

**CITY OF NORWALK
LAND USE COMMITTEE
CAPITAL BUDGET WORKSHOP
JANUARY 26, 2010**

PRESENT: Fran DiMeglio, Chair; Torgny Astrom; Walter McLaughlin; Don Nelson; Joel Zaremby; Steve Ferguson

STAFF: Mike Wrinn; Brenda Hrtanek

OTHERS: Tom Hamilton; Bob Polselli; Dave Hopp; Mike Greene; Tim Callahan; Frank Ferro; Christine Bradley; Susan Gunn Bromley; Peter Bondi; Tim Sheehan

Mr. Tom Hamilton clarified the procedure regarding multi-year projects as far as the capital budget was concerned. He described the budget worksheets in the packets as working documents.

Ms. DiMeglio asked why the budget meetings were held before the actual book came out. Mr. Wrinn agreed to reconsider the process for next year.

I. BOARD OF EDUCATION

Mr. David Hopp explained that the Board of Education's plan was based on a plan created by the previous director.

Mr. Hopp said that the computers for grades 5 and 6 were 7 years old and needed to be replaced with more updated models. He also said that the 12 elementary schools needed network upgrades, as the networks were now 10 years old. He added that West Rocks needed to be upgraded to the same phone system as the rest of the district.

Mr. Hopp said that the department needed about 50 replacement computers for its staff, as the current units were now 7 to 8 years old. He also described the timeline involved in updating the city-wide time and attendance system. Ms. DiMeglio asked how plans could be coordinated to keep down costs. Mr. Hopp emphasized that all schools needed to be on the same system.

Mr. Hopp said that the schools' printers and peripherals should be updated along with the computers themselves. He pointed out that the educators' discount would provide a better price than the overall City price.

Mr. Zaremby asked about smart-boards. Mr. Polselli addressed the topic of smart-boards, commenting that these and other data collection tools would transform the classroom over time.

Mr. Astrom pointed out that much of the \$650,000 requested by the Board of Education last year had been left unspent. Mr. Hopp described the difficulty of coordinating projects without a director of technology.

Mr. Polselli added that the network upgrades would have the advantage of reducing the amount of time technicians spent making repairs.

Ms. DiMeglio asked if the department would be purchasing one particular brand. Mr. Hopp said that it was looking at Hewlett Packard, which cost \$609 for each complete unit.

Mr. Astrom asked if the IT Department would be involved in the discussion. Mr. Polselli stated that the Board of Education, which received the better discount, would try to assist IT.

II. PLANNING AND ZONING

Mr. Greene stated that the department needed a supplement to the city-wide traffic study. He said that this supplement would address land use concerns, rather than only traffic concerns.

Mr. Greene discussed the need for construction funds for the waterfront public access, adding that a study had been funded last year. He also described the implementation of the bikeway plan, which would use the same engineering plan as the sidewalk plan.

Mr. Greene described other department plans, including gateways to Norwalk, plans for public art, a visual access plan for both sides of the river, and a "Streets to the Water" plan that would include small parks for each street that extended all the way to the water.

Mr. Greene discussed LEED certifications and the notion of hiring a consultant to help ensure better conservation. He also described a parking plan to help address requirements for private properties, pointing out that there was no plan yet for how many spaces were actually needed for the city. He stated that the department was seeking a market analysis to address mixed use. Ms. DiMeglio asked why this item was part of Planning and Zoning.

Mr. Greene discussed population projections, pointing out that the 2000 census numbers were still being used and that affordable housing issues were expected to surface once the 2010 census figures were factored in.

Mr. Greene said that the Council Chambers sound system needed upgrading, which would include video capability. Ms. DiMeglio pointed out that the sound system should be part of the IT budget. Mr. Greene agreed.

III. HEALTH DEPARTMENT

Mr. Tim Callahan said that \$224,000 was being requested for the ongoing upgrade to the Health Department building. He discussed repairs for the windows and doors, as well as other items not covered by the grant. He added that \$80,000 was requested for the bathrooms, which were in very bad repair. Mr. Callahan also discussed improvements to the HVAC system, site repairs, and exterior waterproofing. He added that \$20,000 was needed to cover soft costs. There was a discussion of the details of repairs and refurbishing.

IV. LIBRARY

Mr. Frank Ferro discussed work on the HVAC system and funding for bathroom repairs. He stated that the security system, as well as entrance lighting at the South Norwalk branch, were high priority items, because of safety and security issues. He said that an additional \$5,000 was requested for lighting in the rear parking area.

Mr. Wrinn clarified that the additional \$5,000 was not a written requested. Mr. Astrom stated that the department needed to put the new amount in writing.

Ms. DiMeglio pointed out that the library's estimate 30% theft rate was significant and needed to be examined closely. She asked about flood lighting and security guards.

Mr. Ferro said that other department requests included funds for carpets, ceiling, and lights at the main library, furniture replacement (for 2011), and repairs to ceilings, lights, partitions, and painting in the children's restrooms. He noted that no tile repairs were needed at this time.

Mr. Ferro discussed the web page re-design, noting that the loss of other staff positions had resulted in the staff being unable to complete the re-design. He said that the request would also appear in the IT Department's budget.

Mr. Ferro said that \$500,000 was requested for a parking feasibility study for the main branch. He added that parking problems were the primary complaint from library users and the primary reason for the library's inability to attract business to the site.

Ms. Christine Bradley addressed concerns with parking in relation to children's services at the library.

There was a discussion of the relations between the library and owners of the adjacent buildings with regard to making parking adjustments.

Mr. Ferro discussed renovations to the teen room. He also noted that plans for the emergency generator could be combined with another library project, in order to ensure that only one crane rental would be required.

V. HISTORICAL COMMISSION

Ms. Susan Gunn Bromley discussed upgrades to the electric circuitry in the Norwalk Museum, as well as improvements needed for the roofs of the Mill Hill buildings.

Ms. Gunn Bromley added that there was severe rot on a section of the roof at the Lockwood-Matthews Mansion. Mr. McLaughlin asked why a low-quality roofing material had been chosen. Ms. Gunn Bromley said that it was unknown, adding that the Commission now had a handyman who did quality work and allowed funds to go much further. She also pointed out that there was now a yearly maintenance schedule for many items.

VI. REDEVELOPMENT AGENCY

Mr. Tim Sheehan discussed affordable housing, stating that he shared MR. Greene's concern about slipping below the 10% mark. Ms. DiMeglio asked about 8-0 Fair Street. Mr. Sheehan discussed tax obligations, adding that this was a determination of the Common Council. He also addressed the problem of cost-burdened houses.

Mr. Sheehan discussed the importance of urban connectivity from the train station to Wall Street, stating that \$100,000 would help to leverage money from a federal grant. He added that development was anticipated that could be well-served by mass transit.

There was a discussion of the federal DOT grant for the connectivity project.

Mr. Sheehan discussed lighting for West Avenue, funds which should be in the DPW budget but had the potential to get buried deep. He also addressed transit-oriented development and how to leverage grant funds for master-planning. He also discussed improvements in the Wall Street area.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:25 pm.

Respectfully submitted by Charlene Smith.