

LCI Board Special Meeting Minutes
November 29, 2023 (Via Zoom)

PRESENT: Patricia Brett, Taneha Edwards, Nadine Horton, Addie Kimbrough, Seth Poole, Evan Trachten (LCI staff) Michael Pinto (Office of Corporation Counsel)
Absent: Hon. Richard Furlow, Hon. Ernie Santiago, Arlevia Samuel (Executive Director)

Meeting called to order at 6:04 P.M.

Roll call of members

Review of LCI Board meeting minutes from September 27, 2023. A motion to approve was made by Seth Poole, seconded Pat Brett, roll call of members was taken, approved unanimously.

New Business

192 Cedar Street

Evan told the Board that LCI proposes to sell this sliver lot to the adjacent owner occupants for \$0.25 per square foot for a purchase price of \$762.25. The lot is about 3,000 square feet. The applicant will utilize this area as a side yard. Evan asked the Board to add the applicant's wife's name (Danis D. Calzada-Cortes) to the approval because the application was filed solely in the husband's name. LCI didn't try to split the parcel and proposes to sell the entire lot to the applicants because they are owner-occupants, dividing the property wouldn't accomplish anything in this situation. The other abutting property is a three-family rental property owned by Mandy management.

Seth asked if there was a curb cut? Evan said no. If the applicants want to add a curb it will be at the applicant's expense. The applicant already has a driveway on the other side of the lot. Nadine asked about building a tiny house. Evan said the City is now supporting a policy change to allow building on sliver lots. The Development Administrator would like the LCI Board to add this to the PAD Guidelines which is on our agenda tonight. Evan said the Board could table the proposal while we discuss this potential policy change. There was discussion about developing ADU's on sliver lots. A motion was made, then modified to add Danis D. Calzada-Cortes' name to the application.

Seth Poole made a motion to approve the disposition of 192 Cedar Street and add Danis D. Calzada-Cortes to the disposition, seconded by Nadine Horton, roll call was taken, approved unanimously.

321-325 Dixwell Avenue

Evan told the Board LCI proposes to sell this vacant lot as a negotiated sale to the Elks Lodge for \$22,500. The applicant is relocating as part of the Dixwell Plaza redevelopment. LCI has been working with the Elks for several

years. At one point, LCI was trying to sell a vacant lot on County Street to the Elks, but they purchased a structure at 329 Dixwell Avenue via a private transaction. The City is proposing to sell the land at \$2.00 per square foot because the Elks worked with the City and were instrumental in the Dixwell Plaza Revitalization by being one of the first property owners to sell their property. The Elks proposed paying \$1.00, but the City negotiated a higher price because of our fiduciary duty. The lot was appraised at \$105,000. There is a letter of support from Alder Jeanette Morrison. The lot will be utilized for site control and parking. The Elks are in the process of obtaining Zoning approval as part of their relocation. Evan urged the Board's support. The Elks have been good neighbors and help the community, they will continue to do so at this new location.

Nadine told the Board that she will support the sale but has concerns because the reduced price given to the Elks. Nadine said we need to be more careful about giving away property far below its value. The City needs to not continue underselling property. Nadine doesn't want to set a precedent. Evan told the Board the Elks pay taxes and this property would be taxed. Evan said he agrees with Nadine, but in this case, because the City made a firm commitment to do everything in its power to assist with the relocation, the price is appropriate.

Taneha asked if the Elks were building an addition at 329 Dixwell Avenue? Evan said the Elks are expanding the structure at 329 Dixwell Avenue and will utilize our lot for parking. Evan said the Elks paid \$180,000 to purchase 329 Dixwell in December of 2021. Addie asked about the Elks addition and how high it would be? Evan didn't know the exact height but said he believes it's two stories tall.

Nadine Horton made a motion to approve the disposition of 321-325 Dixwell Avenue, seconded by Addie Kimbrough, roll call was taken, approved unanimously.

333 James Street

Evan told the Board this is a sliver lot sale to the adjacent owner occupant. The City sold the applicant a few feet of this lot many years ago so he could build a second floor egress staircase. The City explored creating a green space at this site, but nothing materialized. This is a corner lot and not conducive to development. Evan met with Alder Herrera about this sale and the Alder supports this disposition as long as the applicant fences the lot. Evan noted the applicant has done some maintenance to the lot over the years. Evan said there is a garden a block down across from Chabaso bakery. The lot is about 2700 square feet.

