

NEW HAVEN CITY PLAN COMMISSION ADVISORY REPORT

RE: 200 BROOKSIDE AVENUE AND 49 BROOKSIDE AVENUE (portion),
Authorization for the City to enter into a **COOPERATION AGREEMENT** with the New Haven Housing Authority, Glendower Ribicoff, LLC., Trinity New Haven LLC, Trinity Ribicoff Limited Partnership, and Trinity Ribicoff Four Limited Partnership, with respect to the redevelopment of Abraham Ribicoff Cottages and Extension, including a tax abatement pursuant to Section 28-4 of the New Haven Code of Ordinances (Executive Director of LCI).

REPORT: 1485-05

ADVICE: Approval

BACKGROUND The Livable City Initiative has submitted an Order authorizing the City to enter into a Cooperation Agreement with the Housing Authority of New Haven and Trinity New Haven LLC Trinity, Ribicoff Limited Partnership, and Trinity Ribicoff Four Limited Partnership, with respect to the Abraham Ribicoff Cottages site located at 200 (MBP 364-1193-00200) and 60 Brookside Avenue (MBP 364-1190-0300); the site also includes a small portion of 49 Brookside (MBP 364-1190-00301). The Ribicoff site itself is 8.09 acres; the portion of 49 Brookside is approximately 0.41 acres, for a total site of about 8.50 acres. The site is bounded on the east by Hamden (Thorpe Drive), on the south by Bosley Street, part of the recently built Brookside PDD, on the west by Wintergreen Brook, and on the north by Woodin Street (Hamden). The site is currently zoned RM-1, and a Planned Development District application has been submitted to the Board of Aldermen and referred to the Commission. The Cooperation Agreement sets out the developer's obligations and the Housing Authority's and the City's in order to redevelop the site.

Tax Abatement

The Cooperation Agreement includes a Tax Abatement agreement for the property as it will be leased to the developer for the construction and operation of assisted housing. The abatement would eliminate the taxes during the construction period and then set them at \$350 per unit for 15 years, with escalation and with a renewal for another 15 years possible. A tax abatement is typical for PHA owned housing, or housing on PHA owned land, as the construction and ongoing maintenance costs exceed the allowable affordable rental income. There are 8 homeownership units that would be eligible for the City's assessment deferral program. The Tax Abatement matter has been referred to the BOA committee on Tax Abatement.

Development

The 8.5 acre site is currently occupied by Ribicoff Cottages, and the Ribicoff Extension, 100 units of senior and disabled housing built in 1951 and owned and operated by the New Haven Housing Authority. The Housing Authority and Glendower Inc. (an instrumentality of HANH) and Trinity Financial, and its LLCs and LPs have teamed up for a comprehensive redevelopment of the site. The existing tenants will be relocated to other existing HANH properties such as the new Wilmont building a few blocks to the south, or elsewhere in the City, or will they will be given portable housing vouchers. Some tenants are likely to return to Ribicoff once it is rebuilt. The existing buildings will be razed and 114 new units will be built, 106 family and senior rental units plus 8 homeownership units. Trinity/Glendower will own and manage the new units, while the land will remain in the HANH ownership, leased to the developer. The home ownership units will be built along the northern most boundary of the site. A three story building housing some of the senior rental units is proposed and would have a community space with a kitchen, an outside

patio, a management office and a common laundry facility for use by residents. There are several locations for community garden plots.

The site is currently accessed by two private loop roads off a cul-de-sac at what was the terminus of Brookside Ave. (now partially reconfigured as Bosley Street). A new street layout is proposed; with some portions of existing City streets to be abandoned and new streets built to City standards and accepted by the City, as well as some private streets. The Cooperation Agreement provides for a payment of \$25,000 for a resident engineer to supervise infrastructure construction for the City, at developer expense. Site layout, including the streets, unit layout, floor plans and site infrastructure and amenities are more fully detailed in the Planned Development application for the project which has been submitted to the Board of Aldermen and will be reviewed by the Commission.

PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

The site lies at the northerly end of Brookside Ave. to the south by Bosley Street, and the newly rebuilt Brookside housing complex. This is the northernmost extent of Brookside Ave. was originally a part of, or adjacent to city-owned Springside Farm. Post World War II a number of housing developments were built – Brookside Terrace and Rockview – garden apartment style assisted rental housing; some were originally state owned and managed but all were eventually owned and managed by HANH. Oriental Gardens, another assisted housing development was torn down and replaced with Westville Manor (in 1986). This area has seen three major rebuilding projects completed or underway, Brookside, Rockview and the new building at Wilmont Terrace (at the corner of Wilmot Road and Wintergreen Avenue. Rebuilding Ribicoff is the next step in the comprehensive transformation project.

The new street pattern, a combination of public and private streets, is more grid-like and will allow all units to have street frontage, sidewalks will be provided; and two streets (Augustine and Jennings Way) will connect to Woodin Street. Parking for units will be provided in a small lot near the community building, adjacent to units or on the private streets. There is additional on-street parking on the City streets.

While New Haven has a large number of assisted housing units, demand is still strong; this area of the City is transit served, though minimally, and service support for residents is increasing at the new development at Wilmot and Wintergreen. Access to Hamden via Augustine Street and Jennings Way would increase travel options for work and shopping. Southern Connecticut State University is less than a mile to the south and is a source for both education and employment. The two area schools: Katherine Brennan (K-8) and Clarence Rogers (Pre-K and K) have both been completely rebuilt under the School Construction Program. Given the long term provision of assisted housing, the tax abatement seems warranted. The efforts to give the complex a more traditional urban look and functionality, by ensuring that all units front on streets, and that there are sidewalks throughout the complex, as well as mixing the unit types – family and senior, as well as the effort to provide homeownership opportunity are laudable and will help to ensure the success of the rebuilt housing. This new housing is unlikely to be built without the Cooperation Agreement; therefor the Commission recommends approval.

ADVICE: Approval

ADOPTED: November 20, 2013
Edward Mattison
Chair

ATTEST: 
Karyn M. Gilvarg, AIA
Executive Director