



Justin Elicker  
Mayor

## New Haven Development Commission

165 Church Street, New Haven, Connecticut  
06510

Phone: (203) 946-2366 Fax: (203) 946-2391



Michael Piscitelli  
Economic  
Development  
Administrator

Meeting Notes  
Regular Meeting  
Wednesday, May 10, 2023  
Virtual Zoom-Based Meeting

### COMMISSIONERS PRESENT:

Anthony Sagnella (Chair)  
Sarah Miller, Alder Ward 14, Aldermanic Representative

### City Staff Present:

Michael Piscitelli, Economic Development Administrator  
Carlos Eyzaguirre, Deputy Economic Development Administrator  
Courtney Hendricson, Deputy ED-ARPA  
Barbara Malmberg, EDC of New Haven  
Malachi Bridges, Economic Development Officer  
Steve Fontana, Deputy Director Economic Development  
Helen Rosenberg, Economic Development Officer

### Guests:

Dan McLeggon, CivicPlus

**Call to Order:** Meeting was opened by Mr. Eyzaguirre.

### Approval of the Previous Minutes

Minutes were tabled due to lack of quorum.

### River Street MDP

- Mr. Eyzaguirre opened with a general overview of the meeting, focusing the meeting's attention on the River Street Municipal Development Plan area in which the Development Commission has a specific purview on, in that land ventures within the area require a vote from the Development Commission. As new businesses are established and new initiatives take hold, it is of utmost importance to remain timely in their updates.
- Mr. Fontana introduces two specific project, namely the ArtsToFrames company and the on-going situation at the 198 River Street property which has experienced severe environmental



InfoNewHaven.com

203. 946.2366 Phone / 203. 946.2391 Fax

contamination. Mr. Fontana expresses his excitement in that, “there is growth down there [River Street], and there is opportunity down there.”

- Mr. Fontana begins by introducing AirToFrames (ATF), a company based in Brooklyn, New York which moved to New Haven in 2019 and acquired the former Von Roll property at 128-166 Chapel Street. AirToFrames is a growing business which customizes home decoration and framing services. Ms. Rosenberg takes over to describe that before the Board of Alder is a request to approve the application for cleanup funds for 112 Chapel Street, the location adjacent to AirToFrames. This would support the development of 128 Chapel Street and allow another 15-20 job positions to be opened at the company which Ms. Rosenberg describes as a “positive place to work.” Mr. Piscitelli continues in detail that the application to the DECD for the Brownfields funding is pending before the Board of Alders and that this commission will later be asked to convey the property to ArtsToFrames for a quick turnaround in building.
- Regarding the property of 198 River Street, Ms. Rosenberg first highlights that 34 Lloyd Street was bought by the city in 2005 to consolidate its operations. 198 River St was bought in 2006, however numerous issues have arisen at this location, including a fire and a demolition permit being taken out. Since then, numerous projects and renovations have been completed; more recently the property was informally divided into different parcels to sequentially apply for incremental clean up money. An agreement was made with Bigelow in which as the city received clean up for each parcel from the DECD, Bigelow would be responsible for finding tenants. The City was awarded clean up money from DECD for Parcel C of the land division. Over time and due to natural disasters, the buildings experienced continued decay, leading Bigelow to propose complete redevelopment for the site. The LDA for Parcel C and long-term leases for Parcel B and E will be presented to the Development Commission. In conclusion, Mr. Fontana summarizes that good progress is being made with the current projects and as requests for action are made, they will return to the Commission.

#### **Questions/Discussion**

- Mr. Sagnella asked if the Bigelow Company was ever defunct, and who the actual buyer is. Ms. Rosenberg responds, saying that the Bigelow Company was in fact defunct but Capaso started a business with the purpose of developing this property and named it Bigelow after the company which was originally there.
- Mr. Piscitelli notes that he met with the State Historic Preservation Office which expressed concerns about the Tooth Gap between the buildings, hoping a method can be found to bridge this gap.
- Ms. Miller mentions concerns the neighborhood has had about Capasso’s track record in the area. She asks how they came to be the developer. Ms. Rosenberg explains that in 2006 34 Lloyd St was bought by the City and Capasso consolidated his operations here. Capasso had been a stakeholder while awaiting clean up funds and had tremendous success with renovations and maintenance.

#### **Economic Development Updates**

- Mr. Eyzaguirre provides an update on the Mid-Block Corner Block, a development land disposition between the City and a developer on a key block between Orange St and Chapel St. Working forward from a fire and demolition of the building 14 years ago, a new developer is now on board and making swift progress with the project. The building is now expected to be completed in 2024. Greater business success is expected with the potential for increased foot traffic and more opportunities are also being seen with these construction jobs supporting New Haven Works employees. The one-way traffic switch on Church St will continue to be in place while this project is being completed.
- Mr. Eyzaguirre then mentions that later in the day they will be meeting with the Lieutenant Governor to celebrate Asian American Pacific Islander Heritage month and Small Business Day in New Haven. At this celebration, they will highlight Million Asian Market on South Orange St and

then continue into the Night Market in Nice Square (South Orange St, Crown St, Chapel St). He emphasizes their excitement and the levels of funding that have gone into supporting this celebration of New Haven's creative economy.

- Mr. Eyzaguirre provided an update on Tweed and its environmental assessment which was recently released relating to the planned expansion of the airport. Additionally, Avelo is adding two more destinations, namely in Florida and Orlando.
- Finally, some updates were shared relating to Phase 3 of the American Rescue Plan which was approved late in the summer of 2022. Mr. Bridges speaks on this project's focus on assisting certain neighborhood commercial districts by providing additional cleaning. This will hopefully draw in more visitors and aesthetically-pleasing imaging, especially with heightened foot-traffic during the summer seasons. The contract was recently signed for Kimberly Square, Hill North, Congress Avenue, Davenport, and Daggett Street to be cleaned. Starting this coming July, Mill River, which covers James St and the adjacent intersection, will also be cleaned.
- Mr. Piscitelli then covers the Land Bank and the I'm Home supplement which are both before the Board of Alders for approval. Land Bank relates to the stewardship of properties—either in blade or foreclosure—put back into productive use for affordable housing or economic development. Briefings have already been done with the Portable Housing Commission and the Connecticut Bar Association. The I'm Home supplement relates to inflationary pressure, supply-chain issues and the cost of building affordable housing. They are seeking \$5 million that LCI would then deploy on projects ready to be in construction. Since these are systemic and longer-term programs, they are seeking more support with continuing the discussion with the Alders.
- Finally, Mr. Eyzaguirre continues the discussion on the color of local businesses by introducing some of Raheem Nelson's work. This local artist uses digital overlay and hand drawing to create art in real-time in front of audiences. He recently created a piece which was framed in honor of Miss Kim, an Asian business owner who recently retired but had previously been deeply supported by the community with over \$15,000 being raised after a break-in incident at her store. Mr. Eyzaguirre expresses their excitement in continuing to work with Raheem, even inviting him to join the Development Commission and continue to promote the city.

**Adjournment:**

Mr. Eyzaguirre adjourned the meeting.