

**CITY OF BRIDGEPORT  
ECONOMIC & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT &  
ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE  
DECEMBER 15, 2015  
REGULAR MEETING**

**ATTENDANCE:** Milta Feliciano, Co-Chair; M. Evette Brantley, Co-Chair; Michelle Lyons; Jeanette Herron; Aidee Nieves; Jose Casco

**OTHER:** Max Perez OPED; Frank Croke OPED; Angel de Para CAO; Autumn Hurst, Central Grants; Renu Gupta, Central Grants; Nessah Smith, Councilmember

**CALL TO ORDER**

Co-Chair Brantley called the meeting to order at 6:05 PM. A quorum was present.

**APPROVAL OF COMMITTEE MINUTES OF OCTOBER 20, 2015**

- \*\* COUNCILWOMAN LYONS MOVED TO TABLE THE APPROVAL OF COMMITTEE MINUTES OF OCTOBER 20, 2015.
- \*\* COUNCILMAN CASCO SECONDED THE MOTION.
- \*\* MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

**NO. 08-15**

**PROPOSED RESOLUTION CONCERNING DISPOSITION OF CITY OWNED PROPERTIES LOCATED AT 130 CLIFFORD STREET AND 16 RIVER STREET BY AUCTION, SALE TO ABUTTER OR BY SALE TO COMMUNITY BASE HOUSING DEVELOPMENT CORPORATIONS AND ORDERING A PUBLIC HEARING RELATIVE TO THE SAME**

Mr. Perez came forward to present the item. He stated that the city is looking to sell the properties either at auction or to the abutting property owner. He stated that 16 River Street is a tiny parcel, home to what was formerly a WPCA pump station. Mr. Perez stated that it is likely one of the abutters will purchase the property, so long as they are up to date on their taxes.

Co-Chair Brantley asked about the value of the property on Clifford Street. Mr. Perez stated that they are still waiting on the appraisal, and that it is a WPCA appraisal, so a number of times when they foreclose they sell tax liens. He stated that they do not get the full dollar amount of the appraisal value that goes to the city.

Co-Chair Feliciano requested that appraisals of each property be provided to the committee, as well as documentation that the properties are first offered to the abutters before they move to order a public hearing. Councilwoman Lyons seconded this request, and expressed her concern at constituents coming to them with WPCA coming in and taking over foreclosures at low amounts of money. She stated that this was not the fault of OPED, but that they plan on being more observant regarding this agency given the high occurrence of citizen concern in the last term.

Co-Chair Brantley asked if there was an available list of WPCA properties. Mr. Perez stated that he could compile a list for the committee. He further stated that the Clifford Street property is WPCA, while River Street the City owns outright. In addition, he stated that one of the abutters is delinquent on taxes, but that he will speak to the other owner who is current on their taxes.

**\*\* COUNCILWOMAN LYONS MOVED TO TABLE ITEM #08-15 RE: PROPOSED RESOLUTION CONCERNING DISPOSITION OF CITY OWNED PROPERTIES LOCATED AT 130 CLIFFORD STREET AND 16 RIVER STREET BY AUCTION, SALE TO ABUTTER OR BY SALE TO COMMUNITY BASE HOUSING DEVELOPMENT CORPORATIONS AND ORDERING A PUBLIC HEARING RELATIVE TO THE SAME.**

**\*\* COUNCILWOMAN HERRON SECONDED THE MOTION.**

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

**NO. 09-15**

**PROPOSED RESOLUTION CONCERNING DISPOSITION OF CITY OWNED PROPERTIES (8) BY AUCTION, SALE TO ABUTTER OR BY SALE TO COMMUNITY BASE HOUSING DEVELOPMENT CORPORATIONS AND ORDERING A PUBLIC HEARING RELATIVE TO THE SAME.**

Mr. Perez stated that they have a letter from the abutter at 281 Dover Street, as well as an appraisal for that property. Co-Chair Brantley requested a copy for the record.

