

**CITY OF BRIDGEPORT
CONTRACTS COMMITTEE
REGULAR MEETING
OCTOBER 8, 2024**

ATTENDANCE: Matthew McCarthy, Co-chair; Jeanette Herron, Co-chair;
Ernest Newton, Jorge Cruz, Sr., Richard Ortiz, Dasha Spell, Maria
Pereira (6:08 pm)

OTHERS: Council Member(s): Aidee Nieves, Council President; Scott Burns,
Alfredo Castillo & Maria Valle; Max Perez, OPED; Deborah
Garskof, Associate City Attorney; Joseph Formato, Property
Manager; Tim O'Connor, Park City Compost Initiative Inc.

CALL TO ORDER

Co-chair Herron called the meeting to order at 6:05 p.m. There was a quorum present at the time of roll call.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

- Approval of Committee Minutes: June 18, 2024 (Rescheduled Meeting)

****COUNCIL MEMBER ORTIZ MOTIONED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF JUNE 18, 2024 (REGULAR MEETING).**

****COUNCIL MEMBER SPELL SECONDED THE MOTION.**

****THE MOTION PASSED WITH SIX (6) IN FAVOR (NEWTON, CRUZ, ORTIZ, AND SPELL) AND ONE (1) ABSTENTION (MCCARTHY).**

- Approval of Committee Minutes: July 9, 2024 (Regular Meeting)

****COUNCIL MEMBER ORTIZ MOTIONED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF JULY 9, 2024 (REGULAR MEETING).**

****COUNCIL MEMBER CRUZ SECONDED THE MOTION.**

****THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

- Approval of Committee Minutes: August 14, 2024 (Special Meeting)

****COUNCIL MEMBER ORTIZ MOTIONED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF AUGUST 14, 2024 (SPECIAL MEETING).**

****COUNCIL MEMBER SPELL SECONDED THE MOTION.**

****THE MOTION PASSED WITH SIX (6) IN FAVOR (NEWTON, CRUZ, ORTIZ, AND SPELL) AND ONE (1) ABSTENTION (MCCARTHY).**

89-23 Proposed Lease Agreement with Mozaic Senior Life (formerly known as the Jewish Home for the Elderly) for a portion of the Skane School Property located at 2977 Madison Avenue in order to provide additional parking for the Senior Care Facility.

Mr. Perez shared the property was appraised by two professionals and used the median number to determine the lease cost. It would be a 20 year lease contract with a 2% increase every year. Mosaic Senior Life would be spending approximately \$50,000 for landscaping and improvements if the land is acquired.

****COUNCIL MEMBER PEREIRA JOINED THE MEETING AT 6:08 PM****

Council member Newton asked what is the use.

Mr. Perez replied it would be used as parking for the employees.

Council member Pereira shared that employees do not park on the street side of Park Avenue and continued to ask if this would be preparation for a complete takeover of the current school space as Skane will be merging with John Winthrop.

Mr. Perez replied he has no idea.

Council member McCarthy added as a surveyor, the property won't be used as it is on a slope but the parking lot is balanced.

Atty. Garskof added someone can make a motion to amend the record as the Board of Education did share a resolution approving the transaction.

Council member Pereira asked if the Board approved the lease or the potential sale of the property.

Atty. Garskof replied both, to approve the current transaction or possible sale of the property.

Council member Ortiz asked how long the school had been vacant.

Mr. Perez replied for many years and they haven't been receiving any income on the property.

****COUNCIL MEMBER CRUZ MOTIONED TO APPROVE ITEM 89-23.**

****SECONDED BY COUNCIL MEMBER MCCARTHY.**

***THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Mr. Formato shared the property is located on East Main Street and is currently not in any use. The access agreement would be for the ground use for a composting operation with an agreement of five years. The CAO supports the initiative as it reduces waste and the new soil would be donated to the city parks, the public, and for any other projects with the municipality. The city can revoke the contract with a six month notice to vacate.

Mr. O'Connor shared the current operation site is at Captain's Cove, there are no issues with the neighboring businesses regarding space, smell, appearance or any other factors. They donate the compost to nonprofits organizations, municipalities, and residents in the area. He shared that the city of New York has a mandatory food scrap management program in effect and on January 1st, there will be a state law requiring all businesses to do the same. As there is only a food scrap management system, in Southington and New Milford, this would allow local businesses to spend less money on the services if they used their operation.

Council member Pereira asked if it builds heat.

Mr. O'Connor replied the scraps get heated up to 160 degrees farenheit to kill weeds and pathogenic bacteria from the scrap. He added there are no insects or rodents near there site due to the high heats.

Council member Pereira added the Hall neighborhood House has an operation as well. She asked what's wrong with their current site.

Mr. O'Connor replied they are constrained by space and looking to add more sites throughout the city as Captain's Cove wouldn't like them to keep their operation in their property. He added the nonprofit has worked with the East End NRZ, Nourish Bridgeport, and they pick up a lot of scraps from the Black Rock Area.

Council member Cruz asked why there isn't a public hearing scheduled for this operation.

Mr. O'Connor replied they are expecting to set up a public hearing but must get approval from zoning and the state beforehand.

