



**SPECIAL MEETING OF THE COMMON COUNCIL
MIDDLETOWN CONNECTICUT**

**QUESTIONS TO DIRECTORS
AUGUST 5, 2019
AT 6:00 P.M.**

MINUTES

The Special Meeting, the Questions to Directors Workshop of the Common Council of the City of Middletown, was held in the Council Chamber of the Municipal Building on Monday, August 5, 2019, at 6:00 PM.

Present: Councilwoman Mary Bartolotta (6:30 PM) Councilwoman Deborah Kleckowski (6:10 PM)
Councilman Carl Chisem Councilman Eugene Nocera
Councilman Gerald Daley Councilman Philip Pessina
Councilman Grady Faulkner Councilwoman Linda Salafia
Councilman Sebastian Giuliano Councilman Robert Santangelo

Absent: Councilman Robert Blanchard; Councilman W. Vance Cotten; and Corporation Counsel Daniel Ryan Esq.

Also Present: Council Clerk – Linda S.K. Reed Library – Ramona Burkey
Arts Coordinator - Keisha Michael Police Department – Chief William McKenna
City & Town Clerk – Ashley Flynn, CCTC Planning, Cons. & Devel. – Joseph Samolis
Communications -- Wayne Bartolotta Public Works – William Russo
Equal Opp. & Diversity – Faith Jackson Recreation – Cathy Lechkowitz
Finance – Carl Erlacher, CPA Registrar of Voters – David Bauer
Fire Department – Chief Robert Kronenberger Tax Assessor – Damon Braasch, CCMA II
General Counsel – Brig Smith, Esq. Technology Services – Bryan Skowera
Health – Kevin Elak, R.S. Water & Sewer – Joseph Fazzino, P.E.
Youth Services – Justin Carbonella, MPA

Members of the Public: 3

1. Call to Order

Deputy Mayor Robert Santangelo, calls the meeting to order at 6:01 PM and leads the public in the Pledge of Allegiance.

The Council Clerk reads the Call of the Meeting and the Chair declares the call a legal call and the meeting a legal meeting.

2. Questions to Directors Opens

The Chair asks if anyone has questions for any directors. The Chair calls on Councilman Eugene Nocera.

Councilman Nocera invites Faith Jackson Director of Equal Opportunity & Diversity Management and Randi Renee McCray of NCCJ (National Conference for Community & Justice) to the podium to give the Council an update on the Committee's work. He acknowledges Director Jackson for moving so efficiently to get to this point, having conducted the anti-racism training. It was very beneficial for staff to be involved. The Committee had promised the Council that bi-annual updates would be provided on the status of the work and to share goals for the future.

Director Faith Jackson introduces herself and one of the project consultants, Randi Renee McCray of National Conference for Community & Justice (NCCJ). She notes that there are three (3) consultants on the team, but one is involved in another community's training for youth and the facilitator is just other is traveling. Ms. Jackson recounts that this project is the result of Resolution 124-17, which was approved by the Common Council about a year ago, for the Human Relations Commission to work with the National Conference for Community & Justice (NCCJ) after selecting that group. NCCJ is based in Windsor, CT and are assisting in developing a strategic action plan for further the work in fostering and enhancing mutual understanding, equality, and equity among all racial, religious, and ethnic groups within the community. She adds that they cannot change or transform systems, structures, or the community without changing how we view and think about racial equity and equality. Until the lenses are changed and that perspective we will be doing the "same old, same old." Director Jackson thanks the Council for funding this project and allowing them to move forward. Given the current climate, this work is very important, noting that

