

**CITY OF BRIDGEPORT  
ECONOMIC AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT  
AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE  
SPECIAL MEETING  
OCTOBER 14, 2015**

**ATTENDANCE:** Jack O. Banta, Co-Chair; Lydia Martinez, Co-Chair; José Casco, Michelle Lyons, Rev. Mary McBride-Lee; Eneida Martinez (6:20 p.m.)

**OTHERS:** Council Member Denese Taylor-Moye; Bill Coleman, Neighborhood Development Director; Max Perez, OPED; Jay Habansky, Special Projects Assistant Manager; Renu Gupta, Central Grants, Liz Torres, Bridgeport Neighborhood Trust Executive Director; Ms. Kim Bianco, the Vice Chair of Bridgeport Neighborhood Trust and 25 Bridgeport residents in support of the Bridgeport Neighborhood Trust project

**CALL TO ORDER**

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

**Approval of Committee Minutes of July 23, 2015.**

**Approval of Committee Minutes of September 21, 2015 (Special Meeting)**

**\*\* COMMISSIONER CASCO MOVED THE MINUTES OF JULY 23, 2015 REGULAR MEETING AND THE SEPTEMBER 21, 2015 SPECIAL MEETING.**

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

**\*\* THE MOTION TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF JULY 23, 2015 REGULAR MEETING AND THE SEPTEMBER 21, 2015 SPECIAL MEETING AS SUBMITTED PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**170-14 Proposed Resolution regarding the Reconstruction of Seaview Avenue from Barnum Avenue to Boston Avenue and the extension of Seaview Avenue to the Lake Success Eco Technology Park.**

Mr. Habansky requested that the motion be amended by substitution with the red line document. The request is for the preliminary engineering for the project. OPED has worked with the DOT, GE, DuPont and Bridgeport Hospital on this. It will be a major public investment. The City match is 20% of the overall cost. This will be \$390,000 of the project cost of \$1,950,000. This project has been vetted with the East Side and East End NRZs.

Council Member Lyons asked if the NRZs had representatives present. Mr. Habansky said that there was no one from the NRZs present but that the NRZs were on board.

Council Member Banta asked about the area where a large fire had been. Council Member L. Martinez explained that the funding was there to clean that site and the funding was allocated. Demolition on that site should start soon.

Council Member Banta asked if this was part of the Lake Success project. Mr. Habansky said that it was in conjunction with the project. The road would not continue into Stratford, but the woods do extend into Stratford.

Council Member Casco asked for clarification on the amounts of funding. Mr. Habansky said that it was \$1,950,000 and that the City was responsible for 20% of the cost, which is \$390,000. This will be taken from the Capital account.

*Council Member E. Martinez joined the meeting at 6:20 p.m.*

Council Member Banta asked if there would be any developments behind the old school. Mr. Habansky said that there were plans, but that project would be done later.

**\*\* COUNCIL MEMBER BANTA MOVED TO AMEND AGENDA ITEM 170-14 PROPOSED RESOLUTION REGARDING THE RECONSTRUCTION OF SEAVIEW AVENUE FROM BARNUM AVENUE TO BOSTON AVENUE AND THE EXTENSION OF SEAVIEW AVENUE TO THE LAKE SUCCESS ECO TECHNOLOGY PARK BY SUBSTITUTION OF THE RED LINE DOCUMENT.**

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

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

**\*\* COUNCIL MEMBER BANTA MOVED TO APPROVE AGENDA ITEM 170-14 PROPOSED RESOLUTION REGARDING THE RECONSTRUCTION OF SEAVIEW AVENUE FROM BARNUM AVENUE TO BOSTON AVENUE AND THE EXTENSION OF SEAVIEW AVENUE TO THE LAKE SUCCESS ECO TECHNOLOGY PARK AS AMENDED.**

**\*\* COUNCIL MEMBER CASCO SECONDED.**

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

**156-14 Grant Submission: re Greater Bridgeport Regional Council (GBRC) for a Tulip Museum-Brownfield Revolving Loan Fund to be used for cleaning up Brownfield sites throughout the City. (Project #16446)**

Ms. Gupta came forward and gave a brief overview of the project for 1149 Main Street, which will help restore the area. The building is being renovated and the funding will be used for asbestos removal.

