

**CITY OF BRIDGEPORT  
JOINT COMMITTEE ON ECONOMIC AND COMMUNITY  
DEVELOPMENT AND ENVIRONMENT AND CONTRACTS  
SPECIAL MEETING  
MARCH 17, 2022**

**ATTENDANCE:**     **Contracts**  
Matthew McCarthy, Co-chair  
Jeanette Herron, Co-chair  
Jorge Cruz  
Ernest Newton  
Maria Pereira  
Rosalina Roman-Christy

**ECD&E**  
Maria Valle, Co-chair  
Scott Burns, Co-chair  
Tyler Mack  
Mary McBride-Lee

**OTHERS:**           Tom Gaudett, Mayoral Aide; Atty. Tyisha Toms, City Attorney’s Office;  
Bill Coleman, OPED Deputy Director; Constance Vickers, Director,  
Legislative Affairs; Devon Brown, Joel Z. Green, Tab-8, Ellie (she/er),  
GVI); Jane Eyes, GVI – Ilene Mirkin; GVI – Alexis Maresca; GVI –  
Pippa Bell Ader; Catherine Lindsay, McCarthy; Eileen O’Reilly; Lindsay  
Thomason – I support GVI; Rachel + Luke GVI Support; Reggy (he/him)  
– Bridgeport; Robert P; 720-240-6812

This meeting was conducted by Zoom/Teleconference.

**CALL TO ORDER**

Co-chair Burns called the Joint Meeting of the Economic and Community Development and Environment Committee and the Contracts Committee to order at 5:05 p.m. A quorum was present.

He noted that while he was pleased to see the public present but reminded everyone that the public would not be allowed to speak.

**Approval of Joint Committee Minutes:**

• **October 13, 2021 (Special Meeting)**

**\*\* COUNCIL MEMBER HERRON MOVED THE MINUTES OF THE OCTOBER 13, 2021 SPECIAL MEETING AND THE DECEMBER 28, 2021 MEETING.**

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

Council Member Pereira requested that the votes for the minutes be taken individually.

**\*\* COUNCIL MEMBER HERRON WITHDREW HER MOTION REGARDING THE MINUTES OF THE OCTOBER 13, 2021 SPECIAL MEETING AND THE DECEMBER 28, 2021 MEETING.**

**\*\* COUNCIL MEMBER NEWTON WITHDREW HIS SECOND.**

**\*\* COUNCIL MEMBER NEWTON MOVED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF OCTOBER 13, 2021.**

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

Council Member Mack stated that he would be abstaining from the vote as he was not a member of the Council at the time.

The following correction was noted:

Page 4, paragraph 1, line 3, please change the following from:

“She said that the residents saw some of their taxes goes up over 50% and wanted to know where the tax break for the residents.”

To: “She said that some residents saw their taxes increase over 50% and wished to know where the tax breaks were for the residents.”

**\*\* THE MOTION TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF OCTOBER 13, 2021 AS CORRECTED PASSED WITH EIGHT (8) IN FAVOR (MCCARTHY, HERRON, CRUZ, NEWTON, ROMAN-CHRISTY, VALLE, BURNS, MCBRIDE-LEE); ONE (1) AGAINST (PEREIRA) AND ONE (1) ABSTENTION (MACK).**

Council Member Burns noted that the correction was a scrivener’s error. Council Member Pereira stated that she was voting against the minutes because the sentence was totally and improperly constructed.

• **December 28, 2021 (Special Meeting)**

**\*\* COUNCIL MEMBER NEWTON MOVED THE MINUTES OF THE DECEMBER 28, 2021 SPECIAL MEETING.**

**\*\* COUNCIL MEMBER VALLE SECONDED.**

**\*\* THE MOTION TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF OCTOBER 13, 2021 AS CORRECTED PASSED WITH NINE (9) IN FAVOR (MCCARTHY, HERRON, CRUZ, NEWTON, ROMAN-CHRISTY, VALLE, MACK, BURNS, MCBRIDE-LEE) AND ONE (1) ABSTENTION (PEREIRA).**

**28-21 Proposed Resolution Authorizing a Lease Agreement with Green Village Initiative Inc. for 1469 Reservoir Avenue and 20 Yaremich Drive.**

**\*\* COUNCIL MEMBER NEWTON MOVED AGENDA ITEM 28-21 PROPOSED RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING A LEASE AGREEMENT WITH GREEN VILLAGE INITIATIVE INC. FOR 1469 RESERVOIR AVENUE AND 20 YAREMICH DRIVE.**

**\*\* COUNCIL MEMBER VALLE SECONDED.**

Mr. Coleman, the OPED Deputy Director, said that this was an extension of a lease that had been in place for 15 years. GVI has operated a successful farm there. The compensation is \$1.00 a year because it is a community builder. They insure and maintain the property. He reviewed the additional details.

