

**CITY OF BRIDGEPORT
ECONOMIC AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT
AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE
REGULAR MEETING
OCTOBER 21, 2014**

ATTENDANCE: Jack O. Banta, Co-Chair; Eneida Martinez-Walker, Lydia Martinez, Co-Chair, Richard DeJesus

OTHERS: Council Member Enrique Torres, Atty. Ed Schmidt, Max Perez, Ms. Gupta, Council Member Patricia Swain (6:30 p.m.)

CALL TO ORDER

Council Member Martinez called the meeting to order at 6:20 p.m. A quorum was present.

Approval of Committee Minutes of September 16, 2014.

**** COUNCIL MEMBER MARTINEZ-WALKER MOVED THE MINUTES OF SEPTEMBER 16, 2014.**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER DEJESUS SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF SEPTEMBER 16, 2014 AS SUBMITTED PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Approval of Committee Minutes of September 29, 2014 (Special Meeting)

**** COUNCIL MEMBER MARTINEZ-WALKER MOVED THE MINUTES OF SEPTEMBER 29, 2014.**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER BANTA SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF SEPTEMBER 29, 2014 AS SUBMITTED PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

133-13 Grant Submission re: State Office of Policy Management - Youth Services Prevention Grant for the Office of Neighborhood Revitalization Mentoring Program.

A staff member came forward and distributed some documentation on the youth services grants. This is for slightly over \$67,000, which will be given to the office of Neighborhood Revitalization for administration. The staff member explained that the groups were the Young Adult Police Commissioners, the Taylor Center and one additional group in the East End. The groups will select the number of youth that will participate in the program.

A brief discussion followed about how the funds were allocated by the State. The staff member explained that State Representative Clemmons had decided that this funding would be designated to the East End. Other State Representatives determined where their funding would go.

**** COUNCIL MEMBER BANTA MOVED TO APPROVE AGENDA ITEM 133-13 GRANT SUBMISSION RE: STATE OFFICE OF POLICY MANAGEMENT - YOUTH**

SERVICES PREVENTION GRANT FOR THE OFFICE OF NEIGHBORHOOD REVITALIZATION MENTORING PROGRAM.

**** COUNCIL MEMBER MARTINEZ-WALKER SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

169-13 Grant Submission: re Office of Housing and Urban Development for the Federal Promise Zone Designation Program.

Ms. Gupta came forward and explained that this was not a grant but a Federal designation. If Bridgeport is awarded the designation, it might result in additional points in future grant applications. This will not cost the City anything.

**** COUNCIL MEMBER MARTINEZ-WALKER MOVED TO APPROVE AGENDA ITEM 169-13 GRANT SUBMISSION: RE OFFICE OF HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT FOR THE FEDERAL PROMISE ZONE DESIGNATION PROGRAM.**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER BANTA SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

170-13 Grant Submission: re Connecticut State Library FY 2015 Targeted Grant for Historic Documents Preservation Program (Project #15219)

Council Member DeJesus asked if there were matching funds. Ms. Gupta said that there was not. Council Member DeJesus asked why this was being done. He was told that this makes the documents searchable on the computer. The grant will be for \$10,000.

Council Member Torres said that he had used the historic documents and they are in serious need of attention. He said that this was a good idea and more should be done.

**** COUNCIL MEMBER BANTA MOVED TO APPROVE AGENDA ITEM 170-13 GRANT SUBMISSION: RE CONNECTICUT STATE LIBRARY FY 2015 TARGETED GRANT FOR HISTORIC DOCUMENTS PRESERVATION PROGRAM (PROJECT #15219)**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER MARTINEZ-WALKER SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

171-13 Grant Submission: re State Department of Economic & Community Development - Office of the Arts for Supporting the Arts in Place Grant Program (Project #14448)

Ms. Gupta distributed copies of the grant information. This is the first time the City has applied for this. The staff is still discussing how this \$27,000 will be spent. The City will have a 100% match, but the City already spends this amount. This is not additional spending. Council Member Torres asked how they knew the City had been awarded the grant. Ms. Gupta said that this was for permission to accept the contract that comes with the funding. If the Committee does not approve, then the City will lose the money.

Council Member Swain joined the meeting at 6:30 p.m.

Council Member Martinez said that she would like to have the Council Members involved in the programs. Ms. Gupta agreed and said that she would have the coordinators contact the Council Members.

Council Member DeJesus asked about the \$27,000 that the City already spends in the area of the arts. Ms. Jennifer said that the City was already doing things in the arts. The City is required to do a one to one match and the State grant will supplement the City activities.

Council Member Banta asked if this was part of the DSD program. He was told this was not. Discussion followed about some of the Art activities such as concerts that the City already sponsors. Council Member Martinez said that she would like to have some input with Ms. McDonald, and other administrators regarding these grants.

