

CITY OF BRIDGEPORT
ECONOMIC and COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

and ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 18, 2011

6:00 PM

ATTENDANCE: Council members: dePara; Co-chair, A. Ayala, Lyons

NON-COMMITTEE: Council President McCarthy (sat in to make a quorum)
Council members: Baker, Brannelly, Walsh

OTHER(s): A. McGoldrick, Director, Central Grants;
V.Sorrentino

CITY ATTORNEY: Mark Anastasi

Co-chair dePara called the meeting to order at 6:08 pm.

Approval of Committee Minutes of September 20, 2011.

**** COUNCIL MEMBER AYALA MOVED TO ACCEPT THE MINUTES**
**** COUNCIL MEMBER McCARTHY SECONDED**
**** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

Co-chair dePara stated that the agenda would be taken out of order.

65-10 Grant Submission: re: 2011-2012 Dial-A-Ride Program.

Ms. McGoldrick stated this was a state program that provides transportation for seniors and persons with disabilities through Greater Bridgeport Transit who administers the program. They received an allocation of \$94,433 there's an in-kind match. The funds are used for recreational activities, such as; going to the theatre, restaurants and sports events. This year, they will use a portion of the funds towards trips to the grocery store.

Ms. Sorrentino added that appointments are organized around the program for group transportation. She explained that someone from the housing complex or senior center will get a group together and contact them for the transportation.

Council member Lyons asked what the in-kind match consisted of. Ms. McGoldrick said it consisted of the existing staff people who do the dispatching, which equates to the value of their salary and time contributed that they match.

Council member Lyons asked who to contact for ride information. Ms. McGoldrick said they could call the Recreation Department. She said she would provide the correct contact person.

Council member Walsh asked for more details about the in-kind match. Ms. McGoldrick explained that they use the value of salary for the coordinator and the value of the space used where they're housed to do administration. Everything is tracked and reported as contributory information. Council member Walsh asked if she could provide a breakdown of the value calculated at the next city council meeting.

Council member Lyons asked what the costs added up to. Ms. McGoldrick said the amount of \$89,433 is GBTA's cost for providing the service for the group transportation and \$5,000 goes back to the city.

Council member Baker asked if there was a limit on the number of trips they cover. Ms. McGoldrick said they work out the trips for the amount allocated.

Council member Baker asked how they determine who's eligible to use the service. Ms. Sorrentino said a group registration is required, not individual. Also, outreach is done to inform people of the service and a form is filled out to request a trip. They require 48-hour notice to reserve the transportation.

**** COUNCIL MEMBER McCARTHY MOVED TO APPROVE**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER LYONS SECONDED**

**** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

***Consent calendar**

133-10 Resolution concerning Bridgeport Community Land Trust Grant.

Council member Walsh said the resolution was drafted on behalf of a constituent for a group that has done work in his and other districts. He explained that this organization went out and obtained a grant and they're waiting for it to be signed by the city.

Robert Halsted, Director of Bridgeport Community Land Trust stated that a grant was approved in the amount of \$46k for community gardens for the next ten years. He said the city pays the expenses and they get reimbursed. He noted that an in-kind match applies. He went on to say that the BCLT and the DEEP agreed to let the Bridgeport Community Land Trust have five gardens in different locations throughout the city. They serve (350) people and he commented that the gardens are beautiful and appreciated by the city.

Council member Walsh clarified that they urged the administration to effectuate the steps to complete the contract.

Co-chair dePara asked if the \$46k grant was similar to the previous one they received years ago in the amount of \$158k. Mr. Halsted said it was fundamentally the same.

Co-chair dePara asked if there was a stipulation that the group had to raise a percentage to qualify for the funds. Mr. Halsted said it has to be in-kind hours. He stated to date in-kind hours totaled (750) hours.

Co-chair dePara asked if the organization needed to raise 35% of the total project cost, and for every dollar they receive, they have to raise .35 cents in-kind or actual cash. Mr. Halsted said that was correct.

