

## NEW HAVEN CITY PLAN COMMISSION ADVISORY REPORT

**RE:** 196 WINTHROP AVENUE - DISPOSITION  
**REPORT:** 1520-12  
**ADVICE:** Approval

### PROJECT SUMMARY

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**Purchaser:** Mutual Housing Association of South Central Connecticut, Inc.  
**Disposition Price:** \$1,000  
**Site:** 6,534 sq. ft.  
**Zone:** RM-1  
**Use:** Vacant lot will be utilized for the construction of a single-family house, *with an additional efficiency unit*, by a non-profit housing agency.  
**Financing:** Non-profit  
**Subsidy:** None  
**City Lead:** Evan Trachten  
**Agency:** Livable City Initiative  
**Phone:** 203-946-8373

### BACKGROUND

The property is currently a vacant city-owned lot. It is to be sold to a non-profit agency for the construction of a single-family house, with an additional efficiency unit intended to provide a rental income to the home-owner thus making the unit more affordable. Zoning approval was required due to the average lot width of 43 feet where a 50-foot minimum lot width is required in the RM-1 zone. This approval was granted by the Board of Zoning Appeals on July 12, 2016 (BZA #16-49-V). The planning considerations for this BZA action are identified below.

### PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

The staff report for BZA #16-49-V reads in part: "While it is difficult to fully accept the argument that limiting property to a single family dwelling represents legal hardship given that the applicant purchased the lot in full recognition of its limitations, it is also difficult to understand the connection between the width of a legal non-conforming lot and the number of dwelling units permitted on that lot, particularly when a proposed structure meets all other elements of the zoning ordinance. Density is most typically regulated by property area rather than property shape and at over 6,000 sf the property would be entitled to one conventional dwelling unit (3,500 sf of lot area) and one efficiency unit (2,500 sf)... The intent of the lot width requirement is to provide a reasonable degree of spatial uniformity in a residential neighborhood, however as a legal non-conforming lot some deviation from that spatial uniformity is allowed... It would be difficult to assert that the public health, safety, and general welfare of the community would be at all impacted by this application given the lack of a substantial and genuinely meaningful connection between lot width and allowable density."

### ADVICE:

Approval

**ADOPTED:** July 20, 2016  
Adam Marchand  
Acting Chair

**ATTEST:**   
Karyn M. Gilvarg, AIA  
Executive Director