Mr. Perez stated that the Dover Street property is a two-family row house, and that the property was appraised at \$25,000. He stated that the abutter offered \$28,000 and it is a cash transaction. He stated that the man has an additional \$40,000 in his bank account in order to rehabilitate the property, and that he owns the adjacent parcel.

Co-Chair Feliciano asked if there was appraisal information for the other properties. Mr. Perez answered in the negative, stating that the rest of the properties are effectively building lots. He stated that 25 Orange is a lot, and that it has sold sans council approval at auction, with a buyer offering \$10,000.

Councilwoman Lyons asked if Dover Street is a WPCA foreclosure. Mr. Perez stated this is most likely true. Councilwoman Lyons asked if they know for a fact it has been foreclosed on, and Mr. Perez answered in the negative, stating that the City holds the title and thus it is a dead issue now. He stated that the people who owned the building basically abandoned it as the building was completely destroyed by fire.

Co-Chair Brantley requested the appraisals on the other lots prior to auction. Councilwoman Lyons seconded this, stating that it will help the committee members to understand the tax portion and revenue stream coming from the properties. She stated that she would consider voting on Dover Street as they have all the information on that property.

Mr. Perez stated that the committee has an assessment value on all of the lots. Co-Chair Feliciano stated that the assessed value and the appraisal are very different numbers, and in turn, it doesn't give them an idea of how or what they could sell the property for.

Councilwoman Lyons asked about the chain of ownership and nature of 587 Brook Street. Mr. Perez stated that it was a six family house that caught on fire a few years ago, and that the owner walked away following the demolition of the house.

Co-Chair Brantley stated that they want to be equipped with information to explain things properly to their constituents given the current rate of WPCA foreclosures.

**\*\* COUNCILWOMAN LYONS MOVED TO TABLE ITEM #09-15 RE: PROPOSED RESOLUTION CONCERNING DISPOSITION OF CITY OWNED PROPERTIES (8) BY AUCTION, SALE TO ABUTTER OR BY SALE TO COMMUNITY BASE HOUSING DEVELOPMENT CORPORATIONS AND ORDERING A PUBLIC HEARING RELATIVE TO THE SAME, WITH THE FOLLOWING EXCEPTIONS:**

- 1. 281-283 DOVER STREET IS TO BE APPROVED, WHILE THE REMAINING PROPERTIES WILL BE TABLED.**

**FOR THE FOLLOWING REASONS:**

- 1. IN ORDER TO OBTAIN MORE INFORMATION ON THE REMAINING PROPERTIES FROM THE OFFICE OF PLANNING AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT.**

**\*\* CO-CHAIR FELICIANO SECONDED THE MOTION.**

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

**\*\* COUNCILWOMAN LYONS MOVED TO ORDER A PUBLIC HEARING RE: THE DISPOSITION OF 281-283 DOVER STREET BY AUCTION, SALE TO ABUTTER OR BY SALE TO COMMUNITY BASE HOUSING DEVELOPMENT CORPORATIONS AND ORDERING A PUBLIC HEARING RELATIVE TO THE SAME.**

**\*\* CO-CHAIR FELICIANO SECONDED THE MOTION.**

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

**NO. 16-15**  
**GRANT SUBMISSION RE: U.S. CONSUMER PRODUCT SAFETY COMMISSION**  
**FOR A POOL SAFETY GRANT PROGRAM (PROJECT #16269)**

Ms. Hurst came forward to present on the item. She stated that the grant is for \$75,000 with no match from the City required. She stated they found out on Friday that they were awarded this two part grant. She stated that the overarching goal is to prevent the drowning of children in public pools and spas. The first part of the grant funds training for pool and city inspectors, as well as on-site staff at Bridgeport public schools. Ms. Hurst stated that the grant has been opened up regionally, with space for 70 people to attend. She stated that the second part of the grant is to increase the number of swimming lessons being given to children and adults, with 65 6-week courses. In addition, this grant would bring a Zack Camp (a summer water safety swimming camp for kids) to Bridgeport with enough room for 250 children ages 5-9, and launch an overarching water safety campaign with materials to distribute.

