

**CITY OF BRIDGEPORT
JOINT COMMITTEE ON ECONOMIC AND COMMUNITY
DEVELOPMENT AND ENVIRONMENT AND CONTRACTS
SPECIAL MEETING
SEPTEMBER 13, 2022**

ATTENDANCE: Jeanette Herron, Co-chair; Matthew McCarthy, Co-chair; Scott Burns, Co-chair; Rosalina Roman-Christy, Ernest Newton

STAFF: Bill Coleman, OPED Deputy Director

OTHER: Thomas Gaudett, Mayor's Office; Jonathan Delgado, OPED; Council Member(s): Alfredo Castillo & AmyMarie Vizzo-Paniccia; Christian Ruggiero; Richard Ruggiero

CALL TO ORDER

Co-chair Herron called the meeting to order at 5:19 P.M.

116-21

PROPOSED GROUND LEASE AGREEMENT WITH BERLINETTA BREWING COMPANY, LLC FOR A PORTION OF POST OFFICE SQUARE LOCATED AT 1136-1160 MAIN STREET. (NOTE: THIS ITEM CAN BE FOUND ON THE CITY CLERK'S WEBSITE: CITY COUNCIL AGENDAS/MINUTES; CITY COUNCIL; 2021-2022; FULL/MINUTES/SIZE; 2022-09-06.PDF)

Mr. Coleman came forward to discuss this item. The lease is for a portion of Post Office Square. The Brewing Company is, effectively, an anchor tenant of the property. Mr. Coleman said that they desired to support their growth. The business is a family business. He provided an overview of the business for those present. They are seeking to create a beer garden. There have been discussions about an amendment to the lease in the City's favor which would increase the insurance coverage from \$2,000,000 to \$5,000,000. He also pointed out that a letter had been submitted by their attorney to Council Member Burns, Council Member Herron, Council Member McCarthy, and Council Member Valle which Mr. Coleman reviewed. The letter and associated communications were accepted as 'Exhibit A'.

Council Member Herron asked why it had been submitted with so little warning.

Mr. Coleman said that OPED felt it was important to get the lease in during the September 6th meeting. The City Attorney office made it clear to OPED that they were not in agreement with the insurance level presented in the lease and wanted to reserve the right to revisit the issue. They also wished to try and get this approved before Oktoberfest. They will continue to discuss the matter of insurance with the City Attorney.

Council Member Newton commented that he was glad the Committee was looking at the item to determine what changes should be made.

Council Member Vizzo-Paniccia wished to speak in favor of this and wished that they would allow them to expand the business along with the garden. She wished that the Council and the Committees would support it going forward.

Council Member McCarthy voiced his support. He wished to know more about the long-term plans for the parcel.

Mr. Coleman said it was a one year plus one year option that the City can cancel at any time. He reviewed further details about the parcel. There is ongoing work on one of the walls in the area. The current plan is to simply enliven the space as a public gathering space. He noted that there had been positive responses from the public which he provided examples of. It was suggested that part of the street could be shut down on weekends for pedestrian friendly activities.

In regard to the lease duration, once the lease has run its course, they will come before the Committee again to discuss a new lease. Further discussion followed. Council Member Newton asked why, if they desired to approve this, they would be interested in kicking them out after two years.

Mr. Coleman said that they were interested in seeing the business grow. When it comes time to renew the lease, they will be able to adjust it for any potential growth and changes in both the business and City area. They desire to support the business.

Council Member Castillo raised concerns about safety and the development of the area. He also noted that there were issues with the economic development including raised taxes and people not being able to afford rent. He did not desire to kick them out in two years' time as it could harm any development that happened.

Council Member Cruz noted that they did not have any other developers at the moment and he desired to help the business grow. He felt certain they would take measures of responsibility to be safe.

**** COUNCIL MEMBER CRUZ MOVED TO APPROVE 116-21 PROPOSED GROUND LEASE AGREEMENT WITH BERLINETTA BREWING COMPANY, LLC FOR A PORTION OF POST OFFICE SQUARE LOCATED AT 1136-1160 MAIN STREET.**

Council Member Herron said that other people desired to speak first and requested he hold the motion.

Council Member Castillo asked what the future plans for the parcel were when it got developed. He was curious as to what the roof looked like and if the new area could be developed to have a roof as well. Discussion followed regarding the roof.

**** COUNCIL MEMBER NEWTON MOVED TO ACCEPT THE LETTER FROM ATTORNEY GASKOF DATED SEPTEMBER 13, 2022 REFERENCING THE AMENDED GROUND LEASE AGREEMENT AS EXHIBIT: 9-13-22 – A. (TITLE: ATTORNEY GASKOF COMMUNICATION TO JOINT COMMITTEE) AND ATTATCH IT TO ITEM 116-21 AS AN AMENDMENT.**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER ROMAN-CHRISTY SECONDED THE MOTION.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER NEWTON MOVED TO APPROVE ITEM 116-21 PROPOSED GROUND LEASE AGREEMENT WITH BERLINETTA BREWING COMPANY, LLC FOR A PORTION OF POST OFFICE SQUARE LOCATED AT 1136-1160 MAIN STREET AS AMENDED.**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER ROMAN-CHRISTY SECONDED THE MOTION.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

ADJOURNMENT

**** COUNCIL MEMBER ROMAN-CHRISTY MOVED TO ADJOURN.**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER MCCARTHY SECONDED THE MOTION.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

The meeting adjourned at 5:57 P.M.

Respectfully Submitted

Ian A. Soltes

Telesco Secretarial Services