

## **Minutes - May 13, 2003 - Special**

Minutes of the Special Meeting  
Of the City Council of the  
CITY OF DARIEN  
MAY 13, 2003

### **1. CALL TO ORDER**

Mayor Carmen D. Soldato called the Special Meeting of the City Council of the City of Darien to order at 5:45 P.M.

### **2. ROLL CALL — The Roll Call of Aldermen by City Clerk Coleman was as follows:**

Present: Richard Biehl Joseph Marchese  
Morgan Cotten John Poteraske  
David Hagen Kathleen Weaver  
James Tikalsky (arrived at 5:49 P.M.)

Also in Attendance: Carmen D. Soldato, Mayor  
Joanne F. Coleman, City Clerk  
Kevin P. Monaghan, City Treasurer  
John B. Murphey, City Attorney  
Bryon D. Vana, City Administrator  
Gregory Dreyer, Director of Community Development

### **3. DECLARATION OF A QUORUM — There being six Aldermen present, Mayor Soldato declared a quorum.**

### **4. BUSINESS REDEVELOPMENT DISTRICT / 75th STREET & CASS AVENUE TRIANGLE DEVELOPMENT**

Mayor Soldato thanked Council for their attendance and stated that the purpose of the meeting was for discussion purposes and to outline procedural steps regarding the Central Business District. He commented that the Comprehensive Plan was updated on November 18, 2002, which had a component for the development of the Central Business District at 75th Street & Cass Avenue; City Attorney Murphey outlined steps within a memorandum dated November 26, 2002, which stated that an area needed to be defined as a Business District.

Attorney Murphey recommended that the Council should determine if redevelopment of the area would make planning, policy and financial sense. He stated that the next step would be to determine what long term financing would be available; he emphasized that there was a responsibility to the owners of the properties within the district to progressively continue with the project. He spoke about condemnation under Home Rule. Alderman Cotten inquired what would happen if no progress was made for 1, 2 or 5 years; Attorney Murphey responded that the district was defined and that the City's authority would not diminish if nothing was done for a period of time. Mayor Soldato stated the whole endeavor would take years, not months, to achieve.

Alderman Poteraske commented that perhaps the next logical step for the City to take would be a feasibility study by a real estate consultant to determine the value of the property.

Mayor Soldato referred to the memorandum, which outlined a proposed schedule. He recommended that the Business District Development and Redevelopment Commission be created at the May 19th Council meeting. He spoke about a TIF consultant; he indicated that the land needed to be valued; he stated that funding was budgeted. He commented that developers have informally shown an interest in the site and

that Administrator Vana received a rudimentary proposal for the property. Mayor Soldato felt it was important to do a Request for Proposal in order to formulate what could be placed on the site and to publish the information through the media; the RFP would be drafted by the Commission and Administrator Vana for Council review, released and have a return date of July 31, 2003. He indicated that the Commission would review the proposals from the beginning to mid-August, make a recommendation to Council on August 18, and on August 19 the Council would provide the recommended proposal to the TIF consultant. The TIF feasibility study would be reviewed by September 1. He noted that there were many legal/procedural steps to implement, which would include other taxing bodies.

Alderman Cotten inquired about the number of proposals received. Administrator Vana stated that as part of the budget three categories of services were considered; they were TIF/general economic development consultants, land appraisers and land negotiators. He said that two proposals had been received; they were for TIF/economic development. Alderman Cotten inquired about the Commission's task; they are to evaluate proposals and make recommendation(s) to Council. Administrator Vana commented that Council laid out steps to be taken; money was budgeted last year and he tried to obtain proposals for consideration. Alderman Cotten felt that the scheduling was aggressive and that the \$95,000 in the budget could be deferred.

Alderman Biehl inquired about the number of people for the Commission;

Mayor Soldato responded that four people would be appointed at the May 19th City Council meeting. Alderman Biehl also inquired if June 2nd was enough time to hire a consultant and an appraiser; Administrator Vana responded that after May 19th he would assist the Commissioners with evaluating the consultants to narrow the selection. Mayor Soldato stated that the timeline contained suggested dates; if the Commission felt that additional time was needed they would inform Council.

Alderman Hagen asked if it would be appropriate to advertise for Commission members who may have expertise to be involved with the project instead of making an appointment on May 19th. He asked if it was inappropriate to do a RFP for a TIF consultant. He asked if there was a breakdown of costs associated with the \$95,000 in the budget. Administrator Vana replied that the budgeted amount included a variety of studies and appraisals. Alderman Hagen would like the costs defined; he was concerned about utilizing a TIF consultant, which could be interpreted that the City decided to make the area a TIF district; he said there were other financing options available.

Administrator Vana commented that an economic development consultant would provide various finance options. Mayor Soldato stated that the intent was to look at all finance options, not just TIF.

Alderman Poteraske suggested using the term "real estate feasibility consultant" instead of TIF consultant. The consultant would need real estate appraisal background to provide a fair market value of the property in order for the City to determine what the value of the area would be to provide an acquisition budget.

Council reviewed the proposed schedule. Administrator Vana spoke about the proposed consultants and that they could work on an hourly basis. Alderman Poteraske reiterated that the fair market value needed to be known to make a determination.

Alderman Hagen asked that information regarding the process be provided in advance of a scheduled meeting. Mayor Soldato stated that the purpose of the Committee of the Whole meeting was to discuss and gather input.

Alderman Marchese said that Committee of the Whole meetings should be conducted throughout the project development.

Alderman Cotten inquired about the sale of the land near the Public Works facility; Administrator Vana said that the appraisal had not been received but expected it shortly and would forward it to Council; he said that a verbal offer had been made. Alderman Cotten said he would like the sale completed prior to venturing forward with the triangle project.

Alderman Weaver stated that it would have been helpful if Council had reviewed Attorney Murphey's memo regarding the business district; Mayor Soldato noted that if they needed an additional copy, it could be obtained through Administrator Vana.

Mayor Soldato stated that the sale of the land on Frontage Road would be sold for market value or above, which would assist the Council to view the proposed project as significant, not only financially but aesthetically. People have shown interest in this project and it would require monumental coordination of efforts by all involved.

Alderman Cotten inquired if Council could obtain confidential information about the people who have expressed interest in the triangle property for evaluation purposes; Mayor Soldato replied that Administrator Vana would forward the information.

## 5. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before the City Council, it was moved by Alderman Poteraske and seconded by Alderman Marchese to adjourn.

VIA VOICE VOTE — MOTION DULY CARRIED

The City Council Special Meeting adjourned at 6:35 P.M.

Mayor

---

City Clerk  
JFC/jr

All supporting documentation and report originals of these minutes are on file in the Office of the City Clerk under File Number 05-13-03. Minutes of 05-13-03 CCM

May 13, 2003