

**CITY OF BRIDGEPORT
JOINT COMMITTEE ON ECONOMIC AND COMMUNITY
DEVELOPMENT AND ENVIRONMENT
AND CONTRACTS
SPECIAL MEETING
APRIL 13, 2021**

ATTENDANCE: **ECD&E**
 Maria Valle, Co-chair
 M. Evette Brantley (5:36 p.m.)
 Scott Burns
 Mary McBride-Lee
 Rosalina Roman-Christy

Contracts
 Matthew McCarthy, Co-chair
 Jeanette Herron, Co-chair
 Jorge Cruz
 Ernest Newton

OTHERS: Council President A. Nieves; Council Member(s): E. Martinez &
 D. Taylor-Moye; T. Gaudett, Mayor’s Office; T. Gill, OPED Director; Bill
 Coleman, OPED Deputy Director; Atty. Ron Pacacha, Barbara, Call In
 User 1, Kasey (she/they); 203-414-0712

CALL TO ORDER

Co-chair McCarthy called the Joint Committee Meeting to order at 5:22 p.m. A quorum was present.

46-20 Proposed Resolution seeking Approval of a Lease of City Property on the Site of the Former Pequonnock Apartments to allow the installation of a Digital Billboard to support the Harbor Yard Amphitheater Project.

Mr. Gill asked Atty. Pacacha to provide the background.

Atty. Pacacha said that he was involved in the last billboard agreement for Harbor Yard. This agreement was similar than the previous one, but had more positive benefits for the City. This billboard would be a vehicle to move their promotions forward. It will also allow the City to have “flips” during the day promoting a broader array of events, including health notifications, City events, graduations, holiday parties or voter registration events.

Atty. Pacacha said that they would allow the Amphitheater operator to have a lease on a small parcel of the former Pequonnock Apartments site. The parking lots are wide open, so there is access via Broad Street rather than South Frontage Road. While the City would like to develop

those parcels at some time in the future, any plans would have to be designed around the billboard.

Atty. Pacacha reviewed the details of the billboard agreement which included the billboard lease agreement for the same length of time as the Amphitheater.

He listed the benefits including \$10,000 a year in rent, the property taxes, and 25% of the Harbor Yard flips. Mr. Gill also reviewed the amount that the City would realize annually.

There will be insurance up to \$10 million dollars from the Amphitheater on the sign, along with the sign company's insurance.

Council Member McCarthy said that he had forwarded some questions from Council Member Burns. Atty. Pacacha said that they had included the "air rights" because the top of the sign extends beyond the size of the land lease.

Council Member Brantley joined the meeting at 5:36 p.m.

Council Member Herron asked if the sign had anything to do with the Department of transportation. Atty. Pacacha said that the sign company would have to get all the necessary permits.

Council Member Herron asked if they would start the permitting process pending on the Council's decision. Atty. Pacacha said that it would depend on a favorable outcome from Planning and Zoning and the Council.

Council Member Newton asked if the agreement between the sign company and the Amphitheater was as beneficial as the one between the City and the Amphitheater. Atty. Pacacha said that they were not party to the other agreement, but one could not compare the two deals.

Council Member Cruz asked if they had considered another site closer to the Amphitheater. He was also concerned that the sign might interfere with the parcel's future development. Atty. Pacacha said that it would not.

Mr. Gill said that the decision regarding the location was made with a company called "Out Front", which has billboards all over the nation. They determined that this was the best location for the Amphitheater's sign.

Council Member Valle said that Council Member Martinez was trying to enter the meeting but had been unable to do so.

Council Member Valle asked for permission to ask two questions for Council Member Vizzo-Paniccia, who could not attend the meeting and two for herself.

The first question involved liability and what legal issues would be involved.

Council Member Valle said that she wished to know if the billboard would affect future plans to build at the site. She said that they had mentioned it was an electrical billboard and wished to know how they would stop someone from interfering with it.

