



Justin Elicker
Mayor

New Haven Development Commission

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Meeting Minutes
Regular Meeting
Wednesday, 8/13/2025,
In Person/Online Meeting

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT:

Dirk Bergemann
Doug Coffin
Manmita Dutta
Dan McLeggon
Charles Negaro Sr.

City and EDC Staff Present:

Carlos Eyzaguirre, Deputy Economic Development Administrator
Malachi Bridges, Economic Development Officer
Mark Wilson, Manager Neighborhood Commercial Development

Guests

Allan Appel, Reporter, NHV Independent
Rebecca Wiener, NHV resident

Call to Order

The meeting was opened by Mr. Eyzaguirre at approximately 8:36 am.

Approval of the Previous Minutes

Minutes were unanimously tabled for next month's meeting to allow for more time to review independently

Mill River: Imagine Next Update

- Mr. Eyzaguirre begins the conversation with a focus on English Station. The City recently announced its intent to buy the 8.6 acre former coal burning power plant property (known as "Ball Island") and convert it into a public park with a public pool and other potential water features. This is part of the larger Mill River strategy enabled in part by \$5million in Urban Act funding from DECD, State of Connecticut. The completion of the Mill River Trail and

introduction of more mixed-use development with an emphasis on housing on currently underutilized sites in the Mill River district is also a major portion of the City's initiative.

- Ms. Weiner applauded the City's efforts in Mill River and followed up with a question about potential housing development at English Station.
- Mr. Eyzaguirre responded by noting that it is the City's intention to demolish the former power plant on Ball Island. He also discussed the City's belief that a public park is the best option for the site given the environmental issues at the site while emphasizing the importance of having a large outdoor public pool for residents to use, something that doesn't currently exist in the city.
- Mr. Eyzaguirre proceeded to go over the timeline of this project including some of the enabling projects like property acquisition and trail improvements enabled by the Urban Act funding .
- Mr. Bridges circled back to the housing question posed by Ms Weiner noting that English Station is prone to flooding and could be significantly impacted in 50 years due to sea level rise making housing potentially less desirable.
- Re some of the ongoing work in the district, Mr. Eyzaguirre mentioned the City's progress in potentially moving the salt piles operated by Gateway Terminal on sites directly adjacent (Wolcott St and Grand Ave) to English Station which would relocate them to more suitable industrial sites in town and open the current sites for clean up and redevelopment.
- Ms. Weiner agreed the "salt pile" land would be suitable for housing.
- Continuing with the timeline, Mr. Eyzaguirre then presented "test-fits" or early renderings of what some of the underutilized Mill River parcels could look like once redeveloped.
- Mr. Eyzaguirre then addressed UI's public timeline for English Station highlighting that the \$30M from the partial consent order for UI to clean up the property is not enough to fully remediate the site.
- Commissioners asked for clarity on ownership of Ball Island and staff noted it is comprised of two privately owned parcels. The City's intention is to acquire both parcels via friendly acquisition if possible.
- Mr. Eyzaguirre proceeded to show an early conceptual plan for the park and discussed the size of the pool, highlighting the importance of it being large enough for multiple different uses.
- Mr. Eyzaguirre added that another important reason for building a pool had to do with the fact that many children growing up in New Haven lacked access to pools (and swimming lessons) and lacked the ability to swim. With accidental drowning one of the leading causes of childhood deaths, this is an opportunity to equip New Haven's youth with an important skill that not only increases enjoyment of the water, provides exercise, etc. but could also save their life.
- Ms. Weiner added that many private pools in the area have lanes boxed off for exercise purposes only. Mr. Eyzaguirre responded that there will be opportunities for community input on the programming of the pool later in the process.
- In response to a question about project timeline from Mr Appel, Mr. Eyzaguirre stated that the goal was to have the park built in ~5 years.
- In response to concerns from the Commission about flooding on Ball Island, Mr Eyzaguirre assured them that the City's engineering team is experienced in dealing with waterfront projects and would ensure it was safely addressed.
- Mr Eyzaguirre transitioned into talking about the reauthorization of a Mill River Municipal Development Plan and how initiatives like the park would also enable other types of development

in the Mill River neighborhood more generally and directed Commissioners to the new webpage on Mill River on the City's website.

- Discussion ensued on the benefits of creating a Municipal Development Plan for Mill River including an overarching vision for the district and the powers it grants the City with regard to property acquisition and accessing funding.
- Discussion then centered on explaining the various litigation occurring at Ball Island between multiple parties including UI, the State of CT and PURA and when/how it will be resolved.
- Commissioners were interested in the pending rezoning of Ball Island from industrial to parkland. Staff noted this could be an early win that demonstrates the City's commitment to the park project.
- A follow-up question was asked about the eminent domain at the site, and Mr. Eyzaguirre responded that the owners have been responsive thus far and there was no discussion of it at this time.
- Commissioner Negaro expressed concern about the City's timeline for the park project due to the volume of current City initiatives. Mr Eyzaguirre assured the Commission that this is a governing priority for the City and would have adequate staff resources.

Economic Development Updates

- Mr. Eyzaguirre highlighted last weekend's successful Puerto Rican festival on the Green. In recent years the City has taken a lead role in sponsoring this and similar cultural events like the Apizza Fest (see below).
- Mr. Eyzaguirre discussed the City's collaboration with the Broken Umbrella Theatre and other not for profits in the City as they attempt to access state funding through programs like the Community Investment Fund (CIF).
- Mr. Eyzaguirre encouraged the Commission to support the upcoming Apizza Fest and New Haven Grand Prix on the Green. This year there has been significant national interest as there will be an attempt to break the Guinness World Record for largest pizza party and world-renowned DJ Funkmaster Flex will be on hand.
- Mr. Eyzaguirre highlighted the ribbon cutting at the City-led Cofield Estates affordable townhome development on MLK Blvd. This is the culmination of years of community driven work to "re-stitch" the Legion Ave neighborhood back together after it was demolished during the Redevelopment era and is a significant milestone for the City and Hill and West River residents
- Mr. Eyzaguirre informed the Commission that the selected developers for the River Street RFQ would be announced soon.

Discussion

Commissioners asked about the timeline for redevelopment of the former Quinnipiac STEM school as well as the former Church Street South project (Union Square). Mr Eyzaguirre responded that an RFP for surplus schools would be live soon via OpenGov (City Purchasing site) and that future Commission meetings would focus more on the Union Square project

Adjournment:

- Mr Eyzaguirre asked Commissioner Dutta to entertain a motion to close which was unanimously approved around 9:45 am.