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About the Climate Change and Sustainable Development Group

Committed to meeting client needs as they are affected by a rapidly changing environment, Wiggin and Dana's Climate Change and Sustainable Development Practice Group advises clients reacting to new mandates for change. In particular, the Practice Group advises with regard to the adoption of environmentally-desirable business practices, emerging business opportunities, and litigation associated with climate change and sustainable development. Another useful seminar on these groundbreaking trends is planned for the autumn.

As a firm, Wiggin and Dana is also dedicated to reducing the environmental impact of our offices. Wiggin and Dana recently established a "Green Team" committee to implement the firm's commitment to environmental responsibility in the workplace. For more developments on our "greening" efforts, please see our website, www.wiggin.com.

Wiggin and Dana Hosts Climate Change, Green Development, and Land Use Seminar

On June 10, 2008, Wiggin and Dana's Climate Change and Sustainable Development Practice Group hosted a seminar to address the emerging effects of climate change on private real estate development, municipal land use, and the built environment. Barry Trilling, partner in charge of the Climate Change and Sustainable Development Practice Group, led off the program with a brief background on how concerns about the causes and effects of climate change have resulted in practical consequences to land owners, developers, and municipalities with regard to land use and the built environment. This introduction set a framework for the program's first-hand accounts of cutting-edge "green" development projects in New York and Connecticut, a brisk survey of evolving regulatory regimes on all levels of government, and a lively discussion of the City of Stamford's efforts to address climate change impacts.

Green Development in New York and Connecticut

Bruce Becker, president of the integrated development, planning and architecture firm, Becker + Becker Associates of Fairfield, Connecticut, described his firm's renovation and construction of the Octagon, a 500-unit residential building on Manhattan's Roosevelt Island. A model of sustainable design, the Octagon utilizes locally-produced construction materials from recycled sources and measures promoting exceptional standards of energy efficiency. Completed in 2006, the Octagon received the U.S. Green Building Council's LEED Silver Certification. Mr. Becker also described his firm's progress on the "Shartenberg Site" project at 360 State Street in New Haven, Connecticut. As with the Octagon project, the Shartenberg Site includes cutting-edge features of sustainable design, such as photovoltaic panels, a fuel cell, water heat recovery units, and a "green" roof. Located across the street from New Haven's State Street Metro North station, the project will serve as a model of transit-oriented development by encouraging the use of mass transit and, in effect, reducing harmful green house gas emissions from vehicle use. In analyzing these projects, Mr. Becker demonstrated the potential economic benefits of "green" design including the availability of financing, a driving force behind the move to environmentally-sensitive development.

Legislative Responses

Wiggin and Dana associates Scotia Ryer and Anika Singh presented an overview of pending bills and recently-passed local, state, and federal legislation affecting "green" development and land use. They explained that this burst of activity reflects an increasing governmental recognition of the effects of climate change and an interest in responding with environmental impact reductions and measures promoting increased energy efficiency.

City of Stamford's Approach

Stamford's Land Use Bureau Chief Robert Stein and Director of Economic Development and Intergovernmental Affairs Michael Freimuth described two exciting ongoing development projects in downtown Stamford. The Metro Green project is a mixed-use residen-

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tial, commercial development project in Stamford's Enterprise Zone and Transportation Center (site of Stamford's rail station, the busiest station on the Metro North line after Grand Central Terminal). Metro Green's 238 units of rental and condominium apartments, including 50 affordable housing units, utilize sustainable design elements with the aim of achieving LEED Gold Certification, and its 325,000 square foot office tower aspires to LEED Platinum Certification. While the Metro Green project would implement "smart growth" principles including transit-oriented development, the Mill River Project would enhance the natural environment. By removing the Mill Pond dam and walls and creating a new 26-acre park and greenway in the heart of Stamford, the Mill River Project aims to restore more than four miles of upstream spawning habitat for river herring as well as the surrounding landscape.

Mr. Stein and Mr. Freimuth also expressed Stamford's commitment to progressive energy and transportation initiatives. These include the replacement of street light fixtures and traffic signals with energy efficient LED lights and the construction of an Urban Transitway with dedicated bus and bike lanes.

Conclusion

A growing recognition of the effects of climate change and unsustainable land use patterns have resulted in increasing demand for environmentally sustainable development. Wiggin and Dana LLP's Climate Change, Green Development and Land Use Seminar on June 10, 2008 provided a useful forum to discuss these critical, emerging issues. The presentations and discussion at the program demonstrated that private developers are undertaking "green" projects in earnest and that government, particularly at the local level, is making aggressive efforts to address climate change by adopting land use measures and other policies aimed to address and ameliorate this growing global and local concern.

The Wiggin and Dana Sustainable Developments e-Newsletter is a periodic newsletter designed to inform clients and others about recent developments in the field of climate change and sustainable developments law. Nothing in the e-Newsletter constitutes legal advice, which can only be obtained as a result of personal consultation with an attorney. The information published here is believed to be accurate at the time of publication, but is subject to change and does not purport to be a complete statement of all relevant issues. In certain jurisdictions this may constitute attorney advertising.