

**CITY OF BRIDGEPORT  
ECONOMIC AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT  
AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE  
REGULAR MEETING  
JUNE 20, 2024**

**ATTENDANCE:** Mary McBride-Lee, Co-chair; Michelle Lyons, Scott Burns, Eneida Martinez

**OTHERS:** Council Member(s): Richard Ortiz, Maria Pereira (6:19) & Aidee Nieves (6:20), Council President; Tom Gill, OPED; Jonathan Delgado, OPED; Cathy Fletcher, OPED; Joseph Katz, Central Grants; Gina Malheiro, Port Authority; Chadwick Schroeder, Sustainability; Mardi Morrow, Bee city; Ron Rapice, Bee city.

**CALL TO ORDER**

Co-chair Herron called the meeting to order at 6:18 p.m. There was a quorum present at the time of roll call.

**APPROVAL OF COMMITTEE MINUTES**

• **May 16, 2024 (REGULAR MEETING)**

**\*\*COUNCIL MEMBER MARTINEZ MOTIONED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF MAY 16, 2024 (REGULAR MEETING).**

**\*\*COUNCIL MEMBER LYONS SECONDED THE MOTION.**

**\*\*THE MOTION PASSED WITH FOUR (4) IN FAVOR (MCBRIDE-LEE, MARTINEZ, LYONS, AND BURNS).**

**\*\*COUNCIL MEMBER MARIA H. PERIERA JOINED THE MEETING AT 6:19 PM\*\***

**88-23** Grant Submission: re State of Connecticut Department of Transportation 2011 Ferry Boat Discretionary Program – Water Street Dock Project (Project #0C732).

Mr. Katz shared that they have applied for this grant of \$1.87 million with a 20% match needed which would cover the repairs from the water street project. The funds would be allocated from two capital funding accounts.

Mr. Gill added the grant was revised in 2022 because the ferry company had two berths and Bridgeport Boat Works also had another close by, so they decided to focus on the apron of the ferry, where the cars drive off of. DOT has amended the plans for the grant, and in March of

2024 the federal government approved the amended plans to utilize the fund for the repair of the dock.

**\*\*COUNCIL PRESIDENT NIEVES ENTERED AT 6:23 PM\*\***

Council member McBride-Lee asked if the money had already been approved.

Mr. Gill replied yes.

Council member Burns asked if the ferry company is planning to use the new space they have acquired, what would be the use of the old location.

Mr. Gill replied they would still utilize the space and plan on having four boats in operation.

Co-chair McBride-Lee asked to clarify if the dock in use would need to be repaired.

Mr. Gill replied yes, the loading apron, where the cars drive over needs to be repaired along with the foundation to it. They had a marine company review the area underwater, in which they reported it back to the federal government along with the amendment.

Council Member Pereira asked if the ramp alone cost over two million dollars.

Mr. Gill replied yes, that was the estimate done by professionals.

Council Member Pereira asked if it was made out of metal.

Mr. Gill said the substructure is made of wood and the ramp is metal.

Council President Nieves said the report should have been added to the presentations and asked when the review for repairs was completed.

Mr. Gill replied in April 2022.

Council President Nieves followed up by asking when did they bond for this.

Mr. Katz replied that account 9C732-44411 issued the bond in July 2018 for \$250,000 dollars and account 0C732-44416 issued the bond in June 2020 for \$225,000 dollars.

Council Member Burns asked what would be the process going ahead.

Mr. Gill replied they need to follow the DOT guidelines, now that the accounts have been approved, they need to set up meetings with various departments when it would be bid out.

Council Member Burns asked if there was a timeline or end date to the project.

Mr. Gill replied he isn't quite sure but quicker than 2 years.

Council President Nieves asked if the money was going to be used in any way for the high speed ferry.

Mr. Gill said no this is just for the repairs.

