



Land Use-Urban Redevelopment Committee – Board of Representatives

Virgil de la Cruz, Co-Chair

Bradley Michelson, Co-Chair

Committee Report

Date: Wednesday, May 27, 2020
Time: 7:00 p.m.
Place: Meeting was held remotely

The Land Use-Urban Redevelopment Committee met as indicated above. In attendance were Co-Chairs de la Cruz and Michelson and Committee Member Reps. Cottrell, Florio, Graziosi, Lee, Lion, Sherwood and Summerville. Also present were Reps. Adams and Zelinsky; Kathryn Emmett and Cynthia Anger, Law Department; Jim Travers, Garrett Bolella and Luke Bittenwieser, Transportation, Traffic and Parking Bureau, and Ralph Blessing, Land Use Bureau Chief.

Co-Chair de la Cruz called the meeting to order at 7:05 p.m.

Item No.	Description	Committee Action
<i>Possibly in Executive Session:</i>		
1. LU30.040	RESOLUTION and <u>public hearing</u> ; To Authorize the Acquisition by Negotiated Agreement or Eminent Domain Of Property Located at 4 Pulaski Street, 21 Pulaski Street, 256 Washington Blvd., and 274 Washington Blvd.in Connection with the Washington Blvd. and Pulaski Street Widening Project (See LU30.032). 04/08/20 – Submitted by Mayor Martin 04/07/20 – Held by Board of Finance 04/08/20 – Approved by Planning Board 04/29/20 – Approved by Committee 6-1-1	Approved 7-2-0

Chair de la Cruz opened the public hearing. Approximately 60 members of the public participated. Susan Halpern, Genevieve Cal, Elizabeth McCauley, Bernadette Jachimczyk, Peter Quigley, Carmine Tomas, Sheila Barney, David Michel, Roland Lesperance, Roland Lesperance, Jr. and Raymond Cal spoke in opposition to the resolution. Stuart Katz, Bhagesh Malde, Jerry Silber, Prabakaran Balasubramanian and Carol Ann McClean spoke in favor of the resolution. John F.X. Leydon Jr. requested that the Board hold this item for one month. Co-Chair Michelson then read into the record [written statements](#) which had been emailed to the Board office or provided through the Board website.

Chair de la Cruz then closed the public hearing.

Committee members then discussed this resolution with the invited guests. Comments made included the following:

- The process of negotiation will continue, even if the Board approves the resolution; there is no expectation that the offers would be taken off the table

- This is the beginning of the administrative process to acquire the properties; the owners will attend an administrative hearing with Director Dennies and be able to submit information regarding the valuation of their properties and continue to negotiate; this has been made clear to the owners
- If no agreement is reached, this would probably go to court in early or late fall
- The court process is about the valuation of the properties; the owners can persuade the court that they should receive a different value; the question will be whether the city is paying enough, this is clearly for a public purpose; the property being given to private owners is in the context of a larger public project
- The value offered is based upon highest and best use of property
- The project as a whole is viewed as a public use, not the individual parcel transactions
- The property owners have emotional ties to the properties, but will retain their memories even if the City takes the property
- There are many reasons to approve this resolution as part of the larger plan
- The owners have had adequate time to engage representation
- There has been an adequate showing of the public benefit
- Hopefully the City can negotiation an agreeable transaction
- This could lead to a legal battle over whether or not this is a public use and it might be financially prudent to hold it; one of the owners just retained counsel
- This project is long overdue
- The original plan had a lower cost, but this plan produces a better project for the City and more property owners are comfortable with this plan
- Dedicated bike lanes are safer than shared lanes; the Mill River Green Trailway will be on the west side of the bridge, which will increase the number of pedestrians and cyclists
- More people may be working remotely in the future
- Eminent domain is an old process, dating back to Roman law and incorporated into our constitution in Amendment V
- The Board would still receive the Director of Administration's report and decide at that point to accept the report, increase the compensation or abandon the project
- Negotiation with property owners is required and will go forward

A motion to hold this resolution was made, seconded and failed by a vote of 3-6-0 (Reps. Cottrell, Sherwood and Summerville in favor; Reps. de la Cruz, Michelson, Florio, Graziosi, Lee and Lion opposed). A motion to approve the resolution was made, seconded and approved by a vote of 7-2-0 (Reps. de la Cruz, Michelson, Cottrell, Florio, Graziosi, Lee and Lion in favor; Reps. Sherwood and Summerville opposed)

2. LU30.041 REVIEW; Management of Coastal Access Points **Report Made**
 Which Are Not Privately Owned, Nor Are Public
 Parks/ Beaches.
 05/06/20 – Submitted by Rep. Michelson

Rep. Michelson explained that he put this is to find out about the coastal access points in the City other than beaches and who is responsible for them.

Mr. Blessing stated that a review would need to be done on a case-by-case basis. The State owns up to the mean high water line, but the ownership of the land would require a review of the land records. If land is privately owned, there may be trespass issues; there may also be public access easements. If there are particular areas of concern, the Land Use Bureau can investigate.

Mr. Travers suggested that residents use FixIt Stamford so that complaints can be monitored.

Co-Chair de la Cruz adjourned the meeting at 10:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Virgil de la Cruz, Co-Chair

This meeting is on [video](#)