Council Member Lyons said that she thought that the owner was going to clean up the building by himself. Mr. Coleman said that there were actually two buildings involved. The first building is historic and was done by the owner, but the second building is not historic and in very poor condition. The first building will be a museum. The owner would like to turn that into a garden area. The second building was going to be demolished by the City because of a shared wall but then asbestos was found in the building. The request is for a grant to pay for the asbestos removal.

Council Member Lyons said that she felt that the project was moving too slowly. Mr. Coleman said that he expected the project to be finished soon.

**\*\* COUNCIL MEMBER E. MARTINEZ MOVED TO APPROVE AGENDA ITEM 156-14 GRANT SUBMISSION: RE GREATER BRIDGEPORT REGIONAL COUNCIL (GBRC) FOR A TULIP MUSEUM-BROWNFIELD REVOLVING LOAN FUND TO BE USED FOR CLEANING UP BROWNFIELD SITES THROUGHOUT THE CITY. (PROJECT #16446)**

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

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

**157-14 Grant Submission: FY2015 Supplemental Funding for Brownfields Revolving Loan Fund (RLF) (Project #15261).**

Ms. Gupta gave a brief overview of the supplemental funding. There is a 20% City matching fund requirement. Mr. Coleman said that the EPA gives the City funding and the City turns around and loans it to the developers for brownfields clean ups.

Council Member Banta asked what happens if the company defaults. Mr. Coleman said that there is some risk. He said that if this happened, the City would foreclose but that the EPA might not be as generous with the funding the next time around. Ms. Gupta added that the EPA would also look at the history of the City's loans, which has been good.

**\*\* COUNCIL MEMBER LYONS MOVED TO APPROVE AGENDA ITEM 157-14 GRANT SUBMISSION: FY2015 SUPPLEMENTAL FUNDING FOR BROWNFIELDS REVOLVING LOAN FUND (RLF) (PROJECT #15261).**

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

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

**168-14 Proposed Resolution regarding Amendment #5 to the West End Municipal Development Plan (the "MDP") to allow for Residential Adaptive Reuse Development along Railroad Avenue and to establish 1565 and 1535 Railroad Avenue as Disposition Parcels under the MDP (Ref. #396-93; 130-95; 279-98 & #154-13).**

Mr. Coleman said that this was a technical amendment to the original agreement. There is a municipal development plan for this area and this parcel should be used for housing. He listed a number of parcels in the area that had been redeveloped. There is no developer for this project at this time. This request is for an amendment to the plan to convert these various manufacturing buildings in to housing. There is no money involved.

Council Member Lyons asked about the fact that these are brownfields. Mr. Coleman said that there were only about 5 parcels in the area. This resolution only affects 1565 and 1535 Railroad Avenue. An RFP and an RFQ would be released for interested parties. There has been some interest from New York developers. Discussion followed about the South End Lofts development.

Council Member Casco asked if the building would be demolished. Mr. Perez explained that it would depend on the developer and their plan. Many developers like the historic architecture.

Council Member Lyons asked about the amount of housing that Bridgeport has. She wanted to know what else was in the same area. Mr. Coleman then distributed copies of a local map. Council Member Lyons said that she had concerns about the fact that the housing would be surrounded by businesses.

Council Member McBride-Lee asked what the last use of the business. Mr. Coleman said that last tenant made hydraulic jacks for highway bridges.

