

LCI Board Minutes
April 24, 2019 Meeting

PRESENT: Hon. Dolores Colón, Serena Neal-Sanjurjo, Seth Poole, Neil Currie,
Evan Trachten,

Absent: Mary Wadley, Hon. Delphine Clyburn, Timothy Yolen, Patricia Brett

Guests: Carlos Rodriguez, Adam Hopfner, Carl Rodenhizer

Meeting called to order at 6:02 P.M.

Review of LCI Board meeting minutes from February 6, 2019 Special Meeting . A motion to approve was made by Seth Poole, Seconded by Alder Colón. Neil Currie abstained, thus the motion did not carry.

Board members introduced themselves to Neil Currie who is a new board member. Neil Currie introduced himself to the Board.

New Business

139 Button Street

Evan explained that the City proposes to do a land swap with the former Hill Central Cooperative site. The first step of this sale was the Board of Education surplusing this parcel of land that is about 1700 square feet and authorizing a land swap. The price will be \$1.00. The city has already sold this developer parcels of land on Putnam Street and on Howard to expand this site so they can construct more units at this affordable housing complex, as well as creating a larger buffer between the school site and housing development. Serena told the Board that the City has been working on this development expansion for about a year and a half and the City supports it. Alder Colón thought the developer had been to both Hill North and Hill South Community Management Teams and was planning to move residents around the complex while the development was on-going, and allow them to return to their units once they were complete. Serena confirmed that information was correct.

A motion was made to approve the item by Alder Colón, seconded by Neil Currie, Approved unanimously

55 Dixwell Avenue (Easement)

Evan explained that the City is proposing to grant a five-foot easement (5') over a portion of 55 Dixwell Avenue that is next to the building at 59 Dixwell Avenue. The applicant is in the process of buying this site from the City and was approved to purchase this property as part of an RFP but has been unable to purchase the site because there is a pending lawsuit by a neighbor who owns the former "Reeves Barber Shop". The applicant is rehabilitating a structure at 59 Dixwell Avenue, the former Keyes Funeral Home and is unable to install windows on this side of the building that abuts our parcel of land due to building code regulations (there is a need to have a 5' wide egress) due to the installation of new windows. We are granting this easement so they can get a building permit to do this work because an "access agreement" does not satisfy the Building Department who is the issuer of the work permit. LCI has amended to the Board of Alders approval from the 2017 RFP to extend the expiration of the Order that approves the sale of 55 Dixwell so the

applicant can purchase the City owned property when the lawsuit is resolved. LCI is trying to keep this project moving.

Neil Currie asked about the RFP process and staff explained that the RFP was not the item before the Board tonight, an easement is before the Board. Neil Currie suggested granting an easement to both abutting properties because they both had egress windows with a “zero lot line”. Neil Currie noted that trying to bring both properties into zoning conformity could be achieved. Evan explained that the goals of the RFP were to develop Dixwell Avenue with new residential units and revitalize the commercial strip, so a minor zoning non-conformity being eliminated is not an objective. Evan pointed out that the property at 51 Dixwell Avenue is a pre-existing non-conforming structure and they are not required by code to have egress windows with 5 feet of space. The main objective is the revitalization of this area. The City has taken the position that they do not agree with this lawsuit and are fighting it, our focus is to move forward with the vision that was approved by the Board of Alders as part of the RFP. Evan told the Board that the future development takes into consideration that 51 Dixwell Avenue has existing windows on the upper floors and they will not be obstructed by a new structure. There is a review by City Plan, Building Department, and Fire staff prior to the issuance of a building permit for this development. Neil Currie asked about the Building Department granting waivers for situations like this, Serena advised the Board that an easement is being required by the Building Department.

