

December 13, 2006

Strategic Planning & Partnerships Commission

Proceedings by Authority

State of New York,  
City of Jamestown  
Mayor's Conference Room

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The regular meeting of the Strategic Planning & Partnerships Commission of the City of Jamestown, New York was held on Wednesday, December 13, 2006 at 8:00 a.m.

Members Present: Co-Chair Jennifer Harkness, Dr. Leonard Faulk, Dr. Lillian Vitanza-Ney, Michael Sullivan

Others Present: Director of Financial Services/City Clerk James N. Olson, Bill Rice, Jon Scalise, Bill Daly, Randy Sweeney, John Merino, Amanda Bleck

Co-Chair Harkness called the meeting to order.

Dr. Ney: Mike Lyons hasn't been with us this year. He had a huge and very long commitment to Strategic Planning Commission and with his new duties now he was unable to continue his relationships and Mike was the Co-Chair for a long time and a long time contributing member. I would like to propose if the Commission agrees to recognize him by asking the City Council to thank Mike in the form of a formal resolution, and I'd like to do that here in this Commission and then also to ask the City Council to prepare a resolution to thank Mike for his long time service and I know Jim will help us draft that. We can look back and see. I don't know when he first started but does that sound like a good idea?

Motion made by John Merino seconded by Mike Sullivan.

Dr. Ney: This is the last meeting of the year so I wanted to recognize Jennifer taking over from Mike and she's done a great job from the community co-chair sector and I want to thank her for taking it on as busy as she is. I'd like to recognize the Bank as well for encouraging Jennifer to do this – that's excellent community service as you would all agree.

I just wanted to give a brief report on the CEO. Longtime members of the Strategic Planning Commission remember the Jamestown Guarantee and I just wanted to give you a very, very brief summary of where we are right now. We had had kind of an inner relationship with the Gear-Up Grant that the College and the Jamestown Public School got – a big federal grant for getting high school students ready for college. Our partnership with Jamestown Community College still is very strong. Our students have a specific counselor there who sees them through it. They meet together. Many of them have financial aid. Many of them sort of need that extra lift through college. Some of these youngsters have two and three jobs. They come from very difficult situations and it's a real tribute to everybody including these kids who are succeeding. We have in our coffers now about \$25,000. A class from the Jamestown High School Alumni Association who had a big reunion, gave \$6-7,000. The 100 Member Club has continued to give dollars to that and also the Chautauqua Region Community Foundation has matched it and we're extremely grateful to all of them. So we have about 10 new cohorts this year. We have others there from last year. We have continued on this program. We have not had the buy-in of businesses that the Guarantee wanted it to, but anyway, we're struggling along and we're still continuing to get students and so we're happy about that. The High School has been great. COI have met with us and have pledged that we have very, very similar goals to educate and to get youngsters in the Jamestown area to establish a sustaining job which of course one of our original goals with this program. Bill Daly came last time and we wanted to get him up to snuff on what we're trying to do because we know that the IDA wants the same thing

December 13, 2006

as to prepare skilled workers for the work force in the area. So that's my brief update on that. I was going to do it last time but we really ran out of time.

Ms. Harkness: Jamestown Savings Bank has been one of the corporate sponsors of that.

Dr. Ney: That's exactly right. Excuse me for forgetting that and in fact it was one of the only ones. I also wanted to mention that the Connections which one of the businesses that the Commission was following for many years has already, if some of you don't know, this is the Fred Weiner group, has a commitment already in Jamestown and has for at least a year or year and a half, whereby a couple of hundred workers have been working outside of their homes and having their in-service, or whatever you call it, their meetings, their educational aspects in the Furniture Mart here in Jamestown and at this point, they have committed after the economy has been such that it allows them more customers, to actually bring an operation here and they're going to be having workers here and working right in the Connections' Building, and the commitment is now perhaps 400 additional jobs; and I know that the restoration's going on in the Furniture Mart Building right now.

Mr. Merino: I talked with Fred yesterday and it looks like they're going to open up with 416 jobs as of February 1<sup>st</sup>.

Dr. Ney: Does that include the ones that they...

Mr. Merino: Some of those people will be brought in house, but half of them are going to continue to work out of their homes at their kitchen tables...

Dr. Ney: So, that's a total of 416 John?

Mr. Merino: A total of 416 plus...

Mr. Daly: ...plus people that are still left in their homes. He's going to have like...500 or so employees in the City.

Mr. Merino: There'll be about 300 additional. There'll be about 100 left in their homes out of the couple hundred that are there now. 100 of those are going to come in house, and he needs to start...it'll be three shifts – divide 416 by 3 and that's basically what's going to be in Furniture Mart 24 hours a day on the 5<sup>th</sup> floor. That's great news for downtown. Boy, I'd like to open up a midnight coffee shop down there, with all those employees, it would be a great big...

Dr. Ney: Jake's Uptown Grille is open all night. Well, I also want to recognize that the Connections really was a public private partnership from the word go years ago. And, it was the County, the City, the Foundation and others and the Strategic Planning Commission had a person in a grant-funded position to sort of help foster that, and in fact, that's when the first contact was made and a continuing contact was made by the person that we had in that position. I think that that's a success.

