

**CITY COUNCIL MEETING**

**PUBLIC SPEAKING FORUM**

**MONDAY, JANUARY 3, 2022**

This meeting was conducted by Teleconference.

**CALL TO ORDER**

Council President Nieves called the Public Speaking session of the City Council to order at 6:32 p.m.

**ROLL CALL**

The City Clerk Lydia Martinez called the roll.

130th District: Scott Burns, Matthew McCarthy  
131st District: Jorge Cruz, Tyler Mack  
132nd District: Marcus Brown, *Rolanda Smith*  
133rd District: Aikeem Boyd, Jeanette Herron  
134th District: Michelle Lyons, AmyMarie Vizzo-Paniccia  
135th District: Mary McBride-Lee, Rosalina Roman-Christy  
136th District: *Avelino Silva, Alfredo Castillo*  
137th District: Aidee Nieves, Maria Valle  
138th District: Maria Pereira, Michele Small  
139th District: Wanda Simmons, *Ernest Newton*

The names in italics did not appear to respond during the roll call. Council President Nieves said that Council Member Silva had a schedule conflict.

Council President Nieves reviewed the rules for Public Speaking.

**THE FOLLOWING NAMED PERSON HAS REQUESTED PERMISSION TO ADDRESS THE CITY COUNCIL ON MONDAY, JANUARY 3, 2022 AT 6:30 P.M. THIS MEETING WILL BE CONDUCTED BY ZOOM/TELECONFERENCE.**

**NAME**

**SUBJECT**

**John Marshall Lee**  
30 Beacon Street  
Bridgeport, CT 06605

Bridgeport Financial Values.

Mr. Lee greeted the Council and read the following statement into the record:

City of Bridgeport  
City Council Meeting  
Regular Meeting  
January 3, 2022

Tonight, you are gathered to consider financial proposals that relate to reducing the taxes in years to come to benefit residents on the property acknowledged as the “crown jewels” of Bridgeport, today. Specifically, it is land that has been sectioned off as a district within the City with its own financial powers including a decision to build only luxury housing on the valuable land. It is merely a form of “redlining” to separate where poor people and average people live and pay taxes and where the wealthy can live.

Building of residential units today shows much the same expense to investors until, design, finish, extra features like granite countertops and special kitchen equipment. Residential units in the City are aging rapidly and extraordinarily little oversight or City administrative attention is spent on monitoring and assuring safe and reliable structures for your constituents. Seeing how storm water finds its way into properties, both private and those of Park City Community HUD sponsored, leads to lifetime chronic asthma conditions is ignored or deferred. And free fire alarms, a worthy project of itself, does not indicate that the City administration is attentive to maintaining rental properties in sustainable condition. Observe the continuing lack of personal security and elevator safety at the Stratfield Apartments on Main Street raised in the past month.

Recent results of bonding activity show how the activities of recent years has improved the BLD site immeasurably as it is ready for a final phase of luxury units where a difference of \$100 per month in rental rates will not make a marketing difference of note. So why is the City Council presented with resolutions to abate taxes in amount and over time for a deal that does not need the money to become complete? What if you were able to table this proposal tonight and find an alternative solution that made money available to all neighborhoods for their sustainable quality housing issues with significant data, record keeping and public notice. New residents to the City can know that they are making a fair contribution to the City residents around them. What is the fairest and best deal for taxpayers, residential housing stock, and Bridgeport Landing Development? Isn't that what you are seeking in order to defend your positions in the future when you meet folks who faced eminent domain threat many years ago as well as constituents who have had to accept higher taxes on their property because of poor negotiations and decisions by City leaders, legal counsel, and relatively underinformed Council members in the past? Time will tell.

*Council Member Newton joined the meeting at 6:40 p.m.*

**Johnny Ray Moore**  
574-576 Union Avenue  
Bridgeport, CT 06607

Bridgeport WPCA, Collection practices  
against property owners here in the City of  
Bridgeport.

Mr. Moore greeted the Council and said that he had paid taxes in Bridgeport since 1996 and stated that he had received a WPCA letter regarding an outstanding balance involving a previous foreclosure that had been paid in full with documentation. He reviewed the timeline of the payments and had copies of the submitted payments. However, the WPCA had refused to

provide him with documentation regarding the amount they claim he owes. This issue will be released on social media also.

**Jennifer Jones**  
Showpiece Shows  
1188 Main Street, #525N  
Bridgeport, CT 06604

Support of the Steelpointe Development.

Ms. Jones said that she was present in support of Steelpointe and said that her family had struggles since coming to this country. She is an entrepreneur and works with boat shows. The Christoph's had given her the opportunity to showcase the boat show and this allowed her to bring money to the Bridgeport businesses, like the Holiday Inn, Black Horse Garage, the thrift stores and a variety of other local merchants. The Bridgeport students will have the opportunity to learn about how to run a business, how to stage an event and other professional skills. She is here to help the students learn as her business gives back to Bridgeport.

