



## REDEVELOPMENT AGENCY MEETING MINUTES

Monday, July 23, 2018

100 Broadway, City Hall, Room 319, 6 PM

MEMBERS PRESENT: Chair James Quarto, Alderwoman Stacy Gould, Tucker Braddock, James Heist, Anthony Jacobs, Mark Kulos, Sofee Noblick and Shane Roberts

MEMBERS ABSENT: Robert Buckley

SUBCOMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT: None

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

OTHERS PRESENT: Amy Vaillancourt and James Olsen of Tighe & Bond, City Planner Deanna Rhodes, Recording Secretary Melinda Wilson, Bill Merrill of Integrated Day Charter School (IDCS) and Mike Keedy of TRCC Student Body

- I. Call to Order Call to Order: Chair Jim Quarto called the meeting to order at 6:00 pm.
- II. Roll Call and determination of quorum: It was determined a quorum was present.
- III. Approval of Minutes: April 23, 2018 Meeting  
On a motion by Alderwoman Stacy Gould, seconded by Tucker Braddock, the Redevelopment Agency (RDA) meeting minutes of April 23, 2018 were approved as presented with one abstention by Sofee Noblick for non-attendance.
- IV. Correspondence: None
- V. Old Business: Amy Vaillancourt gave a summary of the Public Forum held to discuss the brownfields sites in the city. She reported that since the meeting several people have come forward to discuss various properties presented. Owners and developers have made inquiries. She gave a brief overview of each discussion she has held since the public forum. There are several sites on the list for the RDA to prioritize so she can proceed.

The owners of Norm's Auto reached out to her. They have been unable to sell the property. The adjacent property is contaminated as well. They owned the auto care business for 40 years. Amy reported that this EPA funding cannot benefit the person(s) or business responsible for the contamination. They are not eligible for this EPA assessment funding. In this case, the owners need more than a Phase 1. She provided them with two hours of consultation at no charge.

Amy updated the group on the status of the Uncas Leap project. Tighe & Bond is about to retain a contractor to remove the tank for further soil assessment with petroleum funds from the EPA grant.

Developers are proposing to renovate 327 Laurel Hill Avenue as a themed restaurant. The former Laurel Hill School needs a Phase 1 Study. She also recommended a Hazardous Building Materials Study. The developers only have to assess what they will impact which in this case is the interior of the building. Deanna noted that the owner of this building has purchased 8 buildings since February and is partnering with restaurateurs who will have a medieval theme at this site. The partners want to use the basement for cooking. Amy suggested testing for the following: lead, asbestos, indoor air quality, and mold. Licensed contractors must be used.

Bill Merrill, Business Manager of IDCS, and also representing the Thermos on Thames Condominium Association, spoke about the site at 68 Thermos Avenue. Originally a large home, the Thermos factory turned it into an office building. It is attached by a shared wall to the school. As a vacant property, it has issues with leakage from the roof and large vermin. The school would like an estimate of remediation costs. IDCS may want to buy it from the condo association. At that point, it could be eligible for grant funding from the state Department of Education. Otherwise, it could be demolished. Amy noted the need for a structural assessment. Once a plan was in place for what the school would like to do with the property, studies could be done to determine abatement steps. A code review for school use would also be necessary. Amy could estimate the associated costs. She recommended a Phase 1 and a Hazardous Building Materials Study.

Amy noted she is planning a preliminary budget for each request to aid the RDA in its decision-making.

Amy presented the following unique circumstances:

At the Sound Manufacturing site on the south side of the Ponemah Mill at 539 Norwich Avenue, the owner wants to build an additional four residential units. Deanna noted the site was on the brownfields inventory list. There is a discrepancy between DEEP's and the owners' interpretation of the status of prior remediation. Amy sent the owner the DEEP determination and the Federal judgement.

Deanna noted that the GIS was incompletely coded, allowing unidentified properties to be incorrectly deemed complete. She reported this is being updated with an accurate representation of properties.

Amy noted that the owners of 3 North 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue reached out for funding. However, they went ahead with the project themselves.

The American Legion is also on the inventory list. They inquired as to assistance with soil cover. They are preparing for their 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary event. Amy noted that this is not an allowable use of the city's current EPA assessment funding but they could apply for separate EPA remediation funds.