**\*\* COUNCIL MEMBER CASCO MOVED TO APPROVE AGENDA ITEM 168-14 PROPOSED RESOLUTION REGARDING AMENDMENT #5 TO THE WEST END MUNICIPAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN (THE "MDP") TO ALLOW FOR RESIDENTIAL ADAPTIVE REUSE DEVELOPMENT ALONG RAILROAD AVENUE AND TO ESTABLISH 1565 AND 1535 RAILROAD AVENUE AS DISPOSITION PARCELS UNDER THE MDP (Ref. #396-93; 130-95; 279-98 & #154-13).**

**\*\* COUNCIL MEMBER BANTA SECONDED.**

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

**169-14 Proposed Resolution Authorizing the Disposition of City Owned property located at 247 Colorado Avenue and requesting a public hearing relative to the same.**

Mr. Perez came forward and gave an overview of the project on Colorado Avenue, across from the Elias House Senior Center. The property is a burned out building and an RFP was published. Only one candidate came forward. Mr. Perez displayed the letter from the bank verifying the candidate has the funding for the property. He will be rehabbing it into an owner occupied building. The second and third floors will be rented out. This was the only offer the City received.

Council Member Lyons asked what the land was worth. Mr. Perez said that a 50' x 100' lot would be worth \$5,000. However the burned out house detracts from the worth of the land.

Council Member E. Martinez asked if the owner would be able to flip the property. Mr. Perez said the owner won't be able to flip it. If the property is not rehabbed in a year, then it reverts to the City with any and all improvements.

Council Member Casco asked why this item comes to the Committee so late. Mr. Coleman said that the RFP was released during the winter of 2014 and a number of Economic and Community Development and Environment Committee meetings had been cancelled. Council Member Casco said that it should have been here before 10 months passed.

Council Member L. Martinez asked when the bank statement was dated. Mr. Perez said that the bank statement was submitted in June of 2014. Council Member L. Martinez said that she would like to have the funding verified. Mr. Perez said that a three family residence would bring in more taxes.

Council Member Banta asked if there were tax breaks. Mr. Perez said that there were no tax breaks for the property.

Council Member Lyons asked what the taxes would be. Mr. Perez said that he was expecting between \$12,500 and \$15,000 in taxes.

**\*\* COUNCIL MEMBER BANTA MOVED TO APPROVE AGENDA ITEM 169-14 PROPOSED RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE DISPOSITION OF CITY OWNED PROPERTY LOCATED AT 247 COLORADO AVENUE AND REQUESTING A PUBLIC HEARING RELATIVE TO THE SAME.**

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

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

**183-14 Proposed Resolution authorizing an affordable Housing Tax Incentive Agreement in support of the Bridgeport Neighborhood Trust Redevelopment project for property located at 515 West Avenue.**

*25 Bridgeport Residents in support of the proposed resolution joined the meeting at 7:00 p.m.*

Mr. Coleman distributed copies of the photo of the parcel at 515 West Avenue. This is located behind the Walgreens on Park Avenue, which has been vacate for many years.

Ms. Liz Torres, the Executive Director of the Bridgeport Neighborhood Trust, introduced herself and Ms. Kim Bianco, the Vice Chair of Bridgeport Neighborhood Trust. Ms. Torres then showed a video of the various projects that the Bridgeport Neighborhood Trust (BNT) has done and a brief overview of the proposed project.

Ms. Torres spoke about the Milestone project and said that BNT takes the minority contractor agreement seriously. A speaker from ABC came forward to talk about the BNT projects along with a member of the East End NRZ, who spoke about the fact that the BNT has upheld their commitment to minority contractors.

Ms. Torres then reminded everyone that they were not just a developer but also involved in stand alone Community building. She displayed a map showing the parcels that the BNT are working in and drawings of the proposed project. 12 units will be set aside for veterans and there will also be a commercial retail component. The ground floor will be mostly parking with the units above the area, along with two small commercial spaces. This will be about 13 million dollars and the majority of the funding will be coming through tax credits, grants and other funding sources. BNT is looking to exceed the minority contractor agreements.