Mr. Merino: My final comment on the whole situation – I think we really have to give credit to Lori Shagla because she stuck with this thing as the employee that was working for Buffalo Niagara Enterprise in the beginning through the Gebbie Foundation, has kept Fred Wiener interested in downtown Jamestown for 4 years and just would not let go of this guy until she finally managed to put a deal together with all the components of it. Certainly City Economic Development, IDA, there's been a number of organizations, State Economic Development, that have been involved with it, but she was really the catalyst to keep his interest here and she ought to get some credit for pulling that off. That's a biggie to bring that number of jobs to the community.

Mr. Daly: ...and she really did. That was her major, major moment. Coming in in January, I heard from her like every two weeks about this and there's a point where we really

December 13, 2006

understood that it was going to happen, it was quite amazing because I thought Fred might walk at any time, but he stuck it out. But it was the labor pool and we discussed that at your CEO meeting. They can come here and find under-employed people who are smart, can read/write, can respond intelligently to incoming calls on their health insurance – that's usually what most of it is – medical insurance/health insurance, and they can pay them \$10 an hour and get 500 people to work and do a great job. I don't know what that comment means. The good news is there's 500 people employed, the bad news is they can readily get people who are of a higher caliber here in Jamestown than they can almost anywhere else in the country.

Mr. Merino: Yes, he told me he's got a higher percentage of people with two years of college or more out of this office in Jamestown than any of his other three facilities in the country which it almost belays the whole argument about we have such a poor local education system, because the proof is turning out to be just the opposite – there are well qualified, educated, intelligent folks out there looking for work.

Mr. Daly: And I think, John, that that's – again we don't have anyone from the school system here so we're not...but the truth is is that kids that come out of New York high schools in the top thirds of their classes are probably as well prepared as any kids in the United States, and not all of them are college bound, so they either have got to take something more of a physical nature and the manufacturers need them badly, but for the rest, this is an interesting opportunity to be employed.

Mr. Merino: Well, they stole three employees of ours from the ice arena that went over and applied and were hired by him.

Dr. Faulk: Is this going to help renovate the Furniture Mart?

Mr. Merino: They are in fact spending in the vicinity of about a quarter of a million dollars to renovate the 5<sup>th</sup> Floor up there when all is said and done, including the second set of stairs through to the 6<sup>th</sup> Floor and...well, he got a long-term lease from Fred...and the sprinkler system being installed as well, so now up to the 5<sup>th</sup> Floor, everything will meet all codes, that leaves us with four floors left and if there's other interested parties, they'll just continue to progress up the building. But we're hoping this is kind of the first step.

Dr. Ney: The Foundation was the first new renter to that building and we had our place renovated...

Mr. Merino: Right, and our office is in there...and there's been a few others that have come since – some small offices – so it'd be nice to see that whole building turn around. In fact, they've gone so far as to order replacement windows for the entire building. They're starting with the 5<sup>th</sup> Floor because that's where the connections are going to be housed, but in the Spring, they let the contract and there'll be – what do we count, 200 and some windows in that building – will all be replaced so it will actually look like a nice building from the outside. Now, if we can get them to pressure wash it and tuck point it, we'd be...that's down the road.

Mr. Daly: I'll tell you – when my first – my offices were always on the back of the building – there was a horrendous windstorm – I mean like 60 m.p.h. gusts – and I'm sitting in my office, and there was a ledge inside the window, and the windows blow out on the top – it has something to do with the air pressure in those empty rooms, and...I don't know, maybe an engineer can explain what would happen...but from the wind, the windows would blow out on the top floors and I about jumped right through the ceiling. Right next to me, like a whole pane of glass hit the ledge next to me coming from like the 9<sup>th</sup> Floor. I want to tell you – if you weren't awake, you're awake for that – it was like somebody coming in my windows.

Mr. Merino: The building's really interesting. It has a gym on the 4<sup>th</sup> Floor and they're people in the building that belong to a private health club there and work out – I mean thousands of

December 13, 2006

dollars worth of equipment – it's really pretty nice. There's a bunch of people...even our secretary, Jen, belong to it – joined it as soon as she came in and she's up there two or three days a week at the end of the work day and there's a lot of folks that are in and out of there. I could use it – I just don't have the time to go...or the desire...

Dr. Ney: Thank you for being so honest...The last item I have real quickly is that we have had a backlog of our minutes. I've spoken to Jim about this a few times, but we really haven't had them coming forward on a regular basis. We do have minutes that we just received in the past week from October. They're verbatim minutes so that they're a little hard to kind of review quickly and see, you know, what happened...let me just give a very quick summary of last month's meeting and maybe we need to consider having a summary by one of us – maybe...I mean I'd be glad to do it. I think we need to just have a little summary of the discussion – the verbatims Jim, you probably know, are accurate I'm sure, but they're very hard to follow because they're so long and I don't know if there's another way around it, I think it probably takes longer to maybe summarize, especially if you're not here, if somebody was transcribing them is not here at the meeting, but it's difficult. And, Strategic Planning when people are sort of brainstorming, it's an unusual way to...so I think if we could reconsider maybe not having verbatim minutes...I think that might help some of the brainstorming. I know that we always had a friendly discussion with a newspaper reporter who used to regularly attend to allow us to sort of brainstorm without any decision making and so that we could not be in the headlines the next morning with some far out plan that we weren't ever going to do. But the follow up items that I took from home from last meeting were strong consideration of a trip to Cleveland to meet with the Director there regarding the townhouses and condos in Cleveland that apparently are near the clinic. Dale Robbins suggested this.

