

CITY OF BRIDGEPORT  
CONTRACTS COMMITTEE

SPECIAL MEETING

TUESDAY, JULY 5, 2011

6:00 PM

ATTENDANCE: Council members: Paoletto; Co-chair, Silva; Co-chair, Lyons  
M. McCarthy, Holloway, Austin, Curwen

CITY STAFF: E. Lavernoich, Deputy Director; OPED

Co-chair Paoletto called the meeting to order at 6:00 pm.

*The co-chair stated that the agenda would be taken out of order to take up item 101-10 first.*

**101-10** Tentative agreement with AFSCME, Local 1522 regarding a collective bargaining agreement.

*\*No minutes were recorded for this item. The stenographer was delayed in another meeting that adjourned at 6:15 pm.*

There was some discussion regarding the item (*see the co-chairs for any relevant information*).

**\*\* COUNCIL MEMBER CURWEN MOVED TO APPROVE**

**\*\* COUNCIL MEMBER M. McCARTHY SECONDED**

**\*\* MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

***\*It was noted that the item would be brought off the floor during the city council meeting to follow.***

**92-10** Proposed Lease Agreement with Green Village Initiative, Inc. (GVI) for the contiguous city-owned property located at 1469 Reservoir Avenue and 20 Yaremich Drive.

Council member Bonney spoke about the final resolution that outlined the lease of the property for another five years.

He questioned how the produce was going to be distributed. He relayed other concerns he had about the lease agreement and he questioned exactly how the proposal would operate and what it would mean to the community and residents.

Council member Curwen thanked Council member Bonney for enlightening him, per his concerns. He stated that his concern was about taking the properties off the tax role. He asked if the entity interested in the property had been paying taxes.

Mr. Lavernoich's reply was no, he stated that the city has owned the property for four years.

Council member Curwen said he had an issue with the last sentence that was outlined in the new language, regarding the *"mutual developer and benefiting the tax base*, in reference to the proposal for the community garden.

Mr. Lavernoich stated that the community is always in flux. He said that it will be a short term fix if there is three years left on a five year deal, they will find another property for five years. However, they will look for something that is good for the city.

Council member Holloway stated that he recently returned from Missouri. He said he visited a community garden that initially was suppose to be a high-rise hotel, but the bottom fell out of the market and a community garden was put in an old coliseum and all the work was done for the garden. He explained that the concept was to give produce to a non-profit organization to help starving people in the Kansas City area. He expressed that he wasn't against the gardens or putting something in the neighborhood. However, he stated that since there isn't a developer coming into Bridgeport to put up Laundromats or other businesses because there's no market here, noting that's partially due to all the dilapidated houses. Overall, he thought there were pros and cons to the issue.

Council member Austin stated that he felt there were so many promises and commitments made to Bridgeport, but nothing goes through and time is wasted. He felt that if something could be established that is good for the community then it should be considered. However, to let the property sit another five years wasn't a

good thing. He suggested that the property be developed. And although the city won't make any money, he felt they should take a stab at getting it going.

Mr. Lavernoich commented that the garden will provide vegetables at no cost to people that need them the most. He further explained that the developer had commercial and community space, noting that it's difficult to find community space. He added that the organization PoKo in conjunction with Ken Olsen have been working on this type of project for years. He explained that the project proposed will have the task of finding a grant subsidiary to go into the space, noting there are different time constraints to finance this type of project. He stated that Dan Levinson of GVI told him that he has no plans to block progress, if development is ready to go forward.

Karen Sussman of GVI stated that the workings of the program don't actually operate like a typical community garden; it's considered to be more of a production garden or farm. She expressed that they are hoping to get two to three sites throughout the city, where they plan to hire ten interns. She explained that they rely on donations and grant money, noting that \$110k would go into the project. She said they already began the school garden projects and she hoped to work with the community center, where they can learn healthy eating and nutrition, as well as distribute food to small families. She added that they will sell the produce to the community. She said they were working with the Newman's Own Foundation and they need a little stability to come into the city. She said they are a completely volunteer organization. She highlighted the schools where gardens have already been done at: Hooker School, Winthrop School, Park City Magnet School and Beardsley School. There is also a Broad Street garden that was a Michelle Obama initiative. She emphasized that they take care to maintain everything for the gardens, noting that a one-acre piece of land produces 10,000 lbs. of food and it could go up to 20,000 lbs.

Council member Bonney asked if the produce would be sold at market value. Ms. Sussman said no, it would be sold way below market value and any profit made would go back to the community. She noted that they have one farmer and one program coordinator.

Council member Bonney asked if a fee would be charged for the meals. Ms. Sussman said they haven't charged a fee so far for meals.

Council member Bonney stated that he would like a fixed figure of how much each garden would cost to operate. Ms. Sussman said they are doing each garden with fencing for approximately \$1,500.00; this is based on the donations and grants they receive.

Council member Silva asked about the five year lease. He questioned if they could possibly do a two year lease instead. Mr. Lavernoich said they couldn't afford to make the investment with a shorter term lease. He noted that a developer has already been identified for the site.

It was stated by Ms. Sussman's colleague that the garden would enhance the neighborhood and it's encouraged by the community.

Council member Silva said he was aware that the community wants the garden, but he had an issue about the property itself. Ms. Sussman said they had plans to enhance the soil, which will improve the quality of the produce.

Council member Blunt commented that this is something new and certain things need to be in place to succeed. He suggested that the organization tie into the local community center as a connection to the community garden. Overall, he felt it was a good concept and he stated that since it's new, everyone needs to work together. He said he would like to see it happen, noting that it's important that they work within the recommendations of the committee and city council.

Co-chair Paoletto stated that the item wouldn't come before the city council at tonight's meeting, because a public hearing has to be held first.

**\*\* COUNCIL MEMBER M. McCARTHY MOVED TO ACCEPT THE RESOLUTION AS AMENDED**

**\*\* COUNCIL MEMBER CURWEN SECONDED**

Ms. Sussman clarified that the proceeds and the produce grown will definitely stay within the community. She noted that it's strictly a Bridgeport project and **it will not go out of the community**. She reiterated that the produce will be sold at a low cost or no cost.

**\*\* MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

**\*\* COUNCIL MEMBER CURWEN MOVED TO APPROVE THE RESOLUTION AS AMENDED:**

**FURTHER, BE IT RESOLVED, that any lease entered into pursuant to this resolution shall have a provision, that for the period after the initial five years, the City has the unilateral right to terminate the lease on one year's notice to Green Village Initiative, Inc. (GVI), subject to the City's good faith effort to find a mutually agreeable replacement site for the remainder of the lease term.**

**\*\* COUNCIL MEMBER M. McCARTHY SECONDED**

**\*\* MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

**\*\* COUNCIL MEMBER CURWEN MOVED TO SCHEDULE A PUBLIC  
HEARING PRIOR TO THE NEXT SCHEDULE CITY COUNCIL MEETING  
\*\* COUNCIL MEMBER LYONS SECONDED  
\*\* MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

### **ADJOURNMENT**

**\*\* COUNCIL MEMBER AUSTIN MOVED TO ADJOURN  
\*\* COUNCIL MEMBER CURWEN SECONDED  
\*\* MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

The meeting adjourned at 6:45 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Diane Graham  
Telesco Secretarial Services