

BUILDING COMMITTEE FOR REUSE OF COHANZIE SCHOOL

June 3, 2009

Special Meeting Minutes

Members Present: Chairman Theodore Olynciw; David DeNoia; Julie Labreque; James Norton; Rabbi Aaron Rosenberg

Members Absent: William Colonis

Staff Present: Thomas V. Wagner, Town Planner; Kate Rotella, Purchasing Agent; Margaret Liparulo, Recording Secretary

1. Call to Order

A quorum was established and Chairman Olynciw called the meeting to order at 6:05 pm.

2. Approval of the Minutes of the December 11, 2008 Special Meeting

MOTION made by Mr. Norton and seconded by Mr. DeNoia to approve the minutes of the December 11, 2008 Special Meeting as written.

VOTE: 5-0

3. Interviews of Parties Interested in the Cohanzie School

Prior to the interviews, Chairman Olynciw stated that the interviews were preliminary, open discussions and would not involve any vote by the Committee. Therefore, he did not intend to recuse himself and would not expect any other member to do so based on the fact that they may have had a personal involvement with any of the individuals or organizations.

a. Jewish Federation of Eastern Connecticut

Representatives: Jerome E. Fischer Executive Director; Romana Strochlitz Primus, President; Gabriel Stern, Vice-President

Mr. Fisher gave an overview of the social services they provide for the Jewish community and the local community. Their proposal is to modify the existing structure or rebuild in part or in total to provide space for their administrative offices, nursery school, extended day care program, synagogue activities, recreational and social programs. There is the possibility that the senior programs could be extended to include some housing for the elderly.

There was some discussion regarding the use of the building in the evening, the level of activity, and the volume of traffic that might be generated.

b. The Connection, Inc.

Representatives: Beth A. Hogan, Project Developer; Jane Dauphinais, Director; Simon F. Gerson, Project Manager, POKO Partners, LLC

Ms. Hogan gave an overview of the organization and the types of adaptive re-use of buildings they have done and affordable housing their organization has developed throughout the state. Their proposal is to construct mixed income, mixed usage condos, single family dwellings, townhouses, and apartments with the potential to include small retail stores and open space. Mr. Gerson presented some conceptual drawings of what the structures might look like. The Connection, Inc. proposes to own and manage the site.

There were some questions from the Committee and discussion regarding the re-use of the existing building and parking for the proposed retail stores.

c. Project Free

Representatives: Rosemary J. Dempsey, Of Counsel; Kim R. Costanzo, Executive Team; David Berto

Ms. Dempsey and Ms. Costanzo gave an overview and a presentation explaining who they are what Project Free would propose to do with the Cohanzie School property. They are proposing to create independent living for individuals with challenges and disabilities and to provide education, trade certifications, life skills, employment opportunities and social programs. The complex would include living units with mixed ownership and long-term leases, training centers and retail stores open for business to employ residents and create jobs for the local community as well.

Mr. Berto reviewed the HUD funding and other funding sources available for the renovation and development of an existing site.

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d. Sound Community Services

Representatives: Jacqueline Johnson, Chief Operations Officer; Cheryl Leone, Program Coordinator

Ms. Johnson gave an overview of the organization, which offers clinical and non-clinical services to individuals with mental health and substance abuse disorders. Ms. Leone discussed the case management program to provide support services. Their proposal is to use the property for administrative services, clinical services, supportive/affordable housing, outpatient programs, and employment and rehabilitation services. Currently their offices are in four locations in New London. The Cohanzie School property would allow them to integrate those offices into one location to better serve their clients and to allow for expansion.

There was discussion regarding funding, the plan to use the existing building, the hours of operation and evening activities.

Following the interviews, the Committee discussed the process for developing an RFP, which would provide more detailed information about the property and would require interested parties to provide more detailed plans for their proposals. It was the consensus of the Committee that Mr. Wagner, Kate Rotella, Purchasing Agent, and Chairman Ted Olynciw should work with the First Selectman to define and develop an RFP.

The Committee will meet again on Thursday, July 23, 2009 at 6:00 pm in the LTA room.

4. Adjournment

There being no further business to come before the Committee, motion made by Mr. Rosenberg, seconded by Mr. DeNoia and unanimously voted to adjourn the Special Meeting at 8:40 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Margaret Liparulo
Recording Secretary