Co-chair dePara asked if they used all the funds from the \$158k. Mr. Halsted said they used \$130k of the \$158k.

Co-chair dePara asked if the \$46k grant is for similar improvements to the existing or new gardens. Mr. Halsted said it would go towards new gardens. He said there was no city match. Ms. McGoldrick clarified that the City of Bridgeport acts as the fiduciary and there's an in-kind match.

Attorney Anastasi gave some background information about the grant. He stated there were misrepresentations of authority to submit the grant, so the CEO of the department worked with the leadership of the grant that were: John Wilkens and Sara Tunney. He felt that the sites were probably appropriate for the gardens, but they require the appropriate agreements and determination thereof. He thought they should continue the ongoing process already in place and he didn't feel a resolution was necessary. He

noted that the community gardens serve a good cause. However; he said the process is moving forward independent to see the organization end up where they want to end up.

Council member McCarthy asked Attorney Anastasi point blank if the Bridgeport Community Land Trust would receive the money. Attorney Anastasi said the short answer is they will see the gardens developed, but they need to see the operational terms worked through.

Mr. Halsted mentioned there were two persons that were no longer with the board. Co-chair dePara stated that fact brings in another issue then. Attorney Anastasi stated that they need to know who they're dealing with before they go forward.

Co-chair dePara stressed that it was clear there were a lot of questions and questionable entities, so he didn't feel comfortable moving forward tonight.

Council member Lyons commented that the community gardens benefit the community and having them is a good thing to teach kids about healthy nutrition. However, she didn't feel it was fair to waste Mr. Halsted's time. She said in view of the two board members that no longer serve on the board, they need to find out more information to assure that they are moving along properly to get the funds released.

Council member McCarthy requested an update from City Attorney Anastasi at the November city council meeting, to address the terms of the grant. Attorney Anastasi clarified that the matter concerns the Bridgeport Community Land Trust.

Council member McCarthy thanked Mr. Halsted for operating the farmers market at the old Waldbaum's every Friday.

Mr. Halsted said he has been in discussion with the city during the last month concerning the contract with the city, he said he spoke to Attorney Lisa Trachtenburg. Attorney Anastasi stated that Attorney Trachtenburg worked for him and he wasn't notified by her about that. Mr. Halsted said he was told by Attorney Trachtenburg that the contract will go forward.

Council member McCarthy repeated that they will receive a report at the November city council meeting.

Attorney Anastasi clarified on behalf of the CAO and the administration, there is an intent to see the matter come to fruition.

**** COUNCIL MEMBER McCARTHY MOVED TO TABLE WITH A REQUEST TO HAVE A REPORT SUBMITTED AT THE NOVEMBER CITY COUNCIL MEETING**
**** COUNCIL MEMBER LYONS SECONDED**
**** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

136-10 Grant Submission: re: 2011-2012 Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Grant (SNAP).

Ms. McGoldrick stated that this program is run by the state, it was formerly known as the food stamp program to assist low income families. The salary goes towards the case manager who fills out the form and they provide nutrition education. The grant is \$148,141 and no match is required. She noted that DSS administers the program.

Council member Lyons asked if they service many children and families. Ms. McGoldrick said yes and they also provide outreach and education.

Council member McCarthy asked if the funds were paid to administer the program and for outreach and education. Ms. McGoldrick said yes, a percentage is taken out for benefits.

**** COUNCIL MEMBER McCARTHY MOVED TO APPROVE**
**** COUNCIL MEMBER LYONS SECONDED**
**** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

***Consent calendar**

137-10 Grant Submission: re: 2011-2012 Social Services Block Grant (SSBG).

Ms. Sorrentino stated this was a social services block grant from The State Department of Social Services. The grant is a 6-month extension from October through March. She noted that hopefully, it will be funded in the future. The grant will fund three programs and it provides one ramp for one family. It's for two programs; the Disability Resource Center and for the Child Guidance Center.