**Mike Fonseca**  
Showpiece Shows  
1188 Main Street, #525N  
Bridgeport, CT 06604

Support of the Steelpointe Development.

Mr. Fonseca said that he has been able to work with Mr. Christoph during the last three years and will continue to tell the world about the amazing things that are happening in Bridgeport. His friend, Ms. Washington, said that the project is attracting notice and bringing people to Bridgeport. He also said that there were others who had spoken about the positive aspects that the Steelpointe Development will bring to the area.

**Willie C. McBride, Jr.**  
WC McBride Electrical Contractors  
1027 Fairfield Avenue  
Bridgeport, CT 06605

Housing at Steel Point.

Mr. McBride greeted the Council members and said that he was the president of the McBride Electrical Contractors. He added that he was a former Civil Service Commissioner and stated that he was in favor of this project. It will provide local and minority jobs, businesses and opportunities. He said that his company had been awarded multiple contracts connected to the Steelpointe project. That was a game changer for his business. He is in the process of constructing a new building for his business.

Everyone is in this together and are trying to make Bridgeport a better place. The Christoph's have invested about \$100 million in the project already. He repeated that he was in favor of this project.

**Eneida Martinez**  
819 Connecticut Avenue  
Bridgeport, CT 06607

Slander/Libel/Defamation/Complaint  
SEEC.

Ms. Martinez said that she was speaking about the legal definition of slander and an SEEC (State Elections Enforcement Commission) complaint involving an elected official that is currently a Council Member. These remarks are directed to Council Member Pereira who posted statements on Facebook regarding a lawsuit involving Ms. Martinez, Generation NOW, NOW Votes and Tony Barr.

Ms. Martinez said that an elected official should know the definition of slander which is in the context of defamation, action, libel and slander as well as invasion of privacy. A public figure cannot succeed in a lawsuit on incorrect, partial statements in the United States. Defamation is to cause damage to a person, reputation, shame, hurt feelings, embarrassment and more. Therefore, Council Member Pereira needs to understand that as a public figure that was elected by her constituents as she always states, she cannot sue anyone because she has taken the oath for a public figure.

Ms. Martinez also said that Council Member Pereira needs to understand that every and any time she writes anything on social media, it can be considered a slanderous offense. Defamation is treated as a criminal offense instead of a civil wrong doing. As an individual that does not serve in any public office capacity, she is to be held liable and accountable for all of her actions.

Ms. Martinez addressed the Council about Case Number 2021-199, which on December 1, 2021, the SEEC voted to authorize an investigation into a complaint filed by Mr. Tony Barr, a constituent and taxpayer of the City of Bridgeport against Council Member Pereira for stolen absentee ballots and for wearing gloves to cover non-evidence of picking up absentee ballots and filling out absentee ballots. Council Member Pereira was recorded on video bullying, intimidating and yelling at the most vulnerable voters here in the City of Bridgeport, which are the seniors. Council Member Pereira is under investigation for illegal handling of ballots.

Ms. Martinez stated she was informing the Council who are elected officials, that the Council Members need to hold one another accountable. Ms. Martinez stated that when she was an elected official, she was on News 12 and the Connecticut Post. When there were press conferences held against Ms. Martinez, a number of elected officials stood up for her. She said that she was not seeing any other Council Members standing up for Council Member Pereira. It is time to put this fear away and fight for the City of Bridgeport. The Council Members took an oath and promised to serve the constituents of Bridgeport. However, their colleague is not serving the constituents of Bridgeport. This week-end, Council Member Pereira was on News 12 chastising developers for bringing a project to the City of Bridgeport.

Council Member Pereira interrupted Ms. Martinez to state that Ms. Martinez had spoken over three minutes.

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Ms. Martinez told Council Member Pereira that the City needs development and she is not serving the City of Bridgeport as to the needs and the standards as an elected official.

**Maria Pereira**  
206 Bradley Street  
Bridgeport, CT 06610

Egregious conduct of the City Clerk's  
Office & Violations of the FOIA, City  
Charter, City Council Rules & Robert's  
Rules of Order.

Council Member Pereira said that she would like to thank former Council Member Martinez for recognizing that Council Member Pereira was currently on the City Council, unlike Ms. Martinez. She then corrected Ms. Martinez's pronunciation of the word "Libel".

Council Member Pereira said that there had been repeated statements made that the Council would start meeting in person first in October and then changed it to January. However, this has not happened. Teachers, social workers and students are going into school buildings completely unvaccinated. This is a disservice to the constituents with almost two years of no in person meetings.