Others of interest:

The Majestic Rose at 352 Main Street is vacant. Amy suggested a hazardous building materials study. Deanna noted that the furnace area in the basement is a focus area. Prior renovation in the building does not seem to pose a problem.

The YMCA, 337-341 Main Street, needs a hazardous building materials assessment. Deanna reported that the City can get into the building to assess it. Another interested party has come forward on the property. An offer of assistance with assessment could bolster the city's position with potential developers.

177-181 Franklin Street was presented to Amy by Bob Mills, President of the Norwich Community Development Corporation (NCDC), as city owned. It was determined the former Tool & Dye is privately owned.

77 Chestnut Street is city owned. Amy suggested a Phase 1 Study to check for registered tanks and existing DEEP filings.

Amy reiterated that the EPA funding of \$384,000 is a two-year grant for environmental assessment only.

Discussion ensued. Due to their proximity, IDCS could partner with the American Legion for the "clean-up of Thermos on Thames" and apply for additional EPA remediation grant funding.

A Phase 1 is valid for transfer to a new owner for 180 days.

Amy gave an update on the Shipping Street project. A lot of good assessment was completed with the grant from the Department of Economic and Community Development (DECD). Assessment was completed for a private owner. The properties have viable development potential. Amy suggested the city prepare a summary document, covering the 9-12 properties located in the potential development area, to present to potential developers. Jim Olsen noted this is part of a master development plan.

Amy reported on the 270 Thames Street property. The stone building is an historical structure built in 1890. Tighe & Bond could get an estimate of abatement or demolition.

Discussion ensued. On a motion by Shane Roberts, seconded by Tucker Braddock, the RDA unanimously prioritized Uncas Leap, 327 Laurel Hill Avenue, 68 Thermos Avenue, and a Summary Report on Shipping Street for assessments with the American Legion, Majestic Rose and YMCA to be discussed next month after the owners have been contacted and given a chance to consider having assessments done under the EPA grant program.

Mark Kulos provided information on 364 Main Street. It can be removed from the priority list due to a business moving into the site.

b. POCD Implementation Committee: Deanna reported that the committee did not meet in July. The next meeting will be 9/12/18 and all are welcome to attend.

c. Ponemah South: Deanna reported the Request for Qualifications (RFQ) has been issued. The mandatory walk-through will be held Friday, July 27, 2018 at 10 AM.

VI. New Business:

Amy introduced Mike Keedy, TRCC student, who was referred by Diba Khan-Bureau, Environmental Engineering Technology Program Coordinator, to Tighe & Bond as a potential intern. After an extensive interview process, Tighe & Bond has chosen him for a paid internship. He can be paid thru the EPA grant's educational component to perform research for Phase 1 Assessments. Mike spoke regarding the quality of the TRCC Environmental Technology program. An internship with Tighe and Bond would be a perfect stepping stone for his career in environmental engineering technology. Jim explained that the city would be charged a lower hourly rate for an intern.

On a motion by Tucker Braddock, seconded by Alderwoman Gould, the RDA unanimously approved of Tighe & Bond moving forward with the use of EPA assessment grant funds to bring on a part-time, paid intern to support research work on Norwich's EPA grant projects up to \$5,000 in charges to the city for work performed under the intern program.

Amy presented a request regarding the rest of the environmental engineering technology students at TRCC. Currently, liability insurance does not cover taking students onto a site. In Tighe & Bond's experience, Middletown's insurance covers it in cases of bus tours for Middlesex Community College's students to walk brownfield sites. Amy leads these tours three times each year. Tighe & Bond would like to share that experience with Diba's students at TRCC. She would like to ask Norwich's permission for a similar program. Deanna agreed, and suggested RDA members may choose to attend the tours, as well. Bill Merrill suggested Amy present to the middle school students at IDCS, as well. They have an active program supporting environmental studies.

VII. Public Comment: Tucker asked members to participate in the Harbor Management Commission survey about uses and attitudes regarding the Norwich Harbor. This can be done online through [NorwichCT.org](http://NorwichCT.org) or via paper surveys. The information will inform the Harbor Management Plan update which has been funded through the Connecticut Port Authority and the city this year.

VIII. Adjournment: On a motion by Alderwoman Gould, seconded by Tony Jacobs, the Redevelopment Agency unanimously adjourned at 7:24 PM.