

PAD MEETING MINUTES
September 21, 2022

PRESENT: Hon. Gerald M. Antunes, BoA; Hon. Anna Festa, BoA, Steve Fontana, Economic Development; Nate Hougrand, City Plan; Evan Trachten, LCI; Clay Williams, Business Development

Absent: Maurine Villani, Tax Office

Meeting called to order at 3:09 PM

Roll Call of Committee members

A motion to approve the PAD minutes from August 17, 2022 was made by Steve Fontana, seconded by Clay Williams, roll call was taken, minutes approved unanimously.

New Business

565 Columbus Avenue

Evan told the committee the City is proposing to sell this sliver lot to an adjacent church named Casa de Oracion y Adoracion as a non-profit sale at \$1.00 per square foot. The church has been trying to purchase this land for many years. The City's policy was to sell sliver lots at fair market value to religious entities, but Corporation Counsel advised staff to treat religious entities as non-profits and sell sliver lots at \$1.00 per square foot, the lot is 4,356 square feet (building lots are sold at market value). There is a federal law known as RLUIPA (Religious Land Use And Institutionalized Persons Act) that is the justification for the change and reasoning from Corporation Counsel. The other adjacent property is a vacant and blighted garage so LCI didn't offer to split this lot. Alder Rodriguez provided a letter of support for this sale. The church owns the adjacent land at 563 Columbus Avenue. The land will be used as a play space for children and for parking.

Nate noted that improvements to the grassy lot such as paving would be subject to further review by City Plan if 10 or more parking spaces are created. Evan noted if the church has a big event it serves as overflow parking on the grassy area. They have a paved area for parking towards the right of their site. Alder Antunes asked if the land will be tax exempt. Evan told the committee it would be tax exempt.

A motion was made by Steve Fontana, seconded by Clay Williams, roll call was taken, approved unanimously

272 Davenport Avenue

Evan told the committee this proposal is to evenly split a sliver lot between two property owners. The price per square foot is \$1.50 because the applicants are non-owner-occupants. The land will be used as a driveway. The applicants will work together to create a common driveway along the front of the lot. They will grant each other cross easements over the front portion of the lot. The lot is 25 feet wide and 110 feet deep. The applicants will need to install a curb cut and modify the existing fencing. The lot is not buildable because it only has 25 feet of frontage. Off-street parking is needed in this area because there is a lot of density. Each property is a multi-family property so taking a few cars off-street is good.

Alder Festa asked who will maintain this area and what are the guarantees? Evan told the committee each owner will be responsible for a portion of the land based on the LDA. Evan believes both property owners are responsible and have been keeping up with maintenance. LCI

could use Housing Code or Anti Blight enforcement if there were problems but that is unlikely based on the applicant's history of being responsible property owners. Nate noted that parking regulations require creating a planting buffer along the driveway to shield the properties from light. Evan believes the first fifty feet of the lot will be a common driveway and then cars will pull into their respective back yards for parking. Alder Festa asked about the taxes for these parcels. Evan told the committee a sliver lot abatement will occur with a 10-year exemption followed by a 5-year phase-in. The property owners land value does increase greatly when additional square footage is added to their existing parcel. Alder Festa was concerned about this policy and the ramifications. Alder Antunes asked if we could vote on this sale as one item, Evan said yes.

A motion was made by Clay Williams, seconded by Steve Fontana, roll call was taken, approved unanimously

64 Elliott Street

Evan told the committee LCI is proposing to sell this sliver lot to 62 Elliott, LLC for \$1.50 per square foot. The applicant recently renovated the adjacent property at 62 Elliott Street and converted it to a three-family property. This land will provide additional yard area. LCI didn't offer this land to the abutting properties on Sylvan Avenue because the City likes to maintain conforming property lines based on previous sales and experience splitting lots. LCI contacted Alder Hurt about this sale. The applicant owns 2 other properties on Elliott Street. The lot has 30 feet of frontage so it's not a buildable.

A motion was made by Steve Fontana, seconded by Alder Antunes, roll call was taken, approved unanimously

281 Newhall Street

Evan told the committee LCI is proposing to sell this sliver lot to the adjacent owner occupants at 402 and 406 Huntington Street for \$0.25 per square foot. Alder Antunes told the committee he once lived at 402 Huntington Street. Evan told the committee these parcels have smaller back yards than the other properties on Huntington Street and can use the additional land for yard area. The split is not even, their portions will match their existing lot width. The Alder is supportive of the sale. It is important to support the homeowner and allow them to gain a little more land. There is a community garden at 49 Bassett Street that never expanded to this site, so the Alder is supportive of the applicants putting this land to use as yard area.

A motion was made by Alder Antunes, seconded by, Alder Festa, roll call was taken, approved unanimously

PAD Guidelines / Discussion

Evan told the committee that no movement has occurred since his last update in July. Evan talked to Mike Pinto and he will try to have further conversations with Al Lucas and Leadership. Clay asked if we want to get rid of the sliver lot tax abatement, given sliver lots are sold at a discounted price. Evan noted the tax abatement is a product of the Urban Homestead Act, this is not in the PAD Guidelines, and therefore may require other legislative action. Clay will ask Pat Solomon to provide us information about sliver lot tax abatements. Clay and Alder Festa think we should examine this issue given buyers receive discount pricing on sliver parcels. Evan noted the assessed value of these parcels is much greater than the added value to a buyers existing parcel.

A motion to adjourn was made by Clay Williams, seconded by Steve Fontana, all were in favor.

Meeting Adjourned 3:39 P.M.