

**Norwich Site Development Committee  
For The  
Former State Hospital**

**Minutes of the August 10, 2009 Meeting**

Members Present: Alderman William Nash, City Manager Alan Bergren, Robert Mills, Executive Director of NCDC, John Bilda, General Manager of NDPU, John Paul Mereen, Citizen Representative, Tucker Braddock, Citizen Representative, Kathleen Murphy, Citizen Representative, Michael O'Neil, Citizen Representative.

Members Absent: Alderman Peter Desaulniers, Mayor Benjamin Lathrop, Peter Davis, Director of Planning & Development

Others Present: Corporation Counsel Michael Driscoll.

Meeting was called to order by Moderator Robert Mills @ 5:30 P.M.

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

Minutes of the August 3, 2009 meeting were reviewed. Motion by J.P. Mereen, second by Tucker Braddock to approve, voted unanimously.

Committee reports were presented.

- Tucker Braddock reported that the State Archeologist will be here to the Committee meeting on Monday, August 17<sup>th</sup> to review the findings of the work done by the state to identify and catalogue the site relative to any significant archeological issues. J.P. Mereen reviewed the site surveys and made note to the committee of the two known locations identified by the prior survey work and advised the committee that those sites may restrict some amount of development.
- Mr. Mereen presented issues related to the legal description and lack of physical references in the field. Proper points should be established in field in order to facilitate future subdivision and development. Mr. Mereen has spoken with Meehan & Goodin who did original survey and description work, regarding a price for corrective work. It's estimated that the physical establishment of survey points the corners of the parcels and at 600' intervals along the perimeter would cost between \$2,500 and \$3,000.
- Alderman Nash and Kathleen Murphy provided a detailed report of their work to define the costs of providing private security for the site. Three firms were asked to estimate costs blind of the site or the inquiring entity and responded that the

range of costs were from a low of \$196,400 for unarmed security force to a high of \$312,480 for armed security providing 24/7/365 coverage. Mr. Nash then suggested that these private entity costs could also be revisited with one or two shift coverage to reduce the costs. He also suggested that coordination with Preston could provide additional benefits that would need to be explored.

- Kathleen Murphy reported that Joseph Ruffo, the City Comptroller had provided all the requested information on the PILOT received from the State of Connecticut to the City of Norwich. It amounted to \$74,937 in 2008 and is budgeted for \$81,770 in 2009, although she cautioned that the state really pays what it decides to pay.
- Ms Murphy also reported on her contact with the City's Purchasing Agent- Bill Block to help define the cost of insurance for the site. Mr. Block will provide basic insurance costs in the next several days to complete this assignment.
- Again, Ms Murphy reported on the subcommittee activity to fulfill the knowledge gap on maintenance exposure. She reached out to Joe Loyacano head of Norwich Public Works and found that they had already done the site survey work earlier this year and made a first year and subsequent year cost projections. Those are estimated at first year contract costs of \$36,000 plus material and equipment costs of \$10,000 plus a DPW labor cost of \$100,000- equalling \$146,000 first year and is estimated to be around \$50,000 per year thereafter. Ms Murphy commented on her drive by the site recently that the State of Connecticut Department of Highways has apparently cut the overgrowth of grass and weeds back from Route 12 approximately 30 feet and it looks better.
- Ms Murphy also reported that her subcommittee will be meeting with the 2 fire departments and the police department over the coming 2 weeks. Nice Work by Ms Murphy and her subcommittee!
- Chairman Mills reported on the proposed draft budget document. He stressed that the initial numbers should be ignored at this point and the Committee should concentrate on the actual budget items to make sure nothing is missed. The budget will eventually be presented in three phases to the City Council for consideration. Chairman Mills asked the Committee members to review the document and attempt to try and plug in numbers before the next meeting.
- John Bilda indicated that the NPU is currently doing work to estimate the costs of installing any needed utilities on the public right of way. Mr. Bilda also indicated his staff will look to estimate the cost of installing and operating adequate fire hydrants and streetlights on the sites. This information will be a couple weeks in development.

- Mr. Bilda also indicated that NPU would investigate the utilization of “green” energy technology on the site- wind, solar, etc. and report back to the Committee at a future date.
- Tucker Braddock reported that Preston is having Jim Burns from the Boston regional office of EPA come down to the site on Friday the 14<sup>th</sup>. Mr. Mills will endeavor to coordinate in meeting with Mr. Burns and Preston. Mr. Braddock reported that Preston has been awarded a \$200k assistance grant from EPA to assessment work on their portion of the site. He also reminded the Committee that Norwich will be eligible for similar grants from EPA and DECD for requisite environmental study work needed on the Norwich side.
- Chairman Mills reported that a rough in cost-benefit analysis needs to be developed to indicate the value to Norwich should the decision be made to purchase the property. He suggested that the best way to do that in the short amount of time available and with minimal expense is to seek qualified consultants willing to donate some time and expertise in evaluating the site, the market and the potential for the site to create a return on the Norwich investment. He asked the full committee opinion in beginning the process to do a strategic master plan process and do so in a manner that is fully coordinated with Preston but yet serves the interest of Norwich’s decision making process. The group unanimously agreed. Corporation Counsel Driscoll asked about the cost and time required to do such work. Mr. Mills responded that a known body of consultants will make themselves available to help with the mission and do so at little or no cost to the community. A similar type effort was formally in place across the state under Governor Rowland and known as “Team Connecticut” where Mr. Mills had worked with these and other consultants on numerous projects in New Haven and Fairfield Counties.
- Alderman Nash inquired as to whether the site would be considered an extension of the CCD for tax purposes, as well as fire and police coverage. It was suggested that this concern be tabled until a more appropriate time in the body of work before the committee. Corporation Counsel Driscoll replied that the City Council is the correct body to contemplate such things.
- Michael O’Neil suggested that as a part of the strategic master planning effort we should engage the public in the process. All agreed that it is important to engage the public and to seek input and guidance from the public, Preston and others to contemplate the highest and best use of the site.
- Mr. O’Neil also suggested we schedule a site visit for the committee to become more familiar with the parcels, their settings and limitations. It was agreed by all to be an important aspect of fulfilling our duties. The committee should be prepared to establish a time and date to conduct the site visit in the next 2 weeks. The committee will have to comply with the PSA as to accessing the property, including signing releases to hold the State of Connecticut harmless. It was also

agreed that because the City of Norwich does not yet own the property and the site is in such a state of disrepair that the site visit would not be open to the general public at this time. Only after site conditions are known and the safety of a large number of people can be assured should the committee recommend controlled public access.

Mr. Mills brought up the location and dates of the next several meetings. Due to scheduling limitations of various rooms, it was determined that the best location would be Room 319 in City Hall after tonight. Regarding dates for future meetings, the committee will meet August 17<sup>th</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup> and then move to a standard meeting schedule of the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Mondays in room 319.

Mr. Braddock and Mr. Mills will attend the next Preston RDA meeting and report back to the Norwich Committee on activities and opportunities to work together.

During the Public Comment portion of the meeting, Mr. John Wong, President of the Chinese American Cultural Exchange addressed the Committee with an idea and desire to use some of or the entire as an educational location for Chinese and Americans both. He suggested some connectivity to state owned- Guangdong University and their 35,000 medical students. Mr. Wong suggested that the interested party could pull together a business plan if provided the property. Chairman Mills indicated that the group would necessarily convince the committee and the City Council that they deserve consideration based upon a business plan first.

Motion to adjourn by Mr. Mereen, seconded by Alderman Nash, voted unanimously @ 6:50 P.M.