

**REPRESENTATIVE TOWN MEETING
TOWN OF DARIEN, CONNECTICUT
FINANCE & BUDGET COMMITTEE
“DRAFT”**

Minutes of a Meeting Held on September 16, 2013

On September 16, 2013, a meeting of the RTM Finance & Budget Committee was held in the Darien Town Hall auditorium with eleven of fifteen members present.

Present were:

Bill Ball
Mari Lu Cleary
Rob Cardone
Terry Duffy
Kirk Hoffman
Bruce Orr
Jim Palen
Deb Ritchie
Anita Rycenga
Marc Thorne
Reilly Tierney

Absent: John Boulton, Jack Davis, Werner Domittner, Kip Hall

Guests in audience: Sarah Seelye, Ed Schmidt, esq., Mr. McClutchy and associate from the development team for Heights project

The meeting was called to order at 8:05 p.m. by Mr. Orr.

Mr. Orr suggested a change to the agenda order and modified it by removing “take action” regarding the Town’s purchase of the Hecker property since it will not be an agenda item for the RTMN meeting as there are some easement matters that require analysis. Marc Thorne moved to accept changes and Deb Ritchie seconded.

Deb Ritchie moved resolution providing a loan of \$250,000 to the Heights affordable housing development and Marc Thorne seconded.

Recap of points made and comments:

- Original budget put forth included a loan from the Town of Darien of \$250,000
- Town was going to receive these funds from Federal grant originally intended for 35 Leroy affordable housing but since the strings attached were onerous and the administration of the grant for a multi- year period would require additional staff related costs the Town decided to forgo the grant and do a 30 year loan with no principal or interest payments required.
- Mr. Schmidt added that when a municipality contributes to projects like these, additional points are earned within the rating method used.

- What if the RTM turned this down? They would have to look elsewhere to make up for budget gap.
- Project is 50% complete, on budget and six months ahead of schedule
- Darien is currently in the top four municipalities in the State for creating more affordable housing
- Developer is handling the administration of the application and lottery process vs. Darien Housing Authority for the time being.
- Recap of what Town has contributed to project includes tax abatement granted to new entity, road abandoned for sewer/drain and developer added that they in turn oversized the drainage system to help mitigate potential flooding.
- Mr. Schmidt says we get credits for affordable housing once CO's are issued
- Traffic concerns were brought up and it was pointed out that the Town should look at making the corner of West Ave. and Noroton Ave. wider to accommodate.

Mr. Orr called for vote and the resolution was unanimously approved.

Discussion regarding the parcel of land on Hecker for sale included:

- Spring Grove is seller and taxes are not paid by cemeteries
- Darien Land Trust is willing to pay half of the \$275,000 sales price
- Parcel has fiber optics and storm sewer lines running through it and is plagued with flooding problems, a crumbling retaining wall and virtually impossible to build upon.
- Why buy it since it will always be open space just based on the fact that no one can develop on it?
- Who will maintain it if it is purchased?

Sarah Seyle suggested it meets the objectives of Town Plan to acquire open space.

Minutes of the 6/20/13 special meeting were up to be approved. Votes as follows:

Yes: Rob Cardone, Bruce Orr, Terry Duffy, Jim Palen

Abstentions due to being absent: Bill Ball, Mari Lu Cleary, Kirk Hoffman, Deb Ritchie, Anita Rycenga, Marc Thorne, Reilly Tierney

Chairman Orr made an announcement that this would be his last meeting with the RTM Finance & Budget Committee as he has accepted a position on the Darien Board of Finance. This announcement was met with applause and gratitude for his service on the committee.

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 9:15 p.m.

Dated: Sept. 17, 2013

Respectfully submitted,

Anita M. Rycenga

Clerk

RTM Finance & Budget Committee