organization, entities, and schools are beginning to work on advancing racial equality. They are not the only ones. Director Jackson notes that she just received information from the State of Connecticut's Sustainable CT Workshops series regarding everyday anti-racism. They are working to advance their work by activities throughout the State. The scope of our project work has been in three (3) parts. Part 1 is the anti-racism workshops. Part 2 is to do focus groups, and Part 3 is to hold several community discussions on information that has been gathered from the training and the focus groups. Following that work, we want to bring it to the community and get community input because this is not just City-wide internally, noting that this program focuses mainly on the community in building and fostering better relationships with all racial and religious groups in the community. She notes that there is still a long way to go, but she commends the City of Middletown for taking on this initiative and talking about race. In this climate, race is one of the key element driving some of the crazy things that are going on, not only here – not in Middletown, thank goodness – but in the State. In Hartford, NAACP is dealing with several shooting cases. Also there are situations in Bridgeport, in several other cities, and in the nation, itself. She recounts that we have all just recently heard about El Paso, Texas and Dayton, Ohio. Something is not right. The only way to mend and move forward is by opening the dialog for better understanding. She believes that once we understand one another, and learn how to get along together we get to see other viewpoints. If things remain status quo, there is only one viewpoint and one side of the story. It is good to have diversity so you have perspective, adding that enhances business relationships as well as services in the community. Both the health industry and education industry are focusing on this because it is a critical time right now, a crucial time in which to do this. She recounts that there have been two (2) anti-racism workshops with City leadership, including all department heads. Other entities were also included: Common Council members. She thanks the Councilmembers for participating and making time to attend. She understands that everyone has busy schedules and some just cannot attend, but they are grateful for those who were able to attend. There was a total of 53 people as well as the library and outside entities, including members from the Chamber of Commerce and Liberty Bank. At the conclusion of the two (2) days, all participants received a certificate of continuing education. They are now working towards the second part, which involves the focus groups. They have identified, within the community, some individual who they would like to have participate in the focus groups. They will be sending communications, telling them about the work and asking them to participate in these focus groups. After this, there will be community discussions. She states that she will now turn the program over to the consultant, who can tell the Council more about this vital work. She thanks all of the Department Heads for their input and participation. After she meets with the Mayor, she will be sending out a mini-follow up survey to see where people are on the action continuum scale.

Randi Renee McCray, the project consultant, reiterates that there are three (3) parts to the work that NCCJ has been contracted to do. The anti-racism component is completed and they are now moving to the second phase, which involves the focus groups. The intent of focus groups is to bring together other affinity groups, people of color, to see how they are experiencing Middletown: how are their experiences in the community, in the City, in the workplace: how are their experiences receiving services. They are trying to get a better understanding so they center themselves on how it is impacting them in their lives. The two (2) day anti-racism program talked a lot about the history, about the structural disparities that exist, but they also want others to hear the stories of those who are impacted on a daily basis to understand what work needs to be done in the town as a result of those experiences, noting that these are the people who are most directly impacted. It will be expanded into the third piece, which will be broader town experiences based on those experiences. We are hearing these people and lifting their voices so that as we develop an action plan, moving forward, we are centering on experiences of individuals in this town. She notes, as Director Jackson stated earlier, that these issues are on the rise across the nation these issues are on the rise nationwide, so it is not unique in that sense; however, there is uniqueness to each community. As we move forward with this work, we want to center ourselves in this community and with an action plan collectively developed by people, who live and work in this community. These two scopes are designed to build on that work so that we have a common understanding of the underpinnings of racial inequality, but at the same time, go deeper into the nuances of this community and determine what this community would do to diffuse or counter-act the things that come up in the focus groups of those who are most impacted.

Director Jackson explains that the handout that has been given to the Council shows the results of the two (2) workshops held in April and June 2019. It is an overall evaluation as far as the facilitators and content of information delivered during the training and the effectiveness of the facilitators. This is an overall assessment along with feedback from the participants. She asks the Council to review this material, noting that it will also be part of the consideration for the overall action plan. She thanks the City leadership for participating in this process.

Councilman Nocera thanks Justin Carbonella, Youth Services Coordinator, as he was an important part of the leadership of the plan development thru NCCJ. He notes that, having attending these workshops, he thought the lesson design was well thought out as it compelled people to move out of their comfort zones with real feeling expressed to move this forward, which is an important achievement.

The Chair calls on Councilman Sebastian Giuliano.

Councilman Giuliano states that, on tangential issue, the Sustainable CT group project, which was brought to the Council by Ingrid Eck, included an anti-racism/ racial justice component. The Councilmembers were asked to go thru training. In looking at that syllabus, he thought that it looked very familiar, much like what was done in the City program. He recounts that, in speaking with Director Jackson, he asked her if she saw the same thing that he did: that it is very much like the same program that we are now going thru in the

City. It fits in with the sustainability project that the City is working on to get that certification. If that is the case, the City implemented this program a year before they (Sustainable CT) asked the City to implement it, which puts Middletown ahead of the curve on what others are now doing.