Atty. Pacacha said that the sign would be under the operation of the sign company and the Amphitheater. He reiterated that there was insurance in place.

It is a legal real estate transaction and the billboard will not affect future development because it is located along South Frontage Road.

The sign has to be approved by the DOT, Planning and Zoning and a variety of other agencies concerned with safety.

Council Member Taylor-Moye asked if the sign was a permanent fixture or if it would come down. She pointed out that the benefits of this sign would be for the Amphitheater and not for her district. She wants to make sure this would not be an eyesore to the local residents.

Mr. Gill said that it would be a very professional sign company that does this type of sign all over. It will be as aesthetic as it can be. While it will advertise the concerts, the City will have “flips” on the billboard that could benefit her district and the City as a whole.

Council Member Burns asked why this was a tenant sublease rather than a shared public/private partnership. He also wanted to know why the tenant only gets one of the eight flips.

Atty. Pacacha said that they were not offered a public/private agreement and it was the Amphitheater that brought the sign company to the City. Regarding the flips, the City gets 1 of every four on the sign or 25%, not 1 of every 8.

Council Member McBride-Lee said that she thought it was a good idea.

Council Member McCarthy said that the access way could be moved at any time depending on future development. He had several questions about the details listed on the map and wished to know why it could not be moved to South Frontage Road and where the electrical access was.

Atty. Pacacha said that the company would handle the electrical outlet. Regarding the access road, they needed an approximate location for access. It also prevents the City from making them get access elsewhere. The map is not a legal document and is not on the land records. Discussion followed.

Council Member McCarthy asked how they would get electrical service. Atty. Pacacha said that most likely the electrical service would come off the street. Council Member McCarthy repeated his comment about moving the sign. Mr. Gill pointed out that this was not an easement, but a temporary access way. The parcel is fenced at this time. He said that he did not know what moving it back 10 feet would entail in terms of permits and other issues.

Atty. Pacacha said that they could add language to the lease to protect the City.

Council Member Roman-Christy asked if the Amphitheater owners would be paying fees. Mr. Gill said that the City would get tax revenue on an annual basic revenue of about \$176,000.

Council Member Roman-Christy said that she would encourage the entrance to be on South Frontage Road.

**** COUNCIL MEMBER CRUZ MOVED TO APPROVE AGENDA ITEM 46-20 PROPOSED RESOLUTION SEEKING APPROVAL OF A LEASE OF CITY PROPERTY ON THE SITE OF THE FORMER PEQUONNOCK APARTMENTS TO ALLOW THE INSTALLATION OF A DIGITAL BILLBOARD TO SUPPORT THE HARBOR YARD AMPHITHEATER PROJECT.**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER HERRON SECONDED.**

Council Member Valle said that she was annoyed at what just happened. She said that there were questions and concerns that were still not answered. The Council Members should be allowed to ask their questions.

**** COUNCIL MEMBER HERRON RESCINDED HER SECOND.**

Council Member McCarthy said that he had been about to suggest this item be tabled.

Council Member Newton said that this had been a long time coming. Council Member McCarthy said that they would like to have their questions answers.

Council President Nieves said that there had been a question about the air rights. She said that the future development might be impacted by this.

**** COUNCIL MEMBER CRUZ SAID THAT HE WOULD RESCIND HIS MOTION TO APPROVE.**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER BURNS MOVED TO TABLE THE ITEM BECAUSE ATTY. PACACHA OFFERED TO REWRITE SOME OF THE LANGUAGE.**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER VALLE SECONDED.**

No vote was taken at this time due to a motion to recess the meeting being made.

**** COUNCIL MEMBER BRANTLEY MOVED TO RECESS THE MEETING UNTIL APRIL 19TH, AT 5:30 P.M.**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER HERRON SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION TO RECESS PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

The meeting recessed at 6:14 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Telesco Secretarial Services

City of Bridgeport
Joint Committee on ECD&E
and Contracts
Special Meeting
April 13, 2021