The lease also recognizes the right for the Library to develop a portion of the site. GVI acknowledges that they will cede the portion of that property. The City will work with GVI to find land to use to replace the Library's portion. The City has the right to require GVI to leave the property with one year's notice.

Council Member Pereira said that a library would need sufficient space for equipment and materials during the construction. She believes that this might be an issue.

Council Member Pereira asked why it was so important to construct the library there. She suggested that there was acreage located behind Park City Magnet. This is literally on the other side of Trumbull Gardens. She wished to know if this site had been considered.

Mr. Coleman said the location of the library had grown out of community conversations that indicated they wished to have the library on that site. The building would be 7,000 square feet and might be considered a tech center. The first step is to get the lease in place and this can be followed by a broader community conversation.

Council Member Pereira said that a tech center was being built in her district. She said that there would need to be parking on site.

Council Member Pereira said that most people were unaware of the fact that there was acreage behind the Park City Magnet. Having a library right next to Park City Magnet School would be good.

Council Member Cruz noted that the site was chosen by the community and the two Council Members, therefore he did not wish to challenge that. The GVI administration has worked with the Library on this lease and it is time to let the Library build what they want there. They do not need a second site.

There was a news piece on Channel 12 about people who were concerned about the GVI lease.

Council Member Burns clarified that the lease had not been signed at this time.

Council Member Newton said that the Library Board has the lease. The current lease is for five years with two options for five-year renewals. He suggested that the lease should be for 10 years, with two options for 10-year renewals. It is important to be fair to the farm. He said that the current language can terminate the lease for anything else other than the library. He requested that the lease be amended to reflect those changes.

Council Member Herron said that if the farm was not there, the Library should be the only thing that goes there. She could not believe the language in Section 7 and wanted that language removed. The Council Members in that District want a library there.

Council Member Herron noted that the Director of GVI did not know about the protest that was held and only found out about it afterwards.

Council Member Valle said that she did not feel that the gathering was a “protest” but more of an effort to raise awareness.

Council Member Valle said that she was not happy with the lease language but wanted to be sure that the lease was fair. She supports the Library but wants to be sure the language is not threatening GVI.

Council Member Roman-Christy said she wanted to make it clear that Mr. Coleman, Council Member McBride-Lee and herself had all agreed on the language on this lease. The five-year term is sufficient, with the two renewal options, so that the Library can raise the funds and GVI will be prepared for the changes. This is City property and the Library Board selected this parcel for the new library. The original lease was only for five years and the addition of the two renewal options were recently added.

Council Member Mack asked if this lease was the model framework for other garden leases. Mr. Coleman said that there were at least two ground leases that will be presented to the Council in the future.

One site is the former Mount Trashmore, which will be Mount Grow More and will feature hydroponic gardening. The lease is similar, but there is no mention of a library and the site is a former brown site, which will require concrete pads on certain areas.

The second site that may come before the Council is in the South End and called the Garden of Joy near Ridge and Gregory Street. The group is working on becoming a 501(c)3. OPEd is not looking to make money from these projects.

Council Member Mack asked if there had been any actual plans drawn up for the Library. Mr. Coleman said that there were no drawings at this time.

Council Member McBride-Lee said that she, Council Member Roman-Christy, Mr. Coleman and Ms. Angerame had come to an agreement about the lease. She felt that it was unfortunate that people who were not involved in the District are objecting. While she and Council Member Roman-Christy don't want GVI to move, they do want a library there. The local children can't

go to Madison Avenue to use the library. They don't have a place to study safely, cool off or have a community center. She hopes that her fellow Council Members support this.

Council Member Burns said that there were two social agencies competing. Both a library and a community garden were both welcomed. GVI is a non-profit and they rely on grants for funding.

