

**CITY OF BRIDGEPORT  
JOINT COMMITTEE ON ECONOMIC AND COMMUNITY  
DEVELOPMENT AND ENVIRONMENT AND CONTRACTS  
SPECIAL MEETING  
DECEMBER 28, 2021**

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

**ECD&E**  
Maria Valle, Co-chair  
Scott Burns, Co-chair  
Marcus Brown  
Michelle Lyons  
Tyler Mack

**OTHERS:**           Council President A. Nieves, Council Member(s): W. Simmons,  
A. Vizzo-Paniccia, & A. Boyd; Thomas Gaudett, Mayoral Aide;  
Tom Gill, OPED Director; Bill Coleman, OPED Deputy Director;  
Constance Vickers, Legislative Affairs, Director; Atty. Ron Pacacha,  
Atty. Mark Anastasi; Robert Christof, Jr., Bridgeport Landing  
Development; Atty. John Stafstrom, Steelpointe; Barbara, John  
Cunningham, Eneida Martinez; Gemeem Davis, aikee, iPhone; 203-209-  
2632; 203-209-3287; 203-348-8578; 203-395-6363; 203-449-6485; 203-  
576-7272; 203-685-3878; 203-829-5222

This meeting was conducted by Zoom/Teleconference.

**CALL TO ORDER**

Co-chair Herron called the Joint Meeting of the Economic and Community Development and Environment Committee and the Contracts Committee to order at 6:03 p.m. A quorum was present.

**APPROVAL OF JOINT COMMITTEE MINUTES:**

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

These were not discussed.

**10-21 Proposed Resolution making certain findings required by the City and Town Development Act (As Precursor to Consideration of a Tax Incentive Development Agreement) for Steelpointe – New Residential Development along East Main Street South of Stratford Avenue.**

**11-21 Proposed Resolution Authorizing a Tax Incentive Development Agreement for a New Residential Development at Steelpointe along East Main Street South of Stratford Avenue.**

Council Member Herron announced that there would be an OPED presentation. She said that the Committee members would be limited to two questions. Some Council Members had submitted questions in advance and that information will be provided.

Mr. Coleman said that he would be sharing an opinion letter from Pullman and Comley and other documents with the Committee. He said that they would be speaking about the affordable housing and the tax district.

**\*\* COUNCIL MEMBER NEWTON MOVED TO ENTER A LETTER FROM PULLMAN AND COMLEY AS EXHIBIT 12-28-21B**

**\*\* COUNCIL MEMBER BURNS SECONDED.**

**\*\* THE MOTION TO ENTER A LETTER FROM PULLMAN AND COMLEY AS AN EXHIBIT AS EXHIBIT 12-28-21B PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**\*\* COUNCIL MEMBER NEWTON MOVED TO ENTER A PRESENTATION AS EXHIBIT 12-28-21A.**

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

**\*\* THE MOTION TO ENTER A PRESENTATION AS EXHIBIT 12-28-21A PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Mr. Coleman gave a brief overview of the LDA and the definition of affordability. He added that they would also indicate where the affordable housing units were located and give an overview of the tax situation.

Mr. Coleman displayed an overview slide of the site that showed where the new housing construction would be located on the peninsula.

He also gave a brief overview of the 2011 Tiger Grant, that provided the utilities, such as separating the storm water from the sewer and relocating the infrastructure underground. There was also work done on the roadway system, LED lighting and the tree canopy.

In 2015, the project focused on the brownfield remediation and elevation of the site. There was also some dredging done in the nearby marina, along with the installation of a new, award winning design bulkhead. This was part of the on-going public access to the waterfront.

Mr. Coleman then gave a brief overview of the reconstructed marina building and the new docks, including the new Bridgeport Boat Works. This also brought in new jobs and strengthened the tax base.

The next topic was the Affordable Housing Requirements per the LDA. He said that while the number of units may change, the percentage will remain. There will be at least 10% affordable housing units. Mr. Coleman reviewed the current deadline goals. Presently, there are 47 units already occupied. BLD is working with BNT on a block by block approach.

Mr. Coleman then reviewed the formulas used to determine “affordable housing” and showed a number of slides with the various affordable housing units that are currently occupied. He also displayed a slide showing the Nichols Avenue project that is currently in front of the Zoning Commission. He displayed a list of over 1,000 affordable housing units that have been supported by the Council in the past.

A graph with the 12-year tax schedule was displayed. Mr. Coleman said that this schedule was similar to the Canfield Avenue project that is underway. Two years will be construction, 1 year of leasing and then a 2% increase over the remaining 9 years.

Mr. Coleman said that Atty. Stafstrom would be speaking about the revenue from the taxes.

