

LCI Board Meeting Minutes
May 22, 2024 (Via Zoom)

PRESENT: Hon. Richard Furlow, Hon. Evelyn Rodriguez, Taneha Edwards, Addie Kimbrough, Seth Poole, John Russo, Michael Pinto (Corporation Counsel), Evan Trachten (LCI staff)

Absent: Arlevia Samuel (Executive Director)

Meeting called to order at 6:00 P.M.

Roll call of members (Taneha Edwards joined the meeting during the approval of the minutes)

Review of LCI Board meeting minutes from April 24, 2024. A motion to approve was made by John Russo, seconded Addie Kimbrough, roll call of members was taken, approved unanimously.

New Business

35-39 Arch Street

Evan told the Board the City is proposing to sell this vacant lot to Habitat for Humanity of Greater New Haven, Inc. for \$75,000. There were other proposals for greater density at this location, but LCI felt this proposal was the best option for Arch Street given the mixture of single family and multi-family homes. The property was advertised as part of an RFP and Habitat for Humanity was selected to develop the site. Habitat is essentially proposing to develop 2, two-family structures at this site. Habitat for Humanity described their development as constructing a single-family with an attached accessory dwelling unit (ADU). Evan told the committee that under the Building Code the applicant is constructing a two-family residential property. Evan also noted that currently, the Zoning Ordinance only allows as-of-right ADU's to be created in the existing envelope of an existing owner-occupied structure, so for the purpose of our discussion we should be reviewing this as the development of two, two-family residential properties. Evan also told the committee that LCI sets a minimum owner occupancy period of 10-years, but Habitat imposes a 30-year term. The rental unit will also be deed restricted for a 20-year minimum term and Habitat for Humanity is proposing to set the AMI between 60-70%. Evan noted the site is a large lot with plenty of room to develop the proposed structures. Evan discussed the rendering of the property and noted there will be a two-story structure and a single-story rental unit connected by a breezeway. Evan said this proposal stood out because Habitat is trying new things and building more than a single-family structure. Alder Rodriguez noted that she discussed this proposal with some neighbors on Arch Street and they liked the idea. Alder Rodriguez also discussed this project with Dennis Michaels of Habitat for Humanity, to express some concerns about height and appearance of the proposed structures, and to make sure they utilized good materials. Alder Rodriguez also noted the properties will have off street parking. Seth asked to clarify if the structures were connected or separate, Evan confirmed the structures will be connected like a main house with an attached wing, two separate structures will be developed each structure will contain two units.

A motion was made by John Russo to approve the item, seconded by Taneha Edwards, roll call was taken, approved unanimously.

177 Edgewood Avenue

Evan told the committee the City is proposing to sell this vacant lot as part of the RFP. LCI thought we might receive a proposal for housing development for this lot because of its proximity to downtown, but we didn't. LCI only received one proposal for this property. Neighborhood Housing Services (NHS) offered \$5,000 to purchase this property to use for parking. NHS owns two adjacent rental properties at 171 Edgewood Avenue and 173 Edgewood Avenue. The properties don't have off-street parking. Evan noted that LCI previously offered this property to NHS and the Community Builders who own the other adjacent property. NHS didn't want to purchase the property when this was discussed several years ago. Evan said the Community Builders has had ample opportunity to acquire this lot and has failed to submit an application to acquire this lot, which is why LCI advertised this site as part of the RPF. Evan noted that the City is receiving double the value that a non-profit would pay for this sliver lot. Evan noted that Community Builders rents a portion of their abutting building to the operator of a daycare and sometimes parents park on this parcel. NHS is a good neighbor and will likely allow the daycare to continue their informal use. The applicant will improve the lot and better maintain it. LCI will no longer need to clean up illegal dumping and maintain the lot which will save taxpayers money, the lot will also become taxable.

Evan told the committee that he contacted Alder Douglass about this land sale. Seth noted he is familiar with this location. Alder Furlow told the Board we should move this item, and the second the motion, prior to having further discussion. Alder Rodriguez asked if there will be enough parking for the renters and the daycare? Evan told the Board that Community Builders was given the opportunity to acquire the entire lot several time and they never moved forward. The priority will go to NHS's tenants but there should be some excess, and there is also on-street on Kensington Street.

A motion was made by Alder Furlow to approve the item, seconded by Alder Rodriguez, roll call was taken, approved unanimously.

227 English Street

Evan told the committee this lot was also advertised as part of the RFP. Neighborhood Housing Services (NHS) was the only bidder and offered \$10,500 and proposes to develop a two-family owner-occupied structure with an 80% AMI affordable rental unit. LCI imposes a 10-year minimum occupancy period and a 20-year affordability period on the rental unit. The lot is a flag lot and has ample room to develop a two-family structure. LCI previously looked for a developer for this site. This is a great opportunity to create an owner occupant, gain an affordable rental unit, and expand the tax base. Evan said the bid was somewhat low because of the cost to bring in utilities such as water, sewer, and electricity, there is large distance from the street to the buildable area in the rear of the lot. The best use of this land is for development and not as an opportunity for the other properties to enlarge their yards. Owner occupancy helps to strengthen neighborhood.