**\*\*COUNCIL MEMBER LYONS MOTIONED TO APPROVE ITEM 88-23**

**\*\*COUNCIL MEMBER MARTINEZ SECONDED THE MOTION.**

**\*\*THE MOTION PASSED WITH FIVE (5) IN FAVOR (MCBRIDE-LEE, MARTINEZ, LYONS, BURNS, NIEVES).**

**93-23** Grant Submission: re CT Department of Economic and Community Development – Community Investment Fund 2030 Grant Program Round 5.

**\*\*COUNCIL MEMBER BURNS MOTIONED TO EXHIBIT CIF MAP ILLUSTRATIONS AS 06-20-2024-A.**

**\*\*COUNCIL MEMBER LYONS SECONDED THE MOTION.**

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

Mr. Katz replied this is round 5 out of 10 for the CIF grant program, they are applying for a planning grant. They recently applied through the reconnecting communicating and neighborhood grant program which was not approved but received great feedback for the project. They have applied for the maximum amount of \$250,000 dollars to study if they can deck over sections of route 8. No city match would be required and there is \$5,000 available from a grant that can be used as it aligns with the project submission.

Council Member Burns said he loves the idea of pulling the neighborhoods together. He would like to know if DOT is interested in the idea.

Mr. Delgado said DOT is aware of the project and metroCOG as well.

Council Member Pereira asked what Districts would this project be a part of and if the representative knew about it.

Mr. Delgado replied it is on the border of 131st and 136th district. He knows that Jorge Cruz and Denise Taylor-Moye were notified last time.

Council Member Pereira asked what they would be building over route 8.

Mr. Delgado responded they would create a tunnel, decking over route 8 to connect the hollow and downtown area.

Ms. Fletcher added they would be creating more land, the feasibility study would help them understand what are the weight limits between bridges.

Council Member Burns added they do need a new police station and they could possibly reuse the area as it would still be close to route 8.

Co-chair McBride-Lee approves the idea of connecting the whole city together again.

**\*\*COUNCIL MEMBER MARTINEZ MOTIONED TO APPROVE ITEM 93-23**

**\*\*COUNCIL MEMBER BURNS SECONDED THE MOTION.**

**\*\*THE MOTION PASSED WITH FIVE (5) IN FAVOR (MCBRIDE-LEE, MARTINEZ, LYONS, BURNS, NIEVES).**

**94-23** Grant Submission: re United States Department of Transportation – Safe Streets and Roads for All (SS4A) Planning and Demonstration Grant (#25648).

Mr. Katz shared the grant would be to create the safe street design manual of roadways, action plan, and demonstration to study high traffic and accident prone areas. The grant reward is \$2.53 million dollars and requires a 20% match from the city, which would be \$634,600 dollars from the OPED capital funding accounts.

Ms. Fletcher explained with the grant they will be studying accident prone areas and accommodating pedestrians and cyclists for these streets.

They have studied the areas within Bridgeport that have a high injury network. The demonstrations will be set up in the high accident prone areas to study if the temporary fixes will reduce the rate of accidents.

Council Member Lyons added from the map there should be more areas included for the demonstration, such as the areas of veteran's park.

Ms. Fletcher added since the map is looking at the top 5 percent within citywide, it may not be ranked that high but they can consider the areas recommended.

**\*\*COUNCIL MEMBER BURNS MOTIONED TO EXHIBIT SS4A AS 06-20-2024-B.**

**\*\*COUNCIL MEMBER LYONS SECONDED THE MOTION.**

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

Council Member Burns asked where the data was collected from for the exhibit and how long it would take to collect the data from the demonstrations.

Ms. Fletcher replied UCONN compiled the data which was given to them from the Police Department to create the exhibit. The grant expires in 3 years so they would design the plan, reach out to the community, then the demonstration project should start soon after to inform the final version of the action plan.

Council Member Martinez shared she believes her district is inaccurately represented as they have many accidents at the corner of Bishop and Stratford Avenue and Mill Hill Avenues as well.

Ms. Fletcher responded the map gives them an idea of where to start, they can use other areas based on council members or community recommendations. They compiled dated from 2022 to five years back for the study and they can use new data to include in the study.