Council member Lyons commented that covering only one family was disappointing, since there are so many families in Bridgeport in need.

**** COUNCIL MEMBER LYONS MOVED TO APPROVE
** COUNCIL MEMBER AYALA SECONDED
** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

***Consent calendar**

138-10 Grant Submission: re: Connecticut State Library for a 2012 Historic Documents Preservation Grant Program.

Ms. McGoldrick stated this was a grant to the Town Clerk's Office for the purpose of archiving all the maps on file; they will be computerized on digital files. The grant is \$9,000 and there is no in-kind match. They contracted the service for a company to come in and process the micro film and for the purchase of a fireproof storage cabinet for the hard copy maps.

Council member Lyons commented that they need updated technology for a computerized map system.

**** COUNCIL MEMBER AYALA MOVED TO APPROVE
** COUNCIL MEMBER McCARTHY SECONDED
** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

***Consent calendar**

142-10 Resolution concerning free goods and services given to RCI Marine.

It was stated that Council members Baker and Walsh were the co-sponsors of the resolution.

Council member Walsh explained that the resolution came about when he read in the newspaper about the soil being removed from the Trumbull property, in relation to Steel Pointe. However, there was no mention of an amendment in the Land Disposition Agreement (LDA). He believed that the city should be reimbursed for the top soil and use of the location. He felt that if the taxpayers asked to pay for the project, the information wouldn't be known until the project was completed. He didn't feel they should be subsidized for something that there was no awareness of and that they agreed to do.

Council member Baker said he would like more details as to the nature of the contract that RCI Marine has with the city.

Don Eversley, Director OPED pointed out that all fifty acres are city property. He explained that they are moving the soil from one city property to another city property and the developer has purchasing rights to purchase the property if they meet the requirements of the LDA. The properties have developmental challenges and one property has issues with being a low property, so it needs to be raised a significant number of feet. Also, cleaner material needs to be planted on site to remediate contaminants. He noted that the Knowlton Street is the former Acme Shear site.

Mr. Eversley clarified that the soil is not being used on privately owned land, it's being used on public land and remediation depends heavily on a number of solutions to bring in clean fill and partially remediate the site, through securing state funds and grants. He stated that they will need much more resources to bring it forward, but it's a great start to bring in clean fill and truck it out of the city.

Council member Ayala asked if any of the soil that will be transferred to Steel Point is contaminated. He further asked if they could be ensured that won't happen. Mr. Eversley said the contractor O&G has more details about that. He added that there's actually very little that is clean and clear on Bridgeport properties, although this site isn't as serious as the PCB's found on some other sites. He said O&G has first hand information about those details. City Attorney Anastasi said whatever is transported will be determined to be fit and purposeful for the site. The soil has to pass the state DEP test – *he said he would provide the information to the council.*

Council member Ayala asked if RCI Marine would benefit from the transferred soil. He also asked what the cost would be to the city. Mr. Eversley said it's a joint development and what they're working on now is a public financing package to do the remediation.

Mr. Eversley explained that the project was designed years ago as a tax generating venture. He stated that reusing the soil is an opportunity to reduce the amount of resources to be put into remediation later on. Again, the site has to be raised because it floods and the school needs to get rid of it. If they don't do in now, for any future projects, they will have to bring it in. He felt this was the best way to go to avoid problems later on. He didn't think the project would result in any kind of cash benefit to RCI Marine.

Council member Lyons asked if the soil would aid the flooding issues. Mr. Eversley said yes, it will be used to address the flooding and for environmental purposes.

Council member Lyons asked what portion of Steel Point they were talking about. Mr. Eversley explained the he was referring to the location near the former power plant,

near the hay bales that were put up to prevent erosion; on the westerly side across the river from downtown.

Council member Lyons asked if they had to remove the soil and not put it on Steel Point, would there have been a cost to move it elsewhere. Mr. Eversley said probably, but he wasn't sure of the answer.