Regarding the City Clerk's violations, Council Member Pereira said she did not think it was an accident that the massive \$12 million dollar tax break was being pushed through the holiday season. The City Clerk noticed a joint Committee meeting of Economic and Community Development on December 9th for Wednesday, December 29th and then on the 21st noticed the exact same agenda except for changing the day and date for the 28th. You cannot have multiple agendas for the exact same committee for the exact same item going forward. This means the Clerk could put up the exact same agenda for the entire week. The point of an agenda is so the public knows when a meeting is being held, where it is being held, what time and what is being discussed. Putting up duplicate agendas creates confusion and a lack of clarity for the public.

Council Member Pereira said that they would be requesting a ruling from the Freedom of Information Commission on this particular issue, which she thought was not accidental but done purposefully.

Council Member Pereira said that those Council Members who had met with the Christoph's have violated Chapter 2.39 of the Code of Ethics because they have to register as lobbyists and they have not been. Any Council Member who met with them and discussed the development in private is a violation of the ordinance.

Council Member Pereira said that there was a 77-page document that was produced by Mr. Bill Coleman at the December 28th meeting with no notice to the public as required. It was not posted on the website. She asked how anyone was supposed to read a 77-page document from a screen during the meeting. This was all intentional and purposeful and meant to obfuscate what is being done, to trick people, to mis-inform people and this is a real disservice to the public. The public needs to know when they are discussing issues, what is being discussed, what date, what

time, how to get on without all the obfuscation during the holiday season. She repeated her belief that this was all done purposefully when people are occupied during the holidays.

When there are discussions about individuals breaking the Council Rules or the City Charter, there are many Council Members who do break the rules, but not Council Member Pereira. She believes in respecting the Freedom of Information Act, the Charter, the Council Rules and Roberts Rules of Order even with those she disagrees with, she said.

**Deborah Thomas Sims**  
East End NRZ  
302 Union Avenue  
Bridgeport, CT 06607

Speaking in Support of Steelepointe  
Development.

Ms. Sims greeted the Council Members and said that she was speaking in support of the Steelpointe Development. She said that during the last 17 years, Steelpointe has been a topic of discussion for the East End NRZ. People have the opportunity to move where they wish to. For the last 17 years, the community has been looking at that land and nothing was being done. Now the project is moving forward. People keep saying that they can't move into the project, but they can move where they wish to.

**Keith Williams, Sr.**  
East End NRZ  
92 Watermen Street  
Bridgeport, CT 06607

Speaking in Support of Steelepointe  
Development.

Council President Nieves called for Mr. Williams to speak. There was no response. She repeated her call.

Council Member Newton said that Mr. Williams had spoken at the Public Hearing and they had that testimony.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

Council President Nieves closed the Public Speaking portion of the Council Meeting at 7:06 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Telesco Secretarial Services

**CITY OF BRIDGEPORT**  
**CITY COUNCIL MEETING**  
**MONDAY, JANUARY 3, 2022**

**7:00 P.M.**

This meeting was conducted by teleconference.

The public was able to listen to this meeting by calling a conference line.

**CALL TO ORDER**

Mayor Ganim called the Regular Meeting of the City Council to order at 7:06 p.m.

**PRAYER**

Mayor Ganim asked Council Member McBride-Lee to lead the Council in prayer.

Council Member McBride-Lee said that she had lost a niece on New Year's Day. She also mentioned the Coble family in the recent passing of Tom Coble.

**PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

Mayor Ganim asked Council Member Newton to lead those present in reciting the Pledge of Allegiance.

**ROLL CALL**

The Assistant City Clerk Frances Ortiz called the roll.

130<sup>th</sup> District: Scott Burns, Matthew McCarthy  
131<sup>st</sup> District: Jorge Cruz, Tyler Mack  
132<sup>nd</sup> District: Marcus Brown, Rolanda Smith  
133<sup>rd</sup> District: Aikeem Boyd, Jeanette Herron  
134<sup>th</sup> District: Michelle Lyons, AmyMarie Vizzo-Paniccia  
135<sup>th</sup> District: Mary McBride-Lee, Rosalina Roman-Christy  
136<sup>th</sup> District: *Avelino Silva*, Alfredo Castillo  
137<sup>th</sup> District: Aidee Nieves, Maria Valle  
138<sup>th</sup> District: Maria Pereira, Michele Small  
139<sup>th</sup> District: Wanda Simmons, Ernest Newton

Council President Nieves said that Council Member Silva had a schedule conflict and was excused.

