

# D R A F T

## Norwich Site Development Committee For The Former State Hospital

### Minutes of the November 9, 2009 Meeting

6:30 pm  
Norwich City Hall  
Council Chambers

**Members Present:** Alan Bergren - City Manager; Peter Desaulniers - Alderman; Robert Mills - Executive Director - NCDC; Tucker Braddock – Alderman Elect; Michael O’Neil - Citizen Representative; John Bilda - General Manager of NPU; Kathleen Murphy - Citizen Representative; Peter Davis - Director of Planning & Development; William Nash – Alderman; John Paul Mereen - Citizen Representative

**Members Absent:** Benjamin Lathrop - Mayor

**Others Present:** Brian Curtin – Norwich Treasurer; Karl-Erik Sternlof - Brown Jacobson, Norwich Corporate Counsel; Bob Zarnetske - Alderman; Josh Pothier – Assistant Comptroller, City of Norwich; Brian Kobylarz - Citizen; Keith Ripley – Citizen; Peter Nystrom – Mayor Elect; Claire Bessette - The Day; Michael Gannon - Norwich Bulletin; William Kenny – Citizen; Joanne Philbrick – Citizen; Ron Ward – Citizen

Meeting was called to order by Moderator Robert Mills @ 6:30 p.m.

Roll call was taken and a determination was made that a quorum was achieved.

Minutes of the October 26, 2009 meeting were reviewed. Motion was made to accept the minutes by Mr. William Nash, seconded by Mr. John Bilda, no discussion, motion approved unanimously.

#### **Discussion/Workshop Relevant to The Hospital Site**

Mr. Mills explained the purpose of the meeting, and that the purpose of the committee was to complete due diligence and present information/findings to the City Council and the public. Management of project and process is very critical.

There was a brief explanation of existing conditions regarding the Norwich portion of the former Hospital site:

- 61± acres – approximately 30 acres developable, based on soils and topography.

- Historic archeological sites – methodology to protect or preserve
- Description of three parcels and buildings
- Explanation of costs involved – short- & long-term drivers
- Cost and Revenue – spreadsheet was passed out and reviewed, will also be posted on City website.
  1. Acquisition costs
  2. Carrying costs
  3. Pre-development costs

**Anticipated Grants Section** was reviewed.

- EPA assessment
- EDA Planning
- Blight and Demo grants – state/federal
- Preservation grants – state/federal
- Infrastructure grants – state/federal/EDA
- Development grants – jobs, taxes, commerce

### **Revenue**

- Sales revenue from land – conveyance
- Conveyance taxes when parcels are sold
- Utilities
- Taxes - Potential Revenue (property, personal property, motor vehicle)

**Other Opportunities** – Brief discussion was held on planning, blight control, regionalization, etc.

**Architectural Assets** – some of the buildings on the site were discussed, such as the Nurses Quarters and the Lippitt Building.

### **Public Comments**

Mr. Zarnetske asked about security and maintenance with regard to State efforts, and whether a volunteer concept might be explored.

Mr. Brian Kobylarz commented that costs decline after buildings are demolished, and asked about the use of Brownfield grants.

A question was raised on revenue – land sales amount? It was mentioned it is approximately \$85K per acre to do this work.

Mr. Joshua Pothier explained impacts with re-bonding, etc., as well as for cleanup, spread over time and phased out over a 30-yr period. Commercial vs. Residential scenarios were reviewed.

It was mentioned that residential use never recovers costs, whereas commercial use pays for itself over time.

Mr. Pothier pointed out that the spreadsheet figures are “best guess” and the actual market scenario that many years out cannot be pre-determined.

Mr. Tucker Braddock and Mr. Nash referred to the long-term investment potential in the site.

Mr. Ron Ward suggested a new budget line-item for the up-front \$300,000, if the Council decides to purchase the site, as well as voicing a concern relative to when a referendum would fit in for the public to vote on the acquisition of the hospital property.

Mr. Nash reiterated that it should be kept in mind that this is a long-term investment of about 30-years.

Mr. Mills commented that there are a number of assumptions; however, the city could see revenue sooner than the 30 years due to phasing of the project, and any revenue realized would be put back into the project.

Mr. Brian Curtin commented that the city would have to have control of the property to realize the benefits.

Mr. Keith Ripley asked if the funding would be coming from bonds, and for how long? He stated a concern about the attitude in the bonding community (State). He asked if the city does not plan to use bonds where the rest of the money would be coming from.

Ms. Joanne Philbrick asked what would happen if the city did not take control of the property.

Mr. Mills stated that it could be as it is now, with no interest in the property due to environmental costs.

Mr. Desaulniers commented that housing might be put on the land, or whatever the State decided to do with the property.

Ms. Kathleen Murphy commented on the following concerns: How controlling our destiny on that site could be strongly tied to zoning being tightened up to address concerns relative to undesirable development on the 61 acre site; that anyone buying that property from the State, if that were the case, would have to comply with Norwich zoning regulations even if the possible buyer might be Preston; and about clarification to the public regarding the total number of buildings on the 61 acres that may need to be demolished, estimated insurance costs per residential home regarding such, and also the fact that two historical buildings are a part of the property and will need to be addressed as appropriate.

Mr. Mills asked Mr. Davis to expand on Ms. Murphy's concern with regard to zoning regulations.

Mr. Davis then explained how zoning regulations can be re-visited and adjusted with regard to the Norwich Hospital property to provide some modicum of control.

Mr. Braddock asked if the city does not buy the land now, would we have another opportunity if someone else became interested in it, but at what cost?

Mr. Ward asked more questions regarding the bonding process.

Attorney Sternlof explained the process if the city declines to purchase the site.

A lengthy general discussion was held.

Mr. Mills wrapped up the discussion and stated all info will be posted on the city website.

### **Discussion Related to the Next meeting**

The findings of this workshop will be presented to the City Council on November 16, 2009.

### **Adjournment**

Motion made to adjourn by Mr. Nash, seconded by Mr. Braddock, approved by unanimous vote @ 8:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Peter Davis