

**CITY OF BRIDGEPORT
ECONOMIC AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT
AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE
REGULAR MEETING
MAY 19, 2021**

ATTENDANCE: Maria Valle, Co-chair; M. Evette Brantley, Co-chair; Jeanette Herron, Scott Burns, Rosalina Roman-Christy, Mary McBride-Lee

OTHERS: Councilmember(s): Maria Pereira, Matthew McCarthy & Eneida Martinez; Thomas Gaudett, Mayor's Office; Bill Coleman, OPED Deputy Director; Vincent Mobilio, OPED; Barbara

CALL TO ORDER

Co-chair Valle called the meeting to order at 6:02 P.M. There was a quorum present.

APPROVAL OF COMMITTEE MINUTES: JANUARY 20, 2021 (REGULAR MEETING)
APPROVAL OF COMMITTEE MINUTES: MARCH 15, 2021 (SPECIAL MEETING).
APPROVAL OF COMMITTEE MINUTES: APRIL 13, 2021 (SPECIAL MEETING).

Chairman Valle pointed out that the minutes for the meeting of April 13, 2021 were for a joint meeting and, thusly, did not need to be approved at this time.

**** COUNCIL MEMBER ROMAN-CHRISTY MOTIONED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF JANUARY 20, 2021 AND MARCH 15, 2021 AS SUBMITTED.**
**** COUNCIL MEMBER HERRON SECONDED THE MOTION.**
**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Council Member Pereria asked if one of the sets of minutes was for a joint meeting.

Chairman Valle clarified that the meeting of April 13, 2021 was a special meeting between the ECDC and Contracts committee. Discussion followed to clarify the situation.

**** COUNCIL MEMBER HERRON MOTIONED TO TABLE THE MINUTES OF APRIL 13, 2021.**
**** COUNCIL MEMBER ROMAN-CHRISTY SECONDED THE MOTION.**
**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

59-20
PROPOSED RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING DISPOSITION OF FOUR (4) CITY-OWNED PROPERTIES.

Mr. Bill Coleman came forward to discuss this item. He was joined by Mr. Vincent Mobilio. Mr. Coleman asked to remove one of the properties in the item. He provided an overview of the four properties including the one he desired to have removed. The property that he desired to remove was 166-168 Fourth Street. The properties came into the City's possession via foreclosure. It was occupied when it came into the City's possession and is still occupied. He reviewed the current

ownership for the Commission. Because of the human concern he had talked with Council Member Newton and Council Member Martinez about removing this item until a plan can be put in place for the current occupant of the property. Council Member Martinez verified this statement that she and Council Member Newton desired to have this lot removed from the item. They desire to table it so a family member may, potentially, come in and assist with the lien that is currently on the property. Further discussion followed regarding the family.

**** COUNCIL MEMBER BRANTLEY MOTIONED TO AMEND ITEM 59-20 TO REMOVE ANY REFERENCE TO 166-168 FOURTH STREET.**

Chairman Valle left the meeting at 6:13 P.M. Council Member Brantley assumed the chairmanship.

**** COUNCIL MEMBER HERRON SECONDED THE MOTION.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Council Member Pereria requested discussion before the vote was finalized. She questioned why the family was able to take action now, after the City had already foreclosed on the property, especially with how long the process could take in court. She also asked what the outstanding debt on the property was.

It was explained that this was an elderly person who had no one involved in her financial affairs until after her daughter had investigated and realized that the property was in foreclosure. The current legal situation regarding the resident was reviewed. The total amount of the debt is \$95,000. The question of whose name the bill payments for usage were being made in was raised. Mr. Coleman answered that he did not have that information at the moment. Council Member Pereria asked if the City was currently paying the bills. Chairman Brantley said that, in these situations, usually the person on the property would pay. Council Member Martinez suggested that the debt had already been paid. There are no other liens on the property.

Council Member McBride-Lee came forward. She commented that older people typically do not like to inform others about their problems. It was important to get involved and help out to back up the City's claims of wanting to care for the elderly.

Council Member Burns asked if they could expect the property to come up again at some point in the future despite being removed from the list.

Mr. Coleman confirmed that they would likely see this property come up again at a future date. It was possible to remove the property from consideration at which point it could not be sold until it was brought forward again individually.

Council Member Roman-Christy asked if this was a W.P.C.A. issue or a City tax issue.

Mr. Coleman said he didn't know the history of how the City came into ownership of the property and, thusly, didn't have an answer.

Council Member Roman-Christy said they needed to get more clarification so that the resident wouldn't be potentially kicked out of their home in the future.

**** THE MOTION TO APPROVE AS AMENDED PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER ROMAN-CHRISTY MOTIONED TO APPROVE THE OTHER THREE PROPERTIES LISTED IN ITEM 59-20.**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER HERRON SECONDED THE MOTION.**

Council Member Pereria asked if Mr. Coleman would speak to the other three properties.

