

CITY OF BRIDGEPORT  
**ECONOMIC and COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT and ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE**

**MONDAY, MARCH 7, 2011**

**6:00 P.M.**

ATTENDANCE: Council members: dePara; Co-chair, Curwen; Co-chair,  
A. Ayala, Blunt, Brantley, Martinez, Lyons

OTHER(s): Council President McCarthy, Council member Brannelly

CITY STAFF: E. Lavernoich, M. Perez

Co-chair Curwen the meeting to order at 6:00 pm.

Informational Session regarding Steel Point and Waltersville School Issues

Mr. Lavernoich handed out copies of the resolution, cover letter and the appendix information that he stated was important to read.

Mr. Lavernoich relayed that this is a school located on the lower east side of Bridgeport. After some discussion, they decided to put out an RFP to solicit interest in the property. On November 1, they drew four responses from Don Eversley, Jeff Bishop, Ben Henson and another party. They took the criteria presented that were mentioned in the RFP to evaluate the responses. He referred to the appendix information that outlined how they scored the responses. He noted that they narrowed the responses down to two proposals. The second best proposal was submitted by Garfield Development. They chose the #1 team Bridgeport Landing Development based largely on their track record to implement projects. With the type of finances to be used, they determined them to be best for the project. He noted that at least three were senior housing proposals – as *outlined in the packet*. He further referred to the proposal to point out how much they plan to spend and the tools they will use to attract financing. He said that Max Perez was the facilitator for the project and he worked with him to solicit more information. They had a supplemental round of questions that was sent to each group and they accumulated all the information needed to make the decision. The approval will authorize the Mayor to enter into the development agreement that is consistent with the proposal submitted.

Council member Martinez stated that for the benefit of the other council members and to benefit the community, she thought the plan was a good plan. She said she didn't perceive there being any issue bringing senior housing in. She relayed that she has

talked to Max Perez and Council President McCarthy about the desire to put in a senior center that will benefit the residents around Waltersville School. She commented that the population of seniors is growing and they are having difficulty with the senior center's current space. She expressed that at first, she was ignored about her request, but she was finally heard. She said if the item is voted on, she would like to see the senior center built for one-hundred and fifty (150) seniors and three (3) small offices. She added that she was told it shouldn't be a problem. She requested support from the committee to get the project going to run the senior center.

She went on to say that she read the Steel Point agreement that indicated building the fifty (50) housing units. She questioned if these units will be part of the Steel Point agreement. Mr. Lavernoich said yes.

Co-chair Curwen asked if the city was willing to work with the developer and Mr. Olson to make sure the space is dedicated to a senior center. Mr. Lavernoich said yes.

Co-chair Curwen asked if language could be added into the resolution to specify that the union is agreeable to adding the senior center space for (150) sitting chairs. Mr. Lavernoich said they could do that. He noted that prior to voting on March 15, the language will be submitted for consideration.

Council President McCarthy asked if they needed to vote on a public hearing. Co-chair Curwen stated the public hearing was ordered at the last meeting to vote on March 21.

Council member Brantley said the language should be very specific to read that it's not only for the surrounding senior residents, but for all seniors on the east side.

Council member Ayala stated that if you look at the neighborhood, it's made up of 30 to 40% seniors who live in private homes and complexes. He urged his colleagues to support the resolution, so all seniors have access to it.

Council member Blunt said the concept sounded good. However, he asked who would maintain economic responsibility for the senior center. Council member Martinez said CDBG money will be used and the city provides the staff. Council member Blunt cautioned that CDBG funds will be limited this year. Co-chair Curwen said they will use the current resources they have at the facility on East Main Street and apply it towards the new facility, which will result in a wash.

Council President McCarthy mentioned that Council member Martinez was doing some long term thinking and she envisioned that they won't be able to pay the rental cost at the current facility, so that was the reason for the new proposal. He stated that he was in support of the project and urged support.

Council member Brannelly asked about proposal #1 that was submitted. Mr. Lavernoich said they were looking at both proposals 1 and 2; if the #1 proposal doesn't work out, he said they will go to the #2 proposal.

Co-chair dePara asked about development rights. Mr. Lavernoich said they were referencing one property for development rights. He said they should know pretty quickly if they can reach a deal based on the extended options or other terms. Co-chair dePara asked if they will put a time limit to decide the development rights negotiations. Mr. Lavernoich read a portion of the RFP proposal that outlined the time constraint of 60 to 90 days to reach an agreement. However, he said they could extend the closing date after the agreement and when they determine if the negotiations are reasonable.

Mr. Lavernoich stated that all four proposals were for residential projects. The issue with the proposal submitted by First National Development was that they've never done a senior project. And while they has some good proposal points, that was an area where they suffered.

Council member Brannelly said she had a concern of putting all their eggs in on basket with Bridgeport Landing. Mr. Lavernoich said it might be an issue if they were the lead developer but they're not and he didn't think it will distract from their capacity to do the project. Council member Brannelly questioned what will happen if they go belly up. Mr. Lavernoich said his thought was the city will still want to do the project.

Co-chair dePara asked if the changes incorporated into the development plan would affect the purchase and the number of units. He noted that they were proposing 55 to 65 units below the 60% median income. Mr. Lavernoich explained that the building is enormous and they have a lot of break out space. He didn't think the break out space will limit the number of units. He said he will research the matter further and provide some information.

Council member Martinez made a request for future projects, to please involve the community and district council members. Mr. Lavernoich acknowledged the request.

Council member Brantley asked if the developer has given up design on the plan. Mr. Lavernoich said no. Commissioner Brantley said she had a concern about the fire exits, noting that she has observed some buildings with only one way out. Mr. Lavernoich said they will insist on a design review team who will work with William Minor and they will consider the exits.

## ADJOURNMENT

**\*\* COUNCIL MEMBER MARTINEZ MOVED TO ADJOURN  
\*\* COUNCIL BRANTLEY SECONDED  
\*\* MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

The meeting adjourned at 6:30 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Diane Graham  
Telesco Secretarial Services