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Mayor

New Haven Development Commission

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Michael Piscitelli
*Economic
Development
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**Meeting Minutes
Regular Meeting
Wednesday 7/9/2025,
In Person/Online Meeting**

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT:

**Dirk Bergemann
Doug Coffin
Manmita Dutta
Dan McLeggon
Charles Negaro Sr.
Casey Pickett
Miguel Pittman
Caroline Tanbee Smith, Aldermanic Representative**

City and EDC Staff Present:

Mike Piscitelli, Economic Development Administrator
Carlos Eyzaguirre, Deputy Economic Development Administrator
Malachi Bridges, Economic Development Officer
John Ward, Special Counsel to Economic Development Administration
Mike Pinto, Assistant Corporation Counsel

Guests

Andrea Kretchmer, Xenolith
Brendan McBride, Gilbane
Rebecca Wiener, NHV resident

Call to Order

The meeting was opened by Comm. Pittman at approximately 8:40 am.

Introduction

All attendees of the meeting introduced themselves by name and their personal/professional roles as they pertain to the city.

Approval of the Previous Minutes

Minutes were unanimously approved (Comm. Pittman made the motion; seconded by Comm. McLeggon; unanimously approved)

Gilbane “State and George Project” DLDA Resolution (183 State Street and 253 State Street)

- Mr. Eyzaguirre discussed how the Development Commission has an official purview on the Development and Land Disposition (“DLDA”) for this project due to its location in the Downtown Municipal Development Plan area and introduced Brendan McBride and Andrew Kretchmer from Gilbane and Xenolith, respectively, who are the developers of this site.
- Mr. Eyzaguirre then mentioned how the development project before the Commission is funded by \$6 million received from DECD to realign the State Street roadway. This infrastructure project is currently underway and will allow for the future development of existing parking lots on State Street.
- Re: the roadway project, Mr. Eyzaguirre noted there is currently a detour on State Street North until the construction of the Beacon Project at 300 State Street is completed. Furthermore, the new traffic patterns should be enabled in the next few weeks.
- Re: the development project, Mr. Eyzaguirre noted the City’s excitement about these new development sites and that the Gilbane project will be the first one into construction. The DLDA before the Commission is also currently with the Board of Alders who have final approval authority. Based on the legislative timeline, staff is hoping for approval in September 2025.
- Mr. Eyzaguirre then showed the layout of the two development sites enabled by the State Street roadway work (labeled A1 and A2). The proposed Gilbane sites which run on State Street roughly from Fair St to Chapel St. A rendering was displayed of what the completed project will look like which will include 2 buildings and ~400 units with a significant portion of them affordable (25%) per the DLDA.
- Mr. Eyzaguirre then showed a timeline pertaining to the parcel transfers and DLDA approval.
- A member of the Commission asked if the City has full title to all the proposed development sites and Mr. Eyzaguirre responded, assuring him that the City does own all the parcels in question.
- Mr. Eyzaguirre explained that the smaller of the two parcels comprising the site will be the first phase of a two-phase project and will have 150 residential units and retail on the lower floor (this building will be called “The Frontier”; the second phase of the project will be called “The Iron”).
- Mr. Eyzaguirre also mentioned that the Commission will ultimately be presented with a DLDA at a future date for the other newly-created development site which is located on George Street between South Orange Street and State Street. This project will be developed by a different development team
- There was an open discussion between multiple participants in the room regarding the physical location of parcels A1 and site A2. Mr. Piscitelli explained in more detail which site was which.
- Mr. Eyzaguirre then showed some of the project milestones that show the City’s readiness to move forward with a DLDA. These milestones include the title work on the designated parcels, the state funding in place for the affordable housing component of the project, the environmental assessments, the full drawings, the “deal points” in the DLDA as well as the marketing and property management plans once the project is completed.