Ms. Torres said that BNT could not do the work they do without the Council's support. The group in support included BNT residents, contractors, clients, NRZ members, Board members and BNT employees.

Mr. Coleman said that this project is not Crescent Crossing and it is worthy of consideration. This is not a 40 year deal, but a 20 year deal. The reason it is 20 years is because it must run consecutively with the bank financing through Citibank. Mr. Coleman reviewed the numbers for the 48 units. The developer is Bridgeport based.

Mr. Coleman then reviewed the rents for the units and how they are pro-rated with the Committee members. Ten of the units are market rate.

Council Member Lyons asked about the tax incentives. She said that she needed to discuss this with her constituents, some of whom are losing their homes. She said her vote in Committee will be one thing, but her vote on the floor may be another thing. She said that she had no problem with the BNT, but with the tax incentive.

Council Member E. Martinez said that Ms. Torres has come before the Council with phenomenal projects and the housing is needed. While this is different from Crescent Crossing, she said that there are constituents that are losing their homes.

Council Member Banta said that he rides by the parcel every day, and \$40,000 in taxes is better than no tax revenue at all. He added that Council Member Taylor-Moye was also in favor of the item.

Council Member McBride-Lee said that she would have to think about this and talk to her constituents. There are people in her neighborhood who have lost their homes.

Council Member L. Martinez said that while she did not have a vote tonight, she would vote in favor of the project if it reaches the Council floor before she retires from the Council.

Mr. Coleman said that while he understood that residents were losing their homes, this is about making money for the City, getting permits and bringing in new tax revenue. He added that if the Committee could let the item go to the full Council, he would appreciate it. The deals are complex and the tax credit dealer needs to close the agreement.

Council Member Taylor-Moye said that this was important to the City. This is an opportunity to help everyone. She said that she respects everyone who wants to bring it back to their Districts. She asked if there was a time constraint involved. Mr. Coleman said that there would be an issue with the funding if the Committee fails to act. Ms. Torres said that in June of this year, the BNT secured their first tax credits. She said that this project would increase the tax revenue and it would be detrimental to the project if it did not get to the City Council this year.

Council Member Casco said that he would have to abstain because he was part of the BNT board. He was in support of the project and understood those who needed to check with their constituents and that this was election time. However, it is important to get rid of the empty lots or have developers leave the City because they can't get the items through the Council. Denying the project will also reduce potential jobs for Bridgeport residents.

Council Member Banta asked the Committee member to bring this to the Council floor to give the full Council a chance to consider the project. Discussion followed about the causes of foreclosures in the City.

**\*\* COUNCIL MEMBER BANTA MOVED TO APPROVE AGENDA ITEM 183-14 PROPOSED RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING AN AFFORDABLE HOUSING TAX INCENTIVE AGREEMENT IN SUPPORT OF THE BRIDGEPORT NEIGHBORHOOD**

**TRUST REDEVELOPMENT PROJECT FOR PROPERTY LOCATED AT 515 WEST AVENUE.**

**\*\* THE MOTION FAILED DUE TO LACK OF A SECOND.**

**\*\* COUNCIL MEMBER LYONS MOVED TO TABLE AGENDA ITEM 183-14 PROPOSED RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING AN AFFORDABLE HOUSING TAX INCENTIVE AGREEMENT IN SUPPORT OF THE BRIDGEPORT NEIGHBORHOOD TRUST REDEVELOPMENT PROJECT FOR PROPERTY LOCATED AT 515 WEST AVENUE.**

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

**\*\* THE MOTION PASSED WITH THREE IN FAVOR (E. MARTINEZ, LYONS, MCBRIDE-LEE); ONE OPPOSED (BANTA) AND ONE ABSTENTION (CASCO).**

### **ADJOURNMENT**

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

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

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

The meeting adjourned at 7:57 p.m.

Respectfully submitted

S. L. Soltes  
Telesco Secretarial Services