

## **Minutes - September 2, 2003 - Committee-of-the-Whole**

Minutes of the Committee-of-the-Whole Meeting

of the City Council of the

CITY OF DARIEN

SEPTEMBER 2, 2003

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

The Committee-of-the-Whole Meeting of the City Council of the City of Darien was called to order at 6:00 P.M. by Mayor Carmen D. Soldato. In attendance were Mayor Soldato, Acting Deputy City Clerk Ragona, Treasurer Monaghan, Aldermen Biehl, Hagen, Marchese, Poteraske, Weaver, Police Chief Pavelchik, Community Development Director Dreyer, and Public Works Asst. Director Mengarelli.

### **2. BUSINESS DISTRICT DEVELOPMENT AND REDEVELOPMENT – CONSULTANT DISCUSSION**

Mayor Soldato stated that the meeting was a follow-up in regard to the two consultant interviews recommended by the Business District Development and Redevelopment Commission. The consultants, Kane, McKenna and Associates, Inc. and Teska Associates, Inc., submitted additional information. Mayor Soldato said that Council needed to decide if they wanted to pursue an avenue on the redevelopment of the triangle where the Commission and Staff would review Council's insights along with the Comprehensive Plan and prepare a 'Request for Proposal' (RFP) for potential developers. He asked Council to provide Administrator Vana with insight as to their consultant recommendation.

Alderman Poteraske favored Teska's approach; he was concerned about utilizing staff since staff was small and it would take them away from other duties; there was an additional fee of \$5,000 to use Teska. He was not satisfied with the redefined Teska document; the document did not meet expectations as they had verbalized. He was inclined to allow Staff and the Commission to do the RFP preparation; he stated that the RFP should be challenging to the reader and enticing to developers.

Alderman Hagen agreed with Alderman Poteraske. He noted that a market analysis needed to be completed. He was impressed with Teska but stated that the 'Scope of Services' could be improved and that outside expertise was needed. He would like to work directly with Teska for the Scope of Services including the business analysis; the RFP could be prepared by Staff and the Commission.

Alderman Biehl commented that Staff and the Commission could prepare the RFP and that Teska appeared to be a more professional consultant.

Alderman Marchese was impressed with Teska because of their more realistic approach including the market analysis, how to proceed, and their consideration of the various components. He agreed that Staff and the Commission should develop the RFP.

Alderman Weaver was comfortable with Teska's common sense approach. She agreed that Staff and the Commission should create the RFP but that a timetable also needed to be established and adhered to.

Alderman Poteraske asked if the Commission would be afforded the opportunity to work with Teska; Mayor Soldato commented that Teska would need to resubmit their 'Scope of Services'.

Alderman Weaver confirmed that the RFP would be presented to the Council prior to distribution; Council and the Commission concurred.

Commissioner Jiskra stated that the Commission was unaware of any letter being sent or of any contact being made with consultants stating that Tax Increment Financing (TIF) was the priority. She said that TIF was not a reason, it was one of the tools that could be utilized; each consultant brought forward the TIF concept. She stated that she would be more comfortable working with Kane, McKenna because they had done strictly the financials; she suggested asking Kane what they could contribute and if they were capable of fulfilling the City's requirements.

Administrator Vana reiterated that Staff would work with the Commission to prepare the RFP to solicit interested developers based on the Comprehensive Plan. He noted that timeframes depended on the amount of information requested. He inquired if the term 'full market analysis' was referred to because of what the consultant stated or staff; he noted that perhaps a consultant could be brought in to review their proposals. Alderman Marchese said that the term was utilized by Teska and that they said the analysis would allow them to state how much area should be dedicated for specific development.

Mayor Soldato stated that Teska made it very clear what the economics were, and if there was a gap would the project be doable or not, and what would make it feasible by using tools. He said that the RFP would assist Teska with putting numbers together. The Mayor commented that one developer looked at the site and offered a schematic that contained a budget and a financial gap; he felt that a RFP would establish a good market analysis. He noted that the Council would wait for responses and if a market analysis was needed, they would hire Teska.

Commissioner Coren stated that he had concerns about hiring an outside consultant. He felt that most of the work could be done in house; he commented that a consultant could be utilized for the housing study concept and for financing alternatives. Commissioner Coren noted that he was impressed with Kane, McKenna because they focused on the financial plan; that Teska was more inclined with the planning and updating the Comprehensive Plan.

Commissioner Cozzolino stated that he was comfortable with either consultant. They approached the market differently. Kane, McKenna was very financial; he said that the Comprehensive Plan's consultant would need to be utilized to obtain additional information regarding the market and to work with Kane, McKenna. Teska offered both with their sister company, Business Districts, Inc. He noted that the housing was a big issue and needed to have consideration from the front end.

Mayor Soldato stated that if the project moved forward that a housing study would need to be completed. Commissioner Cozzolino suggested that the study could be included as part of the RFP.

Commissioner Dahl stated that her concern with Kane, McKenna was that they were strictly financial and she was interested in an overall, start to finish. She was also concerned with Teska because of the housing impact study; they stated that they would need to consult with someone else. She thought that the community would be more acceptable of Teska's approach.

Alderman Biehl commented that the biggest problem to be faced with the development would be the housing issue.

Mayor Soldato said that the market needs to tell the City what was needed, that there were unknown facts and that input was needed from the residents. He noted that to overcome burdens, financial incentives may need to be attached to the land; the City shared sales tax revenue with Towne Centre for ten years.

Alderman Poteraske said there was another option, which was to work around the housing; the City needed to remain flexible.

### 3. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before the Committee-of-the-Whole, the meeting adjourned at 6:40 P.M.

Mayor

---

Acting Deputy Clerk

JR/jr

All supporting documentation and report originals of these minutes are on file in the Office of the City Clerk under File Number 09-02-03 Committee-of-the-Whole.

Minutes of 09-02-03 Committee-of-the-Whole