

[NOTE: These minutes are made available to the public prior to Redevelopment Agency acceptance.]

Minutes
Redevelopment Agency
Wednesday, September 5, 2007
5:00 pm - Town Hall
Town Manager's Conference Room

1. **Call to Order** - Chairman Lee Kuckro called the meeting to order at 5:00 pm.
2. **Roll Call/Attendance** - Members in attendance: Lee Kuckro - Chair, Daniel Camilliere - Vice Chair, Joseph Soja, Paul Thompson and Michael Zaleski. Also in attendance: Town Council Liaison, Martin Walsh; Economic Development and Improvement Commission Member, Tony Homicki; Town Manager, Bonnie Therrien; and Town Planner/Economic Development Manager, Peter Gillespie.

Members absent: none.
3. **Public Comments** - No one from the public was present.
4. **Approval of Minutes** - [August 14, 2007](#) - Mr. Kuckro asked if there were corrections needed for the draft minutes. Mr. Kuckro requested corrections to Section 8 - Reopening of Public Comment. Mr. Zaleski motioned to approve the minutes as amended, Mr. Soja seconded the motion and the vote showed all members in favor.
5. **Referendum Status** - Ms. Therrien said that she received a letter dated August 21, 2007 from the State Elections Enforcement Commission. The Commission's letter was in response to a June 25, 2007 letter from Ms. Therrien, in which she asked clarifying questions about the state statutes governing the referendum process. The Committee's letter conveyed that: the Redevelopment Agency members are allowed to advocate for the referendum; public buildings can be used for meetings, but dissenting opinions must be given equal time; and the Town's professional staff may provide facts regarding the referendum, but are not allowed to advocate for it.
6. **Public Information Strategies** - Mr. Kuckro suggested that the Agency consider revising its mission statement to underscore that its charge is to revitalize non-residential property. Mr. Gillespie suggested using the phrase commercial property because it is a more universally recognized term in zoning law. Mr. Kuckro suggested that the wording in the mission statement be "...to promote redevelopment of the Town's limited stock of commercial buildings and property." Mr. Thompson motioned to approve Mr. Kuckro's amendment to the mission statement, Mr. Camilliere seconded the motion and the vote showed all members in favor. Mr. Gillespie will revise the statement and have it posted on the Town's website.

Mr. Kuckro asked how the explanatory text for the referendum question will be distributed. Ms. Therrien said that a mailing to Town residents is planned for approximately 2 - 3 weeks prior to Election Day. The Town Council must approve the language for the explanatory text, and the State Elections Enforcement Commission will review and edit it. This means the Agency must get the draft language to the Town Council for its first meeting in October.

Mr. Soja said that he has heard concern about how the Redevelopment Agency came up with the \$10 million dollar amount for the referendum, and that Town will incur a huge debt all at once by authorizing \$10 million to be spent. Mr. Kuckro said that care must be taken so that the explanatory text clarifies these issues. He said that the referendum authorizes the Town Council to bond up to that amount, but that the debt would begin only after several more steps are taken, namely: after adoption of a Town redevelopment plan, after specific project or projects are reviewed by the Town Council for consistency with the redevelopment plan, after a public hearing or hearings on the specific project or projects, and after the Town Council approves the bonding for

the specific project or projects.

Mr. Kuckro said that the explanatory text should tell the story of how the bond amount was decided. That is, the Agency decided after it reviewed 13 properties in Town and their assessed values. The Agency came up with a reasonable amount to enable the Town Council the flexibility to bond money for several projects at once, if the opportunities arose.

Mr. Thompson said that the explanatory text should address the concern that the bonding is effectively a subsidy for business, and how that translates into greater benefit to the Town. Mr. Kuckro said that doing so will enhance the tax base and revenue to the town. Mr. Zaleski said that the explanatory text could also mention the town's unusually high residential to commercial property ratio, and compare it to neighboring towns.

Mr. Kuckro said he also understands that here is mistrust of government. However, the Town of Wethersfield has a proud history of government helping to shape the town for the better. He gave the example of how the town hired a planner in 1928 to convince the state to build the Silas Deane Highway instead of widening Hartford Avenue and Main Street. He also said it was the Town that formed a Historic Commission in 1961 to further preserve the character of the town. Mr. Kuckro said that he believes redevelopment is the next phase in shaping the town because it will bring revitalization through greater commercial density and smart growth, and not change the character of the town.

Reopening of Public Comment Section - Mr. Kuckro reopened this section of the meeting to discuss how the state law applies to Agency members if a political action committee is formed. Mr. Homicki said that he may lead the development of a PAC. Mr. Kuckro said that Agency members may go to PAC meetings and advocate, but the Town's professional staff cannot. Ms. Therrien said she thinks it is OK for Agency members to contribute money to the PAC, but she is going to check to be sure.

Return to Public Information Strategies - Mr. Kuckro returned to this section to say that the next Land Use Committee meeting is September 26th, and that Agency members are allowed to attend and advocate for the referendum.

Ms. Therrien distributed copies of the explanatory text for the Town's open space referendum question, for use as a guide for writing the explanatory text for the redevelopment referendum question. Ms. Therrien said that the Superintendent of Schools was receptive to a presentation being made in a town education forum, and recommended the next meeting of the townwide PTA / PTO committee. Mr. Gillespie said that he would put together a list of dates for upcoming meetings of various Town Boards and Commissions.

7. **Additional Information Requests and Topics for Future Meetings** - Ms. Therrien said that she had asked the Town's bank to summarize information about potential debt resulting from the referendum. She distributed copies of a table showing the debt per capita and other information.
8. **Next Meeting Date** - September 19, 2007 at 5:00 pm. (regularly scheduled meeting).
9. **Correspondence** - Ms. Therrien said that she saw a presentation at the Town Council meeting about electricity development districts by Joel Reinbold, of the CT Center for Advanced Technology. She said that Wethersfield may be too small to be its own district, so it may join together with other towns to form one.
10. **Call to Adjourn** - Mr. Soja motioned to adjourn the meeting at 5:52 p.m., Mr. Zaleski seconded the motion, and the vote showed all members in favor.

Respectfully Submitted,

Kevin T. Sullivan
Agency Recording Secretary