Mr. Sullivan: Can I comment on that right away because I'm currently in the planning process here – I'm going to bring it up to Renaissance Corporation tomorrow and suggest that Renaissance Corporation be the promoter or sponsor of it without money. There was a film that Katie Lincoln's group – the Lincoln Land Institute group last year, on Cleveland – A Sense of Place – there's a series that they've done so anyway I've been in contact with Katie and the Lincoln Foundation and they'll let us have the film. I was thinking that we would show that at the Reg Lenna and involve...it could kind of be a kickoff for the Jamestown Renaissance Corp. I saw the film last year and it's a powerful film about how things spread, spread, spread and then how stupid that is and then come back in...it's an interesting film. It'll promote a lot of discussion, I think.

Dr. Ney: Very good – excellent. She's back on the board again I noticed from the newsletter. I'd like to volunteer to develop a kind of a way to get down there to have a look as long as Dale knows the Director of Development to maybe have a visit and maybe we can hopefully ask maybe for some funding from the Chautauqua Region Community Foundation perhaps. That was Dale's suggestion – maybe get a van or something to have a day/afternoon meeting? Is that okay if I work on that project. I'd like to do that after the 1<sup>st</sup> of the year because I think it would be important. It was pointed out that the economic positive impact of condos that are in the area of the downtown, the Urban Design Plan will definitely help promote that. We already know from Sara from ZHA that there's a market need for it and I want to remind everybody that Dale pointed out that the townhouses and condos are taxed but they're an apartment house, not a private home, so it's at a lower amount so there are advantages and this kind of thing all has to be packaged in an appropriate way. The other thing we considered last month was a consideration of a Strategic Plan for neighborhoods – a neighborhood revitalization. That is when we were just digesting the Urban Design Plan for downtown, but remember we're Strategic Planning so we're thinking of, you know, five years down the line and not just right today. I know it may seem overwhelming, but I think we need to at least keep that in the back of our minds. The other thing that was mentioned by John Murphy and Carolyn Seymour who were here from CHRIC was an Endangered Property Fund and the other one was – get the old studies. These are studies that I was not aware of, but I think Don Bloomquist brought them up – something that John was going to look into that was perhaps funded by Gebbie and was done by Harvard.

December 13, 2006

Mr. Merino: That's what Don said, but I couldn't find it in the office. I asked Tom Fabor about it and Tom had no recollection of even ever hearing about it.

Dr. Ney: How about you Jim – did you hear anything about it?

Mr. Olson: No.

Mr. Merino: Don was going to take a second look in his office ...

Mr. Daly: What was it about?

Mr. Merino: I think it was probably similar to the Urban Study, but I think it had more to do with the community overall.

Dr. Ney: ...or neighborhoods, or something...

Ms. Harkness: Do you remember seeing anything like that Bill? I don't know...

Dr. Ney: I've never heard of it – from Harvard? A Harvard study? Well, that finishes my part of the program.

Ms. Harkness: ...and thank you to Lillian for all your leadership over the last year.

Mr. Merino: I'd like Bill's input on this, but just a quick thought, that maybe we ought to really begin to take a look at trying to put together an RFP and start to discuss it for the neighborhood study to be conducted similar to what we did for the urban study and see if we can find some partners in the community through the Foundations or lenders that may want to help make a small contribution or whatever to pull enough dollars together to begin to do that. We know it's a year long process just for the analysis to take place, and you know, I'm thinking that there's such optimism now about the potential of this urban plan having a dramatic impact, that for us to have an analytical handle on what's taking place in the neighborhoods would probably give us the same set of tools. Then, of course, at the end of it, we've got to look for an organization to implement it and all of that and maybe somebody like CODE could play a broader role in the community – someone that has some experience with the neighborhood activity or CHRIC, or a combination of both, but I think we have organizations out there that can probably be largely responsible for implementation. I think it would really behoove us to have a real sense of neighborhoods in the same type of analysis that we did for the small store block area downtown.

Dr. Ney: For the scientific approach, I couldn't agree more...

Mr. Merino: I don't know---who do we recommend that to that we even begin that?

Ms. Harkness: This kind of leads into what we had on the agenda to talk about. We have several strategic initiatives that we've been talking about over the past few months, and everyone of them is a huge issue with champion jobs, preservation and sustainable jobs. The Neighborhood piece is huge and shared services is a whole other animal and we're talking about them for an hour and we're not making any headway and we can't solve any of these in an hour's conversation. Lillian and I talked yesterday about getting back into some ad hoc team to bring recommendations back to the Commission that would then go to the Council and that would be one of them. We were talking about having one for the neighborhoods, this whole neighborhood issue which would be a recommendation if we want to do this overall plan, figuring out the cost, just like you guys did and how we're going to fund it. That's generally how we've done it is we've created these little action teams that really research the issue and came back with recommendations to the total Commission and at the same time have an ad hoc committee that's dealing with the job preservation, sustainable jobs, job growth – just a committee to talk about that and then come back again with recommendations to the Commission which would then go to Council and the shared services –

December 13, 2006

same type of thing. What are your feelings about that – I mean we talked about staying away strategically but we can't offer recommendations if we don't research and come up with valid recommendations.