Council Member Herron asked how involved UCONN is as they are asking the city for over \$600,000 dollars.

Ms. Fletcher replied it is not students going through the data, it is a professional research team.

Mr. Katz added UCONN would not be getting any of the funds, they would set up a RFP to receive the money and will be working with a planning and engineering consultant team.

Ms. Fletcher added the bulk of the money would be going to the demonstration activities such as signage, flashing lights, and painting.

As the grant requires a 20% match, many of the demonstrations would be done anyway for the maintenance and improvements of the city streets. If streets get replaced they would need to be painted over which would allow them an 80% discount.

Council Member Burns asked if the UCONN database could work with the council and share information. The council could help them gather better data for the studies.

Cochair McBride-Lee added in her district you would think Reservoir Avenue would be red all over.

Council Member Pereira asked about East Main Street as it is a state highway, along with Boston Avenue as it is also an accident prone area.

Ms. Fletcher replied their grant submission allows them to work on local and state roads, they would just need to get confirmation from the state DOT as they have a pre-approved list of state roads for demonstrations.

**\*\*COUNCIL MEMBER MARTINEZ MOTIONED TO APPROVE ITEM 94-23**

**\*\*COUNCIL MEMBER BURNS SECONDED THE MOTION.**

**\*\*THE MOTION PASSED WITH FIVE (5) IN FAVOR (MCBRIDE-LEE, MARTINEZ, LYONS, BURNS, NIEVES)**

**97-23** Proposed Resolution to Certify Bridgeport as “BEE CITY USA”.

**\*\*COUNCIL MEMBER BURNS MOTIONED TO EXHIBIT BEE CITY RESOLUTION AS 06-20-2024-C.**

**\*\*COUNCIL MEMBER LYONS SECONDED THE MOTION.**

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

Mr. Schroeder shared that they are looking to certify Bridgeport as a Bee city. The city would be supporting the pollinators' animals by creating a home for them to live and thrive off of. There is only one other town in Connecticut who is certified but Bridgeport would be the first city. The requirements would be hosting educational events and creating new gardens with native plants for the pollinators. This proposal would save the city money from replanting flowers every year with native plants that come back every spring and reducing money spent on pesticides. The resolution would require a committee and land trust for the certification.

Council Member Lyons added Veterans park and Discovery school should be included in this project and she thinks this is a great idea. She also recommends teachers from Discovery school who would like to be involved. She would like to sponsor the project alongside council members Burns and Martinez.

Council Member Burns acknowledged the Bee city representatives and landscaping company based in Easton already do a lot of work in the city of Bridgeport and own land in Bridgeport so the land trust is already established.

Co-chair McBride-Lee asked what exactly is Bee City.

Mr. Schroeder replied it is a program to preserve the pollinator community, and their goal is to educate and connect the community with beautifying the city.

Council Member Pereira added there is a huge waste of space on Mill Hill and Boston Avenue, it would be a great space to use.

Mr. Schroeder agreed.

Co-chair McBride-Lee asked if there was a vision for Bee City and the city.

Mr. Schroeder replied he has a big vision including native plants in all city plans and believes it is community based. He would like it to be the vision of constituents which allows them to want to take care of it.

**\*\*COUNCIL MEMBER MARTINEZ MOTIONED TO APPROVE ITEM 97-23**

**\*\*COUNCIL MEMBER LYONS SECONDED THE MOTION.**

**\*\*THE MOTION PASSED WITH FIVE (5) IN FAVOR (MCBRIDE-LEE, MARTINEZ, LYONS, BURNS, NIEVES)**

**ADJOURNMENT**

**\*\*COUNCIL MEMBER NEWTON MOTIONED TO ADJOURN**

**\*\*COUNCIL MEMBER ORTIZ SECOND THE MOTION.**

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

The meeting was adjourned at 6:52 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Vianca Rivera

Telesco Secretarial Service