**MINUTES FOR APPROVAL:**

• **October 18, 2021**

**\*\* COUNCIL MEMBER HERRON MOVED THE MINUTES OF OCTOBER 18, 2021.**

**\*\* COUNCIL MEMBER LYONS SECONDED.**

**\*\* THE MOTION TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF OCTOBER 18, 2021 AS SUBMITTED PASSED WITH THIRTEEN (13) IN FAVOR (BURNS, MCCARTHY, CRUZ, BROWN, HERRON, LYONS, MCBRIDE-LEE, ROMAN-CHRISTY, CASTILLO, VALLE, NIEVES, PEREIRA AND NEWTON) AND SIX (6) ABSTENTIONS (VIZZO-PANICCA, SMALL, SIMMONS, BOYD, MACK AND SMITH).**

**COMMUNICATIONS TO BE REFERRED TO COMMITTEES:**

**15-21 Communication from City Attorney re: Proposed Settlement of Pending Litigation with Dennis Martinez, referred to Miscellaneous Matters Committee.**

**16-21 Communication from Central Grants re: Grant Submission: United Way of Fairfield County Impact Philanthropy Fund – COVID Relief for Residents in Need (#22480), referred to Economic and Community Development and Environment Committee.**

**17-21 Communication from OPM re: Proposed Approval of Additional Capital Project Authorization to the 2022-2026 Capital Plan and Approval of General Obligation Bonds, referred to Budget and Appropriations Committee.**

**\*\* COUNCIL MEMBER NEWTON MOVED THE FOLLOWING COMMUNICATIONS TO BE REFERRED TO COMMITTEES:**

**15-21 COMMUNICATION FROM CITY ATTORNEY RE: PROPOSED SETTLEMENT OF PENDING LITIGATION WITH DENNIS MARTINEZ, REFERRED TO MISCELLANEOUS MATTERS COMMITTEE.**

**16-21 COMMUNICATION FROM CENTRAL GRANTS RE: GRANT SUBMISSION: UNITED WAY OF FAIRFIELD COUNTY IMPACT PHILANTHROPY FUND – COVID RELIEF FOR RESIDENTS IN NEED (#22480), REFERRED TO ECONOMIC AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE.**

**17-21 COMMUNICATION FROM OPM RE: PROPOSED APPROVAL OF ADDITIONAL CAPITAL PROJECT AUTHORIZATION TO THE 2022-2026 CAPITAL PLAN AND APPROVAL OF GENERAL OBLIGATION BONDS, REFERRED TO BUDGET AND APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE.**



**\*\* COUNCIL MEMBER LYONS SECONDED.**

**\*\* THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**MATTERS TO BE ACTED UPON (CONSENT CALENDAR):**

**\*07-21 Economic and Community Development and Environment Committee Report re: Grant Submission: National Fitness Campaign – Healthy City Grant Program (#22328).**

**\*08-21 Economic and Community Development and Environment Committee Report re: Grant Submission: United States Conference of Mayors – 2022 Childhood Obesity Prevention/Environmental Health and Sustainability Awards (#22305).**

**\*09-21 Economic and Community Development and Environment Committee Report re: Grant Submission: Southwestern CT Agency on Aging (SWCAA) – Title III Funding Older Americans Act Grant Program – American Rescue Plan Act Funding – Bridgeport Seniors Center Recreational Activities Expansion (#22419).**

**\*10-21 Joint Committee on Economic and Community Development and Environment and Contracts Report re: Resolution making certain findings required by the City and Town Development Act (As Precursor to Consideration of a Tax Incentive Development Agreement) for Steelpointe – New Residential Development along East Main Street South of Stratford Avenue.**

Mayor Ganim asked if any Council Member wished to remove an item from the Consent Calendar. Council Member Pereira requested that Agenda Items 07-21, 08-21 and 10-21 be removed from the Consent Calendar.

**\*\* COUNCIL MEMBER BURNS MOVED THE FOLLOWING TWO ITEMS:**

**07-21 ECONOMIC AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE REPORT RE: GRANT SUBMISSION: NATIONAL FITNESS CAMPAIGN – HEALTHY CITY GRANT PROGRAM (#22328).**

**08-21 ECONOMIC AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE REPORT RE: GRANT SUBMISSION: UNITED STATES CONFERENCE OF MAYORS – 2022 CHILDHOOD OBESITY PREVENTION/ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH AND SUSTAINABILITY AWARDS (#22305).**

**\*\* COUNCIL MEMBER CRUZ SECONDED.**

Council Member Pereira said that she was voting against the items because the Board of Park Commissioners did not vote on the installation of the equipment at Seaside and Beardsley Park.

They have sole authority regarding anything done in the parks. It is not appropriate to apply for grants funding for the parks without their approval.

Council Member Burns said that it was a Public Health matter and they had informed the Parks Commissioners.

Council Member Newton said that Ms. DeJesus had submitted a letter to the Economic and Community Development and Environment Committee from the Parks Commission approving the placement of the items in the parks. He wished the record to reflect this.

