

**CITY OF BRIDGEPORT
JOINT COMMITTEE ON ECONOMIC AND COMMUNITY
DEVELOPMENT AND ENVIRONMENT
AND CONTRACTS
SPECIAL MEETING
MAY 11, 2021**

ATTENDANCE: **Contracts**
Matthew McCarthy, Co-chair
Jeanette Herron, Co-chair
Jorge Cruz
Michael DeFilippo (5:31 p.m.)
Ernest Newton
Samia Suliman

ECD&E
Maria Valle, Co-chair
M. Evette Brantley, Co-chair (5:31 p.m.)
Scott Burns
Alfredo Castillo
Mary McBride-Lee
Rosalina Roman-Christy

OTHERS: Council Member(s): A. Silva, M. Pereira & A. Vizzo-Paniccia (5:30 p.m.);
T. Gaudett, Mayor’s Office; Atty. T. Toms, City Attorney’s Office; Bill
Coleman, OPED Deputy Director; Bridget Schulten; Call-In User 1

This meeting was conducted by Zoom/Teleconference.

CALL TO ORDER

Co-chair McCarthy called the Joint meeting to order at 5:16 p.m. A quorum was present.

Approval of Joint Committee Minutes: April 13, 2021 (Special Meeting)

Approval of Joint Committee Minutes: April 19, 2021 (Recessed & Reconvened Meeting)

Approval of Joint Committee Minutes: April 21, 2021 (Special Meeting)

**** COUNCIL MEMBER NEWTON MOVED THE FOLLOWING MINUTES:**

**APRIL 13, 2021 (SPECIAL MEETING)
APRIL 19, 2021 (RECESSED & RECONVENED MEETING)
APRIL 21, 2021 (SPECIAL MEETING)**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER CRUZ SECONDED.**

Council Member Pereira stated that she was present but not listed for the April 19, 2021.

**** COUNCIL MEMBER NEWTON MOVED TO AMEND THE MINUTES OF THE APRIL 19, 2021 BY ADDING COUNCIL MEMBER PEREIRA'S NAME IN THE OTHER CATEGORY.**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER CRUZ SECONDED.**

Council Member Suliman asked if she was listed as being in attendance at the meetings. Council Member McCarthy suggested that she verify this herself. She stated she would be voting in opposition because her name was not included in the minutes.

**** THE MOTION TO AMEND THE MINUTES OF THE APRIL 19, 2021 BY ADDING COUNCIL MEMBER PEREIRA'S NAME IN THE OTHER CATEGORY PASSED WITH EIGHT (8) IN FAVOR (HERRON, CRUZ, NEWTON, VALLE, BURNS, CASTILLO, MCBRIDE-LEE AND ROMAN-CHRISTY) AND ONE (1) OPPOSED (SULIMAN).**

58-20 Proposed Resolution Authorizing a Lease Agreement for a portion of 80 Hastings Street to allow for an Outdoor Tasting and Picnic Area for Fifth State Distillery.

Atty. Toms said she would review the legal issues and Mr. Coleman would be presenting the business aspect.

Mr. Coleman then gave a brief history of the building, which was formerly a factory that fell into disrepair. The building was demolished by the City in 2020. The abutting property owner is a craft beer brewery, an award-winning brewery. The owners of the brewery have asked if the remaining slab, which is an adjacent open space, as an outdoor seating area. A presentation was sent to the Committee members. There will be a few simple improvements made to the site such as some fencing and leveling off and sealing the concrete for safety reasons. This will be a short-term lease.

Council Member Vizzo-Paniccia joined the meeting at 5:30 p.m.

Council Member Brantley and Council Member DeFilippo joined the meeting at 5:31 p.m.

Council Member Newton said that he was glad to see the businesses expanding.

Council Member Cruz asked what the terms of the lease were and what the benefits for the City were. Atty. Toms said that it was \$4,500 from April 1st to November 30th and reviewed the hours of operation. As far as benefits for the City, it is an interest business and they are on the Spirits Trail. It is an adaptation for COVID. From a legal perspective, it will be bringing in a small, modest income and is using an unused space.

Council Member DeFilippo said that he liked the concept but felt that the \$4,500 was too little in light of liability. He also asked what kind of barriers would be in place to keep the place from being used for drug dealing or as a drug shooting gallery after hours.

Atty. Toms said that there was a standard language for indemnity. She said that they would have to address the security aspect.