Mr. Daly: My problem is that – you know I love the studies and to have great, great spot, but the old arguments that we could fill rooms with the studies in the City of Jamestown, but I look at it as pretty simple. You've got the Urban Design Plan for the center City and what you're talking about with Dale Robbins and the departments and the Housing – Restore New York is going to come around again. This is my personal opinion, but I think the greatest thing we could do to facilitate the Urban Design Plan for the inner City is identify all the buildings that would be condos/apartment worthy – and Bill, maybe you know which ones, but I'm thinking of the block of Cherry Street from 2<sup>nd</sup> to 3<sup>rd</sup> Street. But, if you identify a block like that with all that space, I mean, you could have lots of apartments or condos up there – market rate and then maybe some lower priced housing. But if you were to identify something like that - in other words, you don't need a study. I can tell you that. That's where it needs to go. That's what's going to bring the downtown back. This is my personal feeling and with Restore New York, you've got to have the parameters of Restore New York. You've got to get developers who are willing to get constructive control of the property, turn it over to the City, get the applications in, then they'll get \$7.00 a square foot for renovations and whatever, and if you had then 50, 60, 70 apartments or condos and right in the core of the City, the people would actually want to live in, you change the whole dynamic; now parking's another issue. I don't know – what do we just say – “okay that's a good goal to do something like that.” I know it's my personal prejudice, but it's not rocket science.

Ms. Harkness: But Bill, that's just one piece of it, that's part of the Urban Design Plan and that's what we are already talking about. JRC is pulling together the developers and we're going down that road, and that is, I agree with you, that that's a very valid project and I think that should be done. We're talking about the actual neighborhoods of Jamestown that are deteriorating, and we're kind of doing it in a hodge-podge...we'll demolish this house, and fix up one and then three more deteriorate. It's the cycle - we're not changing the cycle.

Mr. Daly: ...and I'm not just telling you that one little bit. I'm saying that...let's just take a focus. Let's just go after something. That Urban Design Plan could be so spectacular. So, if it's this housing component that would bring people into the downtown, live in the downtown, then what does that create on the first floor retail? All the good things Bill...you know this, and this is what you preach. So, I'm just saying that maybe there's a way a group like this says let's focus on that, not just telling what goes on in the neighborhoods. You've got...there's four organizations in the County that legally can do all the good things in the neighborhoods. There's CODE, CHRIC, COI is another that has that designation and there's one in downtown Dunkirk. There's all kinds of grants and things available for them to not just demolish houses, but to reconstruct and put in new housing in their locations. That's all grant money and that's a lot of HUD money, and of course the City gets...how much do they get John in the City every year in direct HUD money?

Ms. Harkness: A million and a half or so...

Dr. Ney: It's being reduced every year, just to let you know.

Mr. Daly: So to have a strategy that says okay let's go to CODE or whatever organizations can provide this, let's just look at the list of the grants that are right there now available and what's the strategy? This shouldn't take a long time.

Ms. Harkness: But what's happening Bill right now, is a lot of that money is focused on low to moderate income and that's not what we need to focus on anymore. We need to change this.

Mr. Merino: We don't want anything that's 80% or less of median income downtown – we've got 400 units of senior housing and the last thing you need to make it vibrant is to use more subsidies, so the program, like the Restore Program that the City's already approached and been

December 13, 2006

lucky enough to get some money on – they'll be going back to round two – we are in fact addressing this with the Renaissance Corporation specifically, and it is part of the Urban Plan to develop loft housing downtown. We're going after that – there are some private sector people already looking at properties and there's some deals in the works, and there's some deals in the works and we're having a developers symposium after the first of the year. We're going to host it at the Ice Arena that the Renaissance Corporation is going to sponsor to bring in developers from all over western New York and Erie – people that do inner city development.

Mr. Scalise: Market development, not low income, but market...

Mr. Daly: ...this CODE and COI stuff though that they would do and that may have some of the grants...that's always low income.

Mr. Merino: That's right. That's why we thought their representation, if we go through the same type of analysis of the community in the neighborhoods outside of the downtown corridor, that it's going to be a group like CHRIC or CODE, that really is in the position to really be in the forefront of implementing that kind of overall city neighborhood strategy because that's their expertise. And, obviously, if you look at the demographics of the community, the income strata, we've got a number of people that are 50, 60, 70% of median income that are living in those neighborhoods that are good people, that are working people that own their homes, that would qualify for a lot of the grant programs to help upgrade or address neighborhood kinds of issues. So, that's where those kinds of grant dollars probably should be spent. I think after the two HUD programs – one that did the Hotel and one that did the other building on the corner of Cherry and Third – between the two of them we got 400 units of senior citizens downtown – all on fixed income. If you wanted to go buy that building as a private person already restored, you'd have 400 people to relocate. What's it up to now – about \$11,000 per tenant or something like that to relocate people, and then you've got the purchase price of the building and you have to negotiate with HUD to buy out their 40 year mortgage on the place. So, we're locked into those units unfortunately and what we want to do is water that down by having working, young professionals and other people that want to enjoy loft living downtown.