Director Jackson replies that this is true. She adds that it is important to her to keep Middletown on the leading edge. Middletown is a very progressive town and has great leadership that listens when a great idea is presented. She recounts that the mayor said let's go with it, so they moved forward. The idea was presented to the Council and they came on board. The work is identical to what NCCJ is doing. She commends the State Sustainable CT for launching this program and introducing it to their leadership. Moving in same direction Middletown is a few steps further want to hear from the community. They are on the same page and moving forward and in the same direction. Middletown is probably taking a few steps further with focus groups and community discussions because we really want to hear from the community so they can develop an action plan that can be implemented, over time, and which will help transform the City and the way we do business and interact with one another.

Councilman Giuliano states that, with the additional phases that are being implemented, this program seems to be even more comprehensive than the sustainability project seeks to do. It was serendipity that Director Jackson got the City involved a year ago – in Spring 2018 – and it dovetails into another project. While it wasn't the intent to do that in the beginning, it is something that we benefit from in more ways than first anticipated. It is an extra bonus that we did not anticipate.

Director Jackson replies that there was a lot of thought put into this, recounting that, when the Chair and Vice-Chair were working with the Commissioners and the consultants, they were able to say, "This is what we are looking for, what we want," which is how the scope came to three (3) parts as it is now set up. She notes that she did also invited the commissioners and other the other three (3) committees, that report to her, but did not have an opportunity to attend our training. She adds that a couple of the Affirmative Action Committee members did attend this recent State training. She recounts that she was told that it is similar to our program with a three-part series. There was the initial session, another this week on August 7th, and another later in August. They are trying to expand this program throughout communities in Connecticut. It is for certification, but our Councilmembers already have certification. She opines that they might want to take the Middletown certifications and include in in their packet, noting that this is what the City leadership has already done, having earned their certification for completing the training. She will let Mike Harris know that he might want to consider presenting this material to his group, showing where Middletown is already. The Middletown program is 2-days long and qualifies for continuing education.

The Chair calls on Councilman Grady Faulkner, Jr.

Councilman Faulkner apologizes for having not been able to attend the session. He supports the effort. He knows the organization and has been trying to attend one of their workshops, adding that he will attend a session in the future. He wants to be sure that we have some things in mind when we go into these session: in particular, the media. He has tracked media ownership deregulation and its effect, which is something that no one seems to be paying attend to. We cannot get away from this, especially TV and radio, talk radio. The market is saturated on one side. These workshops – noting there have been a lot of workshops like this over the past decade – need to have a little bit more of a difference this time. He asks that they keep some of these things in mind and incorporate them into the program.

Director Jackson replies that this is one of the things that was presented to the Commissioners in preparing for the focus groups: what is it that we want achieve by holding these focus groups; what information are we looking for. They hope to have the tools to put this plan together, not based on something the Commission or her office made up, nut actually something from real experiences of people, who live in this community, as to how to transform Middletown. It will not happen overnight, but with a plan in place and some action steps, starting small and gradually building up, she believes that it is attainable.

The Chair calls on Councilman Gerald Daley.

Councilman Daley is glad that Director Jackson explained that the Sustainable CT program is a 3-part series. Having participated in the NCCJ workshop in April, he understands that the second session in the Sustainable CT program 3-seioes presentation is where they focus on ant-racism. The first session, which was held was on overview of sustainability and equity issues and he does not recall the topic of the third sustainability workshop. He does not want to discourage people, who participated in the NCCJ program, from going to the Sustainable CT training because it does look at broader issues of sustainability and equity. He believe that, even with the ant-racism, even if a bit redundant, it is okay because repetition of these concepts is needed to penetrate and take hold with people. He does want anyone to misunderstand that: (1) they are not in competition with the Sustainable CT program and will, hopefully, complement one another, noting that Sustainable CT talks about other equity issues – food equity, hosing, etc. -- not just anti-racism that the NCCJ program did so well.

