



MINUTES

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

JUNE 10, 2009

A meeting of the Portland City Council's Community Development Committee (CDC) was held on Wednesday, June 10, 2009, at 5:00 p.m. in Room 209 on the second floor of Portland City Hall. Present from the CDC was its Chair Councilor Cheryl Leeman who started the meeting with Councilor Kevin Donoghue in attendance as other CDC Members Councilors Nick Mavodones (who arrived as noted in the Minutes) and Daniel Skolnik were not in attendance (Councilor Skolnik was not able to attend the meeting). Present from the City staff were Business Development Representative Nelle Hanig, Economic Development Director Greg Mitchell, Island/Neighborhood Administrator Mike Murray, Senior Executive Assistant Lori Paulette, and Parking Manager John Peverada.

Item #3 – Portland Technology Park Update (20 Minutes)

Because the CDC did not technically have a quorum, Chair Leeman requested to be updated on this item as no action was required by the CDC.

Mr. Mitchell said that the Portland Technology Park concept is an Economic Development initiative on City acquired "Rand Road" property. The location fits well with an office park, particularly because it is located at Exit 47 of the Maine Turnpike. Mr. Mitchell then directed the Committee's attention to a map of the Park, noting that area for the business park and that area that is part of the Resource Protection Zone (RPZ). The business park land has never been developed. Staff has applied for an

Economic Development Administration grant for \$660,000 for investment in public infrastructure – road and utility work; City of Portland CIP funds have been committed in the same amount. Mr. Mitchell indicated that he expects an announcement from EDA shortly on the grant award.

Mr. Mitchell said that the business park will have 120,000 square feet of space in a total of nine buildings, which would bring in approximately 400 jobs – one job for every 300 square feet. The design approach is using low impact development (LID) measures. Economic Development staff is working with staff from Public Services, Planning, and Fire on this design approach. Planning is currently in the process of updating regulations for LID and will present those to the City for final action. Mr. Mitchell said that because the City’s LID standards are not in final form, it is likely that waivers will be needed to support the development of Portland Technology Park (PTP).

As far as recruiting business for the PTP, Mr. Mitchell said that Economic Development has been focusing on out-of-state business. Most recently, Nelle Hanig attended the BIO 2009 trade show in Atlanta. This is the largest biotechnology trade show in the world, and Portland partnered with Westbrook, South Portland, and Scarborough in having a presence at this trade show, under the umbrella of “Greater Portland Region”.

Ms. Hanig said that the City has participated in three BIO trade shows over the past four years, with the partners Mr. Mitchell previously noted. There were over 2,200 exhibitors representing companies world-wide, with 15,000 attendees; there were 22,000 attendees last year so it was down a bit this year. The trade show will be in Chicago next year.

Ms. Hanig said connections were made for recruitment for which she will follow up, noting that Portland offers these businesses a central location in Maine's biotech hub; reasonable real estate costs; and world class quality of life.

(Councilor Mavodones joined the meeting at this time.)

Mr. Mitchell said the PTP is a prime location for biotechnology businesses. Public investment in the main road and utilities is a common practice for municipalities.

Chair Leeman asked if the infrastructure would be put in first and then lots sold.

Mr. Mitchell indicated that that would be the process, with individual building pads sold, again anticipating nine building pads. Sale would start just after the public infrastructure improvements would get underway.

Chair Leeman asked about the timeline.

Mr. Mitchell anticipated that regulatory approvals would be completed in 2009, then requests for bids advertised Feb./March 2010, and then construction and marketing shortly after in early/late Spring 2010.

Chair Leeman said that EDA has funded sites around the state for biotechnology.

Councilor Donoghue asked about a rail right-of-way at the PTP site.

Ms. Hanig said that it does not have such a right-of-way, but trail connections are being made.

Councilor Mavodones asked if the CIP had already been committed for the project, and it was indicated that it had.

Councilor Mavodones asked about an estimate for road and utility work.

Mr. Mitchell said that estimates put this at \$1.3 Million to be shared equally by the EDA grant and CIP funds.

Chair Leeman asked if there was any public comment.

Steven Sharf indicated that there was a rail line not on the property but nearby. He asked how much the City paid for the property.

Ms. Hanig said that the City paid \$1.7 Million for the 40-acre site, of which 26 acres are developable and the remainder RPZ.

Chair Leeman asked if there was any further public comment, and there was none.

Mr. Mitchell thanked the Committee for their time in hearing about the status of the project and its timeline going forward.

Item #4: City staff recommended pro-active business retention and expansion assistance options.

Chair Leeman said that she had requested staff to recommend proactive approaches for business assistance, particularly because of “for lease” signs that have been dotting Portland’s downtown and Exchange Street. The latter has not seen such signs for many years.

Mr. Mitchell said that the Economic Development staff suggested various approaches over and above what is currently being provided. Currently, staff offers confidential site location assistance for both current and new businesses; business loan programs; working with businesses to enter into private/public partnerships; out-of-state business recruitment/marketing; general planning support for initiatives such as the Maine State Pier, Bayside, and Creative Portland Corporation to name a few; as well as limited business counseling services.

Ms. Hanig itemized the various options contained in the memo attached to these

Minutes, noting that a few options came from the recommendations of the Business Diversity Task Force.

Chair Leeman noted the option, “Doing Business with the City and State”, saying that seminars have been done on how to work with the State/Federal government and the turnout has been very good. She also noted that the City’s past practice of putting together “SWOT” (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats) teams comprised of City Departments that would be needed on various issues have been successful and should continue. Issues could range from permits to taxes to development and others, and the SWOT team can pull together whichever City Department(s) are need to assist in the issue.

Regarding the Façade Improvement Program and its current geographic boundary along Congress Street, Chair Leeman suggested that the next round of funding possibly include areas outside of the downtown. She gave an example of a variety store owner she talked with, which store’s façade could be improved.

Chair Leeman then mentioned that this Committee will need to come back to an item previously on agenda, Development Review Process.

Chair Leeman asked if there further questions, discussion on this item. There being none, she thanked Mr. Mitchell and Ms. Hanig.

Item #1 Casco Bay Garage

- Staff presentation.
- **Action Requested:** Discussion regarding request to purchase the City’s interest in the Casco Bay Garage and possible disposition of a portion. **Note:** Pursuant to 1 M.R.S.A. 405(6)(C) and 5 M.R.S.A. 13119(A), the Committee may go into executive session to review and discuss this item.

On motion made and seconded, the Committee voted unanimously at approximately

5:50 p.m. to go into executive session pursuant to 1 M.R.S.A. 405(6)(C) and 5 M.R.S.A. 13119(A). At this time, Councilor Mavodones recused himself because of his employment with Casco Bay Lines. At approximately 6:05, the executive session and meeting ended.

Respectfully submitted,

Lori Paulette