**\*\* THE MOTION TO APPROVE THE FOLLOWING TWO ITEMS:**

**07-21 ECONOMIC AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE REPORT RE: GRANT SUBMISSION: NATIONAL FITNESS CAMPAIGN – HEALTHY CITY GRANT PROGRAM (#22328).**

**08-21 ECONOMIC AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE REPORT RE: GRANT SUBMISSION: UNITED STATES CONFERENCE OF MAYORS – 2022 CHILDHOOD OBESITY PREVENTION/ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH AND SUSTAINABILITY AWARDS (#22305).**

**PASSED WITH SEVENTEEN (17) IN FAVOR (BURNS, MCCARTHY, CRUZ, MACK, BROWN, HERRON, SMITH, LYONS, VIZZO-PANICCIA, MCBRIDE-LEE, ROMAN-CHRISTY, BOYD, CASTILLO, VALLE, NIEVES, SIMMONS AND NEWTON) AND TWO (2) OPPOSED (SMALL AND PEREIRA).**

**09-21 Economic and Community Development and Environment Committee Report re: Grant Submission: Southwestern CT Agency on Aging (SWCAA) – Title III Funding Older Americans Act Grant Program – American Rescue Plan Act Funding – Bridgeport Seniors Center Recreational Activities Expansion (#22419).**

**\*\* COUNCIL MEMBER BURNS MOVED AGENDA ITEM 09-21 ECONOMIC AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE REPORT RE: GRANT SUBMISSION: SOUTHWESTERN CT AGENCY ON AGING (SWCAA) – TITLE III FUNDING OLDER AMERICANS ACT GRANT PROGRAM – AMERICAN RESCUE PLAN ACT FUNDING – BRIDGEPORT SENIORS CENTER RECREATIONAL ACTIVITIES EXPANSION (#22419).**

**\*\* COUNCIL MEMBER ROMAN-CHRISTY SECONDED.**

**\*\* THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**10-21 Joint Committee on Economic and Community Development and Environment and Contracts Report re: Resolution making certain findings required by the City and Town**

**Development Act (As Precursor to Consideration of a Tax Incentive Development Agreement) for Steelpointe – New Residential Development along East Main Street South of Stratford Avenue.**

**\*\* COUNCIL MEMBER HERRON MOVED AGENDA ITEM 10-21 JOINT COMMITTEE ON ECONOMIC AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AND ENVIRONMENT AND CONTRACTS REPORT RE: RESOLUTION MAKING CERTAIN FINDINGS REQUIRED BY THE CITY AND TOWN DEVELOPMENT ACT (AS PRECURSOR TO CONSIDERATION OF A TAX INCENTIVE DEVELOPMENT AGREEMENT) FOR STEELPOINTE – NEW RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT ALONG EAST MAIN STREET SOUTH OF STRATFORD AVENUE.**

**\*\* COUNCIL MEMBER VIZZO-PANICCIA SECONDED.**

Council Member Pereira read the following statement into the record:

I would like to make an amendment requiring a roll call vote that should the Resolution Making Certain Findings Required by the City and Town Development Act be approved by the City Council tonight; that per Section 7-485 (b) of the CT General Statute the resolution adopted by the legislative body be submitted to the electors of Bridgeport for their approval within 60 days which would require the resolution be published in the CT Post within 14 days of today with the date of the referendum specified. I'm sure we thought the voters of Bridgeport were brilliant when they elected all of us. Certainly, they are smart enough to decide on whether voting in favor of this resolution is in their best interest. I can guarantee it would be overwhelmingly defeated in the 138<sup>th</sup> District.

Let's allow democracy to flourish and allow our constituents to vote on this resolution which provides the required mechanism necessary to provide the developer with over \$12,000,000 in tax breaks for 400 luxury apartments while the developer collects approximately \$11-\$12 million dollars in annual rent.

**\*\* COUNCIL MEMBER PEREIRA MOVED TO AMEND AGENDA ITEM 10-21 JOINT COMMITTEE ON ECONOMIC AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AND ENVIRONMENT AND CONTRACTS REPORT RE: RESOLUTION MAKING CERTAIN FINDINGS REQUIRED BY THE CITY AND TOWN DEVELOPMENT ACT (AS PRECURSOR TO CONSIDERATION OF A TAX INCENTIVE DEVELOPMENT AGREEMENT) FOR STEELPOINTE – NEW RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT ALONG EAST MAIN STREET SOUTH OF STRATFORD AVENUE AS FOLLOWS:**

**RESOLUTION MAKING CERTAIN FINDINGS REQUIRED BY THE CITY AND TOWN DEVELOPMENT ACT BE APPROVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL TONIGHT; THAT PER SECTION 7-485 (B) OF THE CT GENERAL STATUTE THE RESOLUTION ADOPTED BY THE LEGISLATIVE BODY BE SUBMITTED TO THE ELECTORS OF BRIDGEPORT FOR THEIR APPROVAL WITHIN 60 DAYS WHICH WOULD REQUIRE THE**

**RESOLUTION BE PUBLISHED IN THE CT POST WITHIN 14 DAYS OF TODAY WITH THE DATE OF THE REFERENDUM SPECIFIED.**

**\*\* COUNCIL MEMBER SMALL SECONDED.**

Council Member Newton said that he was opposed to this amendment because this was a stalling tactic. This agreement is the same as the one in Black Rock. He requested his colleagues to vote against this amendment.

