

APPROVED MINUTES of the City Council
Budget Workshop of the City Council of the
City of Rye held on November 27, 2006 at
7:10 P.M.

PRESENT:

STEVEN OTIS, Mayor
ANDRES C. BALL
MACK CUNNINGHAM
MATTHEW FAHEY (arrived at 7:17)
DUNCAN HENNES
GEORGE PRATT (arrived at 7:15)
HOWARD G. SEITZ
Councilmen

ABSENT:

1. Pledge of Allegiance

Mayor Otis called the meeting to order and invited the Council to join in the Pledge of Allegiance.

2. Roll Call

Mayor Otis asked the City Clerk to call the roll; a quorum was present to conduct official City business.

3. Continued Discussion of 2007 Budget

Mayor Otis said this evening's workshop would concentrate on proposals for capital spending and welcomed City Engineer, George Mottarella who was present to provide nuts and bolts information about the various projects.

Central Business District (CBD)

The Mayor began with Purchase Street -\$150,000 which is for a complete study only. Purchase Street itself needs attention (has not been repaved since 1985) but is not, itself, in desperate shape. The whole area (drainage, synchronized lights, new street lighting, and expansion of the Theodore Fremd intersection) could be done for \$1.5 million. Smith Street alone (fully reconstructed, including drains, curbing, and sidewalks) will cost an extra \$275,000 and will need patch work at least to catch it before it totally deteriorates. Crosswalks need to be restriped every year as we are required to use a water-based paint. Anything more permanent, such as vinyl striping applied with heat, would need an outside contractor. Extended discussion about the Theodore Fremd

intersection included the possibility of widening the road to putting in a “quick fix” green arrow turn signal. Everyone agrees the CBD needs help, but there was a feeling on the part of some that it would be better to wait for the CBD study and treat the whole area together as part of one big plan. Councilman Pratt indicated that even if a Business Improvement District (BID) was established the merchants would probably want to use the funds to pay for aesthetics while the City continued to fund capital improvements.

Peck Avenue and Midland intersection

Mr. Mottarella informed the Council that a smaller Thruway project to shore up a bridge would be over in a month and that the “Last Mile” project had been postponed indefinitely so there will not be heavy traffic in the near future. The plan, already designed, calls for widening the intersection to provide for right-hand turns onto Midland Avenue and making a bigger left-hand turning radius off Midland onto Peck. There is traffic stack up during train times, but this project is not critical.

Boston Post Road

There is serious need to redo the section from the golf course to Mamaroneck. To just repave it would cost \$450,000. To redo it with a bike trail, pedestrian walkways, etc. would be \$800,000 (which would include a study, unique restriping, sidewalks). All the schools want more safety, and some consider the existing sidewalks to be inadequate. The Mayor suggested setting up a committee to study the bike/walking trail idea; if it is not possible, then do the \$450,000 repaving. There was also discussion about looking at grants for such projects.

Theall Road

This is the most pressing and largest expense item on the list and once again required extensive discussion. Full reconstruction (including drainage, curbing and sidewalks) would cost \$1.4 million and last 30 years; just repaving it (but also building up the sides) would cost \$300,000 but probably won't last 30 years. Eliminating the sidewalks will only save about \$55,000. It is the City's road so it is highly unusual to expect a resident or business to contribute to the cost. Councilman Hennes favors the simple repaving; Councilman Ball wants to know more about the simpler solution; Councilman Cunningham favors doing the reconstruction as does the Mayor. Much discussion followed about how to finance such a project. Councilman Seitz would use all the parking pay station funds (\$180,000); raise the merchant permit fee to \$1,000 (\$220,000); use \$213,000 of the Cable TV fund money and the \$293,934 reserved for the Rye Free Reading Room (if they set up a Chapter 414 funding plan) and take the rest (\$487,000) from available fund balance; Councilman Hennes suggested using some of the Debt Service Fund and there was general agreement to use the \$144,000 reserved for new voting machines in the Building and Vehicle Fund.

Parking Meters

Should the meters continue? This will be a discussion at the public hearing? The Mayor is certainly not in favor of using the funds for Theall Road. The general feeling was that the income should be put into a CBD development fund. Corporation Counsel

will research the possibility of having the In Lieu of Parking Fund be redefined (or eliminated) so that funds in it can be used for more general CBD purposes.

Library

Support for reserving \$293,934 for the Rye Free Reading Room (RFRR) if they go to a Chapter 414 funding plan with a referendum eroded, with both Councilman Seitz and Pratt urging that amount be put back into surplus and available to the City for its needs. It was agreed that Councilman Seitz was “100% right” that the RFRR board is split about going to the 414 plan. More details are necessary and there was a question as to whether the City should aid the RFRR in getting to a \$1.4 million level forever or even if a 4% increase in funding was necessary.

Earlier Budget

City Comptroller Michael Genito reiterated that by law NY State follows an “on or before November 10th” schedule and pointed out the difficulty on both the Department of Public Works and Recreation if an earlier budget was required (their busiest seasons) as well as having less year end details. Councilman Fahey pointed out everyone got the capital requests in August and they could have looked at them earlier. The Mayor and Councilman Hennes came out in favor of the present schedule, suggesting that the Council would not want to meet every Monday for more than a month.

Miscellaneous

The available fund balance, other than the \$200,000 already proposed for 2007 projects, in the Building and Vehicle Fund should be retained.

The possibility of altering the requirements for the parking fund should be examined.

The \$600,000 bonds authorized on March 22, 2006 for the renovation of the Police Building should be reclassified from subject to permissive referendum to the public safety exemption per the City Charter.

The Voting Machine funds could be used for something else.

The Comptroller should create another matrix based on this workshop showing the various costs of projects, how they might be funded; and what effect all this would have on the Council’s ability to finance future projects without a referendum.

4. Next workshop

The main topic for the next workshop will be a presentation by Richard Panz of Panz Library Consulting who will discuss the Proposition 414 process under section 259b of the NYS Education Law. It will take place at 7 P.M. on Wednesday, November 29, 2006, prior to the regular meeting of the City Council at 8 P.M.

5. Adjournment

As there was no further discussion on the budget, Councilman Hennes made a motion, seconded by Councilman Pratt and unanimously carried, to adjourn the budget workshop at 9.40 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Susan Morison
City Clerk