Director Jackson replies that Councilman Daley is correct on this. They focus more on industries and how they can work to start to transform their industries and how they interact with outside clientele. In other works, there are more rudimentary things with Sustainable CT. She believes that the Mayor did send it all department heads, which is how Councilman Giuliano commented that they had already done training. She adds that all training is good training on different levels.

Councilman Daley replies that the Sustainable CT group, which he is part of, tries to encourage participation, in particular by Planning & Zoning Commission members as that is, as they are proceeding on the Plan of Conservation and Development (POCD) where they can wrap sustainability issues into that. It would be beneficial and we get points from Sustainable CT towards silver certification based on participation.

Director Jackson states that they do not discourage anyone from going through training, reiterating that the information has been sent out to the individual, if they want to attend that training. She also has done further outreach to be certain that the information reaches other people in the communities, so other entities can attend as they are part of the community, including Planning & Zoning, and development, everything in our community. As much training as people can be exposed, the better for the community.

Councilman Daley states that, if he is not mistaken, part of the plan was to extend this to the Board of Education and its staff.

Director Jackson explains that the Board of Education has brought in its own trainer and actually trained its entire staff from principals on down.

Councilman Daley asks if this work was with NCCJ.

Director Jackson replies that NCCJ is working with youth, but another outside company trained the entire Board of Education staff in a mandatory 2-day session.

The Chair calls on Councilman Philip Pessina.

Councilman Pessina states that he attended the training, adding that it was one of the best training sessions that he has attended. He notes that in her comments, Director Jackson makes reference to our community being progressive. He agrees that it is because of the holistic approach: our youth, our community, our City leaders, our business leaders, who make the City strong. It is strong now, but, as everyone knows, we always try to get better, to get deeper into the community. He recounts that he saw an article today about Champ Bailey, an NFL Hall of Fame inductee. His remarks were right on target. We, as white, need to listen and to understand the fears that a person of color, or a different color of skin, has and what they face every day in society. It was poignant, right on track. When he said that we all need to listen to the challenges that they face, with recent shootings and what we are experiencing, we need to pay attention to ourselves and to our community and to the nation and what is happening. Councilman Pessina states that when he goes to sleep at night, being a former He goes to sleep at night as a former member of the Middletown Police Department, Chief McKenna is very good about putting all the great things the police officers do every day to interact with the public. In some situations, if they are not professional, it could go another way. He is grateful for the training that the Police receive, and for the training that we receive, because Middletown is a special community. We need to get even better. It is the challenge for the future. He thanks Director Jackson for her efforts and Ms. McCray for what the NCCJ organization does.

Director Jackson agrees, adding that you cannot change what you don't know. You cannot change yourself if you don't have a better understanding of the plight of others in everyday living. Once we get to a level of parity where people understand other people, then we will be able to move forward. We are not there because you don't understand my journey and the things that I go through, I might look okay, but that's because I have to live here and over here> there are a lot of challenges that people of color endure every day. Sometimes people don't even bother to talk about; rather, they just deal with it and move on, doing the best they can. When we really listen and understand someone else's plight in life are we going to move forward. We are not blaming anyone and we cannot undo the past, but we can make the future better. It is up to all of us to make that change and work on it, making the effort to really work on it. This makes us different: that we try to work n things and move forward.

The Chair asks if anyone has other questions for this Director.

Councilman Santangelo asks Director Jackson if the Council will her from her again in another six (6) months.

Director Jackson replies, "Yes," adding that, by then they should be very close to where they need to be.

There being no other questions for this Director, the Chair asks if anyone has a question for any other Director. The Chair calls on Councilman Grady Faulkner, Jr.

Councilman Faulkner calls Planning, Conservation & Development Director Joseph Samolis to the podium for questions regarding the proposed open space bond ordinance.

Councilman Faulkner asks Director Samolis to speak to the proposed open space bond ordinance. He asks when the last open space bond was adopted.

Director Samolis replies: 2007.

Councilman Faulkner asks if there is a specific timeframe for the City to do such a bond.