Atty. Stafstrom displayed a slide showing the flow of funds and the Steelpointe TIF. The creation of the Steelpointe district was done by special legislation. The City and the District entered into an interlocal agreement, which has been in place for 10 years. The City has a first call amount. Any excess revenue after that will be a 90/10 split between the developer and the City. The first call amount increases over time according to a sliding scale.

Once the TIF bonds are completed, then there will be a change. The bonds were purchased by 25 different investors and the funds were used to construct the bulkhead, the walkway and the roadways. These are secured bonds. The opinion letter was requested by the City and the developer to insure clarity about the bonds.

Mr. Coleman said that the TIF bonds had been a good tool to attract investment to the City. Mr. Coleman said that Mr. Christoph was also present.

Mr. Gill then said that the presentation covered a great deal of the questions that had been sent to the staff. Mr. Christoph said that he was excited to see the project moving forward.

Council Member McCarthy asked about the \$400,000 first call and the revenue from the properties such as Starbucks and Bass Pro that are already in place. Mr. Coleman said that he believe that the answer to that question was yes. Council Member McCarthy asked for confirmation that the City would get 10% on top of that. He was told this was so.

Council Member Burns said that he believe that another Committee had been told \$5.5 million. Atty. Stafstrom said that the City had been repaid for the money that they had advanced. He believed that the amount was around \$5.2 million.

Council Member Burns asked if they could count on this as regular revenue. He was told that this was so.

Council Member Mack asked about the number of affordable units on site. Mr. Christoph said that he expected to have 25 on site units for the LDA. Mr. Gill reminded everyone that they had already completed 47 affordable units off site.

Council Member Roman-Christy said that she had thought there would be 400 units on site and they would be all market rates. Mr. Coleman said that in the course of the development, there would be 25 affordable units. They will not necessarily be integrated into that building but the LDA covers the entire site. Mr. Gill said that the 400 units that were being constructed, were only the beginning. With 400 market rate units, they are required to have 40 affordable units. Those units are part of the 47 units that are already occupied.

Council Member Roman-Christy asked what the taxes were on the vacant land. Mr. Coleman said that the vacant land would be taxed at \$29,000 per year. He added that Bass Pro and Starbucks were also paying taxes.

Council Member Newton asked when the contract was developed. Mr. Coleman said that he believed it was Mayor Fabrizi who created the LDA.

Council Member Newton said that the LDA had already been signed years ago and he hoped that the Christophs and the BLD would realize how important affordable housing was to the City. However, he said that he did not know if the Council could go in and change the terms of the LDA. Atty. Pacacha said that the agreement was signed in 2009.

Council Member Cruz said that he had spoken with the BNT and the Christophs about the situation. He said that he was happy to hear that there would be 25 affordable units that would be on site. He added that he believed that they went above and beyond the 20% when they helped others with the other units. He said that he felt that this was more than 20% affordable housing.

Council Member McCarthy said that he had reviewed the number to see if they could get more for the City coffers. The project will be creating a market that is not currently in Bridgeport. There is not much they can do to increase the amount the City gets in taxes, but he would like to see the shovels in the ground so they attract more developers.

Council Member Mack said that there was a market rate for the units but wanted to know what the projected rent amounts were. Mr. Coleman said that there was a blended amount of rents, which he reviewed with the Council Members.

Council Member Mack asked if they would be willing to increase the 25 affordable units on site in later years. Mr. Gill said that it would be important to focus on the 10% number which depends on the total of the market rate units built. This is only the beginning and they have already accomplished 47 units, which exceeds the required 40 for the current project.

Council Member Mack said that he respects that they were doing the affordable units, but they need to have units on site.

Council Member Simmons asked why there was such a delay in the onsite housing units in the first stage. Her second question was about the 90/10 split. Atty. Stafstrom explained that after the first call, the 90/10 split can only go to the development for infrastructure.

Council Member Simmons asked for clarification on the 30-year bond. Atty. Stafstrom said that the 30 year bonds were issued by Steelpointe and it was common to have infrastructure bonds with that length of term.

Mr. Coleman said that there was a contract already in place and the Christophs were already ahead of their affordable units. However, now they are trying to develop new units with a new price point. This is an effort to execute the project quickly and move forward with the project. Mr. Christoph said that the timing was critical but there would be 25 affordable units coming in the future. Mr. Gill pointed out that there were multiple types of financing involved. Now it is important to continue their momentum that they got with the bond issuance.

Council Member Lyons said she had reached out to the Christophs and had received some information. The BLD has worked with the BNT to create the 47 units, which is in addition to the 10% of the on-site units that will be done on Steelpointe. She said that she had also asked about the local job opportunities. She added that she was concerned about the hotel which is scheduled for the future. There are also concerns about the boardwalk being completed.

Mr. Christoph said that they were working on the bay walk.

Council Member Newton said that he was concerned that they would have affordable units on the site. He was glad to hear that this was so. He said that this was not about the Council liking the project but about the Christophs keeping their word. They have shown good faith.