Mr. Daly: But that's good for me to know because, to me, that's the ultimate is to bring in market-rate condos and apartments in downtown Jamestown.

Mr. Rice: Well, that's what you're striving for because you want to have a mixture when you're downtown of wide demographics and as John was saying, is that the problem is right now you have a skewing as to one end because it was done specifically with HUD funds and those type of funds that have strings attached for low-mod income. There is one issue too is that Murray Gould was the developer that came for that workshop...

Mr. Merino: Was that the upper level development? Was that the one you just had?

Mr. Rice: Yes. It was good. In fact, he's expressed interest in coming back and doing projects here. He's going to be in town, I believe it's on the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> of December and I'd like to have him sit down to talk with us because one of the things – he did an analysis of the historic credit credits and all that stuff and it's a little bit deceiving because they're not as good as everybody thinks they are because of the central state income tax levels and there's more work that we really need to do as private citizens to get the State to start to really think about this as an economic development tool. And, they're not at that level. It looks good, but it's got to get to another level to really be useable so I'd like to get a couple of people to sit down and chat with him when he comes.

Mr. Merino: And there's some good things at the local level. Council resolutions could be passed...they could be passed at the local level to give tax breaks for investment over a five or ten year period but that has to be addressed at the Council level. The issue is, of course, it's not going to be politically popular for people that live in the neighborhoods to think about – well, sure, if I

December 13, 2006

invest downtown, I get a tax break, but if I want to put money in my house, I don't. The problem is, you need these tools to stimulate it so...

Dr. Faulk: I think there are a variety of routes to go. One, is to use the intelligence we have now that will better refine the study. I think we have now more information we've ever had. We just had an assessment. We now know what the value is of every neighborhood. We have some trend line I think, one of the trend lines was what were the changes? What houses appreciated, what houses did not. In 1991, I did a study of housing in Jamestown. At that point, I had a database which showed over ten years the appreciation of housing in Jamestown, by neighborhood, and it gave you a sense. Now that database I handed over to the City – it was never used or never updated. One, we don't know what impact we have on various housing neighborhood programs because we don't set the bar as to where we are and where we're going to go. That data I think we have now for example, I think we have a lot of experience, banks have experience in terms of offering mortgages to neighborhoods. In other words, we have a lot of intelligence that we could use right now and I think, yes, we need probably someone to put together a study that brings in kind of some national trends and some national best practices. But I think, as we end up, we always end of implementing it, and if we don't have the groundswell of people that know things and can do things, including banks, including real estate involved, nothing's going to happen, I think. When I did the study in '91, we looked at new startups in housing in the region. There was 700 new houses that were built in a period of a few years around Jamestown. In Jamestown, there was – the housing up by Jefferson, I mean, most of the housing was again, subsidized – there was probably 80-100 that were new compared to seven times as much outside. In one sense that showed the people did want to buy new, but they weren't buying here. But it had some... the implications and the market was – you weren't dead in the water- people were building new, but they just weren't looking here. But I think we could get a lot of information from the Department of Development, Planning, from the assessment right away. Meanwhile, I think with the committee that Jennifer has suggested putting together, it started to draw that, that will inform us on an RFP because then we'll begin to know where...I think, I mean, perhaps to bring somebody in and have them say "well, start from scratch," learn about our communities, we're going to be paying a lot of money that we should be doing. We should really have our own sense and then have someone in to kind of sort of draw us out and show us where we're not making some decisions, etc.

Mr. Daly: One of the things that I just learned the other day...we were dealing with a major corporate entity about doing an industrial revenue bond. So we had bond counsel from New York City came up and we went to lunch beforehand and we're talking about IDA's and doing civic facilities bonds like – colleges use them all the time for dorms rather than the dormitory authority industrial revenue bonds are used for businesses and some are fully tax exempt, federal, state and New York City and then the taxable ones are New York State and New York City tax exempts, but they are federally taxable. It depends on the parameter of the business...The guy made an interesting comment – he said "yes, but New York City you do almost all of them for housing." I almost fell out of my chair. I said "what do you mean?" He said "oh yes, you just have to have 20% mid-low income. How do you think all those huge buildings are getting developed in New York City for housing. They're all being underwritten by IDA's." And I sat there. So I thought...I was going to bring it up when I first came in but completely forgot about it.

Dr. Ney: These are industrial development bonds – that's what you call them?

