

LCI Board Meeting Minutes
September 27, 2023 (Via Zoom)

PRESENT: Hon. Richard Furlow, Nadine Horton, Seth Poole, Arlevia Samuel (Executive Director), Evan Trachten (LCI staff)

Absent: Patricia Brett, Ernie Santiago, Taneha Edwards, Addie Kimbrough, Michael Pinto (Office of Corporation Counsel),

Meeting called to order at 6:06 P.M.

Review of LCI Board meeting minutes from May 24, 2023 meeting. A motion to approve was made by Nadine Horton, seconded by Alder Furlow, roll call of members was taken, approved. (Nadine Horton- yes, Alder Furlow- yes, Seth Poole voted present). A few moments after the vote Alder Furlow made a point of Order, and noted Seth voted “present”. Seth stated that he intended to vote to approve the minutes with a “yes” vote.

New Business

0 Carroll Street (MBP 096 1024 00502)

Evan told the Board that LCI proposes to sell this sliver lot to the adjacent property owner (Renkun) for \$1.00 per square foot for a purchase price of \$2,925. The applicant is experiencing water run-off from this parcel and will make drainage improvements upon taking title. The City sold the applicant a sliver lot many years ago to create a driveway to access 95 Carroll Street, where the applicant constructed a house and resided. The water issue is causing erosion. The City Engineer has visited this site and supports LCI’s sale of this parcel. The lot is currently forested and unimproved.

Alder Furlow made a motion to approve the disposition of 0 Carroll Street, seconded by Nadine Horton, roll call was taken, approved unanimously.

1589 Chapel Street

Evan told the Board LCI proposes to sell this vacant lot to Neighborhood Housing Services for \$21,000 as part of an RFP process through the Purchasing Department. The applicant is proposing to develop 2, two-family owner-occupied properties each with an 80% AMI rental unit. There will be a 10-year minimum occupancy period and a 20-year minimum affordability period. The applicant has a great track record developing affordable housing, they are currently developing several properties in Newhallville. The lot is adjacent to larger buildings with much higher density. This development will fill a void in the block. Alder Furlow asked if the neighborhood had been informed about the project, Evan said he didn’t believe the applicant presented this project to the CMT. Evan contacted Alder Hamilton about the sale, and she was supportive. Seth asked why we weren’t selling this at the non-profit pricing of \$1,000 per unit. Evan told the Board the applicant wanted to offer a competitive bid through the RFP process.

Nadine Horton made a motion to approve the disposition of 1589 Chapel Street, seconded by Alder Furlow, roll call was taken, approved unanimously.

252 Davenport Avenue

Evan told the Board this property was also part of the RFP process. LCI is proposing to sell this vacant lot for \$4,000 to National Veterans Council for Legal Redress who will develop 3 affordable rental units at this site. The rental units will be deed-restricted for 20 years at 80% AMI. This is a local non-profit led by the Monk family, and they have been working with LCI for a few years to build their capacity. Their focus is on helping veterans and the disabled. The applicant offered \$1,000 for the parcel but LCI negotiated the price up to \$4,000. The project will be subject to site plan review by the City Plan Commission. Nadine asked about the timeline and 80% AMI rent. Evan told the Board the LDA gives the applicant 6 months to start the project and 18 months to complete the project. The 80% AMI value is established by HUD / State of Connecticut, Evan didn't know the value off the top of his head. Nadine also asked if this was a supportive housing project with services. Evan said he wasn't 100% sure. Evan contacted Alder Hurt about this sale and he was supportive. Seth asked if this would be one structure, Evan said he wasn't sure, but what is before the Board is an LDA to develop 3-units at this site. A final site plan we be submitted to the City Plan Commission.

Nadine Horton made a motion to approve the disposition of 252 Davenport Avenue, seconded by Alder Furlow, roll call was taken, approved unanimously.

309 Dyer Street

Evan told the Board that this is also part of the RFP and LCI is proposing to sell this vacant lot to Habitat for Humanity for \$15,000. The applicant will develop a single-family property subject to a 10-year occupancy requirement. Habitat for Humanity has a great track record. The site can easily support a single-family property. Evan contacted Alder Wingate and he was supportive of the sale. The buyer will receive a 0% interest mortgage from Habitat and will likely be subject to a 30-year occupancy period by Habitat for Humanity

Alder Furlow made a motion to approve the disposition of 309 Dyer Street, seconded by Nadine Horton, roll call was taken, approved unanimously.

0 East Shore Parkway (MBP 067 0953 00100)

Evan told the Board they recently approved a lot on Albia Street to the New Haven Port Authority. We were informed the property actually contained 2 parcels and this wasn't reflected in the New Haven GIS system. We are proposing to sell this sliver lot at \$2.00 per square foot to the New Haven Port Authority for \$2,640 to be utilized for site control and laydown use. Evan said there has been illegal dumping of tires at this location. The Port isn't currently a taxable entity but when they are profitable, they will be taxed per an agreement with the Board of Alders. Nadine asked to stipulate fencing at this location.

Nadine Horton made a motion to approve the disposition of 0 East Shore Parkway with the condition that the buyer install fencing, seconded by Alder Furlow, roll call was taken, approved unanimously.