Neil Currie told the Board it seemed the City was going above and beyond to assist the applicant on a parcel that was in dispute by granting an easement so he could continue the rehabilitation. Serena explained that due to the litigation the entire development has been delayed and we are focused on revitalizing the Dixwell Avenue corridor. Alder Colón asked if Neil Currie has concerns because the applicant’s son is on the Board of Alders? Neil told the Board his concern was for the City to look out for all parties and being equitable and fair, he knows both parties and will likely abstain on this vote, he was not concerned about the family relationship. Neil told the Board he thought the owner of 51 Dixwell Avenue was the high bidder on the RFP, Serena explained that there are objectives in an RFP and the amount of money offered is not the only factor to selecting a bid in that process. The City was seeking a project in line with the revitalization of the Dixwell Avenue corridor.

Seth Poole made a motion to approve the item, seconded by Alder Colón. Neil Currie abstained (The motion did not carry with two affirmative votes).

455 Greenwich Avenue

Evan explained that the City proposes to sell this building lot to Carlos Rodriguez for \$15,000. The applicant would like to construct a mixed-use building and operate his food truck business from this location. The applicant has been working with the Hill South Management Team since August 2018. The applicant has budgeted about \$300,000 to develop this site as a mixed-use building (business use on ground floor and 2 apartments upstairs). The applicant is working with Start Bank for the finances. The applicant needs to own the land for final approval of a loan. The applicant purchased a home around the corner on 1st Street and rehabilitated the property and is an owner occupant. Alder Colón asked about the size of the units and the rents, the applicant told the Board the apartments would be affordable (\$1100 for a 2 bedroom) and a nice addition to the community. Alder Colón asked questions about the site plan, she felt there may need to be more opens space for kids to play. She also told the applicant she did not want the trucks parking on the street, she wanted to make sure the trucks fit in the garage. Neil Currie advised the applicant that people like to use cooking grills and there needed to be 15’ away from the structure. The applicant told the

Board the design has not been finalized and it will be reviewed by Building and Fire prior to a permit to build.

Evan told the committee this sale would be subject to zoning prior to closing compliance.

**Alder Colón made a motion to approve the item, seconded by Seth Poole,
Approved unanimously**

162-168 Plymouth Street

Evan told the committee this is the site for the 2019 Yale Build and Columbus House is the non-profit who is involved. They are proposing to build a three-family property and as a non-profit they pay \$1000 per unit for a purchase price of \$3000. Columbus house has worked with Yale and built houses at 54 Adeline Street and 41 Button Street over the last few years. Yale has been building houses under this program for many years. They have always completed the projects and the project is fully funded. Neil Currie asked about abandoning the design restrictions that the PAD committee had recommended. Serena told the Board that based on the final approved design the City is in support of the proposed design. Neil Currie told the Board he manages a property at 52 Adeline Street. He asked Columbus House staff about the property at 54 Adeline Street. It looks as though there was some work that needed to be done to the eaves, Adam Hopfner advised him that the exterior plywood is marine grade and not damaged or needing completion and that the property has received design awards in 2017. Neil also asked about maintenance and keeping the neighbors informed as to who was in control of the site (Yale or Columbus House), Yale turns over the site to Columbus House when the Certificate of Occupancy is issued. Seth Poole asked who will occupy the units, and Carol Rodenhizer told him they would be affordable rentals with suitable occupants, Columbus House would be vetting the occupants as to make sure they would be good tenants. The units will be occupied by adults, they are one-bedroom units. Evan mentioned the property would have a 20 year affordable requirement.

**Neil Currie made a motion to approve the item, seconded by Seth Poole Approved
unanimously**

Old Business

261-265 Starr Street – Remains Tabled

281 Newhall Street- Remains Tabled

**53 Shelton Avenue- Remains Tabled, Evan plans to meet with the
applicant and will provide an update. Applicant currently
obtaining financing and design refinement.**

**Election of LCI Officers: A motion was made by Alder Colón to move the
election to June, seconded by Seth Poole, All were in favor.**

**Alder Colón asked who are current Board members and Evan are said Tim
Yolen, Mary Wadley, Patricia Brett, Alder Clyburn, as well as the members
here today. We have two Alternate seats open.**

**A motion to adjourn was made by Alder Colón, seconded by Seth Poole, all
were in Favor. Adjourned @ 6:58 PM.**

