

FINAL

THIRD TAXING DISTRICT
of the City of Norwalk
Commission Meeting
March 14, 2016

ATTENDANCE: Commissioners: Charles Yost, Chair; David Brown, Debora Goldstein

STAFF: Jim Smith, General Manager; Ron Scofield, Assistant General Manager

OTHERS: Norwalk Tree Alliance: Rob Frazier and Andrew Strauss
N.I.C.E.: Janet Evelyn
Marvin PTO: Leia Hamilton and Marissa Mangone
Jumar Marketing: Judi Virgulak and Marie Jablonski

CALL TO ORDER

Commissioner Yost called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. A quorum was present.

PUBLIC COMMENT

There were no comments from the public.

MINUTES OF MEETING – FEBRUARY 22, 2016

Commissioner Goldstein made a correction on page 2, 1st paragraph, second line to add the sentence, “Mr. Smith admitted himself for a custodial visit that was previously scheduled.”

**** COMMISSIONER GOLDSTEIN MOVED TO AMEND THE MINUTES.**

**** COMMISSION YOST SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**** COMMISSIONER GOLDSTEIN MOVED TO ACCEPT THE AMENDED MINUTES OF FEBRUARY 22, 2016.**

**** COMMISSION YOST SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**** COMMISSIONER BROWN MOVED TO SUSPEND THE RULES AND ADD A LINE ITEM TO THE AGENDA CALLED PROCEDURAL HANDOUT.**

**** COMMISSIONER GOLDSTEIN SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

PROCEDURAL HANDOUT

Commissioner Brown passed out copies of a handout which read as follows:

“As we begin to think about our strategic planning, I have reflected on our current process as it relates to communicating with and managing the relationship with any of our vendors. In an effort to improve and streamline the flow, I am putting a new procedure in place, effective immediately. We have done this before but got away from it.

All communications (emails or calls) with ideas, opinions, etc. that you want considered must be passed through Jim Smith or the Chairman. This will aid in consolidating feedback, improve the ability of tracking approvals and ensure that timely decisions are being made in a more efficient and effective manner. That is one of the Chairman’s responsibilities. Also, it will put day to day operations and programming where they should be – with staff. The commission can make policy and procedures to follow; implementation will be in the hands of the staff. Performance evaluation is primarily the responsibility of the General Manager; secondarily, the commission.”

Commissioner Brown asked Commissioner Yost for clarity on the above and what had prompted it. Commissioner Yost explained that he is trying to streamline communications within the Commission. Further discussion took place about the subject.

- ** COMMISSIONER BROWN MOVED TO TABLE THE PROCEDURAL ITEM TO THE NEXT REGULAR COMMISSION MEETING.**
- ** COMMISSIONER GOLDSTEIN SECONDED.**
- ** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

NORWALK TREE ALLIANCE

Mr. Frazier thanked the Commission for their generous donation and support to the Norwalk Tree Alliance. He then introduced Mr. Andrew Strauss, also from the Tree Alliance, who gave a report of how the monies were used within the District. The funds were used exclusively for the purchase of the trees from a wholesale nursery in Norwalk and the planting was done on a voluntary basis by two professional landscaping companies in East Norwalk.

A total of 20 trees (12 October Glory maples and 8 Regal Prince Oaks) were purchased. The majority of the trees were planted in the area of Edlie Avenue and Fort Point Street. Others were also planted on Emerson Street and Cavray Road Extension.

Messrs. Frazier and Strauss asked the Commission for future support of this project. They were given a Donation Policy form to complete. Once the form is submitted, they will attend a future meeting to officially request funds.

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NORWALK INTL. CULTURAL EXCHANGE (NICE)

Mr. Smith introduced Janet Evelyn, Executive Director of the Norwalk International Cultural Exchange (NICE). Ms. Evelyn explained that NICE is a Norwalk organization that seeks to promote and increase awareness of the diversity of peoples from around the world through arts and culture. They will be working in conjunction with the Norwalk Recreational Department to host a multi-cultural festival to be held on July 9, 2016 at the Oyster Shell Park. One of her goals is to decorate the City with banners that are sponsored by various businesses within the City.

She is asking TTD for permission to hang some of the banners within the District, as well as some funding for the banners. In return for funding, a banner can be created showing TTD as a sponsor. The Commission asked that Ms. Evelyn please fill out a Donation Policy form, which will be sent to her. One completed and submitted, she can return to a future Commission meeting to officially request the funds and seek permission for hanging the banners within the District.

MARVIN SCHOOL PTO REQUEST

Ms. Leia Hamilton thanked the Commission for last year's grant and said that the programs were well-received and that the students were thrilled. All the feedback she has received on the programs has been very positive. She presented to TTD and the Commission a notebook prepared by the 5th graders filled with "thank you" notes for the generous support of the programs. She also mentioned that last year's Bucket Truck demonstration was a big hit with the students and would like to see that happen again this year.

Ms. Hamilton then reviewed with the Commission the various programs they would like to see funded for the next school year. After some discussion about the programs, the Commission asked if she could switch out a few of the programs for ones that are more geared towards energy efficiency, i.e., "A House for a Hermit Crab" to be replaced with another program.

Ms. Hamilton will go back and review the programs and resubmit for a future meeting.