Council Member Burns said that he was concerned about the language in Section 7 which mentions that the City could decide on a different project after the lease expires. He also mentioned Section 2.1, regarding the lessor having a right to terminate the lease. He would like to see GVI be secure through 2023. He said that he could not imagine there would be any shovels in the ground before December 2023.

Mr. Coleman said that the comments were consistent with Council Member Newton's comments for a two-year notice for termination.

Council Member Newton said that he respects the Council Members from the 135th District, but this is just about being fair. He said that having the City terminate the lease in order to build whatever they want on the site was wrong. The language needs to be more specific, so that building the library on that site is protected. There should be exclusive rights for the Library.

Council Member Pereira said that Council Member Roman-Christy and Council Member McBride-Lee should take a tour of the site behind the Park City Charter School.

Council Member McBride-Lee said that they were talking about being fair to the GVI, but she wasn't hearing about being fair to the students. There have been other projects in the 135th District that were moved to other areas. The property was always designated for the library, but it was later taken to allow GVI to lease it. The residents trust her and Council Member Roman-Christy to represent them.

Council Member Roman-Christy said that the BOE property behind the Park City Magnet was one of the first parcels that they looked at. There were concerns about the cost of removing all the trees and there were concerns about residences there. Council Member Roman-Christy said she is familiar with that area.

Council Member Newton pointed out that the current lease language does not protect the library for the 135th District.

Atty. Toms asked if they were asking to change the language for the contract or proposing to table for further discussion. Council Member Burns noted that the lease expires in 14 days.

Atty. Toms suggested the development rights should be limited but felt that the terms regarding termination could be problematic.

Mr. Coleman said it was not the intent to create a broader opening for the City to take the land. He said that there had been conversations in the past about having things like a pharmacy or other services located there.

Mr. Coleman said Atty. Toms was a remarkable worker but noted that turning something around by Monday could be a logistical challenge. Discussion followed.

**\*\* COUNCIL MEMBER BURNS MOVED TO AMEND SECTION 2.1 OF THE LEASE AS FOLLOWS:**

**SECTION 2.1 - NOTICE OF TERMINATION SHOULD BE EXTENDED FROM 12 MONTHS TO 24 MONTHS TO ALLOW FOR PLANNING IF THE FARM NEEDS TO RELOCATE AND RE-ESTABLISH ON ANOTHER PROPERTY.**

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

Discussion followed.

**\*\* THE MOTION PASSED WITH EIGHT (8) IN FAVOR (MCCARTHY, HERRON, CRUZ, NEWTON, VALLE, BURNS, MACK, PEREIRA) AND TWO (2) OPPOSED (MCBRIDE-LEE, ROMAN-CHRISTY).**

**\*\* COUNCIL MEMBER NEWTON MOVED TO AMEND SECTION 7 OF THE LEASE AS FOLLOWS:**

**SECTION 7- DEVELOPMENT RIGHTS. WE SHOULD REMOVE THE LANGUAGE THAT ALLOWS THE CITY TO TERMINATE THE LEASE AND DEVELOP THE LAND FOR ANY PURPOSE OTHER THAN A LIBRARY. IF ANYTHING IS DEVELOPED THERE BEYOND THE FARM, IT SHOULD BE EXCLUSIVE FOR THE LIBRARY.**

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

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

Council Member McBride-Lee said that she was pleased to hear that someone was concerned about the library other than herself and Council Member Roman-Christy.

Council Member Roman-Christy requested that she and Council Member McBride-Lee see a revised copy of the lease before it goes to Council.

**\*\* COUNCIL MEMBER HERRON MOVED TO APPROVE AGENDA ITEM 28-21 PROPOSED RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING A LEASE AGREEMENT WITH GREEN VILLAGE INITIATIVE INC. FOR 1469 RESERVOIR AVENUE AND 20 YAREMICH DRIVE AS AMENDED.**

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

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

**ADJOURNMENT**

- \*\* COUNCIL MEMBER HERRON MOVED TO ADJOURN.**
- \*\* COUNCIL MEMBER NEWTON SECONDED.**
- \*\* THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

The meeting adjourned at 6:38 p.m.

Respectfully submitted

Telesco Secretarial Services