

**CITY OF BRIDGEPORT
ECONOMIC AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT
AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE
REGULAR MEETING
FEBRUARY 17, 2016**

ATTENDANCE: Milta Feliciano, Co-chair; Jeanette Herron, Michelle Lyons;
Rev. Mary McBride-Lee; Aidee Nieves, Eneida Martinez (7:55 p.m.)

OTHERS: Council Member Kathryn Bukovsky; Bill Coleman, OPED
Neighborhood Development Director; Max Perez, OPED Sr. Economic
Development Associate; John Cottell; Angel dePara, CAO's Office; Liz
Torres, Bridgeport Neighborhood Trust; Council Member Scott Burns;
Frank Croke

CALL TO ORDER

Council Member Feliciano called the meeting to order at 6:08 p.m. A quorum was present.

APPROVAL OF COMMITTEE MINUTES OF JANUARY 20, 2016

**** COUNCIL MEMBER HERRON MOVED TO APPROVE THE COMMITTEE
MINUTES OF JANUARY 20, 2016.**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER MCBRIDE-LEE SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**24-15 Grant Submission: re State of Connecticut Department of Transportation for the
2011 Ferry Boat Discretionary Program - Water Street Dock Project; 15-355.**

Council Member Feliciano stated that a letter had been received requesting the withdrawal of
Agenda Item 24-15. Copies were distributed to the committee members.

**** COUNCIL MEMBER HERRON MOVED TO WITHDRAW AGENDA ITEM 24-15
GRANT SUBMISSION: RE STATE OF CONNECTICUT DEPARTMENT OF
TRANSPORTATION FOR THE 2011 FERRY BOAT DISCRETIONARY PROGRAM -
WATER STREET DOCK PROJECT; 15-355.**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER MCBRIDE-LEE SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**51-15 Proposed Resolution concerning Disposition of City Owned properties located at
119 Johnson Street and 77 Johnson Street by sale to the Abutter and Ordering a Public
Hearing Relative to the same.**

Mr. Coleman displayed a map showing Columbia Street and Columbia Court. Mr. Perez said
that there was an encroachment by a property owner who had built his two car garage on part
of the parcel.

Ms. Torres said that Bridgeport Neighborhood Trust (BNT) had been acquiring property in this area. The proposed project will consist of 10 two family homes in the Columbia Street and Columbia Court area. This is a home ownership project. To be eligible, the owners cannot earn more than 100% of the area mean income, which is approximately \$60,000. It is expected that the owners will reside on the top floor unit and rent the first floor. This is approximately a 5 million dollar program. 1.5 million will come from the sale of the buildings, and the remaining balance will hopefully be bonded with State funds.

The discussion moved to the access that the fire department would now have on Columbia Court. Currently, the street is too narrow and the emergency vehicles cannot turn around. Once the roadway development is done, the vehicles will be able to leave via Johnson Street. BNT will also yield some of their property so the street will be made wider.

If the City sells the two houses to BNT for the sum of \$1.00 per house, then the project can go forward. In return, the City will have a public City street and 10 new residences.

Council Member Herron asked if the developer would pay for the infrastructure under the street. Ms. Torres said that the developer would bear the cost.

Council Member Herron asked if the rental property on the first floor would be rent controlled. Ms. Torres said gave the details and said that the owner's unit would require a 20 year commitment.

Council Member McBride-Lee expressed concern about what might happen if the State did not approve the bond. Ms. Torres said that the BNT would own the property and then develop a Plan B for the project.

Council Member Feliciano said that the Committee could not vote on this item since there were no appraisals and there was not enough information. Mr. Perez said that he had the appraisals. He added that the City would be gaining a road. Council Member Feliciano said that the City already owned the road. Mr. Perez pointed out that Columbia Court was a dead end. When the project is completed, there will be a new portion of the road that does not exist and provides access out to Johnson Street.