Council Member Herron requested her colleagues to vote against this amendment. She asked if there was a recent change in the rule to let Council Members shout out rather than raising their hands to speak.

**\*\* THE MOTION TO AMEND AGENDA ITEM 10-21 JOINT COMMITTEE ON ECONOMIC AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AND ENVIRONMENT AND CONTRACTS REPORT RE: RESOLUTION MAKING CERTAIN FINDINGS REQUIRED BY THE CITY AND TOWN DEVELOPMENT ACT (AS PRECURSOR TO CONSIDERATION OF A TAX INCENTIVE DEVELOPMENT AGREEMENT) FOR STEELPOINTE – NEW RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT ALONG EAST MAIN STREET SOUTH OF STRATFORD AVENUE AS FOLLOWS:**

**RESOLUTION MAKING CERTAIN FINDINGS REQUIRED BY THE CITY AND TOWN DEVELOPMENT ACT BE APPROVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL TONIGHT; THAT PER SECTION 7-485 (B) OF THE CT GENERAL STATUTE THE RESOLUTION ADOPTED BY THE LEGISLATIVE BODY BE SUBMITTED TO THE ELECTORS OF BRIDGEPORT FOR THEIR APPROVAL WITHIN 60 DAYS WHICH WOULD REQUIRE THE RESOLUTION BE PUBLISHED IN THE CT POST WITHIN 14 DAYS OF TODAY WITH THE DATE OF THE REFERENDUM SPECIFIED.**

**FAILED TO PASS WITH TWO (2) IN FAVOR (PEREIRA AND SMALL) AND SEVENTEEN (17) AGAINST (BURNS, MCCARTHY, CRUZ, MACK, BROWN, HERRON, SMITH, LYONS, VIZZO-PANICCIA, MCBRIDE-LEE, ROMAN-CHRISTY, BOYD, CASTILLO, VALLE, NIEVES, SIMMONS AND NEWTON).**

**\*\* THE MOTION TO APPROVE AGENDA ITEM 10-21 JOINT COMMITTEE ON ECONOMIC AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AND ENVIRONMENT AND CONTRACTS REPORT RE: RESOLUTION MAKING CERTAIN FINDINGS REQUIRED BY THE CITY AND TOWN DEVELOPMENT ACT (AS PRECURSOR TO CONSIDERATION OF A TAX INCENTIVE DEVELOPMENT AGREEMENT) FOR STEELPOINTE – NEW RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT ALONG EAST MAIN STREET SOUTH OF STRATFORD AVENUE PASSED WITH SEVENTEEN (17) IN FAVOR (BURNS, MCCARTHY, CRUZ, MACK, BROWN, HERRON, SMITH, LYONS, VIZZO-PANICCIA, MCBRIDE-LEE, ROMAN-CHRISTY, BOYD, CASTILLO, VALLE,**

**NIEVES, SIMMONS AND NEWTON) AND TWO (2) OPPOSED (SMALL AND PEREIRA).**

**MATTERS TO BE ACTED UPON:**

**03-21 Miscellaneous Matters Committee Report re: Refund of Excess Payments – 2012 ESA Project Company, LLC regarding 522 Fairfield Avenue.**

**04-21 Miscellaneous Matters Committee Report re: Refund of Excess Payments – DRS Naval Power Systems, Inc. regarding 196 Island Brook Avenue.**

**05-21 Miscellaneous Matters Committee Report re: Refund of Excess Payments – DRS Naval Power Systems, Inc. regarding 141 North Avenue.**

**\*\* COUNCIL MEMBER VIZZO-PANICCIA MOVED THE FOLLOWING AGENDA ITEMS:**

**03-21 MISCELLANEOUS MATTERS COMMITTEE REPORT RE: REFUND OF EXCESS PAYMENTS – 2012 ESA PROJECT COMPANY, LLC REGARDING 522 FAIRFIELD AVENUE.**

**04-21 MISCELLANEOUS MATTERS COMMITTEE REPORT RE: REFUND OF EXCESS PAYMENTS – DRS NAVAL POWER SYSTEMS, INC. REGARDING 196 ISLAND BROOK AVENUE.**

**05-21 MISCELLANEOUS MATTERS COMMITTEE REPORT RE: REFUND OF EXCESS PAYMENTS – DRS NAVAL POWER SYSTEMS, INC. REGARDING 141 NORTH AVENUE.**

