

Cuyahoga Falls City Council

Minutes of the Finance and Appropriations Committee Meeting

May 17, 2004

Members: Mr. Flinn, Chairman; Mr. Barnhart, Vice Chair; Mr. Gorbach, Member.

Mr. Flinn called the Finance Committee to order at 6:20 p.m. Mr. Barnhart was absent. The minutes from May 3, 2004 Finance and Appropriations Committee meeting were approved as submitted.

Legislation this evening (second readings):

A-81	An Ordinance authorizing the Mayor to enter into a contract for professional consulting services as related to the US EPA Brownfield Project and declaring an emergency.
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Fred Guerra indicates this is for a land-planning firm for the land portion use of the Brownfield. SRW was hired for \$150,000 and another \$50,000 for Farr Associates (\$40,000). GPD was hired at \$15,000 for the trail only. There are six different scopes to this project that Farr Associates will do including collecting maps, inventory key attributes, goals/objectives for site uses, regulations for the planning area, overlay the district to the new code by identifying mixed use residential office area with codes established that can be used in future. This will provide a comprehensive view of the area and be used for other areas of the city. GPD was a separate grant so this is for Farr Associates. The total is \$215,000 and Farr Associates is \$40,000. Mary Ellen asks if the "trail head" includes Prospect Bridge and also the Glens Trailhead. Fred confirms this area is included and will provide a written scope of the project to Council. Mary Ellen thanks Fred for his hard work and this is directly coming from the charrettes.

The committee recommends bringing out Temp. Ord. A-81

A-82	An Ordinance authorizing the sale of parcel 107 in the front and center Urban Renewal Project Area to Zarembo, Inc. for redevelopment in accordance with a contract for sale of land for private redevelopment, determining that such real property will not be needed for public use, that the purchase price is satisfactory, and related findings, and declaring an emergency.
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Sue Truby stated in 1986 we had 7 vacant parcels in the downtown area, in 1988 the Sheraton hotel was developed and in 1990 the Town Center Project followed by LeFevers and eventually the River Square development. We have created over 600 jobs in our downtown area along with \$50 million in new investments. This administration takes a proactive look at our downtown and look forward to the development of Parcel 107. Manchester Square pertaining to the original name of the Cuyahoga Falls area, has been proposed by Zarembo Inc. and has taken about 1 ½ years to come to fruition.

Nate Zarembo offered a PowerPoint presentation on his work and his proposal for Parcel 107 along with Michael Caito of Cityarchitecture. The presentation outlined the conceptual drawing of the retail and residential building and described one building having 8820 sq. ft. of restaurant and retail space and about 40 residential rental units on the upper levels. There are also three levels of parking below the mall level. The second building would include 8 loft style town homes.

Sue indicated the City would be responsible for planning the one-way access level and the city would replace the streets, curbs, etc. at about \$600,000. We are loaning \$10,000 per parking space for short term parking for twenty years. We are watching new home ownership dwindle. The tax abatement program will be the same as with the Sheraton with the time frame for completion of the necessary paperwork before July 1, 2005 for closing. Ground break will be 30 days after this process. The plans, soil borings, evidence of financing, etc. must be presented prior to this date. He will be looking at pre-leases, etc. There is a lot to occur before the ground breaking.

The target market for the lofts is professional couples/empty nesters/pre-retirement. It is difficult to find these demands and many lack imagination for these people. Mr. Zaremba is confident this plan will meet their needs. Mr. Gorbach states there is a lot to digest with the tax abatements. Are we willing to invest 1.5 million for additional spots as a city? It is exciting and I am interested in hearing other council comments. Mr. Zaremba indicates a restaurant takes up approximately 8000 sq. ft. along with two other retailers. Mary Ellen likes the seclusion of the courtyard. Sue indicates they are working with TrafPro on the street rearrangements along with the traffic flow and turn in. During concerts, we may close areas to control traffic. There needs to be 24 hr. access since people will be living there. Mr. Gorbach indicates on page 4, Section 2 of the types of portions not consistent with the redevelopment needs to be stipulated. Kathy Hummel acknowledges it is very innovative. She has several questions: The tax abatement, who gets the abatement? The condo owners would get the advantage of the abatement. First we will establish the community reinvestment area. The owner in essence would be applying for it. The retail use would be different and excluded. The loft "owners" not the users would get the tax break. The value of the tax abatement will be known in the future by the extension of the 7/1/05 agreement & council should be aware of the figure. Mrs. Hummel requests the project come back to Council. Kathy asks if the soil testing and if the two more levels of development might be a problem? Sue indicates the rock pattern at the Sheraton and River Square probably will continue, but we will see. Kathy indicates on page 5 about the plans for review in the Planning Commission. This plan will come through Council for passage. Kathy Hummel asks about the parking: there is reference to parking requirement to code 213 for urban renewal level. Does it meet the requirements based on the square footage? 48 of the 98 spaces are for retail support (almost 8000-9000 sq ft). There is no parking requirement for the CU area according to Fred Guerra but he may have to research further for a definite answer. Sue indicates her interpretation is there is no requirement for this area. The residential parking area will be key card restricted. Mr. Potts asks if there was any discussion of putting access to the garage to the back of this? Mrs. Truby indicates there has to be quality parking for this project. Mr. Potts questions the garage layout. This is the most efficient way for parking. Coming off Portage Trail would be hazardous. George asks if there will be a left turn permitted. Sue indicates we are working and changing things as we go along. Is there a courtyard effect only accessible from the retail? Mike Caito from Cityarchitecture, indicates it is accessible from the retail areas and a little gateway from Portage Trail. All the units are for sale and will not be leased. George asked about other Zaremba projects. All but Harborwalk, Zaremba has received tax abatements on. Most of the other abatements have been for 15 years. Tax increment financing (TIF) has been done on some projects. Tax abatements on lofts are risky according to Mr. Zaremba. We plan this to be a success. Mary Ellen asks about projects through to South of the Front Street. Mr. Zaremba feels a friendly pedestrian environment is inevitable for that area. He walked the area and attended the Ward 2 Charrettes. Mr. James asks if the courtyard will be private/semiprivate? Who will be responsible for the upkeep. Eventually there will be a homeowners association and retailers that will be responsible for the care of the courtyard. Carol asks if on the Millcreek project, was there a lot of building going on in Cleveland? Mr. Zaremba states there were only ten permits pulled the year he started it. Now our cheapest house goes for \$157,000. This is in a neighborhood that was a \$40,000 neighborhood. As a result, everyone comes out a winner. Carol would like to work amendments into this ordinance because of past problems. When she looks at the successful plan that has been brought before us, she is impressed. This project will be the cornerstone and will be followed through the rest of the downtown. Mayor Robart visualizes the excitement of the corner. The residential tax incentives are a new avenue for us, but it has worked and this will bring long-term housing to our downtown. This is for the better business of the area. It is also the last parcel in the urban renewal district. Nate Zaremba has brought a positive influence to this area. It has been 35 years since this has been developed. Mr. Mader thanks him for his hard work and would like to see him travel down State Road. Mr. Walters asks if there will be service parking for the Arts Center. Sue indicates yes and there will be limited parking time for the front access.

The committee recommends bringing out Temp. Ord. A-82

Finance and Appropriations Committee Meeting adjourned at 8:00 p.m.