Council Member Feliciano said that the Committee members were concerned about the fact that the parcels were being sold for a dollar, and there was no firm financials. Mr. Coleman said that the application has been presented to and approved by the Planning and Zoning Commission. Council Member Feliciano said that the application should have come to ECDCE first. Mr. Coleman said that with a project this size and scope needed to go to Planning and Zoning first for approvals and for approvals from other departments. He reminded everyone that this project would make an unsafe street safer and improve the neighborhood.

Council Member McBride-Lee left the meeting at 6:41 p.m.

Council Member Lyons asked about the Marina Village Parcel. Mr. Coleman said that the City was going to be working on that parcel and there were plans to make the new buildings mixed income residences.

Council Member Herron asked when the project would start if the finances were in place. Ms. Torres said that the application for the 3.5 million to the State was due on February 29th. It normally takes about three to four months to get approval. If that happens, the construction could start by the end of the year. This project is targeted for home ownership.

Council Member Lyons asked why the BNT was getting from this. Ms. Torres said that the BNT takes about 15% of the total cost and uses that for staff salaries, and to re-invest in the upcoming projects. The BNT pays more than \$250,000 in taxes to the City each year. BNT also owns a number of buildings with rental units in the City, all of which have been paying taxes for years.

Council Member Herron asked whether BNT had applied for funding from CDBG funding. Ms. Torres said that last year was the first time they had been granted CDBG funding. Mr. Coleman said that BNT had started with one employee, Ms. Torres, and now employs 23 people, some of whom are Bridgeport residents.

Council Member Nieves said that she had known those who had been helped with foreclosure prevention. She said that the project would be good, but wanted to know if the home owners would receive help if there was the threat of foreclosure. Ms. Torres said that there were a number of supports offered to the home owners, including foreclosure assistance.

Council Member Feliciano repeated that she felt that the project should have come to ECDCE first before Zoning. She also said that there was no Plan B ready and there should be something planned. Council Member Feliciano then stated if the project received funding, Bridgeport companies have to be chosen for the work.

Mr. Coleman said that with a single parcel, it would be fine to come to ECDCE, but because of the scale of the project, there were requirements for approvals from the Fire Marshal and from Zoning. Ms. Torres pointed out that the two parcels were actually slated to go to the Bridgeport Housing Authority (BHA). The BHA does not pay taxes on their properties. The BNT brings parcels back onto the tax paying rolls. The BHA and the BNT have been working together. Discussion followed about possibly giving BNT site control and not closing until after funding is in place.

Council Member Feliciano said that if the City was going to issue a contract for a dollar, the contractors would have to be Bridgeport based. She insisted that this should be imposed on the developer. Mr. Croke explained that while Bridgeport contractors might be able to do a major portion of the work, requiring that they do all the work would be problematic and not allowed by law, especially if State funding is used in the project.

**** COUNCIL MEMBER LYONS MOVED TO AMEND RESOLUTION 51-15 WITH THE ADDITION OF THE FOLLOWING LANGUAGE: “BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT THE CITY SHALL NOT TRANSFER TITLE TO THE ABUTTER UNTIL THE PROJECT FINANCING IS IN PLACE”.**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER HERRON SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER LYONS MOVED TO SCHEDULE A PUBLIC HEARING FOR AGENDA ITEM 51-15 PROPOSED RESOLUTION CONCERNING DISPOSITION OF CITY OWNED PROPERTIES LOCATED AT 119 JOHNSON STREET AND 77 JOHNSON STREET BY SALE TO THE ABUTTER AND ORDERING A PUBLIC HEARING RELATIVE TO THE SAME.**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER HERRON SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

36-15 Grant Submission: re Round 8 State Department of economics and Community Development Brownfield Grant Program - Remediation for Digester Project DECD (Project #16231)

Mr. Frank Croke came forward and said that he would like to amend by substitution. The change is adding the OPED Director as a signatory for amendments.

