved were not sure a change should be made, then the zoning should stay as FBZ.

Mr. Williams raised the concern about the precedent set by making an exception for one property. Mr. Darby replied that Zoning Boards of Appeals do that frequently, and the property in question was an outlier.

Mr. Anderson said he would convey the Agency's input to the PZC. The PZC would then schedule a workshop and any RDA members who wished to be involved could attend.

#### Discussion of public information material regarding construction of Center Springs Park entrance

Mr. Shiel said construction of the park entrance would not begin until the fall of 2017 because Field Services was working on Charter Oak Park. He asked if the Agency wanted to do a press release about the park entrance construction.

Mr. Sweet asked if Fuss & O'Neill had done a rendering that could be given to the Journal Inquirer. Mr. Shiel said Fuss & O'Neill had done a plan view, and they could do a rendering for an additional \$3,000.

Mr. Anderson said when the park entrance was done, it would be visible, so a conceptual drawing was not necessary. He advised issuing press releases leading up to the park opening, but suggested that \$3,000 for a rendering might not be a good investment.

Mr. Sweet said a rendering would be important to get to the Journal Inquirer and Hartford Courant because they like to run that type of material. He thought people would be more likely to skip over a press release with no pictures.

Mr. Ansaldi suggested putting this project out to bid in the winter to get it done sooner. If the bids came in over budget, then Town staff could be used, he said. Mr. Anderson clarified that the construction project would be going out to bid in January; Town staff would be doing only some portions of the work in order to lower costs. Mr. Ansaldi asked if the whole project was being delayed for that reason. Mr. Anderson was unsure because he was not involved in those conversations, but he said he would get details from the Department of Public Works and add this topic as an agenda item for the next meeting.

Ms. Bogli asked if the consensus was that the RDA needed to promote the purchase of the property and the park entrance in some way. Mr. Wlochowski said the discussion should be tabled.

Mr. Williams asked if there were plans for a Center Street entrance to the park. Mr. Darby said he thought there were plans, but it was not within the Agency's charge. Mr. Anderson said the building on the corner of Center Street and Trotter Street would be demolished and there was an idea for a park entrance, but that was outside of the redevelopment area.

#### Other Business

Mr. Anderson said LWLP was willing to do a downtown strategic planning workshop, and he had relayed the Agency's interest in participating to the Special Services District Board of Commissioners. The workshop was expected to take place in the winter, he said.

Mr. Farina said that director Timothy Devanney, Jr., tabled Mr. Schneider's reappointment to the Redevelopment Agency during the November Board of Directors meeting. He said he thought that was a disgrace and asked Agency members to voice their support of Mr. Schneider's reappointment. There was a disagreement between Mr. Farina and Mr. Spadaccini. Mr. Anderson noted that if a member's appointment is tabled, that member still sits until a new appointment is made. Ms. Bogli said that Mr. Schneider was aware of this and that there was precedent for how this situation should be handled. Mr. Anderson suggested that Agency members who wished to voice their opinions on Mr. Schneider's reappointment should contact a member of the Board of Directors rather than discussing it at this meeting. Mr. Darby added that the Agency's strength was its bipartisanship, so it should stay out of the political process as much as possible. Mr. Sweet encouraged Agency members to speak their minds. Ms. Bogli reiterated that Agency members who wished to comment on Mr. Schneider's appointment should contact a member of the Board of Directors.

#### Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 8:26 a.m.