A motion was made by Alder Rodriguez to approve the item, seconded by Alder Furlow, roll call was taken, approved unanimously.

596-598 George Street

Evan told the committee that some LCI Board members may recall with item from about six years ago when the City acquired these structures from Yale New Haven Hospital for \$1.00. The City was planning to develop owner occupied properties at this site, but the plan has shifted to creating affordable rentals. This is a proposal for a non-profit sale to the National Veterans Counsel for Legal Redress, Inc., who focuses on veterans housing and supportive housing. There are two existing brick structures at 596-598 George Street. LCI originally planned to rehabilitate these properties and sell them to owner occupants, but the site lacked off-street parking to support a multi-family use. There is a letter of support in the file from Board of Alders President Walker-Myers because this site is located in her Ward. There is also a letter of support from the Hill North Community Management Team. The purchase price is \$6,000 which is non-profit pricing (6 units @ \$1000 per unit). Evan said he believe the applicant will create a community space and an office as part of the project. The property will be deed restricted for a minimum 20-year affordable term at 80% AMI. The applicant is seeking additional funding for this project, and the proposal was approved at the PAD Committee giving the applicant 24 months to complete the rehabilitation. The applicant must show proof of funding prior to closing on the property because there was a gap in their preliminary development budget. The applicant is currently working on developing a site on Davenport Avenue. LCI spent some money stabilizing the properties because they needed attention.

Seth noted he was instrumental in making sure these properties weren't demolished a few years ago. The property is historical. Seth asked about the parking situation and the vacant lot adjacent to the property. Evan told the Board the adjacent lot isn't City owned, and the City contacted the owner and they didn't want to sell the lot. There isn't much yard area to develop parking at 596-598 George Street which is why the City moved away from the concept of developing owner occupied properties. There will be a 20-year affordability period at 80% AMI.

A motion was made by John Russo to approve the item, seconded by Alder Rodriguez, roll call was taken, approved unanimously.

211 Rosette Street

Evan told the committee this lot was offered as part of the RFP and Habitat for Humanity is being selected to develop this property, they offered \$35,000 for this site. Habitat for Humanity is proposing to develop a single-family house. The PAD Committee approved the applicant to develop a single family or a two-family property at this site (like the Arch Street proposal). Habitat for Humanity built several houses on Rosette Street several years ago. If they develop a two-family it would have an owner occupancy requirement for a minimum of 10-years and an affordable rental unit at 80% AMI with a minimum 20-year term. Alder Rodriguez asked if there would be off-street parking? Evan said they will have parking and there is plenty of room for parking, the applicant must comply with the Zoning regulations for parking. Alder Rodriguez believes that Habitat for Humanity will be working towards developing two units. Seth Poole asked about the existing trees, will they be removed? Evan though the trees would be removed in order to develop the site. Evan noted trees can damage the future structure and they are also expensive for the future homeowner to cut if they are damaged in a storm.

A motion was made by John Russo to approve the item, seconded by Addie Kimbrough, roll call was taken, approved unanimously.

Seth told the Board that members can discuss the PAD Guidelines tonight because everyone had time to review them. John Russo offered an amendment to mandate meeting the City's sustainability and electrification guidelines for future housing on sliver lots and building lots.

A motion was made by John Russo to mandate adherence to the City's standard for sustainability and electrification for all future housing development of building lots and sliver lots, seconded by Alder Rodriguez, roll call was taken, approved unanimously.

A motion was made by Taneha Edwards to approve the PAD Guidelines as amended, seconded by Alder Rodriguez, roll call was taken, approved unanimously.

LCI election of officers

Seth told the Board he hits the ten-year limit and will be off the Board on July 1, 2024. Seth asked if there were any nominations? Evan said we have elections for Chair and Vice-Chair. Evan said he believe if we don't have a Chair or Vice Chair the Executive Director would run the meetings. Taneha Edward asked about the duties of the Chair. Seth said it's mostly public speaking and making sure we have a quorum. Evan noted he expects to have a new Board member next month, former Alder Dolores Colon may be on the Board. A question arose about if the Alders could be elected as LCI officers? John Russo said in his experience, historically the Alders didn't hold these posts Attorney Pinto said there isn't anything to prohibit an elected official from being the Chair or Vice Chair. John Russo said he would be interested in being Chair, he was previously the Chair of the City Plan Commission and the Port Authority. John Russo will not nominate himself but would place himself in consideration for the position. Seth nominated John Russo for Chair, seconded by Taneha Edwards. Taneha nominated herself for Chair, seconded by Seth Poole. There was discussion about Vice-Chair. Seth nominated John Russo for Vice-Chair, seconded by Taneha Edwards. John Russo nominated Taneha Edward for Vice-Chair, Seconded by Seth Poole. Elections will be held at the June meeting.

A motion to adjourn was made by John Russo, seconded by Addie Kimbrough, all were in favor.

Meeting adjourned 7:04 PM