Council Member Roman-Christy said that the Christophs have shown good faith and she felt that they should made a motion on the project. Council Member Herron said that she would like to have the others speak first.

Council Member Burns asked about the recent bonding issuance. He wished to know how much more would be done in the future.

Atty. Stafstrom said that the State would allow up to \$190 million for the project, but it would be up to Christophs about how much they would want to do. There has been some discussions about structured parking, which tends to be very expensive.

Mr. Christoph said that there would be sidewalks, and other utilities, so right now they are just focused on this phase of the project.

Council Member Valle said that she wished to make a statement about the fact that the land was purchased from individuals who lived in that area. The land was taken from Puerto Ricans and blacks. She thanked the Council Members who listened to her thoughts. It is about time that the cloud that has been over the East Side is lifted. Now is the time for the East Side to shine. She thanked the Council Members who spoke in favor of the project.

Council Member Cruz said that he had met with Mr. Christoph and he came across as very trustworthy. They have a mission that is a win/win for them and the City. This will become an attraction for the City and increase the tax base.

Council Member Cruz asked about the 90% and whether the developers would be responsible for the maintenance of the infrastructure. Mr. Gill said that the property has been turned over to the District and the District is responsible for the public access.

Council Member Cruz asked what percentage they already achieved. Mr. Coleman said that they were already ahead of the 10%, which was about 11.5%. Mr. Gill said that he believed that they were going to be up about 40% in the end.

**\*\* COUNCIL MEMBER BURNS MOVED TO ENTER AN EMAILED DOCUMENT AS EXHIBIT 12-28-21C.**

**\*\* COUNCIL MEMBER BROWN SECONDED.**

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

A discussion followed about sending the emails to all the Council Members.

**\*\* COUNCIL MEMBER MACK MOVED TO ENTER AN EMAILED DOCUMENT AS EXHIBIT 12-28-21D.**

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

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

Council Member Lyons said that she had received correspondence earlier in the day. A brief discussion followed about including that information as an exhibit.

**\*\* COUNCIL MEMBER NEWTON MOVED TO ENTER AN EMAILED DOCUMENT AS EXHIBIT 12-28-21E.**

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

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

Council Member Simmons asked what would happen if the tax abatement was not approved. Mr. Gill said that if the project was not approved, their financing would not work and the project would not go forward.

**\*\* COUNCIL MEMBER MCCARTHY MOVED TO APPROVE 11-21 PROPOSED RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING A TAX INCENTIVE DEVELOPMENT AGREEMENT FOR A NEW RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT AT STEELPOINTE ALONG EAST MAIN STREET SOUTH OF STRATFORD AVENUE.**

Mr. Coleman pointed out that the Council needs to make some public finding which were listed in Agenda Item 10-21 to allow the Council to move the City and Town Development Act, which is a State statute. This requires a resolution with public findings such as: the City finds that there is a need for more investment and the City finds that there is a need for more housing due to the fact that the private sector cannot fulfill this need on its own.

Atty. Pacacha agreed and said that the Council was making a finding that this development was required for the various reasons that were contained in the resolution.

**\*\* COUNCIL MEMBER MCCARTHY WITHDREW HIS MOTION FOR AGENDA ITEM 11-21 PROPOSED RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING A TAX INCENTIVE DEVELOPMENT AGREEMENT FOR A NEW RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT AT STEELPOINTE ALONG EAST MAIN STREET SOUTH OF STRATFORD AVENUE.**

**\*\* COUNCIL MEMBER MCCARTHY MOVED AGENDA ITEM 10-21 PROPOSED RESOLUTION MAKING CERTAIN FINDINGS REQUIRED BY THE CITY AND TOWN DEVELOPMENT ACT (AS PRECURSOR TO CONSIDERATION OF A TAX INCENTIVE DEVELOPMENT AGREEMENT) FOR STEELPOINTE – NEW RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT ALONG EAST MAIN STREET SOUTH OF STRATFORD AVENUE.**

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

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

**\*\* COUNCIL MEMBER ROMAN-CHRISTY MOVED AGENDA ITEM 11-21 PROPOSED RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING A TAX INCENTIVE DEVELOPMENT AGREEMENT FOR A NEW RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT AT STEELPOINTE ALONG EAST MAIN STREET SOUTH OF STRATFORD AVENUE.**

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

**\*\* THE MOTION TO APPROVE AGENDA ITEM PASSED WITH EIGHT (8) IN FAVOR (ROMAN-CHRISTY, NEWTON, MCCARTHY, CRUZ, VALLE, BURNS, BROWN & LYONS) AND ONE (1) OPPOSED (MACK).**

**ADJOURNMENT**

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

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

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

The meeting adjourned at 7:42 p.m.

Respectfully submitted

Telesco Secretarial Services