

**Town of Preston
Norwich Hospital Advisory Committee
Regular Meeting
Wednesday, May 6, 2009
Preston Town Hall
7:00 pm**

1. Call to Order/Roll Call

Vice-Chairman Sinko called the meeting to order at 7:07 pm

Joseph Biber - Chairman
Michael Sinko – Vice Chairman
Roy Beauregard
Kent Borner
Allyn Brown III
Bob Congdon
Sandy Ewing
Merrill Gerber
Gerald Grabarek - absent
Dan Kulesza - absent

Acknowledged Guests

Bob Mills, executive director NCDC
Tucker Braddock, Norwich
Michael Clancy – appointed member of redevelopment agency
Kerry Gentry – appointed member of redevelopment agency – via telephone
Sean Nugent – appointed member of redevelopment agency
Linda Riegel – appointed member of redevelopment agency

2. Acceptance of Previous Meeting Minutes – April 29, 2009 Regular Meeting

A motion was made by Kent Borner and seconded by Roy Beauregard to approve the minutes of the Norwich Hospital Advisory Committee (NHAC) April 29, 2009 Regular Meeting as amended. All in favor. So voted.

Page 1, last line; Sandy Ewing said she heard Dan Kulesza was retiring and she will miss him, this should also state that the rest of the NHAC members agreed.

Page 2, 9lines down under Public Comment; . . . it does not preclude *an* longer and evolving master plan. . . , should read, it does not preclude *a* longer and evolving master plan. . . ,

3. Communications

- a. Email from John Myer, Weston Solutions indicating that Jim Byrne, EPA said he will be scheduling a meeting with the NHAC very shortly.
- b. DECD asked for a joint meeting with Preston and Norwich to look at the whole site for next Tuesday at 10:00 am in Hartford.

4. Redevelopment Agency – Town Meeting approval

Mike Sinko announced that the Town voted last week to approve the new Development Agency. In fifteen days it will be an official agency of the town of Preston. There are six members on the NHAC who will be members of the redevelopment agency; Joe, Sandy, Merrill, Allyn, Kent, and Roy. The new members are Linda Reigel, Mike Clancy, Kerry Gentry and Sean Nugent. The first official meeting of the redevelopment agency will be on May 20, 2009.

Bob Congdon thought in order to move forward as fast as possible; next week's meeting should include ethics training by the ethics committee, and Bruce Chudwick could explain parliamentary procedure, executive session and other issues that will be faced.

5. Bill Penn – Master Planning

Bill Penn introduced Barry Hersh, member of the Board of Directors of the Clean Land Fund and professor of real estate development at NYU.

Bill Penn explained that Mr. Hersh could give another perspective on master planning.

Background: planning director in Poughkeepsie and Toledo, then became a real estate developer.

Discussed the projects he has been involved in;

Hudson River State Hospital, Harlem Valley Psychiatric center, Rockland Psychiatric Center, Rockland Psychiatric Center, Fairfield Hills, Letchworth Village.

Barry Hersh described the PBS show on Greensburg, Kansas, a rural town that was flattened by a tornado that was rebuilt as a green sustainable town.

They had open planning sessions and included young people in the planning process. They came up with a vision and persevered. It is relevant to this project, and there is something to be said with planning and having a vision.

This is a multi-track project; a physical planning track which involves your vision, a political track; the forces you have to deal with, a community track which includes the people who voted against it and are skeptical. At some point you will want to open up the process and let everyone see the way you are going and there are different ways to structure that, then there is the money track; keeping track of the various sources.

Bill Penn explained that the redevelopment agency will be eligible to apply for various brown field grants. Assessment grants, clean-up grants; applications are due in the Fall and the decisions are made in the Spring. The USDA rural development programs for infrastructure. A new fund; Special Contaminated Property Remediation and Insurance Fund for planning and demolition of brown fields. There is no one big source but many small sources.

Kent Borner asked if Bill Penn had any information on the department of energy 3.2 billion allocations. Bill Penn answered that is primarily for residential weatherization or increasing efficiency of municipal buildings. It is not for new development, but for retro fitting.

Barry Hersh stated that he has been on the EPA advisory committee that selects projects and it is quite a process, they send them to different parts of the country where staff review and rate them and then they get sent back. HUD has put more money in but that requires repayment, so it is complicated to keep up with all of it. There aren't any short cuts, there are a lot of lessons to be learned, and some of them are learned the hard way. The idea is to have an open work shop at some point and there are a lot of ways to do that. The idea is to have people be able to say this should go there and that should go there, the idea is to have people buy into the plan. Again I will mention including young people and getting some enthusiasm going, a tool to think about and it is fun and exciting. Opening it up and just letting a developer respond; you already tried that. As a developer I will tell you it is very hard to pull

off a project that way because a developer can never quite figure out what it is you want and can be overly ambitious.

Kent Borner said he would like to start with a clean slate and get away from calling this project the former Norwich Hospital property.

Barry Hersh thought that was fair and asked what the property would be called.

Allyn Brown said that would be one of the first jobs for the redevelopment agency.

Bob Congdon said a master plan will need to be done by the agency that will then be sent to planning and zoning.

Bill Penn said the beauty of the master plan being developed by the agency with community involvement, is that it is the broad umbrella and therefore there will be components in the master plan in terms of the development that you could go to specific developers.

Bob Congdon explained that the agency does not have nine months to a year to develop a master plan.

Bill Penn said you are forced to take that time because of the economy.

Sandy Ewing stated that on the other side of the comments "We don't have the luxury of 9 months for a master plan" I'd like to see this done right and not put together a master plan in a couple of months. I want the town to have the opportunity to think about, and voice what they want, to look at consultants we want to bring in; who is best for the town, a plan that incorporates all that together. If it can't be done in three months and takes nine months, I'd rather see us getting it right from the start and having a process that does it the right way, rather than jumping on a band wagon because they can do it fast.

Barry Hersh asked if the power plant on the property still worked.

The answer was no

Barry Hersh said you need to think about the options for energy

Bill Penn said the stimulus package has a 30% investment tax credit for the developer of renewable energy.

Bill Penn said one of the vision goals is, do you want an environmentally sustainable development and if you want that you need to put that as one of the goals.

Bill Penn explained that they are present at this meeting to let the committee know that the clean land fund is a resource. A proposal will be put together for when the agency begins looking for consultants.

6. Discussion pursuant to development of the former Norwich State Hospital property

no discussion

7. Public Comment

Mark Fields, Thames River Landing asked if the Norwich Hospital property has gotten EPA designation for brown field.

Bob Congdon answered that Jim Byrne from the EPA told him the application was reviewed and funding is approved. To get funding it has to be recognized as a brown field.

Bob Mills, NCDC asked if a site walk has been planned.

It was decided that the redevelopment agency would organize a site walk.

Sean Nugent asked if a packet was being put together for the new members to bring them up to speed on the property, and are there maps of the property available that could be used to start marking up with ideas.

Bob Congdon answered that he could make maps available and there will be a history of the property given at the redevelopment agency's first meeting.

Sean Nugent suggested measuring twice and cutting once.

8. Adjournment

A motion was made by Sandy Ewing and seconded by Roy Beauregard to adjourn the meeting at 8:40 pm. All in favor. So voted.

Respectfully submitted,

Roberta Charpentier
recorder