**\*\* COUNCIL MEMBER NEWTON SECONDED.**

**\*\* THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**11-21 Joint Committee on Economic and Community Development and Environment and Contracts Report re: Resolution Authorizing a Tax Incentive Development Agreement for a New Residential Development at Steelpointe along East Main Street South of Stratford Avenue.**

**\*\* COUNCIL MEMBER HERRON MOVED AGENDA ITEM 11-21 JOINT COMMITTEE ON ECONOMIC AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AND ENVIRONMENT AND CONTRACTS REPORT RE: RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING A TAX INCENTIVE DEVELOPMENT AGREEMENT FOR A NEW RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT AT STEELPOINTE ALONG EAST MAIN STREET SOUTH OF STRATFORD AVENUE**

**\*\* COUNCIL MEMBER ROMAN-CHRISTY SECONDED.**

Council Member Pereira requested a roll call vote. She then made the following statement into the record without interruption. Mayor Ganim requested that she submit any lengthy statement in writing to the City Clerk.

Council Member Pereira said that there were many of her constituents on the call and they wished to know where she stood on the particular tax agreement. She then said that she had read the entire 200-page Development Acquisition Agreement given to the City Council on October 19, 2019. The 6.5 acres where these 400 luxury apartments will be built were part of a [inaudible] were acquired through eminent domain from United Illuminating in 2006 for \$14.9 million. At the time, the land which has not been used by UI for any meaningful purpose for years was estimated as valued at \$1.9 million [inaudible]. That would bring the assessed value per acre in 2006 to \$600,000. Yet, Mr. Coleman asserted that the same 6.5 acres today are worth \$550,000, which is 8% less than 2006. This is 15 years later after remediation, infrastructure improvements were made and real estate costs have sky rocketed. She said that she had a Congress Street Bridge for sale for anyone who believed that those 6.5 acres of land were worth less now than 15 years ago.

Page 40 of the LDA requires that the developer must pay the City \$100,000 for each acre per phase excluding easements and right of ways. Mr. Coleman stated that this project will bring in \$1.1 million in revenue through building permits along with the \$400,000 that the City is receiving. Council Member Pereira states that Atty. Pacacha and Mr. Flatto made it clear earlier that the \$11 million in tax revenue will not go to the City. Every dollar over \$400,000 goes back to the Steelpointe Taxing District to be distributed by the board, which is made up of the Christoph's and their designee. The City will not receive a single dollar for general purposes.

Page 31 of the LDA states the City is supposed to receive \$370,000 along with 20% of any taxes over the \$370,000. Then Mr. Coleman stated that there would be a 90/10 split with the 10% going to the City. 90% will go to the Special Taxing District. Mr. Flatto stated earlier in the day that the City would not be receiving anything more than the \$400,000. There is no additional tax revenue coming into the City coffers. This is based on mis-information and deceit with flagrant violations of this agreement, which was voted on by the Council, [inaudible] in a court of law [inaudible] The Council has been given a great deal of flagrant mis-information and it is incredibly deceitful. Asking the Council to vote on purposefully incorrect information is wrong.

Council Member Pereira said that she did not know how that would remain binding in a court of law in 2023 after the next election. If Bridgeport taxpayers paid \$14.9 million for these 14.1 acres, what did they pay for 60 acres associated with massive costs associated with eminent domain and litigation. All 60 acres are being handed over to the developer for \$100,000 per acre and there is no evidence those payments are even being made. The City will only receive \$400,000 in real estate taxes, the developer is guaranteed a tax revenue stream to offset his costs for a decade. The 400 luxury apartment tenants will be paying rent while utilizing our public parks, libraries, schools, emergency services and public works without the developer paying his fair share of taxes to support the very public services that his tenants will utilize.

In closing Council Member Pereira asked what the Bridgeport taxpayers received for 20 years of massive financial investment and 15 years of lost tax revenue after they utilized eminent domain to force black and brown property owners from their homes and businesses while the Steelpointe peninsula lay dormant and undeveloped. Only \$400,000 in annual taxes with anything over \$400,000 going back to Steelpointe Special District under the control of the developer.

This proposed tax development is egregiously inappropriate and insulting to Council Member Pereira's severely overburdened constituents. Therefore, Council Member Pereira said she will be voting no for gentrification, no on segregation of any kind including socio-economic, no on racist, discriminatory and exclusionary housing policies, no on white [inaudible] elitism, no on tax breaks for the wealthy, and no on tax breaks for luxury apartments.

Mayor Ganim asked Council Member Pereira to wrap her statement up.

Council Member Pereira stated that what Bridgeport needs is affordable housing for the residents, veterans, seniors and those with physical disabilities, not luxury apartments.

