

Long Term Community Recovery (LTCR) Steering Committee Meeting
Monday, 7/1/2013 - 5:30 pm
Minutes

Present: M. Luce, B. Farr, F. Hurley, M. Rivera, N. Howell, M. Callan, M. Monley, R. Ellis, Carol Miller, Sue Miller, E. Loomis

N. Howell called the meeting to order at 5:39 and began with a welcome to Fauna Hurley, the new Executive Director of Revitalizing Waterbury (RW). At the next meeting, the Steering Committee will officially appoint an RW position on the LTCR Board.

M. Luce made a motion to approve the minutes from 6/17/13. This motion was seconded by M. Rivera and passed unanimously.

B. Farr gave an update on back up plans and potential funding sources moving forward in the wake of the failed bond vote.

The bond vote failed and bond vote moving forward: been looking at back up plans, funding sources to go forward. Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP) funds was an option under consideration to demolish Stanley Hall and put the footprint of the building into conservation and to elevate Wasson Hall. Barb found out today that these two projects didn't qualify in the preliminary Benefit-Cost Analysis (BCA) that FEMA ran. If the building's basements had contained usable space, the projects could have gained the points it needed to pass. Both buildings are a fraction of a foot over the 100 year flood limit, and each of the major flooding events (1927, 1938, and Irene) were too far apart and there wasn't enough documented damage through the 90-year timespan for FEMA to justify spending millions of dollars on them.

Barb also updated the group on the public meeting on the new Community Development Block Grant – Disaster Recovery (CDBG-DR) funds that she attended with Rebecca Ellis and Eva Loomis last week.

There is about \$18 million available in a second round of CDBG-DR funds and the Department of Housing and Community Development is asking for Letters of Intent by July 3 so they can get input on how to allocate this money. The Federal Notice requires the State to target at least 80% of this funding to Washington, Windsor, and Windham Counties. Waterbury has identified the following needs below for the next allocation of CDBG-DR funds, which will be presented in a letter to be signed by the Select Board tonight.

- 1) *Slums and Blight/Downtown Project - Estimated cost: \$350,000:* Buyout of 1-2 properties that received flood damage and have not yet been put back into use, for open space/parking areas as part of the Revitalize Waterbury effort following Tropical Storm Irene. Includes signage for parking, Wayfinding, Welcome Signs.
- 2) *Public Infrastructure – Estimated cost: \$550,000:* Repair and renovate historic public library building that has civil war significance. The library building is owned by the town yet has had years of deferred maintenance. The library has outgrown this space. The partially finished basement had received extensive flood damage from

- TS Irene and the historic foundation is crumbling. The building needs a new foundation, new electrical work, roof, insulation, windows, and adequate upgrades and accessibility for future community use.
- 3) *Planning – Estimated Cost: \$50,000.* Alternative site designs for the old municipal building at 51 South Main Street and the current Library at 28 North Main Street. This could involve a design competition that would lead to the implementation of the future uses for these buildings.
 - 4) *Planning - Estimated cost: \$30,000:* Support part time position for the coordination of the Long Term Community Recovery Steering Committee. This would include ongoing coordination for the Steering Committee and 22 projects and could be a Vista Volunteer or other person.
 - 5) *Planning – Estimated Cost: \$20,000.* Floodplain studies and public education to enhance existing mitigation and preparedness efforts for residents and downtown businesses.

Barb had been considering the idea of demolishing Stanley and turning the site into green space and elevating Wasson Hall and moving it to a central portion of the land at the site to serve as the Municipal Civic Building. Wasson Hall provides more than 10,000 square feet of usable space, and there would be a cost savings of \$75 per square foot by renovating instead of building new, which would result in a cost savings of about \$750,000. Waterbury has already received a large portion of CDBG-DR funds, so if we apply for this project we won't be as competitive with other communities applying.

Mike Stevens of Buildings and General Services and Commissioner Obuchowski have expressed that BGS is open to renegotiating the current purchase and sales agreement for the Stanley and Wasson Halls site when the time comes.

Monica Callan proposed the idea of moving the Old Laundry Building at the State Office Complex to the Wasson Site to be used as an addition for the library and in keeping with the historic character of the Complex. This option might also be eligible for historical preservation funding, and the roof structure is something that the Division for Historic Preservation would like to preserve. Monica has blueprints of the building, which is about 7,200 square feet (60' x 120') of lofty and open space with large windows all along it. The building has a brick foundation and a slate roof and is set on a concrete slab. Margaret Luce feels that the library may not be well suited for a building with high ceilings. MK Monley is excited about the potential of using this building, which is a part of Waterbury's heritage, in an artistic way, but questions if it is a cost effective option and if the building could be made energy efficient. She also wonders if the Select Board could get behind the Stanley or Wasson site under any circumstances.

Regarding the downtown projects, Revitalizing Waterbury gave direct money to Leanne Tingay who hired Tripp Muldrow and his team of consultants. There might be some specific projects that RW wants to write grants for.

Carol Miller wondered if any CDBG-DR money could be used for hazard mitigation purposes at the old municipal offices at 51 South Main Street. The response was that in the February round of HMGP funds

we were told no. We were also turned down for mitigation work at the Stanley and Wasson Halls site. We might be able to get CDBG-DR funds to turn 51 South Main into something non-municipal related.

Someone wondered if we could get a Letter of Interest from the Town to explore the 3 Elm Street site. Because this building is owned privately (by Jeff Larkin), he could get a private loan or Across Roads Center for the Arts could get a 0% loan to adapt the space.

Out of \$100,000 of CDBG - DR planning money that was awarded to the Town for the Municipal Civic Building project, to date \$33,191 has been paid out to Black River Design. The \$1 million implementation grant the Town was awarded for this building is specific to the Stanley Wasson site. If the location was to change, we would need to conduct a new environmental assessment and hold a public hearing in order to transfer the funds to the new site. We would also need to agree that the project would be adhering to the same objective, just at a different site.

MK asked if private fundraising was an option and a way to reduce the bond vote amount. Monica and Margaret have found that it is impossible to begin raising money before a piece of land has been secured.

Barb asked Carol and Sue Miller what their thoughts on the Municipal Civic Building are. Carol said that the sticking points for her included price; feeling that there might be alternatives that weren't investigated with the same square footage requirements which left her with questions of viability; and the demolition cost of the Stanley Hall plan. Co-location also isn't a compelling argument for Carol and she didn't understand why it was worth extra money for all of the functions to be located together. Carol can't say if the functions should be split up or not because she hasn't seen numbers on the square footage. The Stanley and Wasson site was so imminent because the State was ready to sell it; therefore it became a top priority on Waterbury's agenda. Sue declined to comment because she is not a Waterbury resident.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 6:44pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Eva Loomis, VISTA

Approved on: August 5, 2013

Upcoming Meetings:

- Select Board: Monday, July 15 at 7pm, Main St. Fire Station
- "Expanded Tri-Board": Monday, July 22 at 7pm
- Pomegranate Steering Committee: Tuesday, July 16 at 7pm, 30 Foundry St.
- **Next LTCR Meeting: Monday, August 5 at 5:30pm, Steele's Block**