Director Samolis replies that, typically, the City does not have a prescribed schedule for public bonding and a referendum for open space acquisition. The varying amount over the last three (3) have been between \$5M, \$3M, and \$2M. He reiterates that it has been some time – since 2007, 12 years – since the City has put forth any money for open space acquisition. With the advice of the Conservation & Agriculture Commission and the Economic Development Commission, they put forth the idea of going forward with a \$5M open space acquisition bond.

Councilman Faulkner asks Director Samolis to define the overall objective.

Director Samolis replies that there are two (2) things. First, it to preserve open space for the overall enjoyment of the community as a whole, which does a number of things from preserving the environment, keeping air quality in good condition, and water quality. The second is related to economic development where we are driving development away from open spaces, agricultural spaces, and undeveloped forest areas to areas already primed for development, these areas that already have infrastructure in place. Redevelopment becomes a priority for the community as a whole. Long term, you save money so that for every dollar invested you save roughly save one and a half (1.5) times that over the course of the generations in terms of keeping costs down because there is no infrastructure investment to put in as well as the ongoing services that that need to be budgeted on an annual basis to maintain that infrastructure.

Councilman Faulkner asks Director Samolis if he has any idea how Middletown fares compared to other cities.

Director Samolis replies that, in general, Middletown does a good job acquiring open space. He adds that he does not know of any other communities that put forward public referendum bonds of this magnitude on such a regular basis to acquire open space. He states that, from his perspective, Middletown is doing pretty well.

Councilman Faulkner states that the City normally does 10-year bonds. He asks if this bond is the same.

Director Samolis replies that tonight the Council is authorizing the \$5M to go public referendum in November. The goal is to have that \$5M spent over a period of time. It depends when a property becomes available and what are the priorities in terms of land acquisition. He reiterates that there is a selection criteria ranking within the Department that the Conservation Commission utilizes when ranking potential open space purchases and, depending on when that space potentially becomes available, is when we would look to step in and acquire the property. Ultimately, we will look to stretch this \$5M over time.

Councilman Faulkner states that he thought a great deal about this issue recently as he has been attending workshops. Among the issues is homelessness. We cannot help but think homelessness and open space, adding it would be nice if we could reduce the density of public housing.

Director Samolis replies that the conservation of open space does a number of great things, as he mentioned previously. It is imperative to make these investments now because, as he mentioned previously, a property owner can get an offer from a developer and the developer can easily sway someone to sell a property at a reasonable rate. If we are able to conserve that space for generations to come to enjoy and for the benefit of the whole community, then it stands for us to move forward in that direction. He encourages the Council to support this and to send it for public referendum in November

The Chair calls on Councilman Sebastian Giuliano.

Councilman Giuliano points out, in response to what Director Samolis said about the last bond of \$2M. As he recalls, that bond was in conjunction with a State program that had matching funds. This means that, even though the bond was only \$2M, that was leveraged to far more in actual open space acquisitions than that bond would seem to indicate. That would put this proposed bond right in the same ballpark in terms of effective yield.

Director Samolis replies that is correct. The bond language allows the City to leverage other grants that we might obtain through other land use agencies: DEEP, ECD, and EPA. He notes that they would look to do that in every case, if possible. The difference with this language compared to other open space bonds gives the Council the ability to acquire open space without those grants being available., So, if timing is critical where the grant cycle isn't there yet, but the owner is looking to sell the property, potentially to a developer, the Council can act fast and appropriate out of that bond.

Councilman Giuliano notes that, mechanically, since the bond is an authorization, if a property was identified and the Council agreed to buy it, the Finance Department does a short term borrowing and, usually, that would be covered by the sale of a bond later. So, rather than go out for bond sale for nickels and dimes, it is all rolled into one, financed by short term borrowings because the bond also allows that.

Director Samolis replies, "Yes, that is correct."

Councilman Giuliano notes that we can act pretty fast if an opportunity presents itself.

Director Samolis replies, "Yes, that is correct."

The Chair calls on Councilman Gerald Daley.

Councilman Daley asks that Director Samolis to clarify a couple of points. He asks if any proposed purchase will come back to Council for authorization and approval.

Director Samolis replies, “Yes, that is correct.”