City Attorney Anastasi mentioned that tax incremental financing. Mr. Eversley clarified that there is property in the city that is unproductive. He said that currently, there are future opportunities for the city to capture more revenue and the idea is to move those properties into the direction where revenue can be generated.

Mr. Eversley stated that he will bring the committee's questions related to quality, quantity and value back to the committee with answers at a later date.

Council member McCarthy commented that the questions asked needed to be asked. He noted that it was a positive project, noting that the city has lost dollars for a long time and they would have had to pay for it in the long term. So anything that saves them going forward is a win-win situation.

Council member Brannelly asked what it would cost the developer to do it if the city didn't have the soil available. She further asked what the value of it was and what is the city's responsibility to do it. Mr. Eversley responded that he had a report on the quality of the fill, the amount and the value. He asked the committee to keep in mind that the property is city owned. He said he would personally take credit for stopping the transaction of giving the developer an exorbitant amount if necessary. He explained that the value is that the city continues to be the owner of the site, i.e., they're increasing the value of their own city property. He emphasized that they're improving and enriching a city property by doing this.

Council member Walsh commented that if all was going to projects like the Knowlton Street development, he wouldn't have a problem with it. But when they're making improvements to the property that the developer already has rights to and where the city will eventually pay; then he thought it results in the city incurring the cost on the back end.

Co-chair dePara called for a brief recess.

The meeting reconvened at 7:02 pm.

Council member Walsh said he always believed that the property where United Illuminating was located needed to be raised and he felt that was the responsibility of the developer if it wasn't otherwise contained in the LDA. He stressed that there are enough brownfields in the city to fill with soil, instead of unilaterally going to Steel Point. He stated that he thought the plan was to cap the property and put up buildings that don't require strong structural support. He mentioned this to speak to the matter of avoiding big box retail stores. Mr. Eversley said they have to put fill in no matter what's done. And given that it's not known what will be going in, the property has to be raised. Council member Walsh said he had a concern with it being done at the taxpayer's expense.

Council member Lyons stated that until she receives all the questions she had answered, she wouldn't vote in favor of the item.

Council member Baker questioned at what point does RCI Marine make a firm commitment in regard to site improvements. Mr. Eversley said the next project will be the infrastructure project to widen the roads, relocate utilities, separate and upgrade the sanitary sewer from the storm water sewer. It will be an approximately \$2 million project and he hoped to have a bid package out by the holidays, so that construction can begin during the spring. He emphasized that those are the things to be done to get the site ready. He stated that they were lucky enough to get a grant to see how the city can add value. He noted that right now, these properties have no value due to the pollutants and contaminants that exist. He reiterated that the department is scrambling to get it done. He noted that he will obtain the information and submit it to the co-chairs dePara and Curwen and the council members.

Council member Baker asked why they didn't consider moving the soil to another location. Mr. Eversley said he wasn't sure of the answer, but he thought that since excavation was going on, the question was asked who needed the fill. So the property was determined to have the greatest need. He noted that his question could be answered by the Public Facilities Department.

Council member Baker asked when the soil will be tested. Mr. Eversley said it's already been done per the requirement to have it tested while they're working on the property. He said it would be tested again when the work is completed – *he noted he will submit the information about testing.*

Council member Baker asked if they already found problem soil. And if new soil needs to be brought in, he asked who will pay for it. Mr. Eversley stated that he wasn't sure, but he will request more technical information about this.

**** COUNCIL MEMBER McCARTHY MOVED TO TABLE**

Council member McCarthy rescinded his motion to table to allow Co-chair dePara to address the matter.

Co-chair dePara posed the statement that while it may be easier to go into a suburban area, they will also encounter the “not in my background” mentality. He said whether it’s and environment or financial issue, it’s still a lot better than people may think. Mr. Eversley agreed that what Co-chair dePara said was correct. He added that suburban areas tend to have more challenges.

