

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

MINUTES

February 9, 1998

Present

G. Daley, chair
R. Santangelo
S. Shapiro

Absent

J.J. Vinci
S. Gionfriddo

Also Present

M. Widem
C. Pompea, Primary Steel
H. Davis, Primary Steel
W. Weir, *Press*
R. Lisker, NEAT/NRZ
L. Brewster “
S. Allison “
7 members of the public
C. Wilcox, Staff

G. Daley called the meeting to order at 7:09 p.m. in room 208 of the Municipal Building and opened the public session. Roy Lisker, representing NEAT (North End Action Team) spoke to the committee about his group's wish to have the boundaries of the NRZ (Neighborhood Revitalization zone) changed to include the Miller/Bridge Street area and the two schools in the North End, St. John's and McDonough. Mr. Lisker read the letter NEAT had sent to the Economic Development Committee indicating that the State stresses the importance of having schools as community centers in setting up Neighborhood Revitalization Zones. He and other members of NEAT went on to discuss the Miller and Bridge Street situation. They have several members who live there and their concerns cannot be separated from the NRZ study. The ideas that this is not a viable neighborhood, that it is dangerous, that it will disappear and become industrial, that it is contaminated from the bridge work, and that nothing is being done for the residents is of great concern to them. Roosevelt park has now been cleaned up by NEAT and is usable.

It was pointed out that the Yale Charette will include Miller and Bridge Streets in their study. G. Daley asked about the NRZ Task Force and whether it supported this idea. They meet on Feb. 19th. L. Brewster has spoken to the principals of the schools; and the committee urged them to solicit their support for the NRZ. McDonough will be the site for the Charette and other neighborhood meetings; and perhaps the students will also be involved in the Charette. R. Santangelo urged the group to include other streets in the expansion beyond St. John's such as Portland Street. The committee supported the idea of expanding the NRZ to include the schools and to make sure Miller and Bridge Streets were included in the Study; but deferred taking any action until they had been given a report from the NRZ Task Force after their meeting on the 19th. They noted it was valid to consider Miller/Bridge a transitional area, and understood that there were public health and safety concerns. Two residents of the area spoke to the issue confirming the concerns but noting that as a neighborhood the community was better off than its image. The main problem is its dangerous access. S. Allison felt it was not necessarily best to make this an industrial site and spoke to some of the more human interest values of the residents. There being no further comment, G. Daley closed the public session and moved Item 3. Up on the agenda.

Portland Chemical Works Property: Both Mr. Pompea, president and Mr. Davis, treasurer of Primary Steel were present to discuss this item and their company's interest in acquiring it. They understood that there were a number of environmental issues on the site. Discussion with the committee ensued on the State Remediation Insurance Fund which might pay for a Phase II study, another DEP fund for underground tanks and the increased traffic situation. The guests indicated their interest in the rail spur and how they would make their truck traffic one-way. They expected to enlarge their operation, perhaps adding a second shift. They are already the railroad's #1 customer and would be increasing their use. Staff was asked to look into Environmental insurance as cited under CGS 22a Sec 133 t. The committee also discussed the potential conflicts with the proposed Brickyard Industrial park, but were anxious to dispose of this property in a timely manner. A motion was made, therefore, by S. Shapiro, seconded by R. Santangelo and voted unanimously to have the Economic Development Fund advance funding for Environmental Studies sufficient to identify the type and extent of contamination on the property, to develop a work plan for its remediation and to ascertain remediation costs. The committee noted the price ranges from the environmental professionals solicited by the City's Environmental planner were quite wide but, at a glance, the proposal of Woodward & Curran seemed complete and the preferred one. Staff will co-ordinate with purchasing for the formal proposal process, and will submit the appropriation to the Council.

Minutes: Upon a motion by S. Shapiro, seconded by R. Santangelo the committee voted unanimously to accept the minutes of the January 12, 1988 meeting.

North End Industrial Area:

Red Wing Depot: Atty. Milton Widem addressed the committee giving them the history of the present owner's involvement with the property and the scope of the present taking. Messrs. Sweet and Rocque bought the entire property of 1.21 acres with 41,000 square feet of building space in 1995 from O'Connor for \$75,000. The taking involves the north building to which the owners have made some repairs. They had wanted to be the redevelopers; but when told by the committee that their proposal must conform to the North End Industrial Area redevelopment plan they decided not to come in with a plan. Atty. Widem advised the committee that the property can be acquired by proceeding with a taking. He would need an update of the appraisal from Roger Palmer dated 1/2/97 valuing the property at \$53,000, and a survey of the 0.41 acres involved in order to prepare a taking map. A motion was made by R. Santangelo, seconded by S. Shapiro and voted unanimously to proceed with the taking as soon as possible, to authorize Roger Palmer to update his appraisal and to hire a qualified surveyor to produce an A-2 survey if Public Works cannot do it. They want no more delays or stalling.

Package Store: Staff reported that she had asked Bob Hill at INFORM to contact some of his commercial brokers to try to find three locations to offer Mike McCormick. So far that has not produced any results. Several locations were mentioned but zoning is a problem.

REINVEST: E. Blade had indicated that she had been in touch with the owner of VanDough's and was also advised by the City Attorney's Office that calling the loan simply for not being in business was not in the REINVEST guidelines. However the committee reaffirmed their previous action since the entire business was changing including principals and location. They would be welcome,

however, to come in and apply again for the new business when it is ready to open. A motion was

made by S. Shapiro, seconded by R. Santangelo and voted unanimously to call the loan and inform the principals that they can submit a new application.

A motion was made by S. Shapiro, seconded by R. Santangelo and voted unanimously to approve the change of wording of the definition of default as requested by E. Blade in the REINVEST guidelines.

The committee wanted, however to have some leeway to work with the applicant businesses noting it was hard to get small businesses to succeed. S. Shapiro emphasized the importance of a good business plan and financial forecast.

There being no further Business, the meeting adjourned at 8:10.

Cynthia G. Wilcox, Project Development Manager