Mr. Coleman reviewed the properties for the Committee. He provided images for the Committee. The first property is an old factory at 1564 Seaview Ave.

Council Member Pereria asked to confirm that the City was foreclosing on this property. Mr. Coleman confirmed this.

She asked if there would be a City Council hearing by Monday. She noted that it had been foreclosed on in 2012 and she wished to know why it was coming forward now.

Mr. Coleman pointed out that there have been occasional expressions of interest in the property. They have typically lost interest upon discovering what the environmental issues were for the property which he reviewed for the Committee. There has been interest but not specific interest.

Council Member Pereria asked what the property manufactured to make it so contaminated.

Mr. Coleman answered that, as best he knew, it was computer monitor screens designed to limit eye-strain.

Council Member Martinez commented that the building was so old that it was likely to collapse and any company moving in would need to deal with its structural issues.

Council Member Newton came forward to address the Committee. He said that he wished the building had been taken down twenty years ago due to how hazardous it is. He hoped no one would buy it and that the city would finally knock the building down. Further discussion followed regarding the property. Mr. Coleman said that, if no one purchased the property, there was a possibility it would be knocked down.

Council Member Roman-Christy asked if the previous owner still had the responsibility for cleaning the property.

Mr. Coleman confirmed that the previous owner had the responsibility of cleaning up the sub-surface contamination. Not the responsibility for cleaning up materials such as asbestos which are in the building.

Council Member Roman-Christy asked whether the prior owner would need to come to clean up the grounds/field section if the City took over.

Mr. Coleman confirmed this. He said there was an electronic remediation system currently working. Further discussion followed.

Mr. Coleman reviewed the other two properties. The next was 33-35 Lee Ave. They are asking for permission to sell this parcel to the owner of 29 Lee Ave for \$80,000. The final property is 1503 State Street. They are seeking authority to sell the parcel to the owner of Julio Sausage for use as parking.

Council Member Herron asked if these abutting properties would be put back on the tax list so the owners would be paying taxes on the property. Mr. Coleman confirmed this. She then asked what the owner of the Lee Ave. property would be doing with the purchase.

Mr. Coleman said that, to the best of his memory, it was to create parking. He did not believe they desired to build on it.

Council Member McCarthy asked if the Lee Ave. lot was a buildable property and if they would need a variance if so, he felt the price was low if it was a buildable lot.

Mr. Coleman said that, under the current authority, it would not be considered a buildable lot.

Council Member Pereria said that the price was low in her opinion. She was also confused by the lot being sold to Julio Sausage. She said the document was requesting it be transferred via a long-term ground lease with a 100% up-front payment for \$90,000. She wished clarification on if it was being sold or leased.

Mr. Coleman explained that, when there is a brownfield in which another party is responsible for the clean-up, which was the case for this lot, they are responsible for the clean-up but the City owns the title. Due to the history of the property, which Mr. Coleman reviewed for the Committee, the City owns the title to the land. He explained that the agreement would be a lease but require full payment up front as a result and they would need to pay taxes as if they were the owner. The City gains the benefit of the sale but, since it is a lease, they do not need to take responsibility for cleaning the property up.

Council Member Burns asked if the price could be renegotiated.

Mr. Coleman explained that the dynamic was different between city-owned properties and privately-owned properties. As a result, city-owned properties tend to be appraised higher than what a market appraisal would produce.

Council Member Burns asked for clarification as the assessment rate that the taxes for the property would be collected at.

Mr. Coleman clarified the rate for Council Member Burns.

**** COUNCIL MEMBER MARY-LEE MOTIONED TO APPROVE ITEM 59-20 AS AMENDED.**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER CHRISTY SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

66-20 PROPOSED RESOLUTION APPROVING PROGRAMS FOR CONNECTICUT NEIGHBORHOOD ASSISTANCE TAX CREDIT PROGRAM APPLICATION. NOTE:

Mr. Vincent Mobilio came forward to address the Committee. This is a yearly program administered by the department of government service. The City plays an administrative role in this process. He asked them to consider an additional application from the Center for Family Justice. He reviewed the organizations that would be represented by this.

**** COUNCIL MEMBER BURNS MOTIONED TO AMEND ITEM 66-20 TO INCLUDE THE CENTER FOR FAMILY JUSTICE.**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER HERRON SECONDED THE MOTION.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Council Member Pereria asked where the money to fund these organizations was coming from and that she didn't understand a thing about it.

Mr. Mobilio said that the program was administered by the Department of Revenue Services. They give non-profits the opportunity to seek funds. Further discussion followed.

**** COUNCIL MEMBER HERRON MOTIONED TO APPROVE ITEM 66-20 AS AMENDED.**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER MARY LEE SECONDED THE MOTION.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

ADJOURNMENT

**** COUNCIL MEMBER HERRON MOTIONED TO ADJOURN.**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER MARY LEE SECONDED THE MOTION.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

The meeting was adjourned at 7:07 P.M.

Respectfully Submitted

Ian A. Soltes

Telesco Secretarial Services