Nadine Horton made a motion to approve the disposition of 333 James Street with the requirement that the lot be fenced, seconded by Pat Brett, roll call was taken, approved unanimously.

145 Portsea Street

Evan told the Board this is a sliver lot sale to the adjacent owner occupant. The parcel is about 10' of frontage and serves as a driveway. The property is already paved and used by the applicant. A portion of the lot was previously sold to the other abutting property owner. This is a classic sliver lot sale of a 1100 square foot lot for \$290.00.

Seth made a motion to approve the disposition of 145 Portsea Street, seconded by Addie Kimbrough, roll call was taken, approved unanimously.

PAD Guidelines / Motion to amend

Evan told the Board the Development Administrator supports changes to sliver lots that will allow for the development of affordable housing and owner-occupied housing. LCI would like the Board to consider selling sliver lots at \$7.50 per square foot to develop owner occupied single-family properties with a 10-year occupancy deed restriction and allowing two-unit owner occupied properties with a 20-year deed restricted rental unit at 80% AMI. Additionally, LCI proposed to allow people who already purchased sliver lots to amend their LDA's and pay \$10,000 to develop a single family, or \$15,000 to develop a two family, subject to the above occupancy requirements.

Nadine asked about the other proposed changes: Evan noted the removal of gender, removal of the objective to reduce density, adding the Land Bank, the ability of LCI Director or Development Administrator to sign a purchase and sale contract subject to BoA approval. Nadine asked about developing structures. Evan reviewed the proposed regulations. The proposed terms are similar to sales to non-profits: 10-year occupancy requirement and 20-year affordable term at 80% AMI. Evan noted that ADU's and tiny houses could be developed. Evan wants the Board to have time to review this idea. LCI believes these changes will act as a catalyst towards the development of additional owner-occupied and affordable units. Evan noted that a tiny house is a single-family home. Zoning regulations will prevent overdevelopment of these parcels. We want permanent structures and investments in our community, not houses on wheels.

Evan said LCI needs the Board to provide feedback to refine this concept. Seth asked that LCI seek the best practices across the State. Evan said the City Plan Department is leading the City's policy about tiny houses and ADU's. Evan will invite City Plan to a future meeting to discuss this topic. Addie asked if this topic is related to the tiny house development on Rosette Street? Evan said no, the City has been thinking about allowing sliver lots to be developed for some time. The tiny houses on Rosette Street are not code compliant structures. The City wants permanent code compliant structures to be developed, not temporary structures without proper permits. Evan noted a local non-profit developed a two-unit tiny house on Scranton Street. Evan said Rosette Street needed a zoning review and variance to increase the density, prior to obtaining a building permit.

Our proposed changes would not allow someone to put several tiny houses on a sliver lot. LCI Board will review this concept and discuss at a future meeting. **No action taken**

LCI meeting dates and election of officers

The dates for 2024 are listed. There was a bullet point typo that said 2023, but all of the dates listed are 2024 and 2025 so there is no issue.

Seth said he intends to take some time away from the Board after April 2024 when his term expires. LCI needs to nominate a new chair and vice chair. Nadine noted that her term expired some time ago and would like to be reappointed. Evan said the Charter allows members to sit for 10-years, as long as expired members haven't hit the 10-year limit. Expired members are replaced when new members are appointed to the Board. Pat would like a list of members who are on the LCI Board. Pat asked who was eligible to be chair? Evan will send a list to the members.

The Board discussed the legislative process to get on a board. Nadine talked about the process, and the fact that the Board of Alders decides who gets on a committee. Once on a board, officers are elected by the membership. Seth noted we don't have any members from the Hill, Fair Haven, or Quinnipiac. Pat also asked what qualifications are required to be eligible to be the Chair? The Board would like more time to think about this topic. A Special meeting in December could occur. Nadine also noted that Board members aren't paid and give a lot of their time to the City when serving. People serve on boards because they love their neighborhood and City. Addie said she recently ran for Alder in Ward 20 and has lived in New Haven for 40 years and cares about New Haven. Taneha said a social setting would be good for members to get to know each other and be a community within ourselves. **No action taken.**

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

Meeting adjourned 7:45 PM