

**PAD MEETING MINUTES**  
**November 16, 2022**

**PRESENT:** Hon. Gerald M. Antunes, BoA; Hon. Anna Festa, BoA, Steve Fontana, Economic Development; Nate Hougrand, City Plan; Evan Trachten, LCI; Clay Williams, Business Development

**Absent:** Maurine Villani, Tax Office

**Meeting called to order at 3:03 PM**

**Roll Call of Committee members**

A motion to approve the PAD minutes from September 21, 2022 was made by Clay Williams, seconded by Alder Antunes, roll call was taken, minutes approved unanimously.

## New Business

### 262,263,265, & 269 Dixwell Avenue

Evan told the committee the City is proposing to acquire a portfolio of properties owned by Ocean Management affiliates for \$1,300,000. The properties consist of two partially occupied two-family houses at 262 & 263 Dixwell Avenue, as well as two mixed-use vacant properties at 265 & 269 Dixwell Avenue. 265 Dixwell Avenue is the former "Monterey Club" and 269 Dixwell Avenue is a vacant convenience store with residential uses above. Evan gave an overview of the development occurring on Dixwell Avenue: The Joe Grate's site is being redeveloped as a residential use. The Walt's Cleaners site is on the list for redevelopment (City owned), the adjacent church is being renovated, the City owned property at 308 Dixwell is slated for redevelopment, the City owned lot next to the flower shop is proposed to be redeveloped with a structure to house the flower shop. Evan also noted closer to Downtown the Dixwell Plaza site plan was recently approved by the City Plan Commission. Also, the Q House project has been completed. Evan told the committee it is vital for the City to acquire this portfolio of properties for site control. The current owner has talked about redeveloping this site since the days of the Harp Administration, but nothing has occurred. The City would like to take control of this area. The City is proposing to conduct a simultaneous acquisition and disposition of 262 & 263 Dixwell Avenue and not hold title to occupied properties. LCI is working to select a non-profit to take title to 262 & 263 Dixwell Avenue as part of the acquisition-disposition. The City will retain 265 & 269 Dixwell Avenue and rehabilitate the property for mixed-use purposes. The City is in the process of obtaining appraisals for all the properties. These properties are in the heart of the revitalization area on Dixwell Avenue

The City has dedicated acquisition funds for this site (CDBG). LCI does not want an investor to acquire this portfolio. Acquiring this cluster of properties is key to the revitalization of Dixwell Avenue. As part of our rehabilitation of 265 & 269 Dixwell Avenue, the City will control how many residential units are developed. The properties currently contain several one-bedroom units and LCI may want to create larger units. This acquisition will support the other investment in the Dixwell Avenue corridor. Clay Williams asked about how many occupants are on site and will be displaced? Evan said one unit is occupied at 262 Dixwell Avenue and two units are occupied at 263 Dixwell Avenue. None of the tenants will be displaced by the proposed acquisition-disposition. Clay asked how much tax revenue will be lost due to this acquisition? Evan didn't have an answer about the tax revenue but noted the assessment of the properties are not

high because of the condition of the properties. The City may sell these properties in the future and they would be back on the tax rolls. The end use has yet to be determined. Alder Festa asked what would the City be responsible to do? Evan told the committee the residential properties would be sold immediately and LCI plans to rehabilitate the mix-use properties. Evan noted, the City may decide to sell the mixed-use properties, it could also offer them as an RFP. We could rehab and resell the mixed-use properties. LCI does not want to manage the completed properties, LCI acts as a caretaker for properties. The final plan hasn't been determined yet, there are several possibilities. Evan noted this is a multi-step process and step-one is to gain site control. Alder Festa noted it would be wise to sell the properties to a developer of our choosing to control what occurs during the redevelopment process. Evan noted our plan could change, and LCI could theoretically sell the properties to a developer. We want the community to benefit from this redevelopment. Alder Festa wants to make sure we get a return on our investment.

Clay has some concerns and would like to modify the motion because of the unknowns. Clay doesn't have enough information and will likely abstain. Clay supports the acquisition but needs more details to vote yes on the item. Alder Festa asked if the Alders were contacted. Evan said Arlevia reached out to the Alders and Evan hand delivered the Prior Notification forms. Alder Festa doesn't want the City to rush and make a mistake. Evan said the current proposal is to pay \$1.3 million for the site. Alder Festa ask why we are paying above the assessed value? The purchase price was negotiated by LCI. There is a community benefit and staff don't expect the City to be overpaying by \$400,000 relative to the assessed value. The area will be cleaned up and this will eliminate the blight and vacancies, which will have a huge impact on this area. Steve Fontana spoke in favor of the proposal. Steve understands the concerns expressed by the Alders. Steve said this is precisely the time to utilize scarce City resources to act as a catalyst to further the development of this corridor. The City hasn't been able to act quickly to acquire sites like this and this is a great opportunity. Steve noted he understands Clay's concerns but based on his experience in development this is exactly what needs to be done.

Alder Festa noted that she is afraid of gentrification. Steve said with LCI owner in charge we shouldn't worry about gentrification. Evan said the residential units in the mixed-use structures will be affordable and Arlevia cares deeply about affordable housing and is focused on helping the residents of this area. Alder Festa wants to make sure the AMI of the rental units keeps people in this area. Alder Antunes noted we also need to focus on affordable ownership, there is a lot of focus on affordable rentals. Evan told the committee LCI builds affordable homeownership properties and so do several local non-profits.

**A motion was made by Alder Antunes seconded by Steve Fontana, roll call was taken, approved 5-0 with Clay Williams abstaining.**

### **79 Morris Street**

Evan told the committee this proposal is to sell a sliver lot to an owner occupant to use as a yard area. The sliver lot is small at 25' X 150' so developing a structure is difficult. Evan offered to sell a portion of the lot to the other adjacent property owner but they didn't respond to the certified letter. It costs the City to cut the grass and shovel the snow at this site. The property will eventually be back on the tax rolls. Alder Antunes asked what does the City do when the adjacent property owner doesn't want to buy a sliver lot? Evan said a greenspace, garden, or park are the typical options. Nate told the committee under the zoning code a single-family house is permitted on a non-conforming lot (sliver lot) as of right. When the lot is small it may not be possible to

develop a single-family house. This lot was too small for Habitat for Humanity to develop a house. LCI wanted to support the owner occupant because they rehabilitated a vacant property.

**A motion was made by Nate Hougrand, seconded by Clay Williams, roll call was taken, approved unanimously**

**PAD Guidelines / Discussion**

Evan told the committee that no movement has occurred since our last update. Evan will work internally to review the Guidelines with Arlevia because she wasn't involved previously. Evan hopes to have this item as an action item in the new year. Evan reached out to Pat Solomon and she is pulling data on sliver lot tax abatements. Evan will share this information in the future.

**A motion to adjourn was made by Clay Williams, seconded by Alder Festa, all were in favor.**

**Meeting Adjourned 3:41 P.M.**