

WEYMOUTH REDEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY
Monday, May 30, 2012 - 7:00PM
Town Hall – 3rd Floor Conference Room
75 Middle Street
MINUTES

Present: Vincent Mina, Vice Chairman
Tom Vincent
George Berg

Absent: Joe Curran

Also Present: Bob Luongo, Economic Planning Director

Chairman Mina called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM.

MINUTES

Mr. Vincent made a MOTION to APPROVE the minutes of February 13, 2012. Mr. Berg SECONDED the MOTION. It was UNANIMOUSLY VOTED.

WEYMOUTH LANDING URBAN RENEWAL FEASIBILITY ASSESSMENT INTERVIEWS:

McCABE ENTERPRISES, Kathleen McCabe

Ms. McCabe stated that she is a professional planner and has been in business for 21 years. Her main focus is on projects similar to the Weymouth Landing project and her strengths include financial tools. She has experience in Urban Renewal; has worked on many projects and decided if Urban Renewal was a good fit or not.

Worcester Hospital was an Urban Renewal project which included a financial piece. Ms. McCabe stated that sometimes the revitalization of the neighborhoods don't include all fancy tools from the state but more tools like CDBG and private sector investments, etc.

Ms. McCabe gave as an example the MBTA Parking Lot at Wonderland in Revere. The city's goal is to redevelop that site; Ms. McCabe's client is in the private sector and her role is public financing.

Mr. Luongo stated in Weymouth Landing the Town of Weymouth would like to enhance the walkway from parking lots and the commercial district to the MBTA Station.

Ms. McCabe stated the Delagas property is the issue; the town needs to figure out a clear plan and strategy for Weymouth Landing for more opportunity for success. Need an economic engine; have Sacred Heart Church and School and MBTA, MBTA is not necessarily an economic engine.

Some of the environmental challenges are:

- Smelt run
- Chapter 91
- Parking and parking management (from retain standpoint)

Some of the goals for Weymouth Landing are:

- PWED (already doing)
- Overlay district
- Storefront façade
- Lighting

Approach:

- Delagas Property as a case study
- Appropriate Scale (Site; Weymouth; District)
- Series of 5 work sessions/meetings
 - Vision, opportunities, challenges
 - Urban Renewal, Tools & Approaches
 - Eligibility; Eminent Domain, Boundaries; Sequencing
 - Mayoral Briefing
 - Redevelopment Authority Presentation/Orientation
- Final Report

Mr. Berg stated that Urban Renewal is hard to put through with only a few small parcels. Ms. McCabe stated the qualifying factors for blight are difficult to gather. Mr. Luongo stated Urban Renewal might be more a hindrance than a help. Mr. Vincent asked is it possible to do a Development Corporation? Ms. McCabe stated yes. Mr. Berg stated it appears Ms. McCabe has experience with communities such as Weymouth. Ms. McCabe stated she has had a foot in both worlds; has done large cities like Boston and Worcester but probably has done more work in medium communities like Weymouth. Mr. Berg stated that there is a lot of emotion involved in the Weymouth Landing right now; it is important for the firm that is chosen to be able to explain the path that will be taken and why. Mr. Vincent asked if this project is doable in eight (8) weeks. Ms. McCabe stated yes; it's ambitious with summer but it is doable.

The Cecil Group, Steve Cecil

Mr. Cecil stated his background is multi-faceted; he has degrees in economics, architecture and landscape architecture. Mr. Cecil stated one of the major issues with Weymouth Landing is a property owner that owns a cluster of properties that if they are not revitalized Weymouth Landing won't be able to move forward. The Landing area is a transit oriented area. The challenge of this project is to balance which tools will work. How can the town get this area moving again? Mr. Cecil stated first the town needs to establish redevelopment area. In original legislation it was easy to establish blight, now it is hard to establish blight. In this instance it will not work; the DHCD may accept it but will it all stand up to court challenge.

The town could do a mini-Urban Renewal redevelopment area. This would be really desirable and the cost of the acquisition will be very high. Rule of thumb is two times the actual value of the property.

Mr. Cecil stated several issues confront the Landing:

- Weak in retail and commercial area
- Problem with parking
- Building a parking structure is very expensive
- Church parking lot is a good piece of the puzzle

Mr. Berg stated that it would be contusive to Weymouth/Braintree to also add parking to Braintree municipal lot.

Mr. Mina asked Mr. Cecil what is Weymouth Landing best suited for. Mr. Cecil stated distinctive restaurants and modest housing on second floor (condo/apartment). The market will decide what will happen in the end. Mr. Cecil suggested rehabilitating/reusing existing buildings.