634 Howard Avenue

Evan told the Board LCI proposed to sell this vacant lot to Neighborhood Housing Services for \$10,500 as part of an RFP process through the Purchasing Department. The applicant is proposing to develop a two-family owner-occupied property with an 80% AMI rental unit. There will be a 10-year minimum occupancy period and a 20-year minimum affordability period. The applicant has developed many properties in New Haven. The lot is large enough to easily develop a two-family property. The proposal is in keeping with the existing housing in the area.

Nadine Horton made a motion to approve the disposition of 634 Howard Avenue, seconded by Alder Furlow, roll call was taken, approved unanimously.

83 Lombard Street

Evan told the Board this property was also advertised as part of the RFP and LCI is selecting Douglas Allen Investment Group, LLC. They are proposing to develop 4-8 affordable rental housing units at 80% AMI with a minimum term of 20-years. They offered \$55,000 for the lot. Alder Santiago supports the sale of this lot which is located in his ward. The project will require zoning approval and City Plan site plan review. The applicant recently developed two new structures next to this site at the corner of Downing and Peck. They pulled all permits and completed their development. Seth asked about Peck Alley, Arlevia explained that this Alley provides backyard access to some houses along Peck and Lombard Street.

An adjacent property owner contacted LCI with some concerns. Mr. Wilson Reyes of 89 Lombard expressed concerns about the proposed density and also about an existing retaining wall. Mr. Reyes is concerned future development may disturb his wall and driveway. Alder Sarah Miller also reached out to Evan about Mr. Reyes' concerns. Evan told Alder Miller and Mr. Reyes that there are ample opportunities for public comment such as at LCI Board, the Board of Alders, the Zoning Board, and also the City Plan Commission. LCI supports the development of this site for affordable housing. This is only an approval for the LDA.

Nadine Horton made a motion to approve the disposition of 89 Lombard Street, seconded by Alder Furlow, roll call was taken, approved unanimously.

18 Mill River Street

Evan told the Board that this is a sliver lot sale to the adjacent property owner. One applicant is an owner occupant (Martinez) the other applicant is an LLC (Smart Properties, LLC). The Town Clerk, Michael Smart, is the principal member of the LLC and has filled out all disclosure forms required for this sale. Attorney Pinto has reviewed the sale and advised LCI that an ethics opinion is not required for this sale. The owner occupant pays \$0.25 per square foot and the LLC pays \$1.50 per square foot per the PAD Guidelines pricing for sliver lots. This lot has been incorporated into the adjacent properties for many years. The City became aware of this land being cared for by the adjacent property owners and Evan reached out to the property owners as we have done many times in the past. The land is fenced-in and cared-for by the adjacent property owners. Alder Furlow told the Board that Attorney Pinto should submit a letter as part of this submission stating that there is no conflict. LCI sees this disposition as a standard sliver lot sale.

Alder Furlow made a motion to approve the disposition of 18 Mill River Street subject to Attorney Pinto sending a letter to the Board of Alders stating there is no conflict of ethics, seconded by Nadine Horton, roll call was taken, approved unanimously.

13 Walnut Street

Evan told the Board this parcel is being split three-ways between two owner-occupants and a non-owner occupant. 15 Walnut, LLC is purchasing half of the lot at \$1.50 per square foot. Mr. Martinez and Mr. Carreno are acquiring portions that parallel their properties at the owner-occupied price of \$0.25 per square foot. No fences will be moved as part of this sale. The land is already being cared for by the applicants. Evan showed the Board maps of each portion to be conveyed. The lot is in close proximity to the previous disposition heard by the Board. The properties will go back on the tax rolls.

Seth Poole made a motion to approve the disposition of 13 Walnut Street, seconded by Nadine Horton, roll call was taken, approved unanimously.

Old Business / Discussion

Alder Furlow told the Board he needed to leave the meeting because he was attending two meetings at once.

Seth opened the discussion portion of the meeting.

Evan told the Board the PAD Guidelines are before LCI Board for review. Evan said the proposed changes are minimal. Evan highlighted some of the proposed updates: removing gender from the guidelines, adding a sentence about the Land Bank, updating the objectives, allowing the Development Administrator to sign contracts to purchase property subject to Board of Alders approval, eliminating the section about sales to religious organizations that violates RILUPA, and increasing the cost of sliver lot sales for commercial uses. The “objectives” have also been updated and “decreasing density” is being removed because we are increasing density. We are also proposing to increase the cost of commercial sliver lots to \$3.00 per square foot. Evan said the PAD committee did their due diligence over the last few months reviewing this document. The Guidelines should be updated every 5 years and it has been over 10 years since the last update.

Seth asked if we should be strengthening LDA’s as part of this process. Evan said the guidelines don’t touch on the LDA’s language. Seth would like to make LDA’s more ironclad so there are less loopholes or opportunities for litigation. Seth noted it might make sense to update the PAD Guidelines every 10 years when we review the Charter rather than doing it every 5 years as it currently reads.

Evan noted that Arlevia also left the meeting.

A motion to adjourn was made by Seth Poole, all were in favor.

Meeting adjourned 7:17 PM