**** COUNCIL MEMBER McCARTHY MOVED TO TABLE**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER LYONS SECONDED**

**** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

143-10 Resolution concerning future development of Steel Point.

Council member Baker stated the previous item that was discussed raised some points regarding this item. He recalled that the project has been in the works for six years, and there have been many questions on different levels with no solutions or straight answers provided from the administration. He questioned at what point does the city move forward with the project. He stressed that he would like to take some information back to his constituents to give them some hope. He asked if there were any firm updates to report.

City Attorney Anastasi said Council member Baker’s frustration was shared by the administration, but it’s not a project that they can dictate a timeline on. He updated that the developers are attending trade shows etc., to put together their players and the information will be disclosed at the appropriate time. He pointed out that the matter is an extraordinarily confidential process. He deferred to Mr. Eversley who said it was important for the city council to receive Steel Point updates. He said they should receive the Inter-Local agreement during December or January, which will be an opportunity to ask questions. However, they are moving forward with the infrastructure project that will result in a huge financial outcome to the city. He felt that the value they were adding is to keep the city in the loop as much as possible and to track the progress they made years before. He said he anticipates an announcement of the first tenant possibly before

the holiday. He explained that as they devise the developer agreements, they like to have things tight as much as possible, but it's also crucial to have someone sign off on them.

Council member Lyons said she understood the timelines, but in view of the deflated economy, they need to make sure the proposed tenants are solid. She felt the city could still keep to their word of saying what they don't want on the property. She expressed that she wasn't pleased about waiting a few more years to see the project come to fruition. She stated that as a council, they should know ahead of time to have some insight of what's going on.

Council member McCarthy clarified that he unequivocally was against a Wal-Mart going in at Steel Point. He emphasized that he would do anything he could to stop it if it comes before the council. Mr. Eversley said with respect to large format retail, the plan footprints always showed it above the north of Stratford Avenue.

Council member Walsh recalled that he asked the developer to reconsider only four (4) retailers occupying 10,000 sq. ft. and it wasn't agreed to. He stressed that the developer always presented to the council that there would be an upscale mall on the site. Mr. Eversley responded that given the format of the combination of stores, for example; the Wal-Mart stores put in smaller cities...Co-chair dePara interjected to ask the committee to move on.

Council member McCarthy reiterated and he was adamant that he was totally against a Wal-Mart going in. He emphasized that it has to be a quality development with quality merchants. He said he would be okay with a quality mix of retail, but **absolutely no Wal-Mart** should go on the city's waterfront.

Attorney Anastasi stated for the record that a generic term wasn't agreed to, such as a Target. Council member McCarthy clarified once again, that he is **against** Wal-Mart specifically. He mentioned their less than positive history towards employees as one of the reasons he was against them going onto the site. Attorney Anastasi said that point was related to a social issue. Co-chair dePara interjected to ask the committee and other attendees to end the volatile discussion.

Council member Lyons stated that Bridgeport doesn't have a lot of prime land left that can stand out in history. She said when she visits other cities with quality retailers, she felt that having quality stores, boardwalks etc. would bring in people from outside of Bridgeport; especially with the convenient access to I-95. She compared the site to

resembling Block Island where people frequent these types of stores. She added that people coming into Bridgeport would also be in proximity to the downtown area.

Council member McCarthy made a promise that he will fight Wal-Mart coming in. He said he didn't feel it was smart to pass the resolution at this time.

Council member Lyons asked if they were able to draft legal terms to outline that the property should not be constructed for a Wal-Mart. Council member McCarthy thought they should wait until the Inter-Local project begins.

**** COUNCIL MEMBER McCARTHY MOVED TO TABLE
** COUNCIL MEMBER AYALA SECONDED
** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

ADJOURNMENT

**** COUNCIL McCARTHY MOVED TO ADJOURN
** COUNCIL AYALA SECONDED
** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

The meeting adjourned at 8:05 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Diane Graham
Telesco Secretarial Services

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Economic and Community Development
and Environment Committee
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