Mr. Daly: ...Industrial Development Bonds and they're used for housing. So, I guess what we need to do is, I need to get more information about that. We can always...well I don't like bringing the guy in from New York City, but if he would conference call us we could get information, I'd get publications, but developers...again, I keep coming back to that same spot, because it just looks to me like a great area, because you've got all the people who would be in one area of the City. But let's say you had a developer and there's whatever advantages a developer has, say Restore New York money...does that have to be low income? I think that's just to remodel the building. That's why it's so attractive. Let's say, I'll make it up, a \$10,000,000 project. They can actually get these investor revenue bonds to do this – only 20% of the housing would have to be mid-

December 13, 2006

low income. But 80% could be market-rate income, so, I mean, that's just another tool. However you guys want to develop this – if we need an ad hoc group or we need to meet again, but now you start really getting all the arrows and the quiver and that's what I'm saying John about you know, but who can bring what to the table when developers come in here. Let's just lay it out and say look it, here are the things...most of these developers know a lot of this anyhow, but if that were the case, then somebody's got to put six or seven million in a building, and he can go out and sell bonds that would go, I don't know what they do on those housing bonds, industrial bonds go kind of like the useful life...there was like real estate in it, because they could get it out further, if it's just equipment they have to shorten those bond terms, but if it's real estate it might go 30 years on these bonds. So, now you're taking the payment out of 30 years – they'd be tax free bonds and this becomes very attractive for developers.

Mr. Merino: I suppose the two threshold questions you'd want to ask are "what is the dollar amount and how many units in the projects." It might be something like 100 units is the threshold or something in one project, which means then we just have to marry all these buildings together and do them all at once.

Mr. Rice: If you get the right developer, they're going to know all these different tools because they've used them repeatedly and that, in a way, is the key. You get the right one that's been doing housing in different cities, they'll be able to tell you how to do this stuff.

Mr. Scalise: Well, I think it's great conversation, but it goes back to your point that you and Lillian were discussing and now that Bill has shared this particular item with us, and of course, Bill has a lot of expertise in that area, and I think back at some of the discussions we've talked about during the course of the year, we talked about improving the entrance way into the City, we've talked about job creation, we've talked about a multitude of things and it's been great conversation. I think sometimes we have to look at where are we at the end of the line. So I think it's playing back to what you and Lillian have been discussing is that Bill feels really comfortable in sinking his teeth into this particular issue that he's talking about, or this initiative, and are there three or four of us that want to jump into the initiative of the entrance way into the City and things of that nature so that on a collective basis, we can keep coming back and saying okay, here's the improvement that we've shown in these four focuses and if we narrow the focus a little bit, maybe we can accomplish and put some of things behind us.

Mr. Rice: I think this may be one of the best ways of doing it because if we can keep churning this same discussion over and over and over again – but we're not going to get anywhere..

Dr. Ney: Well, just to give a tiny, tiny history about that...is we had done all of our several years' work with action teams. We thought, we had brainstorming sessions, we asked the community, we had community forums, we had action teams, we got things done and there were some members of the Commission that thought we shouldn't be doing that anymore. We shouldn't be doing. We should be thinking ahead and planning ahead strategically. I think we've been doing a lot of that in the last six months or discussing, discussing, discussing what needs to be done. Now, I think we have enough information where we have to plan some action teams – I agree 100% and I think the people who are most committed to it, like Jon said, will have a burning interest in it and then we can then get back into our earlier mode of reporting back to the Commission and then making other recommendations. The only thing I think that's important for us not to do is either duplicate or...you know, the Renaissance Group is working and we don't want to duplicate anything they're doing. They're doing mostly the implementation of the downtown Urban Design Plan, so if we talk about condos and townhouses to a certain extent, they may be on the periphery of downtown. You know what I mean – up on the hill, so maybe you can see the lake, but it's within walkable distance to the downtown. I mean, that could be an action team. But even that entrance way to the City could. The more we do together and then if the Renaissance develops that as one of their major things, we can just back off or help them as we need to. I don't want to make them feel as though we're impinging on their area, so I don't know how you guys want to resolve that.

December 13, 2006

Ms. Harkness: The role of the Commission, as I understand it from the by-laws or charter, was that we are here to make recommendations whether it be to City Council or other organizations within the City, it really doesn't matter, so if we come up with strategic initiatives, items...it doesn't mean we're going to do everything all the way to the end, it just means that we see this as the strategic direction for the City. These we feel are priorities and then we make recommendations.

Dr. Ney: Exactly.

Ms. Harkness: JRC is already tackling the one that Bill is very interested in. There's no reason why you don't partner with other people that have the talent and the expertise. We're all here to collaborate and cooperate with each other.

Mr. Merino: ...strictly we can make recommendations...so I mean the neighborhood component of it, I mean I would almost want to suggest that we just say to both CHRIC and CODE "why don't the two of you organizations get together – you're the ones that do all the work in the community relative to housing. Meet with Bill, for example, to begin to talk about what the process is like for the Urban Development Plan and between your two groups (because John Murphy is a great analyst and grant writer) begin to look at the information we have as Len suggested, let's take it the recent revaluation data and all the rest of it that we have – begin to look at all that and let's at least put together our fundamental documentation on the community and then see what kind of a firm or individual we need to come in and help kind of collate all that and point us in the right direction in terms of developing neighborhood strategies.

