

REDEVELOPMENT AGENCY

(SUBCOMMITTEE OF THE SOUTH WINDSOR TOWN COUNCIL)

MINUTES
SPRENKEL ROOM

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TOWN HALL

REGULAR MEETING
November 2, 2016

1. **Call Meeting to Order**

The meeting was called to order at 5:09 pm.

2. **Roll Call**

Members Present

Scott Andrusis

Cile Decker

William E. Keohane

Members Absent

Barbara Barbour, Chairperson

Guests

Gary Bazzano, PZC Chair

Cindy Beaulieu, Resident

Matthew Galligan, Town Manager

Michele Lipe, Director of Planning

3. **Approval of Minutes of Previous Meeting**

Ms. Cile Decker made a motion to approve the following Meeting Minutes: May 4, 2016; June 8, 2016; June 15, 2016; and June 20, 2016; Mr. Scott Andrusis seconded the motion; and approved unanimously.

4. **Bills and Communications**

None

5. **Petitions to the Agency**

None

6. **Report of Executive Director**

None

7. **Report of Committees**

None

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8. Old Business
None

9. New Business
A. Update on I-291 Project

Town Manager Matthew Galligan updated the Agency on the casino proposal. The MMCT that composes the two tribes decided to resubmit the casino RFP for a second round. South Windsor did not submit a proposal during the first round. Town Manager Galligan asked the Town Council for direction on whether to submit a proposal during the second round. All nine Councilors at that time supported dck submitting a proposal. dck has full ownership of the land based upon the development agreement which is why they are submitting the proposal. There were other landowners who were interested in submitting a proposal, and Town Manager Galligan felt that the I-291 area was the best location.

As part of the application, dck and the Town had to show MMCT the process of placing a casino in South Windsor. There would need to be a finding as well as a public hearing before the Redevelopment Agency after thirty-five days. Once approved by the Redevelopment Agency, the Town Council will have to approve the development plan. Once approved by the Council, then the plan will go through all the requisite agencies.

Town Manager Galligan emphasized that the casino is only an application at this point. dck has taken the Town's public requirements and submitted those with their application along with some ideas of what the Town and dck could do for MMCT. The project will be worth \$150-300 million.

Town Manager Galligan said that even after MMCT picks two applications for possible casino locations, the State Legislature still needs to review the selected applications. It is a very political process.

Town Manager Galligan stated that he is very discouraged with how this process has been handled at the local level. Some information was discussed in an executive session with the Council, and that information should not have been discussed outside of executive session, and that upsets him. He has already been accused of dirty dealings by residents. This is only an application, and he will have to remind the Council of this fact. The Town will not learn anything more until MMCT makes a decision, and he does not know when that will be. There will be no tax incentives for this project.

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9.A Continued

Town Manager Galligan said that this will be a controversial project, but it is hard to turn away \$3-4 million in tax revenue along with many jobs. If South Windsor is ultimately selected, all eyes will be on the Redevelopment Agency as it will be the first stop for this project.

Town Manager Galligan explained the hypothetical second phase. He and Michele Lipe, Director of Planning, reviewed dck's plan for a tech park, and this will be the backup plan. dck will be submitting this plan sometime in December. Ms. Cile Decker asked about the technology park. Town Manager Galligan said it would be more of an office park.

Ms. Decker said this project is not a slam dunk as it is a vital change to the community. Many people have questioned the fact that there was no referendum. Town Manager Galligan said that both the new and old town attorneys have said there is no process for referendums. A referendum would allow the application to bypass the Planning and Zoning Commission, which it should not do. Even if there were a referendum that was voted no, the applicant could still apply. The Planning and Zoning Commission would have a hard time denying the project if it meets the zoning constraints. Town Manager Galligan said he does not think it is fair to put the land use agencies under the gun with a pre-judged project. He thinks highly of the land agencies and their knowledgeable members, and the agencies should be left to their processes.

Ms. Decker asked if dck was approached. Town Manager Galligan surmised that dck was approached. He had dck put an affidavit in the packet that clearly states what information is from the Town.

Town Manager Galligan said that he has already received a freedom of information request regarding this application.

Mr. Keohane asked if the process will boil down to a selection between two towns. Town Manager Galligan said there are five applications from East Hartford, East Windsor, Hartford, South Windsor, and Windsor Locks that will be considered.

Mr. Keohane asked if FOI requests are coming about because of competition between towns. Town Manager Galligan said that he does not want to play politics, but he has a feeling that information got out for political reasons. He is very upset at how this information was handled.

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9.A Continued

Ms. Decker said that the Agency's biggest challenge will be keeping the community informed as much as possible as they are skeptical of that piece of land. Town Manager Galligan said that by November 11th, DEEP and DECD will inform the Town if there is studio project. PURA assigned the Power Purchase Agreement to South Windsor. Eversource is gathering lawyers because of the assignment. Town Manager Galligan said that going through DEEP has been a frustrating and disheartening process.

Mr. Scott Andrusis asked if dck has indicated how long they will wait for a casino decision. Town Manager Galligan said dck will not wait that long.

Ms. Decker asked if the tribes gave any indication of timing guidelines. Town Manager Galligan said there are no timelines that he is aware of. dck has asked the tribes not to be strung out. The biggest problem will be going to the State Legislature after a location is chosen.

Ms. Decker asked where the logical location for a casino would be. Town Manager Galligan said that South Windsor would be the number one contender because it is vacant land right off the highway, it is close to the highway, and roads could be built to run into the site in order to bypass local roads.

Mr. Andrusis said that the I-291 location is similar to the locations that Foxwoods and Mohegan Sun chose when they were originally built.

Town Manager Galligan said that dck wants to hold on to this property. They will build it, own it, and lease it to vendors, but they do not want to give up the land.

Ms. Decker asked how many acres the whole project would encompass. Town Manager Galligan said that he has no idea. The project would only need about 20 to 30 acres, but they could go beyond that amount.

Town Manager Galligan said that this is a very delicate process that could have already been marred by the early release of information.

The Agency discussed the problems that arose during the Evergreen Walk process.

Mr. Keohane asked about the extent of rezoning the I-291 area. Ms. Michele Lipe said the zone is in place. Town Manager Galligan said the Municipal Development Plan would need to be reevaluated to accommodate a casino. Mr. Keohane asked what area is covered by the plan. Ms. Lipe said it is generally the area between Ellington Road, Route 5, and south of Chapel Road.

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9.A Continued

Mr. Andrusis said there was a deadline in the last deed signed over to the studio project. Town Manager Galligan said dck has until December 15, 2016 to submit a plan to the Town.

Mr. Andrusis asked if the tribes are aware that dck wants to own the property and lease it. Town Manager Galligan said that they have had those discussions.

Mr. Andrusis asked when the Springfield casino is scheduled to open. The Agency members and guests were not sure about the opening date.

Town Manager Galligan said this process is in a holding pattern for the moment, and if anything happens, the boards and commissions will need to get involved in the process.

Mr. Keohane asked if dck is excited about the casino application. Town Manager Galligan said dck sees it as a viable economic development project. He had cautioned the Town Council that the money from this project should be spent wisely.

10. Adjournment

Mr. William Keohane made a motion to adjourn at 5:45 pm; Mr. Scott Andrusis seconded the motion; and it was approved unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Ashley Booth
Recording Secretary