

September 25, 2019

Hon Virgil de la Cruz, Co-Chair
Hon. Charles Pia, Co-Chair
Land Use-Urban Redevelopment Committee
Board of Representatives
888 Washington Boulevard
Stamford, CT

By email

Re: Resolution LU30.031

Dear Co-Chairmen de la Cruz and Pia, and Members of the Committee,

I write in support of creating a South End historic district study committee. I am a property owner and resident of Stamford with 40 years' experience as a professional historic preservation planner.

The South End meets the criteria for this investigation, for the story of Stamford's rise to the successful city it is today began in the South End. The arrival of Yale & Towne in 1868 stimulated supply chain industries and a housing boom attracting waves of new people to Stamford. The evidence of this story remains embedded in the existing buildings where they lived, worked, and worshipped. Most of today's Stamfordites whose families reach back one or two generations are more than likely to be connected to this place and its story.

The neighborhood's historic two- and three- family housing stock embodies a particularly timely lesson of human-scale and economic sustainability. When first developed for owner occupancy, this housing provided comfort, affordability and a viable revenue stream. But industry atrophied, much of the housing transitioned to absentee ownership, and sites began to be assembled for demolition and redevelopment. Other cities, like Waterbury, Boston, Newburgh, NY and Burlington VT value this human-scaled, affordable housing stock and are reclaiming it, but neither the City of Stamford or our local developers have demonstrated similar interest.

This study is not about freezing the past but it is about shaping the future. In deliberating this resolution tonight, please keep in mind that historic districts are places established and regulated for present and future generations. Historic preservation has proven to be a positive economic development tool since its establishment as public policy under the National Historic Preservation Act (1966), helping to transform thousands of struggling neighborhoods like the South End into vibrant and sustainable places where people like to live. The study is consistent with federal and municipal policy, and will not require any City funding to complete. Its funding will be paid for by federal funds re-granted through the State Office of Historic Preservation within the Department of Economic and Community Development.

Sincerely,

Wes Haynes
22 Brightside Drive
Stamford, CT 06902

cc. Rep. T. Adams, R. Blessing, S. Halpern, S. Barney, E. McAuley.