Council Member Lyons asked why OPED needed to sign. Mr. Croke said that in the past years, the Mayor signed the contract and then a letter was submitted by the Mayor. However, by giving the OPED Director the ability to sign reduces the time to process the various contracts when amendments need to be made.

**** COUNCIL MEMBER HERRON MOVED TO ENTER THE DOCUMENT LABELED 36-15 EX #1 - 02.17.16 AS EXHIBIT #1.**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER NIEVES SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Council Member Lyons asked how this process works. Mr. Coleman gave an overview of how the grant funding had been handled in the past. He said that without this type of adjustment, the Mayor would have to sign every change order or for a refund on a bill payment.

Council Member Feliciano said that the Committee had not received this information previously. Mr. Croke said that the information had been emailed to the Committee last week. Council Member Herron confirmed that she had received the email on her phone.

Mr. Cottell said that the City had been working on the digester project for a number of years. The first step is clean up of the site. The remediation is expensive, so the WPCA and the City split the cost. Now a soil analysis is the next step. The Brown Field Grant through the State was applied for and recently some funding was awarded.

Council Member Burns said that the District noted in the documentation was incorrect. It was actually located in the 130th District. Council Member Burns said that he was present in support of this. Council Member Bukovsky also said that she was in support of this project.

Mr. Croke said that there were no matching funds involved.

Council Member Burns asked if this was part of Captain's Cove. He was told that this was so.

Currently, the City trucks take the WPCA sludge over to New Haven where it is burned. This project will be siphoning off the methane gas from the sludge and using it to run the WPCA plant. The volume is reduced by half and consequently reducing the amount of sludge going to New Haven.

Council Member Lyons asked if the WPCA bill would be reduced. Mr. Cottell said that it would result in cost reductions for the utilities bill for the WPCA plant and a reduction in the cost of removing the sludge to New Haven. Discussion about the details followed.

Mr. Coleman said that the details of the contract had already approved by the previous Council.

Council Member Feliciano wanted to know what the benefits would be for the City. Mr. Croke said that once the facility was up and running, there would be 5 or 6 new job positions.

**** COUNCIL MEMBER HERRON MOVED TO APPROVE 36-15 GRANT SUBMISSION: RE ROUND 8 STATE DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMICS AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT BROWNFIELD GRANT PROGRAM - REMEDIATION FOR DIGESTER PROJECT DECD (PROJECT #16231) AS AMENDED BY SUBSTITUTION.**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER LYONS SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

08-15 Proposed Resolution concerning Disposition of City Owned properties located at 16 River Street by auction, Sale to Abutter or by sale to Community Base Housing Development Corporation and Ordering a Public Hearing Relative to the same.

Mr. Perez said that the property had been appraised at \$12,000 and was the old WPCA pumping station. The parcel is owned by the City. The WPCA had a bigger pumping station, which was built by the dog park. The building is still there, the pump has been removed.

Council Member Feliciano asked who the abutters were. Mr. Perez said that one side was Ricky Jesus and the other parcel had just changed hands.

**** COUNCIL MEMBER LYONS MOVED TO APPROVE AGENDA ITEM 08-15 PROPOSED RESOLUTION CONCERNING DISPOSITION OF CITY OWNED PROPERTIES LOCATED AT 16 RIVER STREET BY AUCTION, SALE TO ABUTTER OR BY SALE TO COMMUNITY BASE HOUSING DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION AND ORDERING A PUBLIC HEARING RELATIVE TO THE SAME.**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER HERRON SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER LYONS MOVED TO APPROVE THE SCHEDULING OF A PUBLIC HEARING FOR AGENDA ITEM 08-15 PROPOSED RESOLUTION CONCERNING DISPOSITION OF CITY OWNED PROPERTIES LOCATED AT 16 RIVER STREET BY AUCTION, SALE TO ABUTTER OR BY SALE TO COMMUNITY BASE HOUSING DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION.**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER HERRON SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

09-15 Proposed Resolution concerning in Disposition of City Owned properties (7) by Auction, sale to the Abutter or by sale to Community Base Housing Development Corporation and Ordering a Public Hearing Relative to the same.

