

LCI Board Special Meeting Minutes
January 25, 2023 (Via Zoom)

PRESENT: Patricia Brett, Taneha Edwards, Nadine Horton, Seth Poole, Hon. Richard Furlow, Michael Pinto (Office of Corporation Counsel), Arlevia Samuel (Executive Director, Evan Trachten (LCI staff), Frank D’Amore (LCI Deputy Director), Mark Stroud (LCI Deputy Director)

Absent: Hon. Ernie Santiago

Guests: Nora Grace-Flood, Crystal Gooding

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

Roll call of Members: Pat Brett, Taneha Edwards, Seth Poole, Nadine Horton

Review of LCI Board meeting minutes from December 14, 2022 Special Meeting. A motion to approve was made by Nadine Horton, seconded by Pat Brett, roll call of members was taken, approved unanimously.

New Business

Acquisition of 262 Dixwell Avenue, 263 Dixwell Avenue, 265 Dixwell Avenue, 269 Dixwell Avenue

Evan told the Board the City of New Haven proposes to acquire a portfolio of properties on Dixwell Avenue for \$1,300,000 from affiliates of Ocean Management. LCI has confirmed the Main Streets funding must be spent by April 30, 2023. Evan told the Board LCI received appraisals and the value of the properties was \$1,175,000. Mike Pinto noted there was a typo listing the value as \$1,170,000 but the correct value is \$1,175,000. The gap between the appraised value and the purchase price is \$125,000. The portfolio consists of 2, occupied two-family properties located at 262 Dixwell Avenue and 263 Dixwell Avenue, and two vacant mixed-use properties located at 265 Dixwell Avenue and 269 Dixwell Avenue. The City is proposing to do a simultaneous acquisition and disposition of the two-family properties to local non-profit Beulah Land Development at market value (\$495,000). The City will meet with the community to discuss the reuse of the mixed-use properties which will be rehabilitated in the future with an affordable housing component.

Nadine asked a few questions: What is the history of code violations at 262 & 263 Dixwell Avenue. Frank D’Amore told the Board there are no anti-bligh violations. Evan told the Board he did some research and 262 has not had any Housing Code violations while owned by Ocean Management. 263 Dixwell was cited for exterior violations during a spring sweep in 2022 but the issues were resolved. Nadine asked for the sale price for 262 & 263 Dixwell Avenue, Arlevia said Beulah Land Development would pay the appraised value of \$495,000 for both properties. Nadine asked about 265 Dixwell the historic jazz club the Monterey, will this property be used as a jazz club like the Mayor stated at a

recent press event? Arlevia told the Board the City will do community engagement to determine the reuse of the mixed-use properties at 265 & 269 Dixwell Avenue. The community will drive the reuse of the property. After the engagement process, the City may do an RFP or develop the property. Nadine asked who will maintain the property. Arlevia said LCI will maintain the property, we have a property management division that maintains City owned parcels. Frank D'Amore said the cost would be minimal but couldn't put an exact dollar figure to keep it clean and secured. Arlevia noted the intention is to turn the properties around quickly and not sit on the properties. Nadine asked how many apartments are at 269 Dixwell Avenue. Evan said there were 3 apartments based on his site inspection: 1 on the first floor (rear area), one on the second floor, and one on the third floor. Evan noted it appeared the units were set up as a rooming house with locks on each bedroom door. Are there any plans to do apartments on the first floor? Arlevia said as part of the community engagement process the use of the property would be determined.

Crystal Gooding asked about 265 Dixwell Avenue's exterior? Frank said we would not alter the exterior during our property management. Crystal said the roof is in poor condition, would we be addressing it? Frank said we may tarp the roof, but he hasn't been inside to see the damage. Crystal said she was inside about two months ago, and the sheetrock was falling from the ceiling on the third floor. Will the City seek historic funds to fix the property? Arlevia said we will explore this type of funding. LCI will be marketing the community engagement process via the Board of Education, Mayor's weekly blast, the Community Management team, we will be doing a lot of outreach to engage the community.

Nadine asked if we are trying to renegotiate the purchase price at the appraised value of \$1,175,000? Arlevia said she discussed this with Ocean Management and they are not willing to go below \$1,300,000. Arlevia said their original price was \$1,800,000 and she negotiated down to \$1,300,000. Alder Furlow joined the meeting, he was attending an education finance meeting at the same time as LCI Board. Seth gave a quick recap of the meeting.

Alder Furlow said the Board of Alders can amend the price and allow Arlevia to keep trying to negotiate a lower price. Attorney Pinto noted the Board has plenary powers and can make changes on the floor of the Board. Arlevia appreciated the offer, but they are not budging based on a few conversations. If we don't purchase the property another developer will take the site. This is an investment in the community. Evan told the Board, the \$125,000 gap over the appraised value is a small premium when you look at the percentage of the total value. The owner has said it's \$1,300,000 or no deal. Evan believes local developers would be happy to pay the appraised value and the City is getting a fair deal. The City needs to gain site control to continue the revitalization of Dixwell Avenue. Attorney Pinto noted the numbers are out there and the City risks losing the deal if the Board approves the sale below \$1,300,000. Nadine wants to get the best deal for our tax-payer money. Pat asked if the Alders can go up or down on the price. Alder Furlow said the Board will not go up on the price. Attorney Pinto said the Board of Alders can change the price, but the sale

must be approved at LCI Board prior to going to the Board of Alders for final action. This proposal had a workshop at the Board of Alder last week.

A motion was made by Seth Poole to approve the acquisition of the properties for \$1,300,000, seconded by Alder Furlow, roll call was taken, approved (4 yes votes and 1 no vote by Nadine Horton)

Old Business / Discussion

Seth opened the discussion. Evan said the PAD Guidelines have been submitted to the PAD Committee for review. The item was tabled at the PAD Committee and they will come to the LCI Board over the next few months.

Seth asked about the status of the new Neighborhood Specialists. Arlevia said the posting closed last Friday and Arlevia and Frank will interview candidates shortly.

Nadine asked about the ongoing issues at 311 Blake Street. Nadine received an email from the Blake Street Tenants Union. Nadine forwarded the email to LCI staff and the LCI Board. Nadine read the email into the record. The tenants have not received follow up from LCI. Deputy Stroud updated the Board: One violation went to warrant, and there is currently only one open issue at this address. Nadine asked where to direct future complaints? Arlevia said to call (203)946-7090 or email housingcode@newhavenct.gov. Seth also noted the Quinnipiac East Management team has not had an LCI representative. Frank noted the City does not recognize this group; they are a spin-off from the original management team. This group is not the official management team. Maggy Fernandez is the Neighborhood Specialist for this area.

A motion to adjourn was made by Taneha, seconded by Pat Brett, all were in favor, approved unanimously.

Meeting adjourned 6:55 PM