



Land Use-Urban Redevelopment Committee – Board of Representatives

Bradley Bewkes, Chair

Nina Sherwood, Vice Chair

Committee Report

Date: Thursday, April 21, 2022
Time: 7:00 pm
Place: *This meeting was held remotely.*

The Land Use-Urban Redevelopment Committee met as indicated above. In attendance were Chair Bewkes, Vice Chair Sherwood and Committee Member Reps. Adams, Campbell, de la Cruz, Florio, Grunberger, Matheny, and Tomas. Excused were Reps. Mays and Summerville. Also in attendance were Reps. Boeger, Figueroa, Miller, Stella, and Walston; Bridget Fox, Mayor's Office; Doug Dalena, Director of Legal Affairs.; Matt Quinones, Director of Operations; Ralph Blessing, Land Use Bureau Chief; Lou Casolo, Engineering Dept.; Robin Ashenfelter, Steve Garst, and Barry Michelson, Stamford Neighborhood Coalition; and several members of the public.

Chair Bewkes called the meeting to order at 7:03 pm

Item No.	Description	Committee Action
11. LU31.009	REVIEW; Materials and Analysis Related to the Petition and Appeal for Application of Amendment to the Zoning Regulations under Zoning Board Approval No. 221-20 . 02/09/22 – Submitted by Reps. Bewkes 02/14/22 – Held at Steering 03/31/22 – Report Made & Held 7-0-0	Report Made and Held 8-1-0

Mr. Blessing and Mr. Dalena gave an overview of this item and there was discussion.

The Land Use Bureau (LUB) compared its finding with the Town Clerk's findings. This has been put into one spreadsheet and will be a review item for the Zoning Board meeting on Monday, April 25th. The Zoning Board will be the body that makes a determination if the Land Use findings were correct.

Mr. Blessing said it would not be appropriate to share the findings before the Zoning Board has had an opportunity to review the information. The LUB agrees on the vast majority of signatures, but there are some signatures in question, and they are working with the Law Dept. on these.

There is not a legal mechanism for the Zoning Board to vote on this. This item is an informational analysis review of what happened after the determination that was published in the High Ridge case under the binding law that was current at the time of the decision in December.

¹ Video Time Stamp: 00:03:10

The Stamford Neighborhood Coalition had reached out twice, and it was Mr. Garst's understanding that they were going to get together in person with the LUB and Law Dept. to discuss. He was told this in person meeting would not be appropriate.

It is a long standing principal that the Zoning Board, acting through the LUB staff, makes the application on behalf of the City.

There are issues of items coming to BOR after petitions have been filed. The entity that is applying for the application should not be the entity reviewing the signatures for validity. This should be done by a different department. This can cause the perception of conflict to the public.

The Supreme Court made the decision that the City and Administration has interpreted the Charter improperly. The law did not change.

It was clearly expressed at the previous Land Use Committee Meeting that the Committee hoped a representative of the petitioning side would be witness to this review process and this has been denied.

Who will the BOR be advised to listen to when both parties, the LUB and the Town Clerk, have a plausible argument and both are credible?

All signatures sheets are available on the LUB website, and an explanation of the process will be available soon.

Mr. Dalena has advised Mr. Stein and Mr. Blessing that a detailed set of rules and procedures should be developed for permits so everyone understands the process.

A motion to hold Item #1 was made, seconded and approved by a vote of 8-1-0 (Reps. Bewkes, Sherwood, Adams, Campbell, de la Cruz, Florio, Matheny, and Tomas in favor; Rep. Grunberger opposed).

<p>². LU31.015</p>	<p>REJECTION and <u>approval of public hearing</u>; Appeal of Approval of ZB Appl. 222-01: Omnibus Text Changes Clean-up 3. 04/04/22 – Submitted by Zoning Board</p>	<p>Public Hearing: Approved 8-0-0</p> <p>Rejection: Report Made and Held 8-0-0</p>
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Mr. Blessing and the Stamford Neighborhood Coalition (SNC) reviewed this item and there was discussion.

There were various reasons for undertaking this text change. The zoning regulations date back to 1951. Over the course of time these regulations do not work well with changes in the City. Instead of doing a piecemeal approach, it is better to go over the entire process with a comprehensive approach. Some things added/updated have been sustainability, affordable housing, electrical vehicle charging, storm water management, and fee-in-lieu payments,

There are five main goals: protecting residents from inappropriate construction; correct inconsistencies; reorganize and simplify the regulations; make it easier to convert older, underutilized office buildings into workforce housing; and create a chapter for downtown zoning

² Video Time Stamp: 01:24:40

regulations.

