

Planning & Development Committee
September 3, 2014 – 5:30 p.m.
1st Fl. Council Committee Room – City Hall
-Minutes-

Present: Chair, Councilor Greg Verga; Councilor Steven LeBlanc

Absent: Councilor Lundberg

Also Present: Councilor McGeary (entered at 5:37 p.m.); Tom Daniel; Salvatore DiStefano

The meeting was called to order at 5:30 p.m. Items were taken out of order.

1. ***Request by P&D Committee that Community Development Director present an update on the I4-C2 (65 Rogers Street) development project; the Fuller Site redevelopment project and the Stage Fort Park Rehabilitation and Maintenance projects and related new Advisory Committee***

Stage Fort Park: **Tom Daniel**, Director of the Community Development Department, reported that the Mayor has been delayed in making appointments to the newly created Stage Fort Park Advisory Committee (SFPAC). **Councilor Verga** and **Mr. Daniel** briefly discussed submitted letters of interest for appointment to the SFPAC. **Councilor Verga** then reviewed in brief for Mr. DiStefano's benefit the background for the Council's impetus to create the SFPAC, and that the 400th anniversary of the city is in 2023.

Councilor Verga asked about internal discussions for potential improvements and plans for Stage Fort Park with city staff and the possible hiring of an outside consultant to assist in that process. **Mr. Daniel** said they are looking at structuring the SFPAC and potential funding sources for a consultant. He reported they haven't looked at any new grant funding opportunities to support that work, and discussed with Councilor Verga the issue of constraints in staffing to shepherd the new committee. **Councilor Verga** suggested that Mr. Daniel not let funding stand in the way of the SFPAC noting that there are plenty of people who are willing to do it for free from families who have resided in the city for decades that have an abiding interest to see something happen.

Councilor LeBlanc reiterated that there are people who have put their time and energy as volunteers towards making Stage Fort Park a better maintained and improved park and urged Mr. Daniel to move forward relying on these local residents who have a defined vision to be a driving force. **Councilor Verga** said a paid consultant can be brought in later because there is no need for a paid consultant to tell locals what they like. Rather it is more important to move forward by letting locals talk about what they see are the deficiencies and what the goals should be, he said.

65 Rogers Street (I4-C2): **Mr. Daniel** informed the Committee that: In May there was a third public workshop with the city's consultant, Gulf of Maine Research Institute (GMRI). GMRI is delayed in completing their work product, but that the draft report is due this month. The expectation is that the Administration would come back this fall to report the results of the GMRI analysis. GMRI has done the conceptual design, and that other aspects are looking at letters of interest and the financial model and analysis. It is expected that the Administration will forward this information to the Council before Thanksgiving.

Fuller School Site: **Councilor Verga** noted the P&D Committee requested through Mr. Daniel previously for a three-tier approach – a non-profit Request For Proposal (RFP); a highest bidder RFP, and if the city decides it should hold on to the property, to move city offices now in leased space to at least a portion of that building. **Mr. Daniel** pointed out at that time the Committee discussed possible municipal office reuse of the building. He submitted a letter (placed on file) from Dore & Whittier, Architects the designer for the city's proposed Public Safety Center. He explained the letter contained a look at a potential 50,000 square foot "vanilla" municipal office space in the Fuller building and what the cost would be to put the city offices there now housed in leased space. The square footage, he remarked, is based on a space inventory several years ago which accounted for current use for municipal offices outside of City Hall.

Mr. Daniel reviewed the page containing a drawing of the Fuller site showing the location of the proposed Public Safety Center, and a rendering of the Fuller School building showing a first floor 30,800 square foot renovation footprint, and a second floor 17,400 foot renovation footprint. **Councilor Verga** confirmed these renderings are working off of the current structure, using a portion of it.

Mr. Daniel also noted the physical breakdown for renovating a 50,000 square foot office space in the existing structure and reviewed the cost broken down by existing first floor and second floor, assuming the demolition of the rest of the building, and assumed hazardous material mitigation as well as a small amount of new construction along with contingencies and multipliers. Total cost is estimated at about \$20,000,000.