Mr. Sullivan: On this, a couple of thoughts – one is that when you think about neighborhoods, first of all, you know, I think we need to think of it as more than just geographical entities, and in that case, are there neighborhoods? Because you know, I live in the City and I don't live in a neighborhood to be honest with you, I live in a house because there's nothing going on around it, which is a sad state of affairs perhaps, but that's the way it is. So, if you really want to mobilize, I mean, we've got to mobilize the community and not just think that some group is going to do things – you know, you've got to get every homeowner to want to improve their property which is problematic and you need to influence me to do it and it's hard thinking about the fact that whatever I do, it's going to be hard to get any money out of it. I'm already losing to start with, I think. So, there needs to be some way to help me make my property better, and I'm pretty typical, I think. The other thing is – how do you create neighborhoods, as opposed to just geographical boundaries. Then the thing that somebody ought to do because I need them to do it, is there ought to be a list of services for homeowners that you can get at, because there seems like there's almost nobody to do the little jobs that need to get done to make things better.

Dr. Ney: Do you mean suppliers of the services?

Mr. Sullivan: Yes, like if you have to fix a hole in the plaster; I've been calling, calling, and calling. You know my wife is driving me crazy – she won't let me even try it.

Mr. Scalise: Going back to your point about enticing you to do something about your house – are you talking about a subsidization or subsidizing something for your....

Mr. Sullivan: Not necessarily...well, I'm not sure... Well, having a value or having it...is there some incentive in terms of lower interest rates or something that you're going to do something...Or what you're talking about, you know, people don't relate to neighborhood like they used to. ...place-making – they just don't have the attachment to that area. I think our lifestyle has changed over the last 40- or 50 years and it's impacted that quite drastically in a way; in fact, even design has done that. It used to be years ago that houses had a front porch and people were on them. See if you can find a brand new house that has that.

Mr. Scalise: That's when civilization went down the toilet.

December 13, 2006

- Mr. Rice:                   What we did is we reverted inside...it's the little things like that that make a difference.
- Mr. Sullivan:               It's like the chicken or the egg – if you build a neighborhood, will people come?
- Mr. Rice:                   That's so true – you think about it – what part of the culture of every city – what's gone? The little fish fry joint on the corner – the saloon, next to it was a meat market, maybe a pharmacy...I mean look at Jamestown. We're on the south side where they make the korv – Pearson's – that was so famous, ...there was always a sense of these neighborhoods...there was grocery store in every neighborhood...
- Mr. Sullivan:               ...part of this film shows some of that but also you know, I go and visit my sister-in-law in Minneapolis – they have a neighborhood. They walk to the restaurant, they...
- Dr. Ney:                    Mike, take a look at that email that I sent out last night to everybody on the Commission. It comes from George so it looks a little bit misleading, but you'll get the...I mean you're on the server. It's a group from Buffalo talking about sustainable communities and they have what's coming up with conferences and stuff like that. It's actually very interesting – they've got some great ideas so it's really worthwhile to read through it.
- Ms. Harkness:             Well, just to wrap this up...what action teams do we want to create? One for this whole neighborhood issue – it's a very large issue. Len, would you be interested in chairing that? John I know it's your back, do you have an interest in working on that with...
- Mr. Marino:                Yes, depending on how we schedule meetings and how much time I can find with the other 64 organizations I'm involved in...I'd love to help – it's just that I don't know how to be productive at it and all we've been doing is attending meetings...
- Dr. Ney:                    One thing that can happen too is the leader can just find community members that will be of value and that would want to help – that's what we did earlier, and Bill, or somebody from your department, or who would.....
- Mr. Rice:                   I'm sure somebody's going to be...you've been working on HUD stuff in the housing and that...Steve probably would be a good resource...
- Dr. Ney:                    Steve and Amanda? Okay.
- Ms. Harkness:             ...the job preservation and job growth – that's a big one. Who wants that?jk I think we also have to look at our full Commission too. Okay, so Bill??? and Jon and Lillian and I can go through the list and contact the other members and then the Urban Design – we're promoting it, the support of it, JRC is already established so we don't need an ad hoc committee for that.
- Mr. Merino:                Well, it might be good to get Lee to come in every couple of meetings and just give an update on what's going on so that we're...rather than hearing from us on the Board...
- Dr. Ney:                    I would also suggest an action team for the condo/townhouses.
- Ms. Harkness:             But that's already being worked on by JRC...
- Dr. Ney:                    Oh, they have a group to do that already? Okay.
- Mr. Daly:                   So, this industrial revenue bond stuff – if I get the information, to whom do I...
- Ms. Harkness:             Well, I would have Lee talk to...get you and Lee together.

December 13, 2006

Mr. Daly: Okay.

Ms. Harkness: Really, there's no sense in us duplicating that.

Mr. Merino: Is that the Renaissance?

Dr. Ney: No. That was my earlier...

Ms. Harkness: Not the Cleveland thing...

Dr. Ney: I'm going to chair the Cleveland trip.

Ms. Harkness: That's a different...that's outside – could be outside of the downtown or it could tie into the downtown, it doesn't matter. I think that's a good one, and then the Shared Services? I don't mind chairing that.

Dr. Faulk: Did Dale say he was going to get together the regional group soon – I think after the election he was going to get together the regional players, and that's the key to the next steps, you know.

Dr. Ney: We really need to invite him to a meeting early on and I agree and we need to add Dale, since he volunteered to do that...