**** COMMISSIONER GOLDSTEIN MOVED TO TABLE THIS ITEM TO THE NEXT REGULAR MEETING FOLLOWING THE RESUBMISSION OF THE REVISED PROGRAMS.**

**** COMMISSIONER YOST SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

JUMAR MARKETING UPDATE

Ms. Judi Virgulak and Ms. Marie Jablonski from Jumar Marketing presented the Marketing Review for the past quarter, which included Customer Service Programs, Communications Campaign, Advertising, Public Relations, Special Events, Website Management and General Business Support. They gave examples of the completed work within the different categories and answered any of the questions the Commission asked.

They then presented the Q2 Initiatives to the Commission and explained what their plans for the next quarter were. Considerable discussion took place around the various categories, with emphasis on new banners for the District and how to re-promote the EV Charging Station. Ms. Virgulak spoke about an initiative around Community Outreach/Involvement. She discussed her program ideas for Marvin School and getting the children more involved.

SUMMARY OF PERSON-TO-PERSON RESULTS

Mr. Scofield reviewed the Person-To-Person Program that is currently in place and how it works. Person-To-Person assists, educates and counsels ratepayers who are having problems making their monthly payments to TTD. They teach them how to create and work with a budget. If they complete the program successfully by making on-time payments for six consecutive months, they will qualify for the program's incentive. The program has proven to be very successful.

BL&P MEMBERSHIP

Mr. Smith explained that back in the Fall of 2015, Bozrah had requested to become a member of CMEEC and was supposed to have all the Resolutions submitted by December 31, 2015. This did not happen, so they need to go through the process again.

CMEEC is asking for the Third Taxing District Commission to please vote on whether or not to accept the new Resolution as presented.

**** COMMISSIONER GOLDSTEIN MOVED TO APPROVE THE RESOLUTION AS IT APPEARS ON PAGE 31 OF THE MARCH 14, 2016 COMMISSION MEETING PACKET.**

**** COMMISSION BROWN SECONDED.**

**** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

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ANNUAL MEETING FOLLOW-UP

Mr. Scofield reviewed some new ideas for next year's Annual Meeting. The one idea that was well-received was to add the Pledge of Allegiance and a Moment of Silence to the program, but not have it added to the written agenda.

Commissioner Brown discussed how he would like to have the projection screens placed in a different position, so they could be better viewed.

More advertising was discussed such as possibly a second postcard mailing or more ads placed in The Hour. When ads are placed in The Hour, it was suggested that it be requested when and where in the paper it should appear – Odd page number, close to the beginning of the section, above the fold and on the lightest day.

Further discussion will take place on this subject again in January 2017.

GENERAL MANAGER'S REPORT

Second Street Seawall – Mr. Smith informed the Commission that the seawall behind the office at Second Street is crumbling and is in need of an unexpected emergency repair. Mr. Scofield is working on obtaining three bids for the project. To date, he has received two bids (ranging from \$23,000 to \$35,000) and will let Mr. Smith know when the third one is in. The only dilemma is that the work can only be done at low tide.

Mr. Smith spoke to Liz Lyons about the problem and she is checking to see if there is insurance coverage. She believes it could be approximately \$25,000, but will check and let Mr. Smith know when she has a definite answer.

Weekly Payables Check Signing – Mr. Smith is looking to find an alternate for check signing in case Commissioner Brown is not available to sign the weekly checks. Commissioner Goldstein has signatory rights and is willing to be the back-up for Commissioner Brown.

It was also suggested that Dr. Intrieri be added to the account as a signatory in case Commissioners Brown or Goldstein are not available.

Commission Stipends – Commissioner Yost would like to review the stipend for the Treasurer and feels it should be increased, as well as the Commissioner stipends. Discussion took place and it was decided to hold off on this for now and discuss at the next meeting.

FY 2015-16 2nd Qtr. Budget vs. Actual Results – Mr. Smith reviewed the 2nd quarter budget to actual results with the Commission. Overall, operating and capital expenses are under control. Based on a benchmark of 50%, operating expenses are at 46.8% and capital expenses are at 45%, which are on target for the year.

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DISCUSSION/ANALYSIS OF FINANCIAL STATEMENTS/KEY PERFORMANCE

Mr. Smith said for the first seven months of the year, we are in good shape. Net Income is at \$698,645 vs. last year of \$185,064 because we have almost doubled our contribution to the Rate Stabilization fund. Last year's contribution to the fund was \$359,319 vs. this year of \$665,233. Other Income is down a bit from last year due to the Norden Generators not being run as much this past season because of the mild winter. Total Expense is within 3% of last year.

The Capital Improvements Fund and the Line of Credit through Patriot Bank have not been tapped into as yet for the capital projects.

KPIs – Bad debt ratio has dropped approximately 1% due to the write-offs of old balances of \$100 or less which are more than 180 days old.

New item under KPI – System Load Factor – determines how efficient your system is in terms of how your customers use energy. In a system that has a lot of residential customers, energy is not used efficiently, so your load factor goes down. The lower the load factor, the more inefficient your system is in terms of using energy. The higher the load factor, the more efficient you are. Our load factor is on the low side. It is Mr. Smith's hope to bring in some larger customers who are more efficient in using energy which should drive the System Load Factor up.

PCA – Continues to go down. Once it reaches a neutral number (or zero), then a decision will be made whether or not to adjust the PCA figure.

PROJECT SUMMARY

No discussion on this.

ADJOURNMENT

- ** COMMISSIONER GOLSTEIN MOVED TO ADJOURN.**
- ** COMMISSIONER YOST SECONDED.**
- ** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

The meeting adjourned at 9:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Cynthia Tenney
Executive Assistant
Third Taxing District

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of the City of Norwalk
March 14, 2016