- Mr. Eyzaguirre then discussed some of the milestones after the proposed approval of the DLDA, which include the property closing with Gilbane and Xenolith later this year, the fulfillment of all permits not more than 30 days after closing, and construction deadlines.
- Mr. Eyzaguirre also reminded Commissioners that all provisions of sections 12 1/2 and 12 1/4 of the City's Code of Ordinances will be followed on this project. These pertain to the hiring of small contractors on the project as well as ensuring women and minorities are a significant part of the project's workforce.
- Ms. Kretchmer and Mr. McBride then went over the program summary for Parcel A1 and Parcel A2, discussing the broad range of income levels that these developments will target. Mr. McBride also expressed his excitement for the progress of this project and the city's initiative to reactivate these sites.
- Mr. McBride and Mr. Eyzaguirre proceeded to wrap up the presentation with another brief look at the development timeline.
- Comm. Pittman then opened the floor for any questions from the commissioners.
- A question was brought up about the legal purview of the Commission for this project. Mr. Piscitelli responded and explained that Municipal Development Plans essentially replaced the Redevelopment Agency as the governing platform for property acquisitions and dispositions. Mr. Piscitelli proceeded to give a broader history of these types of plans and their previous usage.
- Other questions asked by the Commission pertained to total development cost for the project and if there was a way to limit the number of parking lots and increase the green space or incorporate some parks into the new developments. Mr. Piscitelli responded that there is currently an open discussion about the project's parking needs. He then asked the development team to talk in more detail about the budget. Mr. McBride noted the first phase will be ~\$65 million and the second phase ~ 150 million with similar "capital stacks" for both phases.
- A question was directed at Mr. Piscitelli about how the City determined the \$1.2 million land sale price. Mr. Piscitelli responded that the City team reviewed the Grand List, appraisals and took into consideration the project is phased and could be prorated should the second phase not proceed. A request was made to talk more about that and Mr. Piscitelli then explained that the City is not going to close on the full site at one time as th project is seperated into 2 phases.
- Comm. Pittman restated his question expressing his confusion about selling 3 acres of land in a prime location for \$1.2 million.
- Mr. Piscitelli responded by saying that there are a lot of factors that the City must consider when determining a sale price especially the complicated financing required to build affordable units. In this case there are three main sources: the Connecticut Housing Finance Authority's (CHFA) tax credit program, the state's new "Build for CT" workforce housing initiative, and support from the newly formed CT Municipal Redevelopment Authority. Another factor is the ever-increasing construction costs
- Comm. Pickett asked Mr. Piscitelli to describe the project in the case of public interest. Mr. Piscitelli responded by citing the enabling value of this site and how it unlocks other districts such as the Mill River and Union Station areas.
- Comm. McCleggon asked about the project milestones, noting that Phase 1 project goals seem more easily attainable in comparison to Phase 2 and would Phase 2 ever come to fruition?
- Mr. Piscitelli assured him that the City has worked with its counsel and can protect itself if Phase 2 does not occur in a timely manner.

- Comm. Pittman wondered how the City settled on a 25% affordability benchmark for this project given the high demand for affordable housing. Mr. Piscitelli noted the 25 % affordable housing set-aside was shaped by the funding tools available to support the project (see above).
- A question was asked about the potential problems future tenants might have with paying even the affordable unit rates and what percentage of the Average Median Income (“AMI”) is attached to the affordable units.
- Mr. McBride noted that the affordable rents will be set for the households at rates ranging between 30-80% of AMI and a households’ rent cannot be more than 30% of gross income.
- Mr. Bridges gave a brief explanation about AMI and what the different levels of AMI mean.
- A questions was asked about how the 45 “workforce housing” units would work. Mr. Piscitelli noted that these would be part of The Iron building program and are part of the Build for CT funding.
- Comm Pittman expressed his discomfort in voting on this project at this time and suggested potentially tabling the resolution while setting up a separate special meeting to discuss further. Several commissioners disagreed, citing the need to get this project moving while agreeing in part that they would like to continue to learn more about the project as it progresses.
- Comm. Pittman questioned potential confusion arising from the different presentations given to the Commission over the last 6 months.
- Comm. Bergemann responded that no project can be contained to just one presentation as it requires multiple rounds of revision. He noted the tradeoff with selling the property at a lower price, connecting neighborhoods and the long-term benefit is more valuable to the city than a short-term profit.
- Alder Tanbee Smith registered her excitement about this project and readiness to move it forward. She added a suggestion regarding long term revenue to the City as a result of the project and ways to more formally demonstrate this to the Commission.
- A question was asked about the role of the Commission as it pertains to sale price. Mr. Piscitelli noted the role of the Commission is geographical.
- Mr. McBride added that the first phase is the most financially feasible and it is important to the development team to get the project started as quickly as possible to rising costs and other unpredictable economic factors.
- Mr. Piscitelli expressed the City team’s desire for a positive vote today, and reiterated the legislative timeline of this project.
- Discussion then centered on the two different conversations occurring, one pertaining to the specific project and one on how advisory role of the Commission.
- Mr. Piscitelli applauded the progress this Commission has made this year and the constructive conversations on development policy that it has sparked.
- Comm. Pickett agreed and added that while the Commission continues to need to find ways to be more involved, that does not mean they should delay the vote.
- Comm. Pittman asked if there were other concerns and seeing none, he entertained a motion to approve the Resolution in support of the DLDA. The motion was made by Comm. Negaro and seconded by Comm. Dutta.
- Mr. Eyzaguirre went over the Resolution a final time.
- It was noted that once approved the actual substance of the Resolution cannot change.

- Mr. Eyzaguirre conducted the roll call. There was a unanimous vote from all Commissioners present and the motion carried.
- It was agreed by the Commission to go over the regular economic development updates at a another meeting.

Adjournment:

- Comm. Pittman asked for a motion to close. The motion was moved by Comm. Pickett and seconded by Comm. Negaro. All Commissioners voted in favor. The meeting was adjourned at 9:45 am