

NEW HAVEN CITY PLAN COMMISSION ADVISORY REPORT

RE: **ORDER OF THE BOARD OF ALDERS OF THE CITY OF NEW HAVEN**
approving a three hundred thousand dollar (\$300,000.00) matching grant for
Clifford Beers Community Care Center to support required physical upgrades to
794 Dixwell Avenue that will enable the creation of a trauma-informed
community wellness and education center focused on youth and families

Submitted by: Carlos Eyzaguirre, Deputy EDA- Economic Development
Administration

REPORT: **1650-08**

ADVICE: **Approve**

BACKGROUND

Enclosed for the Board of Alders' ("BOA") consideration is an Order requesting approval of a matching grant for Clifford Beers Community Care Center ("Clifford Beers").

Clifford Beers is a nationally recognized provider of trauma-informed mental health care for children, adolescents and adults. Their comprehensive approach to services goes far beyond counseling as evidenced by the successful reimagining of the Farnam House in Fair Haven, the new Full-Service Community Schools initiative being implemented at two Fair Haven schools and the introduction of early childhood services as part of Clifford Beers' overall service delivery plan.

Recently, Clifford Beers has purchased the former St. Michael's School located at 794 Dixwell Ave in Newhallville with plans to rehabilitate the long-shuttered building and open a transformative community space that will include Connecticut's first trauma-informed community wellness and education center focused on youth and families. A long-awaited new charter school focused on educating Black and Brown boys is also slated to co-locate at this location.

Given the current advocacy for change in Newhallville that includes the community-led creation of Newhallville/Hamden Stronger Together and subsequent launch of a new neighborhood development corporation, the relocation of the New Haven Adult and Continuing Education Center to Bassett Street and deeper partnerships with anchor institutions like Albertus Magnus College, the City of New Haven (the "City") is strongly invested in seeing this project to fruition.

As the building at 794 Dixwell Avenue has not been occupied for many years at least two phases of capital improvements are required to make it suitable for Clifford Beers' purposes. In particular the roof requires immediate attention, and the bulk of the proposed City grant would be spent on repairs to the roof system to allow for tenancy inside the building as early as Fall 2024. Simultaneously, Clifford Beers will be seeking capital funding from additional sources

including the upcoming Round 5 of the State of Connecticut’s Community Investment Fund expected to be announced in the coming months that will potentially fund other longer-term phase 2 improvements of the building.

In closing, the rehabilitation and future programming at the new Dixwell Avenue location will have a positive and lasting impact on residents living in both New Haven and southern Hamden consistent with the Clifford Beers mission in the community and our shared goals for revitalization of the area. The proposed grant funding will allow Clifford Beers to begin their work in Newhallville as soon as possible. Furthermore, Clifford Beers has demonstrated its willingness to work closely with the community on its plans for expansion into Newhallville and we are confident they will continue to do so as they envision new opportunities for the Dixwell Avenue campus.

PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

The City of New Haven Comprehensive Plan **New Haven Vision 2025** states the following goals:

“Connect residents to community facilities by encouraging such facilities to be located as focal points of large-scale new developments and by assessing the feasibility of re-using existing vacant community facilities in the city” (**Sec. xxiii**)

“Assess the feasibility of re-using existing vacant or under-utilized community facilities in the city for promoting community interaction and addressing indoor recreational and healthy exercise needs of residents, to the extent feasible” (**Sec. III-10**)

Overall, pursuing grant funding opportunities for the adaptive reuse of an existing building for the purposes of opening a community space that centers on community wellness furthers the goals of the City’s Comprehensive Plan.

ADVICE

Authorization of this grant aligns with the City’s Comprehensive Plan and the State of Connecticut’s goals.

ADOPTED: May 15, 2024
Leslie Radcliffe
Chair

ATTEST: _____
Laura Brown
Executive Director, City Plan Department