

NEW HAVEN CITY PLAN COMMISSION ADVISORY REPORT

RE: [ORDER CONCERNING](#) designating the corner of Bishop Street and State Street as “Bob Frew Corner” In perpetuity, for his integrity, visionary leadership, great contributions, and lifelong service to the City of New Haven.

Submitted by: Alder Caroline Tanbee Smith, Ward 9

REPORT: 1682-18

ADVICE: Approve

BACKGROUND

Bob Frew’s legacy is deeply woven into the civic, architectural, and cultural fabric of our city. He was a tireless public servant who played a pivotal role in the revitalization of State Street and served with distinction on the New Haven Board of Alders. His leadership extended well beyond elected office including his service as President of Habitat for Humanity of Greater New Haven, where he helped advance equitable housing opportunities for countless residents. In addition to his civic leadership, Bob Frew was a visionary architect and educator. As a professor at the Yale School of Architecture, he influenced generations of designers and planners, and he made lasting contributions to the early development of Computer-Aided Design (CAD). He also co-founded the Computer Science Department at Southern Connecticut State University, further underscoring his commitment to education, innovation, and public service. Bob Frew was also a cultural bridge-builder. Born in Scotland, he was a founding member of the New Haven Branch of the Royal Country Scottish Dancers, enriching our city's cultural life and strengthening community through shared tradition and creativity.

According to Section 18-2(a)(3) of Title III, Chapter 18, Article I of the City’s Code requires, “Each submission shall contain:

- (i) Plan of the site of the proposed location indicating all structures and street features as well as the proposed signage drawn to scale for review by the city.
- (ii) Proposed wording of the signage.
- (iii) A petition of at least two hundred fifty (250) city resident signatures in favor of the proposed naming, of which at least two-thirds (2/3 (one hundred sixty-six ((166)) shall be residents of the neighborhood of the proposed sign location.”

PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

This proposal in accordance with Title I, Article XIII, Section 2(A) of the New Haven Code of Ordinances states, "Every Ordinance or Resolution of the Board of Alders relating to the location and use of any street, bridge, boulevard, esplanade, square, park, playground, playfield, aviation field, parking space, public building, the facilities or terminals of any public utility, or the establishment or change in the boundaries of or regulations concerning zoning, shall be at once referred to the City Planning Commission and final action shall not be taken on any such Ordinance or Resolution until the commission shall have reported thereon, provided that the Board of Alders may establish by ordinance a period of not less than sixty (60) Days within which the commission shall file its report with the City Clerk and if no report is filed within such period the approval of the commission shall be presumed.” Accordingly, the Board of Alders seeks guidance regarding the proposed amendment.

The Board of Alder seeks guidance as to:

- Whether the proposal is aligned with the City’s Comprehensive Plan.
- Whether the proposal is “complete” and meets the criteria set forth in Section 18-2(a)(3) of Title III, Chapter 18, Article I of the City Code.

ADVICE

The Commission notes that this proposal is aligned with the Vision 2034 Comprehensive Plan, in that it promotes storytelling to build community and share culture, which is the fifth goal of the Arts and Cultural Identity focus area. However, this petition does not appear to be complete pursuant to the requirements of Section 18-2(a)(3). The wording for the sign, and a Google maps / street view screenshot have been provided showing the corner where the sign will be placed, but the petition lacks the scale drawing of the proposed sign. Further, staff confirm over 250 signatures have been included in the submission materials, but have not verified whether 2/3 of the signatures are from residents living in the East Rock Neighborhood. Despite this, the commission otherwise recommends approval of the corner renaming, should these ordinance requirements be met.

ADOPTED: May 20, 2026
Ernest Pagan
Chair

ATTEST: _____
Laura E Brown
Executive Director, City Plan Department