Mr. Perez distributed copies of the appraisals to the Committee. Council Member Feliciano said that she felt that the City needed to get a new appraiser.

Council Member Lyons asked about back taxes. Mr. Perez said that the outstanding debt comes off the top of the sale price. He said that he would like to have an auction in June.

Council Member Lyons asked about Peach Street. Mr. Perez said that it was taken due to back taxes

Council Member Martinez joined the meeting at 7:55 p.m.

**** COUNCIL MEMBER LYONS MOVED TO APPROVE AGENDA ITEM 09-15 PROPOSED RESOLUTION CONCERNING IN DISPOSITION OF CITY OWNED PROPERTIES (7) BY AUCTION, SALE TO THE ABUTTER OR BY SALE TO COMMUNITY BASE HOUSING DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION AND ORDERING A PUBLIC HEARING RELATIVE TO THE SAME.**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER HERRON SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER LYONS MOVED TO APPROVE THE SCHEDULING OF A PUBLIC HEARING FOR AGENDA ITEM 09-15 PROPOSED RESOLUTION CONCERNING IN DISPOSITION OF CITY OWNED PROPERTIES (7) BY AUCTION, SALE TO THE ABUTTER OR BY SALE TO COMMUNITY BASE HOUSING DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION.**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER HERRON SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

37-15 Grant Submission: re Round 8 State Department of Economics and Community Development Brownfield Grant Program - Civic Block Assessment Project - DECD (Project #16247)

Mr. Coleman displayed an aerial view of the block and said that the City had purchased the current Newfield Branch of the Library. He indicated which parcels were vacant and which ones had occupants. The parcel is 3 acres. It will be a mixed use development.

**** COUNCIL MEMBER LYONS MOVED TO ENTER THE DOCUMENT LABELED EXHIBIT #2-2-17-16 AS EXHIBIT #2.**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER MARTINEZ SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Mr. Coleman gave an overview of the property acquisitions. Once the project moves forward, then the City will do an assessment on the residences. One of the sites was formerly a dry

cleaners, but the Bank of America gave the City a large file on environmental work that has been done.

**** COUNCIL MEMBER MARTINEZ MOVED TO APPROVE AGENDA ITEM 37-15 GRANT SUBMISSION: RE ROUND 8 STATE DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMICS AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT BROWNFIELD GRANT PROGRAM - CIVIC BLOCK ASSESSMENT PROJECT - DECD (Project #16247) AS AMENDED.**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER LYONS SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

52-15 Proposed Resolution Authorizing the City to accept the title and to resell properties located at 1163 and 1149 Main Street.

Mr. Coleman then displayed a map showing the area and buildings under consideration.

Mr. Coleman said that Colorblend had occupied one of the buildings. They won the RFP for the two buildings. One building will become a museum and the second building will be demolished and a tulip garden will be created. Mr. Coleman said that the City had agreed that the City would removed the asbestos and lead from the building that would be demolished. On November 10, 2015, the City closed on the property. However, the funding requires that the funding be used on City properties. So the owners of Colorblend have agreed to transfer the property back to the City for the cleanup and then it will be transferred back to them.

**** COUNCIL MEMBER LYONS MOVED TO APPROVE AGENDA ITEM 52-15 PROPOSED RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE CITY TO ACCEPT THE TITLE AND TO RESELL PROPERTIES LOCATED AT 1163 AND 1149 MAIN STREET.**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER HERRON SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

ADJOURNMENT

**** COUNCIL MEMBER HERRON MOVED TO ADJOURN.**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER LYONS SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

The meeting adjourned at 8:24 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

S. L. Soltes
Telesco Secretarial Services