Council Member Burns stated that the Bond Counsel had clarified the allocation regarding the 90/10 split.

Atty. Stafstrom said that he would like to clarify the 90/10 split which was incorrect due to using an older set of agreements. The City is actually receiving an interlocal amount which is a first call. He explained that the sale occurred before the current Ganim administration. The other issue regarding the money from the bond issue will only be used for public improvements like the replacement of the bulkhead.

Council Member Newton said that he was on the Council when the original agreement was presented. He noted that when the parcels were taken by eminent domain, the residents were given market value for their property. Those individuals were able to purchase new property. It is wrong to say that black and brown people lost their homes with this development. Talking about gentrification is wrong because between 40% and 50% residents own homes. He reminded everyone that Council Member Pereira had voted against every affordable housing project since she had been on the Council.

**\*\* THE MOTION TO APPROVE AGENDA ITEM 11-21 JOINT COMMITTEE ON ECONOMIC AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AND ENVIRONMENT AND CONTRACTS REPORT RE: RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING A TAX INCENTIVE DEVELOPMENT AGREEMENT FOR A NEW RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT AT STEELPOINTE ALONG EAST MAIN STREET SOUTH OF STRATFORD AVENUE PASSED WITH FOURTEEN (14) IN FAVOR (BURNS, MCCARTHY, CRUZ, BROWN, HERRON, SMITH, LYONS, VIZZO-PANICCIA, MCBRIDE-LEE, ROMAN-CHRISTY, CASTILLO, VALLE, NIEVES, AND NEWTON) AND FIVE (5) OPPOSED (BOYD, MACK, SMALL, SIMMONS AND PEREIRA).**

**\*\* COUNCIL PRESIDENT NIEVES MOVED TO SUSPEND THE RULES TO ADD AN AGENDA ITEM WITH THE PURPOSE OF VOTING ON UPDATED COMMITTEE ASSIGNMENTS.**

Mayor Ganim said that this would require a simple 2/3rd majority to suspend the rules to add an item to the agenda. Atty. Anastasi agreed.

**\*\* COUNCIL MEMBER HERRON SECONDED.**

Council Member Pereira said she wished to comment on the motion to add the item to the agenda. She stated that this has continuously happened where the items are added to the agenda by a 2/3rd vote and no notice to the public, or Council Members who are not in the inner circle, and they do not have the item in writing. She said that she had requested the information in writing but they read off the seven members of seven committee rapid fire instead. This has happened over and over again. It is a disservice to the public and other Council Members.

Mayor Ganim said that this process has been used by the Council for years when the City Council President presents their Committee assignments.

Council Member Newton requested the vote be taken and welcomed Council Member Smith.

**\*\* THE MOTION TO SUSPEND THE RULES TO ADD AN AGENDA ITEM WITH THE PURPOSE OF VOTING ON UPDATED COMMITTEE ASSIGNMENTS PASSED WITH EIGHTEEN (18) IN FAVOR (BURNS, MCCARTHY, CRUZ, MACK, BROWN, HERRON, SMITH, LYONS, VIZZO-PANICCIA, MCBRIDE-LEE, ROMAN-CHRISTY, BOYD, CASTILLO, VALLE, NIEVES, SMALL, SIMMONS AND NEWTON) AND ONE (1) OPPOSED (PEREIRA).**

**\*\* COUNCIL PRESIDENT NIEVES MOVED TO APPROVE THE FOLLOWING COUNCIL COMMITTEE ASSIGNMENT CHANGES IN ORDER TO ADD NEWLY APPOINTED COUNCIL MEMBER ROLANDA SMITH ARE AS FOLLOWS:**

**MISCELLANEOUS MATTERS: REMOVE MARCUS BROWN AND ADD ROLANDA SMITH.**

**ECONOMIC AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT: REMOVE MARCUS BROWN AND ADD ROLANDA SMITH.**

**POLICE COMMISSION – ADD COUNCIL MEMBER MARY MCBRIDE-LEE AS LIAISON.**

**\*\* COUNCIL MEMBER HERRON SECONDED.**



Council Member Pereira said that she appreciated that Council President Nieves clearly articulated which Council Member was being removed from the Committees. It was simple to understand.

**\*\* THE MOTION TO APPROVE THE COMMITTEE ASSIGNMENT CHANGES AS LISTED PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Council President Nieves welcomed Ms. Smith to the Council and congratulated her.

Council Member Newton also welcomed Ms. Smith.

Council Member Vizzo-Paniccia said that she had spoken with the Representative from CCM and Ms. Smith will be receiving information and materials from him about various issues.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

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

**\*\* COUNCIL MEMBER VIZZO-PANICCIA SECONDED.**

**\*\* THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

The meeting adjourned at 7:53 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Telesco Secretarial Services