The Committee requested that all of the changes be put into a single redlined document, as the high volume of documents with changes are very complex and difficult to decipher.

Additionally, it was requested that the 55 page summary document have links inserted to the specific points in the regulations.

Mr. Michelson spoke on behalf of the SNC. It is a group of concerned citizens who strive to preserve the quality of life in Stamford. The City and the public should work with each other, not against each other.

Recently there seems to be a change in regulations every month. The City appears to be looking at each parcel individually and not how it works in the neighborhood and city as a whole.

Developers should conform to the regulations, but the City changes the regulations to fit the project. This has created a zone-to-suit environment. Once one change happens, then it makes it easier for the next developer to have changes made.

The meetings about these omnibus changes were not easy for the public to understand.

Citizens would like to be able voice their concerns about projects going on in their neighborhood. The role of the public appears to have been diminished by the Planning and Zoning Boards.

A motion to approve the public hearing for Item #2, with the expectation that the requested redlined document will be ready by the Land Use Bureau, was made, seconded and approved by a vote of 8-0-0 (Reps. Bewkes, Sherwood, Adams, Campbell, de la Cruz, Grunberger, Matheny, and Tomas in favor).

A motion to hold the Rejection for Item #2 was made, seconded and approved by a vote of 8-0-0 (Reps. Bewkes, Sherwood, Adams, Campbell, de la Cruz, Grunberger, Matheny, and Tomas in favor).

- ³³. [LU31.013](#) RESOLUTION; Requesting Acceptance of Mill Brook Road and Mill Brook Road West as City Streets Under Charter Part 8, Budgetary Procedures, Division 2. Estimates And Capital Projects, Section C8-20-1 to C8-20-11 And Division 6, Special Assessment, Section C8-60-1 to Section C8-60-17 and Chapter 214, Article III of the Code of Ordinances.
03/17/22 – Submitted by Mill Brook Road Homeowners Association **Held 8-0-0**

Chair Bewkes explained that the Committee needs more information before being ready to discuss this item. This is a relatively new process and needs to be done correctly. The Board Office has requested a legal opinion from Corporation Counsel and is waiting to hear back.

A motion to hold Item #3 was made, seconded and approved by a vote of 8-0-0 (Reps. Bewkes, Sherwood, Adams, Campbell, de la Cruz, Grunberger, Matheny, and Tomas in favor).

³ Video Time Stamp: 03:15:00

44. [LU31.014](#) REVIEW; Pedestrian Bridge from Charter Communications Building to Mill River Park, including funding and approvals. **Report Made and Held 8-0-0**
04/06/22 – Submitted by Reps. Adams and Sherwood

Mr. Quinones stated that a settlement agreement was entered into by the prior Administration and this project was identified as part of the settlement.

Mr. Dalena and Mr. Casolo reviewed this item and there was discussion.

There was a three-part dispute: Harbor Point Infrastructure improvement District was claiming that the City had an obligation to pay the district \$4.3 million in tax increment financing revenues when the bonds were refinanced in 2017 and 2018. The City claimed that BLT had an obligation to pay for certain road and sidewalk construction with the 400-440 Washington Blvd. project. The City also claimed that BLT had an obligation to pay \$100 thousand to a fund a project due to the closure of the Gateway Garage without permission based on decision by the Zoning Board.

Three improvements will be made over time. 1) a complete streets project on Ludlow Street, 2) a complete streets project on Garden Street, and 3) a Pulaski Street pedestrian bridge project.

The City put \$3.97 million in an escrow account in settlement of the claim. BLT will draw from this account to do the three projects. If cost of three projects goes over this amount, BLT will put in the remainder of funds.

City engineering has reviewed the plans but it still needs to be determined who will be overseeing the project.

Mr. Casolo will look into the clearance for kayakers and small sailboats going under the bridge, and access to the train station.

The project is currently in review by DEEP. It then goes to Army Corps, then out to bid. The bridge could be complete late 2022 or early 2023. .

This is a collaborative vision for a continuous link from Scalzi Park to the Stamford Harbor, as part of the trailways path system.

A motion to hold Item #4 was made, seconded and approved by a vote of 8-0-0 (Reps. Bewkes, Sherwood, Adams, Campbell, de la Cruz, Grunberger, Matheny, and Tomas in favor).

Chair Bewkes adjourned the meeting at 11:26 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Bradley Bewkes, Chair

This meeting is on [video](#).

⁴ Video Time Stamp: 03:17:00