Mr. Cecil stated tax deferrals might be utilized as an incentive.

Mr. Luongo stated that Mr. Delagas is looking for 3 million for landing property, is the property worth that? Mr. Cecil stated the town should broker a deal, don't use any town money. If it is not the right time then there is no risk for the town. Mr. Cecil stated it's a visible place, he foresees it being a local person who purchases the parcels and creates development.

Mr. Cecil stated he will show the town which tools to use and why to use this tool and why not that tool. The community will want to know all these components. Mr. Luongo asked would it be appropriate for the chosen firm to speak with Mr. Delagas to ask him "what do you want out of this deal?" Mr. Cecil stated yes, definitely. The chosen firm would want to set up the process where Mr. Delagas has no options if he sits on the property; give Mr. Delagas deadlines.

BSC Group, Russ Burke, Dominic Rinaldi

Mr. Burke stated his team has worked on a number of Urban Renewal Planning projects, Project Implementation Programs and Strategies, Transit-Oriented Development, Center Revitalization, Civil/Site Engineering, Transportation Planning/Traffic Engineering and Urban/Streetscape Design.

To evaluate and be effective BSC would need to figure out what the town wants to do; modest development objectives and a comparative matrix:

- Review existing data
- Consult with Town Officials
- Affirm community goals and objectives
- Review and evaluate programs and strategies available to the Town
- Prepare comparative analysis/Matrix
- Write report evaluating efficacy of various programs to achieve objectives

Mr. Burke stated there are places where Urban Renewal is appropriate and there are places where it is not. Some of BSC's recent relevant experience includes:

- Gardner Urban Renewal Plan
- Hicks Logan Sawyer District Redevelopment Plan
- Quincy Center Urban Renewal Plan
- Brockton Downtown Streetscape and Roadway Improvements
- Southbridge Urban Renewal Plan
- Rockland Center Revitalization
- Mill Street Urban Renewal Plan
- Belmont Center Parking Study and Streetscape

- Myles Standish Industrial Park Expansion Master Plan
- Grafton State Hospital Reuse TOD Feasibility Study

The familiarity with Federal and State funding procedures are as follows:

- Community Development Block Grants
- MassWorks Infrastructure Grants
- Urban Renewal Funding
- District Improvement Financing
- Tax Increment Financing
- New Market Tax Credits
- Federal EDA Grants
- Federal EPA Grants
- Urban Park and Recovery Program
- Land and Water Conservation Fund
- Historic Landscape Preservation Program
- SAFETEA-LU and Roadway Enhancement Funds
- Urban Self-Help
- Urban Rivers Program

The reasons for choosing BSC:

- Experience identifying and utilizing state/federal programs
- Commitment to working with town officials and community to respond to goals and objectives
- Expertise in site development for pragmatic, implementable plans
- Depth of resources
- All required disciplines available within a single firm, BSC

Mr. Burke stated going forward BSC would advise the Town of Weymouth to do an assessment of the market feasibility.

Mr. Berg stated there are over 1,000 parking spaces in the Weymouth Landing area. It is a multi jurisdiction area with compatible zoning. A PWED grant has been implemented and there is ongoing mitigation from MBTA to the smelt brook area.

Mr. Burke suggested creating a plan from the MAPC study. If the town has a focused plan it speaks volumes to the community; pair it with a market study and it is even more helpful.

Mr. Luongo asked Mr. Burke if he or his firm has ever worked on a small site like this one and could he give an example. Mr. Burke stated he worked on a parcel in Medway on 109/495 called Oak Grove Parkway area. It was a paper sub-division with 300 postage stamp parcels with 60% of it owned by the town or private families. Worked with town and families to develop site as master plan, title work was needed and the concept was called land pooling.

Redevelopment Authority Committee thanked all applicants for their time.

Mr. Vincent made a MOTION to APPROVE The Cecil Group as the chosen applicant for the Weymouth Landing Urban Renewal Project. Mr. Berg SECONDED the MOTION. It was UNANIMOUSLY VOTED.

NEXT MEETING

The date of the next meeting of the Weymouth Redevelopment Authority is to be determined.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Berg made a MOTION to ADJOURN at 9:35PM. Mr. Vincent SECONDED the MOTION. It was UNANIMOUSLY VOTED.

Respectfully submitted,

Christine Callbeck
Recording Secretary

Approved by: _____
Vincent Mina, Vice Chairman

Dated: _____