Councilor Verga asked what it would cost to bond such an amount. **Councilor McGeary** calculated it would cost the city \$4,000 per month per \$1 million, or about \$1 million annually over a 30-year term based on 3.5 percent interest which he commented the interest rate he noted might be a bit high. **Councilor Verga** noted that is about what the city is spending currently to rent municipal office space at Pond Road and the School Administration housed at the Blackburn Industrial Park. He said the idea is to be rid of those two rentals. **Mr. Daniel** pointed out that this wasn't a space/needs analysis, but a generic look. **Councilor Verga** recalled as a member of the Public Facilities Study Committee they found that the Fuller building had more space than the city needed, but was based on space being used then which was downsized over time, with staff now in cramped spaces. He said there was a need to look at where space needs are currently and possible need for expansion over a 15 year period. He also cautioned that space needs to be accounted for a records storage center for the city, with a large amount of records currently stored in an adjacent facility to City Hall which is less than ideal. He urged that this situation should be looked in terms of what is needed for records storage management, archiving and possible expansion. **Mr. Daniel** said there are opportunities with technology for digitization of records, and there could be off-site storage but acknowledged that the paper records still must be kept.

Mr. Daniel said that Dore & Whittier is leading the Public Safety Center design process that is underway, as the architect, and a subcontractor, a firm that are public safety center experts have been meeting with the Police and Fire Chiefs to ascertain the space needs of each service. He pointed out a critical piece is the time response analysis which is being done by another consultant to learn if the Fuller parcel makes sense. It is expected the information will be received and reviewed in the coming weeks which will be reported to the Council. He said they are on track for the November timeline for schematic designs. There is an effort to look at compacting the Public Safety Center building because if some of the parcel is subsequently not used for municipal use and is declared surplus that surplus property could be made available for development, he suggested.

Councilor LeBlanc confirmed with Mr. Daniel that the Dore & Whittier report is just related to 50,000 square foot municipal offices and is looking to demolish the rest of the building not used for municipal offices and storage. The demolition can be removed from the matrix if there is reuse of the remainder of the building, **Mr. Daniel** noted.

Councilor Verga highlighted that the response time study is the key and noted that if the city moves the police station to the combined Public Service Center at the Fuller site, and said then there would need to be consideration as to what happens to that Main Street building still housing the District Court. **Mr. Daniel** said that analysis has to be done, adding that from an economic development perspective, having the district court remaining downtown would be helpful. **Councilor Verga** said he assumed because of court security issues rental of the downstairs portion of that building may be an issue but was too soon to broach.

Councilor McGeary pointed out there had been discussion related to the Public Safety Center for a bypass road to more easily access the downtown center to Sargent Street from the Fuller site. Responding to an inquiry from the Committee related to the possible bypass road, **Mr. Daniel** said the Linsky property is back on the market, and explained that property has been cleaned up for industrial level use. He said that the option for a bypass road is off the table because the infrastructure cost is a barrier, and then there would be the cost of the acquisition of the property to create the road. He added that if the response time analysis demonstrates that response times are sufficient then the need for bypass road becomes moot. He said the Mayor intends to submit a memo to the Council through the next Mayor's Report with an update presenting options for discussion, he reported.

Councilor Verga noted there is a lot of discussion surrounding the Cape Ann YMCA's letter requesting to purchase the Fuller site and asked when an RFP is expected to be issued. **Mr. Daniel** said that letter of request to purchase the Fuller site drove the city's effort to determine what portion of the property will be retained and what portion could be surplus for sale. He said they weren't ready to issue an RFP yet. **Councilor McGeary** asked if there is a deadline or a target date for the release of an RFP. **Mr. Daniel** said that he doesn't have a firm date to put forward, but that the Mayor wants this matter move forward expeditiously.

2. Review of Draft Resolution for Council Vote re: Commercial Street #44

Councilor Verga advised that the Committee was in receipt of a letter via email (on file) from Attorney Adam Costa of Blatman, Bobrowski & Mead, representing Cove Harbor, LLC, representing Mac S. Bell, Manager of Cove Harbor LLC, asking that this matter be continued until such time as his client can present draft resolution language to the Committee after consulting with city staff. He read the letter to those present and said that the matter would return to the Committee's agenda when draft resolution language is received.

A motion was made, seconded and voted unanimously to adjourn the meeting at 5:52 p.m.

**Respectfully submitted,
Dana C. Jorgenson,
Clerk of Committees**

DOCUMENTS/ITEMS SUBMITTED AT MEETING:

- Letter dated July 10, 2014 to Tom Daniel from Jason Harris, Project Manager, Dore & Whittier Architects, Inc. with two page attachment