Mr. Merino: You might want to think about Carla for Job Creation too because of Cummins involvement in the area.

Ms. Harkness: And any suggestions you have too – if there's other outside community members that you know would be good, or Council members that have an interest. In the past, we've had...our action teams we did include a Council member...

Dr. Ney: ...on every one in the department...

Ms. Harkness: ...all the City departments...who else is doing the Shared Services one? Anything else then?

Dr. Ney: How about the neighborhood...Yes. The Neighborhood Revitalization. Maybe Melissa Belli is actually Chairman of an action team working out in the neighborhood. And then there's the Neighborhood Pride Organization Bob Doverspike...those would be the two community members that are involved...Bob is chairing that – Chuck Cornell's quite involved in it, but Bob is actually chairing the group.

Mr. Daly: Who's the woman you mentioned?

Dr. Ney: Melissa Belli. Anybody else you can think of for neighborhoods? Bill and Amanda?

Mr. Rice: There's a lot of groups that have like the Neighborhood Watch groups and that...it might be good to involve a couple of them possibly. But when you're dealing with neighborhoods, you're going to deal with strategies and the strategies might be more than just neighborhoods. Even the downtown housing is inner-related maybe because of the demographics you have.

Dr. Faulk: I would like to see some market rate people, whether it's real estate...when we worked on this in the past, we worked with developers as a group and it was difficult. They didn't see this as the market they wanted to build in. We finally got a guy who was willing to do it and there

December 13, 2006

was like a \$20,000 subsidy in the house that was sold, but we had a developer in square box that has no frills up on City Line Drive. It was like manufactured homes – couldn't sell them because there was nothing of value. Somebody needs to come in that knows the market – knows what people want...

Ms. Harkness: What about Scott? He was a real estate agent and now he's at Commercial Lending with us.

Mr. Scalise: Scott Crist?

Ms. Harkness: Yes.

Mr. Rice: I think Steve Centi would be good too because something that might come into plan is the Brownfield Opportunities Grant. So, those strategies, I think, and Steve knows them intimately so he'd be a good resource. It's Brownfield Opportunities Grant money. If you have an area that is in need of demolition, maybe more than one house at a time you can package it for manufacturing as a way to eliminate some of the blight that you have. That's always one of the big issues is that there is a significant of cost to demolitions and it's not cheap to do.

Mr. Daly: It's expensive. You end up with an empty lot, what are you going to put on it? The sad part, when you're talking people in the HUD world, is yes, we'll build a house there for... now what's a one family house going to cost on a 55 x 75' lot in Jamestown? It's going to cost \$110,000 to build – what are you going to sell it for? \$65,000. That's just a fact. So, when you say that, it's just like getting hit with a bucket of cold water because it's...not just to tear it down – what are you going to put in its place. Well, we could have neighborhoods with just empty lots all over the place.

Mr. Rice: Well, maybe that's one of the strategies you think about. I think you have to get that creative in solving some of the issues that you have in the neighborhoods. Because otherwise, you're going to be dealing with those dollars and cents all the time and you're not going to get any return off of it. You're going to be in a hole.

Mr. Daly: In the grant world that I found interesting...is that they expect that. In other words, if you're going to re-populate that parcel of land, you're going to pay \$110,000 – and you're going to sell it for \$65,000. The government's eating \$40,000 to get someone to live on that lot.

Mr. Rice: That's kind of a negative way of thinking though, when you think about it. So...maybe we've got to get past that point...instead of following what grants are doing and how they think – use the grants for our advantage.

Dr. Ney: Do what we need to do and then use grants.

Mr. Daly: I'm learning this stuff...are you willing to pay \$150,000 to sell it for \$70,000? Doesn't make much sense...and they do it all the time...

Dr. Ney: One thing we're going do too is I'm going to contact the BPU to put in their newsletter the Tax Abatement Program that we have in the City of Jamestown for new housing along with the tool system. Somebody brought up not too long ago Jim, ...

Mr. Olson: ...at the Housing meeting the other day...

Dr. Ney: Yes, that was at the Housing...somehow I knew that you would remember... and I've got a note to call them today to ask Sue Jones to put that in the newsletter. Somebody said that even though it's been out there a lot, a lot of people don't know about it and so we should re-enforce that.

December 13, 2006

Mr. Scalise: Are there incentives that the City has for homeowners to ...at one time, wasn't there an incentive to replace your heating system in your house, or something like that?

Mr. Olson: You've got to go through the Department of Development.

Mr. Scalise: Okay. But are there incentives for like aluminum siding on your house, or painting your house or any of that type of stuff?

Mr. Rice: There are some programs that we have.

Mr. Scalise: There are?

Mr. Rice: I don't know exactly what the parameters are – Steve, again, is the best one to talk to...

Ms. Bleck: It's all income eligibility, pretty much. It's all through CDBG and the Program.

Mr. Rice: It's all in the HUD monies and there's strings attached to that.

Dr. Ney: Yes. Just like Mike was asking that earlier in the meeting – what incentives are there versus doing it himself because he doesn't think he'll recoup it afterwards.

Ms. Harkness: Thank you very much.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

James N. Olson  
Director of Financial Services/City Clerk