Co-chair Brantley asked if this grant would cover any private pools, and Ms. Hurst stated for legal reasons this only extends to public pools. Co-Chair Brantley inquired about the selection of pools, and Ms. Hurst stated that they would cover the public school pools, the YMCA, the Sheehan Center, and condo pools.

Councilwoman Lyons asked if the senior center pool would be part of the initiative, and Ms. Hurst answered in the affirmative.

Co-Chair Feliciano asked if they come to the committee for permission to apply for grants or permission to accept grants. Ms. Hurst stated that they come to the committee to seek permission to have the contract signed by the mayor and department head. She stated that they find a grant opportunity, go to the department head, get the project approved, then go to the City Council with the opportunity and ask if they would be interested in accepting it.

Co-Chair Feliciano asked if the program would be run through Parks & Recreation. Ms. Hurst stated that the Department of Health is the lead applicant, while the Parks department is often involved.

Co-Chair Feliciano inquired about the training aspect of the program. Ms. Hurst stated that they have to update the inspectors annually, and that at present, the city have 5 inspectors and 2 supervisors. This grant program expands to allow 2 staff members from the public pools to attend training, and if they have remaining slots they will open up the program regionally, with Bridgeport as the first priority as a condition of the grant.

Co-Chair Feliciano requested in future that all departments involved be put on the front of the packets, and Ms. Hurst stated that they would do this in future.

**\*\* COUNCILWOMAN HERRON MOVED TO APPROVE ITEM #16-15 RE: GRANT SUBMISSION RE: U.S. CONSUMER PRODUCT SAFETY COMMISSION FOR A POOL SAFETY GRANT PROGRAM (PROJECT #16269).**

**\*\* COUNCILWOMAN LYONS SECONDED THE MOTION.**

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

**NO. 17-15**

**GRANT SUBMISSION RE: NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE ARTS FOR AN ART WORKS GRANT PROGRAM (PROJECT #16454)**

Ms. Hurst stated that this is a \$12,500 grant, with \$37,500 being provided by a third party (CT Free Shakespeare, the non-profit recipient), making it a \$50,000 total grant.

Councilwoman Lyons asked where the performances are held, and Ms. Hurst stated they are held at either the McLevy Green or the Beardsley Zoo. Councilwoman Lyons asked why the City has to contribute money, and Ms. Hurst stated that the City has contributed \$20,000 to the non-profit every year, and that this grant is the result of an effort to trim the City's costs. She stated that the contribution is in the interest of supporting the growth of the program and commitment to its aims. Councilwoman Lyons asked that the grant money will be used for. Ms. Hurst stated that the money will be used to pay salaries to actors and other artistic productions staff, in addition to bringing the performances back up to 2 weeks after it was cut to a single week last year due to monetary constrictions.

Councilwoman Lyons asked about the grant dates. Ms. Hurst stated that the production is technically in August 2016, with the project period overall expiring in 2017.

Co-Chair Feliciano asked if other funding options were explored before tapping into general funds, such as the CDGB. Ms. Hurst stated that she is not sure if they have applied there before, and that it is a small operation it may not qualify, with the City traditionally supporting them. Co-Chair Feliciano stated that they should try to explore different funding options before having they come to the City.

Councilwoman Lyons asked how the \$12,500 is approved to be utilized from the General Fund. Ms. Hurst stated that the Office of Policy and Management approves the amount, and Tom Sherwood was the head at the time the grant was approved. She further stated because of meeting cancellations, this is a past agenda item.