**** COUNCIL MEMBER MARTINEZ-WALKER MOVED TO APPROVE AGENDA ITEM 171-13 GRANT SUBMISSION: RE STATE DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMIC & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT - OFFICE OF THE ARTS FOR SUPPORTING THE ARTS IN PLACE GRANT PROGRAM (PROJECT #14448).**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER DEJESUS SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

160-13 Proposed Resolution Authorizing a ground lease for the Use and Redevelopment of the rear portion of 236 Evergreen Street.

Mr. Perez came forward and distributed copies of information about the lease. He directed everyone's attention to the map in the information packet. Tarrantino Landscaping would like to lease the land to park vehicles or other landscaping equipment. They will maintain the site and provide insurance. It will be \$18,000 per year that the City will be collecting. The parcel is landlocked and there is no street frontage.

Council Member DeJesus asked if there were any residences in the area. Mr. Perez said that there was none.

Council Member Banta asked if they would be erecting any buildings on the parcel. Mr. Perez said that it was just the space they wanted and they would not be erecting any buildings on the parcel. It is a temporary use while the contractor builds another facility.

Council Member Banta asked about the driveway maintenance. Mr. Perez said that the driveway was already in place. He indicated where it was on the aerial view. The land belongs to the City of Bridgeport.

**** COUNCIL MEMBER BANTA MOVED TO APPROVE AGENDA ITEM 160-13 PROPOSED RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING A GROUND LEASE FOR THE USE AND REDEVELOPMENT OF THE REAR PORTION OF 236 EVERGREEN STREET.**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER MARTINEZ-WALKER SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

167-13 Proposed request that the City Establish a Moratorium of future Tax Abatements, Expansions or Proliferations on any not-for-profit organization.

Council Member Torres said that he would like to suggest a moratorium until the Committee gets an understanding of what the City is giving away. He gave an example that if there was a 100 unit building was constructed and there were 50 school aged children in the complex, how this would impact the other aspects of the City, such as the schools. Council Member Torres said that he can't afford to hire anyone who is not working directly for him so that having someone say that a development like this would bring in jobs isn't workable.

Council Member Torres mentioned that the building permits generate revenue, but the City should have a booklet so that everyone knows what it costs when these developments present these type of developments. He pointed out that the Committee needs to understand the impact of not-for-profit services have on the Bridgeport taxpayers. The surrounding towns receive some of the benefits of the not-for-profits but contribute nothing to their support.

He said that it would be important to know what the cost of the abatements and the not-for-profits would be.

Atty. Schmidt said that Atty. Anastasi had requested that he review the proposed moratorium since Atty Schmidt is very familiar with the moratorium process. He added that Council Member Torres had raised an important point about taxes and economic development in the city. However, Atty. Schmidt said the draft resolution would need to be re-written in order not to have it struck down in court.

He said that with the draft, it would only apply to non-profits rather than for profits. Atty. Schmidt also pointed out that this was also discriminating again the religious organizations. He gave an example from 1962 regarding St. John's Church in Darien. The current wording eliminates tax abatements does not have an end date. Usually there is a general agreement that six months is the normal length of a moratorium, At eight months, the courts ask questions and there are very few 12 month moratoriums.

Atty. Schmidt explained that the wording eliminates any tax abatements for any non-profit expansions in the future. While this was well-intended, but needs to be re-written. He recommended that this be re-drafted

Council Member Torres said that this resolution was actually intended to target private developers, not non-profits or churches. He said that there were taxing entities that do not give tax breaks or abatements to churches or non-profits. He said that the moratorium was only intended to craft language to address this issue. He said that he was unsure how the language got flipped. Atty. Schmidt then indicated the problematic language. Council Member Torres said that his problem was giving tax abatements to millionaires, not churches. He said that he expected that OPED should be giving the Committee a booklet showing

Council Member DeJesus said that this could not be moved forward at this time, but the fact that Council Member Torres pointed out that there was no indication of what it cost the City for these types of abatements could be done separately without a moratorium.

**** COUNCIL MEMBER DEJESUS MOVED TO TABLE AGENDA ITEM 167-13 PROPOSED REQUEST THAT THE CITY ESTABLISH A MORATORIUM OF FUTURE TAX ABATEMENTS, EXPANSIONS OR PROLIFERATIONS ON ANY NOT-FOR-PROFIT ORGANIZATION.**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER MARTINEZ-WALKER SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION TO TABLE PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

ADJOURNMENT

**** COUNCIL MEMBER MARTINEZ-WALKER MOVED TO ADJOURN.**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER BANTA SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

The meeting adjourned at 7:20 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Sharon L. Soltes
Telesco Secretarial Services