Council member Burns added the nonprofit has been looking for a site for over a year now and has met with many organizations to collaborate with on the project and just recently got communications back from hall neighbor house. He added the organization would be happy to meet or spread with whoever.

Council member Newton asked what the payment would be to the city for their use.

Mr. O'Connor replied they would be providing free compost to the city, nonprofits, and the residents. This agreement would allow the organization to help with environmental issues and they pledged to clean up on Pembroke Street.

Council member Pereira asked if there are any negatives.

Mr. O'Connor replied there is no smell, as the food scraps get mixed in with carbon products to eliminate the smell and there are no pests in the operation area. They are only seeking for a five thousand tons operation not the seventy tons that has been falsely advertised in the petition.

Council member Pereira asked if there would be any barriers set up.

Mr. O'Connor replied there will be 6' x 3' x 2' barrier blocks planted green along the perimeter of the compost and it would be covered in tarps. They will also create buffer zones with gardens.

Council member Spell asked about their recruiting process.

Mr. O'Connor replied they would be employing the community and have networked with the Homeboy Industry to help employ recently incarcerated individuals. They have the capacity to employ six or seven people.

Council member Spell asked how much revenue would they collect.

Mr. O'Connor replied that the customer would pay on a tipping basis. Being local the customers won't have to cover high transit fees which would be an advantage for the city. They also apply for many grants to cover expenses.

Council member Burns added they have a worker from P.T. who makes \$30 hourly, and noted as the chair of the board he does not get paid from work he puts in.

Council member Castillo shared he has a concern with the agreement as they are looking for the city to give them property for no money at all while they collect tips. He is not interested in giving free property to businesses as the city has high taxes.

Council member Pereira asked as the new law will come into effect soon, would they amend the proposal to prioritize the businesses in the east side as that is where they are looking to have their operation.

Mr. O'Connor replied he agrees with the intent but the community may not be interested in the traffic of more haulers. He added businesses have their contracts with waste management companies and those businesses would be offering them services for food scraps to align with the new law.

Council member Burns replied they can do outreach with businesses in the East Side to share the initiative.

Council President Nieves added waste management is a big industry and private businesses are adding the food scrap services so there is a competition for the small composters.

Council member Ortiz shared he believes the public should decide.

Council member Newton added he is sure they have done outreach but believes the city may have a better use for that land.

Co-chair Herron shared she uses the composting system and doesn't have any issues and they need to consider the new law that will be in effect and the city should be more ecologically friendly.

Council member McCarthy added this operation will save the city money and followed up by asking if this will be a temporary location or will they be looking to stay.

Mr. O'Connor replied they are speaking with the city to possibly set up a site at the transfer station, having different locations they can diversify the clientele and reach more people.

Co-chair Herron asked if they would be using public employees.

Council member Burns replied no city employees would be used and this operation would not interfere with the current salt operation in the same location. This property is about six acres and they are only asking for one acre to use.

Council member Valle shared she is grateful for council members who do not make comments or business suggestions for other districts. She has concerns with the smell as there are already businesses that crush rocks in the area. Regarding the compost she believes the residents should decide but they need to clear out the lies that were shared on the flyers. She added many people who signed the petition don't live in the East Side. She concluded by saying the senior centers make compost and it doesn't smell.

Council President Nieves added New York has found it helps with rats, and other studies have shown there is no negative impact on the real estate or property values. She doesn't have a problem with the expansion as there have been no real comments arise regarding the smell and there is a tractor trailing school in the same area. She believes taxes shouldn't be a factor as the city has forgiven businesses and others simply don't pay their taxes. She added Hall Neighborhood House has expressed they are looking to expand to build a bridge to a gymnasium. When they reached out to the director, he sent an attorney instead of a board member.

Council member Newton shared that Hall Neighborhood House has done something shameful to spread lies regarding the operation. Churches do not get a dime from being a non-profit and they shouldn't outcast the proposing nonprofit. He doesn't agree with East Side businesses getting preference as it should be on who spends more money. He believes it should be moved forward to keep business in the city and employ people reentering society.

Council member Pereira added she has seen the composting bins at the Hall neighborhood House. She asked if she could call Bob.

Council member Nieves read an email from Hall neighborhood House regarding the proposal and what operation would like. They shared they are willing to go to court to proceed with the expansion if the city would be opposed to it.

Council member Burns shared that the city managed over fifty five thousand tons of waste last year and the organization is only looking to be permitted to handle five thousand tons with space capacity. So, the false spread of information of seventy tons would never be capable for their site to handle.

****COUNCIL MEMBER MCCARTHY MOTIONED TO APPROVE ITEM OF 146-23.**

****COUNCIL MEMBER NEWTON SECONDED THE MOTION.**

****THE MOTION WAS PASSED WITH**

****THE MOTION PASSED WITH SIX (6) IN FAVOR (MCCARTHY, NEWTON, CRUZ, AND SPELL) AND ONE (1) OPPOSED (ORTIZ).**

ADJOURNMENT

****COUNCIL MEMBER HERRON MOTIONED TO ADJOURN AT 7:17 pm.**

****COUNCIL MEMBER SPELL SECOND THE MOTION.**

****THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

The meeting was adjourned at 7:17 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Vianca Rivera

Telesco Secretarial Service