Co-Chair Feliciano suggested that they check with the current administration before approving or denying the item in order to determine if that same funding is available. Ms. Hurst stated, to that point, that even if the contract is signed, the City can still say no to the allotted amount and tell the non-profit they have to find alternative funding.

**\*\* CO-CHAIR FELICIANO MOVED TO TABLE ITEM #17-15 RE: GRANT SUBMISSION RE: NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE ARTS FOR AN ART WORKS GRANT PROGRAM (PROJECT #16454).**

**\*\* COUNCILWOMAN LYONS SECONDED THE MOTION.**

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

**NO. 18-15**

**GRANT SUBMISSION RE: ROCKEFELLER FOUNDATION FOR THE 100 RESILIENT CITIES CHALLENGE GRANT PROGRAM (PROJECT #16208)**

Ms. Hurst stated that the grant is for both technical assistance and to be determined funding if the proposal is accepted. She stated that the program is focused on finding cities with a focus on resilience, to be taken in a broad context to include issues such as poverty, violence, unemployment, environmental sustainability, and other causes. She stated that they plan on taking those issues and examining how Bridgeport, as a coastal city, is effected at a higher rate and how those problems may be fixed. Ms. Hurst stated that, if they are given this designation, they will be given funding to develop a chief resilience officer and provide a salary for this role.

Co-Chair Feliciano asked which department this is run through, and Ms. Hurst stated that it is currently open, but that it would be a natural fit for the Office of Planning and Economic Development, with a partnership through the Mayor's office.

Co-Chair Brantley asked if there is a match and about the specifics of the amount. Ms. Hurst stated that as it is an international program, there is a huge variable in the awarded amount, but that there is no match. Co-Chair Brantley asked about the specifics of the term technical assistance, and Ms. Hurst stated that the assistance comes from the Rockefeller Foundation and 100 Cities network. She stated that the city is obligated to do nothing but hire.

Councilman Casco asked what the contract period will be, and Ms. Hurst stated that it is a 10 year designation.

**\*\* CO-CHAIR FELICIANO MOVED TO APPROVE ITEM #18-15 RE: ROCKEFELLER FOUNDATION FOR THE 100 RESILIENT CITIES CHALLENGE GRANT PROGRAM (PROJECT #16208).**

**\*\* COUNCILWOMAN LYONS SECONDED THE MOTION.**

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

**NO. 19-15**

**GRANT SUBMISSION RE: CONNECTICUT STATE LIBRARY FY2016 TARGETED GRANT FOR A HISTORIC DOCUMENTS PRESERVATION GRANT PROGRAM**

Ms. Gupta stated that this is a small grant from the State Library for archival purposes. She stated that they provide the funding and the City decides on the documents that need to be archived for easier access. The total amount is for \$6500, and the Office of Planning and Economic Development will run point on the project. She stated that they will utilize a scanner which will mark each document with a unique field and allow the documents to be digitized for easy access. Ms. Gupta stated that the program starts in January and lasts for 6 months, with no match from the City. She further stated that this is a grant the City receives every year.

Councilwoman Lyons asked where the documents are stored. Ms. Gupta stated that the documents will be on the server, and while the grant for historic documents, they are not technically historic in the traditional sense. She stated that they cannot digitize things such as large old maps, and that the grant is not for that express purpose.

**\*\* CO-CHAIR FELICIANO MOVED TO APPROVE ITEM #19-15 RE: GRANT SUBMISSION RE: CONNECTICUT STATE LIBRARY FY2016 TARGETED GRANT FOR A HISTORIC DOCUMENTS PRESERVATION GRANT PROGRAM.**

**\*\* COUNCILWOMAN HERRON SECONDED THE MOTION.**

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

**ADJOURNMENT**

**\*\* CO-CHAIR FELICIANO MOVED TO ADJOURN.**

**\*\* COUNCILWOMAN HERRON SECONDED THE MOTION.**

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

The meeting adjourned at 7:00 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Catherine Ramos  
Telesco Secretarial Services