Councilman Daley states that approval of the bond ordinance tonight puts this item on the November ballot so that voters may authorize the expenditure of funds, and each and every individual purchase to be made with these funds comes back to the Council

Director Samolis replies, “Yes, that is correct,” adding that the Couric is not writing a \$5M blank check for property acquisition. Every proposed purchase would come back to the Council for approval.

Councilman Daley states that, with respect to the impact on tax rates, the authorization does not trigger an impact on the tax rate; rather, it would only impact the tax rate if debt service were incurred as a result of bond issuance. If a property were to be purchased, there would be short term borrowing and a bond issuance to pay off that borrowing which would then impact the tax rate. He reiterates that the tax rate is not impacted by the \$5M bond authorization itself.

Director Samolis concurs, saying that anytime that an authorization for referendum is put forward, it has no impact on mill rates, on taxes in the community.

Councilman Daley interjects, adding not until the money is spent.

Director Samolis affirms, saying not until the money is spend and, of course, \$5M will not all be spent at once.

Councilman Daley states that there have been numerous studies that show that preserving open space and farmland, and creating greenways, has a beneficial effect on abutting property values. So that if someone lives next to an open space area, it is likely that your property value will increase.

Director Samolis concurs, reiterating that, as the appraisal increase, the overall value of the property increases.

Councilman Daley asks, relative to trends in zoning and development, does preserving open space support the current efforts that many communities have to have denser areas of housing as opposed to large, individual lots, where open space is a community benefit with small lot sizes. He adds that he has read that in some areas they are moving towards eliminating single family housing in favor of multifamily development to create a greater concentration and more housing equity.

Director Samolis replies, “Yes, that is correct,” adding that the acquisition of open space -- greenways -- drives development in terms of redevelopment stabile saturated areas where infrastructure – water. Sewer, electric -- is already in place so it adds no great expense to the municipality on an ongoing basis. It strives to push redevelopment into urban areas.

Councilman Daley states that, if an open space area in the outskirts of town were to be developed, that would bring with it additional costs for services: utilities, infrastructure, schools . . .

Director Samolis interjects, adding, “police, fire, and education.”

Councilman Daley continues, saying where developing urban areas does not involve those costs.

The Chair calls on Councilman Eugene Nocera for this Director. Councilman Nocera replies, “No,” indicating that he has questions for the City Attorney, Brig Smith.

Councilman Nocera indicated to Attorney Smith that he has questions about Item 12D, the proposed ordinance tax fixing agreement, adding that he believes that a different term – not “fixing” – would be preferred. This project brings in a long sought after project to Newfield Street valued at over \$25M, which will bring benefits to the City. Reading the document, it is obvious that there are some taxes, but he cannot it figure out. He asks what the savings are to the owner in terms of reduced taxes.

Attorney Smith replies that, to build from the ground up, it is a \$25M project with 144 residential units on Newfield Street. It will include 9,000 sq. ft. of commercial space as well. There will be high end commercial space and 1, 2, and 3 bedroom units. The \$25M investment will yield a lot of taxes even with the fixed rate that will be in place for 10 years. By way of comparison, that largely vacant land nets the City about \$20,000 in taxes per year I property taxes. Over 10 years, that amounts to \$200,000. Under this plan, in the first year, the value of the improvements will be abated at 95%, so the owner will pay five percent (5%) on the improvements, which is almost \$40,000 in the City’s pocket in Year One, almost double what is being paid in taxes now for vacant land. That escalates over 10 years: 5%, 5%, 10%, 15%, 30%, and ultimately up to 85% in Year Ten. After that time, the City is looking at rather than \$20,000 in taxes, over \$3.1M in taxes.

Those percentages are being abated for a property that would otherwise not be developed if not but for the tax fixing agreement.

Councilman Nocera states that, looking at this, over a 10-year period, the reduction in taxes, if this were not a tax fixing agreement, is close to \$4M. He asks Attorney Smith if that is correct.

Attorey Smith replies that he has not added up the reverse because his philosophy is that there is nothing to subtract from if you do not have the agreement in place. That question makes no sense to him.

The Chair calls on Councilman Grady L. Faulkner, Jr.

Councilman Faulkner asks if there are performance dates in that agreement or do they start work whenever they want.

