



REDEVELOPMENT AGENCY MEETING MINUTES  
Monday, June 28, 2021, 6 PM  
Virtual Meeting via Zoom

MEMBERS PRESENT: Alderwoman Stacy Gould, Tucker Braddock, Mark Kulos, Shane Roberts and Richard Verbeke

MEMBERS ABSENT: Chair James Quarto and Vice Chair Robert Buckley

SUBCOMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT: None

SUBCOMMITTEE MEMBERS ABSENT Diba Khan-Bureau of Three Rivers Community College (TRCC): Barry Ellison of Norwich Public Utilities, Sean F. Buckley and Jennifer Messervy

OTHERS PRESENT: City Planner Deanna Rhodes, Amy Vaillancourt of Tighe & Bond and Recording Secretary Melinda Wilson

- I. Call to Order Call to Order: Mark Kulos called the meeting to order at 6:03 pm.
- II. Roll Call and determination of quorum: It was determined a quorum was present.
- III. Approval of Minutes: On a motion by Alderwoman Stacy Gould, seconded by Richard Verbeke, the Redevelopment Agency (RDA) unanimously approved the meeting minutes of May 24, 2021 as presented.
- IV. Correspondence: City Planner Deanna Rhodes reported that she would review new correspondence with corresponding agenda items during the meeting.
- V. Old Business:  
Updates on projects:  
Amy Vaillancourt of Tighe & Bond provided updates on the following:

Task Order #16 – Phase 2 & HBMI Assessment and Task Order #20 - Additional sampling, abatement/demolition design & bid specs - 337-341 & 351-353 Main Street – YMCA: Ms. Vaillancourt reported Tighe & Bond is waiting on the final court decision for the city to take ownership. Tighe & Bond has done one inspection for hazardous materials. She has been given a date of July 21, 2021 for the city to take ownership so that is the target date to get back on site to remove the underground storage tank. Rich Verbeke brought up the safety of accessing the building in its current condition. Ms. Vaillancourt assured the RDA that her staff can access the majority of the building safely. Due to COVID-19 precautions and the potential for hazardous materials, the staff will wear personal protective equipment (PPE) anyway, including respirators and hazmat suits. Mark Kulos asked for confirmation that the oil tank is outside. Ms. Vaillancourt confirmed. She also noted that

the work will by the end of September. She also confirmed that the RDA planned enough funding into the task order to remove the tank to assess the soil under it.

For the other Task Orders, Ms. Vaillancourt confirmed that Tighe & Bond needs to send a couple of final reports to the City since only draft reports have been issued thus far. She confirmed that all field work has been done. The city has 60 days after the grant end date of September 30, 2021 to submit grant closure documentation.

#### VI. New Business:

Discuss and Consider Finding the following:

- 1) Task Order #21 – 201 Main Street, Reid & Hughes – Requested by Heritage Housing, Inc.

City Planner Deanna Rhodes presented a potential new task order. Heritage Housing reached out to the city to express interest in having a Phase 1 completed (or updated) on 201 Main Street. She announced that David McCarthy of Heritage Housing was in attendance on the Zoom call. She reported on meeting with him, Mayor Peter Nystrom and City Manager John Salomone. She read the email correspondence between her and Mr. McCarthy that had been sent to RDA members prior to the meeting. Heritage Housing requested a Phase 1 for planned redevelopment of the Reid & Hughes building at 201 Main Street. The proposed redevelopment would complement their investment at the Wauregan, also in downtown Norwich. They plan on 17 apartments in the building with retail on the street side of the first floor. She contacted Ms. Vaillancourt who prepared a task order for RDA's consideration.

Ms. Vaillancourt noted that Tighe & Bond would need a task order for a Phase 1, similar to the other 12 done by this EPA grant and for the same price. There was no Phase 1 on the site of 201 Main Street found in their preliminary research.