Council Member DeFilippo asked if the \$4,500 would cover the liability. Atty. Toms said that it was not the way the City would determine the rent. Mr. Coleman said that it was \$1.25/per foot and a modest income that would be a business that would attract customers. He gave some examples. The rate is based on the market value.

Mr. Schulten said that they have been in business for 7 years and open to the public for 5 years. There will be 24-hour surveillance on it and it will be secured by two fences.

Regarding the cost, the business has to be make a significant investment in this venture. That includes security and the lease is only for a year.

Council Member DeFilippo wished them the best of luck.

Council Member Pereira said that she along with Council Member Suliman and others had taken a tour of the facility. It is very quaint, but there are limited job opportunities. Asylum Street is a problem area with dilapidated factory buildings. She said that they had sent a list of seven items to Mr. Coleman on Monday. There are serious concerns about parking and the patio can hold up to 100 customers. This could mean 50-60v vehicles parked on the street.

Council Member Pereira said that while they won't have a live band, there are concerns about the noise ordinance. She asked what the status was of the seven items.

The first item was to ensure that there was a copy of the noise ordinance attached to the lease. Atty. Toms said that there was a provision in the lease requiring them to adhere to all laws, which is already covered by the laws.

The second item was no live music or live entertainment of any sort. It does not say that in the lease. Mr. Coleman aid that there was a conversation with the neighbors and the key concern was the noise ordinance. The business owners will be having to abide by the noise ordinance.

Council Member Pereira said that if they did not support this, the constituents would be working against this including going up to the State level. The entertainers cannot be facing the residential properties.

Mr. Coleman replied that getting down to this level of details was not something he wished to be involved in. Atty. Toms said that she didn't have a problem adding the noise ordinance to the lease. She said that she would prefer to leave the terms general because that requires the business owners to comply with all the ordinances and laws.

Council Member Pereira said that the patio was not ADA compliant. There is no plan and they cannot discriminate against ADA customers.

Council Member Pereira said that the driveway was in very poor condition and needs to be repaved. Mr. Coleman said the issue was that neither the Schulten's nor the City owns that driveway. The Schulten's are tenants. OPED does not have an agreement with the property owner.

Mr. Schulten said that the property owner is aware of the single pothole and will repair it.

Council Member Pereira said that there were a few steps which are not ADA compliant. There is only one railing on the side of the stairs. She wished to know what was going to be done because this area would be able to hold up to 100 customers and they may be intoxicated. Mr. Coleman said that the issues would be addressed but reminded everyone that this was about the leasing of the property.

Council Member Pereira said that there was language in the resolution that they wished to have it removed. Atty. Toms said that the City Attorney's need to have the ability to make technical changes to the document as necessary. If there is a typo, they should not have to come back to the Council for approval.

Council Member Pereira asked why the application may be sent to P&Z. Mr. Coleman said that there was an 8-24 review. He then spoke about how the Zoning Office would be reviewing the application. He said this would only be an administrative review since they have a permit to serve certain beverages. If they expand the service, they will have to go for a Special Permit from P&Z.

****COUNCIL MEMBER CRUZ MOVED AGENDA ITEM 58-20 PROPOSED RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING A LEASE AGREEMENT FOR A PORTION OF 80 HASTINGS STREET TO ALLOW FOR AN OUTDOOR TASTING AND PICNIC AREA FOR FIFTH STATE DISTILLERY.**

****COUNCIL MEMBER HERRON SECONDED.**

Council Member Roman-Christy said that it was an excellent idea and would like to know if there was some language that the City would be held harmless and liability. Atty. Toms said that there was. She gave the details in Article 9 in the insurance.

Council Member Brantley said that she wished them the best. She thanked them for considering doing business and hoped that they would be following the noise ordinance.

Council Member McBride-Lee said that she agreed with the project whole heartedly. There is already a noise ordinance in the City. She said that three people should not be deciding whether someone could play a guitar or laughing too loud. It's not fair to put too many stipulations on them.

Council Member Pereira said that it would impact her and her neighborhood directly. They will block this project.

**** THE MOTION TO APPROVE AGENDA ITEM 58-20 PROPOSED RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING A LEASE AGREEMENT FOR A PORTION OF 80 HASTINGS STREET TO ALLOW FOR AN OUTDOOR TASTING AND PICNIC AREA FOR FIFTH STATE DISTILLERY PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

ADJOURNMENT

**** COUNCIL MEMBER HERRON MOVED TO ADJOURN.**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER NEWTON SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

The meeting adjourned at 6:06 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Telesco Secretarial Services