Attorney Smith replies that it is yet to be determined because a lot of what determines it is the financing, and a lot of what determines the financing is with the Town and its tax structure. Currently, in reading the draft agreement, there are blanks for dates when they are to commence construction, but they must begin development by November 15, 2019 and they must complete work by November 15, 2023, which a 4-year period, He reiterates that there is no date certain as to when they have to put a shovel in the ground, but it must begin by November 15, 2019.

The Chair asks if any other Councilmember has questions for this director. The Chair calls on Councilman Gerald Daley.

Councilman Daley asks, in terms of the history of what has previously been called “tax abatements,” adding that he, too, does not like the term “tax fixing agreement,” but understands why it is phrased that way: it means “fixing” in terms of “setting” the tax rate or tax percent. The history is that there was a program based on the authorizing statute. That statute actually had a chart with a maximum seven (7) year term and it was based on the value with a set scale that was allowed to be abated. Several years ago – some four (4) or five (5) years ago – that statute was changed and the language became broader and gave much greater discretion to municipalities to fix taxes in any way we want for certain types of development as long as we do not exceed a 10-year period.

Attorney Smith replies, “That is correct.”

Councilman Daley continues, saying that, since that time, we have done a number of these agreements, and at Attorney Smith’s recommendation, they have all been codified so that we don’t lose track of them, which is why this is now being done by Ordinance where it had previously been done by resolution. He asks if it is fair to say that this is consistent with the most recent instance that he is aware of, which is a “55 and over” development for which the Council approved a similar agreement. He notes that that agreement actually started out with the developer paying zero percent on the improvements for the first two (2) years and increased from there. He notes that this proposed agreement is not as beneficial to the developer as the previous agreement was to that developer. He asks if that is a fair statement.

Attorey Smith agrees, noting that is his recollection. He states that one of the old sawhorses in the law was that money is fungible, but property is not. Property, by its nature, is unique, noting that any realtor will tell you that: “Location, location, location.” Each project is different. He notes that Councilman Daley is correct, for better or worse, adding that the City has been given a 10-year blank slate from the State and the City adapts it for each deal that comes in. The theory for 0% or 5% or whatever the percentage is, at the beginning, is when the percentages in those first years are low, because the developer’s cash flow is, too. To make the project go, their carrying costs, which are carried along with the deal, plus their initial start-up costs, have to be low to make the deal work at the back end when the City then gets a whole 100% at the back end and graduate up from there.

Councilman Daley asks if the early years are when the developer invests in the infrastructure: the internal roadways, the utilities, the engineering, the architectural costs, the costs of gaining approvals, noting that, in this case, that had to go thru local approvals of Inland Wetlands & Watercourses Agency, Planning & Zoning Commission, and Urban Forestry Commission, Design & Preservation Review Board, and the State Traffic Commission or Department of Transportation (DOT) approval as the property fronts on a State highway.

Attorey Smith replies, “Yes,” noting that the developer has been through a lot of carrying costs already, a lot of costs involved in getting the project approved.

The Chair asks if anyone has additional question for any Director. The Chair calls on Councilwoman Mary Bartolotta.

Councilwoman Bartolotta states that she was not certain whether or not she heard Councilman Daley mention that this project also required a workout with Connecticut Department of Transportation (DOT) relative to traffic on Newfield Street.

Attorney Smith replies, “Correct.”

Councilwoman Bartolotta asks if that application was approved.

Attorney Smith replies, "Yes."

3. Questions to Directors Closes

There being no further questions for this director or any other director, the Chair closes the Questions to Directors at 6:52 PM.

4. Meeting adjourned

Councilwoman Deborah Kleckowski moves to adjourn. Councilman Grady Faulkner seconds the motion. There being no discussion, the Chair calls for a vote. The vote is unanimous with 10 aye votes (Councilmembers Bartolotta, Chisem, Daley, Faulkner, Giuliano, Kleckowski, Nocera, Pessina, Salafia, and Santangelo). The Motion to Adjourn is approved.

The meeting is adjourned at 6:52 PM

ATTEST:

LINDA S.K. REED,
COMMON COUNCIL CLERK

K: review/ minutes 19 August 05 – Questions to Directors - minutes – 5 August 2019