Brian McCarthy of Heritage Housing spoke to the RDA. He reported that the owner of the Reid & Hughes, the Women's Institute for Housing, has basically gone bankrupt. All of their other assets in Connecticut are being sold to another group. The senior lender on the property is working with him. The lender is agreeable to the Phase 1 being done. Mr. McCarthy described the stabilization as good, with no further deterioration of the building. According to engineering reports, the building is structurally sound. Due to hazardous materials, the building needs demolition work inside.

Heritage Housing's schedule is driven by the timing of a brownfields grant application to Connecticut's Department of Economic and Community Development (DECD) later this year. Also, the redevelopment plans need to be submitted to the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO). SHPO did not approve historic credits for the Women's Institute for Housing's project previously. This will include a review by the National Park Service. Mr. McCarthy estimates a 4 – 6 month time frame for the brownfields and historic tax credit tax credits applications to be approved. The historic elements that will be addressed include the façade, windows and tin ceilings. Mr. McCarthy noted that he has been working on various development projects in Connecticut for 16 years. He thinks this property and project qualify but there are no guarantees. Heritage Housing's purchase will be contingent on approvals. Ms. Rhodes mentioned that Heritage Housing will be seeking to partner with NCDC to apply for the DECD

remediation grant as only non-profits, municipal governments and tribes may apply for grant funds instead of loans. Mr. Verbeke noted that the Phase 1 is beneficial to the city regardless of this sale.

Ms. Rhodes noted that the Women's Institute for Housing had previously obtained zoning variances due to the depth of the building. Mr. McCarthy noted that the Wauregan is affordable housing where this project would be market rate housing. He reported that many applicants are denied rental at the Wauregan due to their higher incomes, so the Reid and Hughes development could meet that demand.

On a motion by Tucker Braddock, seconded by Richard Verbeke, the RDA unanimously approved Task Order #21 for a Phase 1 environmental study to be completed by Tighe & Bond with a maximum of \$3,500 from the city's EPA Assessment grant for 201 Main Street.

Correspondence:

Press Release Outreach regarding remaining EPA Funds: Ms. Rhodes reported on an article in The Day newspaper, written by Claire Bessette, which aimed to communicate to property owners that the city still has available EPA assessment funding in the petroleum section of the grant. The article reviews the project and encourages property owners to contact her. As of yet, she has received no calls as a result of the article.

She noted that after the last meeting she reached out to the Fire Departments, Fire Marshal's Office, Public Works Department and NPU to ask if they had any underground tanks on properties that they owned needing to be removed. A discussion then ensued where it was clarified that the owner of a property cannot be the responsible party for installing the underground tank to be assessed. Alderwoman Gould then recommended that Ms. Rhodes go on the radio and promote the project and remainder of the funds. Ms. Rhodes asked that Ms. Gould join her on the radio and that Ms. Gould reach out to WICH to set it up.

NCDC Award of DECD Remediation Funds for 555 & 575 Norwich Avenue – South Mill at Ponemah: Ms. Rhodes reported on a letter sent from DECD to Robert Buckley in his capacity as the Chairman of the Norwich Community Development Corporation (NCDC) Board of Directors. DECD awarded NCDC \$795,000 for clean-up remediation at the Ponemah South Mill site in the Taftville section of the city. There was previously a grant awarded from DECD for remediation of the Ponemah North Mill project. A market study for the South Mill included as part of a \$200K assessment grant awarded to the City of Norwich from DECD determined that having all commercial uses in the South Mill would not be financially feasible, so housing is now being considered for the primary use complimented with commercial. OneKey is a for-profit and therefore cannot apply for grant funding from DECD. NCDC partnered with OneKey in a similar fashion that they did for the North Mill. NCDC, as a non-profit, was the applicant. The city has not approved a multi-use development for the South Mill. According to Alderwoman Stacy Gould, OneKey will come back to the city for approval. She also confirmed that NCDC does receive some funding for administration of the DECD remediation grant funds. Ms. Rhodes noted that she offered her assistance to NCDC to facilitate and hire a consultant for the remediation work.

Citizen Comment: None

Adjournment: On a motion by Alderwoman Stacy Gould, seconded by Richard Verbeke, the Redevelopment Agency unanimously adjourned at 6:42 PM.