***Land Use-Urban Redevelopment Committee – Board of Representatives***

Harry Day, Chair

# Committee Report

**Date:** Thursday, March 22, 2012
**Time:** 7:30 p.m.
**Place:** Republican Caucus Room, 4th Floor, Government Center

The Land Use-Urban Redevelopment Committee met as indicated above. In attendance were Chair Day, Clerk of the Board Summerville, and Committee Member Reps. McGarry and Raduazzo. Also present were Reps. Adams and Coleman, Rachel Goldberg, URC; Milton Puryear, Mill River Collaborative; Ernie Orgera, Director of Operations; Lou Casolo, City Engineer; and Ann Brown, Engineering.

Chair Day called the meeting to order at 7:32 p.m.

| Item No. | Description | Committee Action |
|---|---|---|
| 1. LU28.041 | RESOLUTION & **public hearing**; in connection with the acquisition by negotiation or eminent domain of rights of way for Group C (25 partial take) properties for the Stamford Urban Transitway Project. | Approved 4-0-0 |

Chair Day stated that notice of the public hearing had been duly published, and opened the public hearing. There were no members of the public present wishing to speak, and Chair Day left the public hearing open in the event members of the public who wished to speak arrived.

Chair Day stated that this resolution relates solely to the partial take Group C properties, and that the "full-take" properties were in Group A and had been previously addressed. Ms. Goldberg provided a quick review of the status of the Group A "full-take" properties, and then explained that the Group C properties are all partial takes, most of which will not fundamentally affect the operations of the businesses involved. Ms. Goldberg stated that for the most part, the property owners are looking forward to the completion of the project because they see the benefits of what has already been accomplished. She believes agreements will be reached with most property owners and that parking, landscaping and other concerns can be accommodated. Ms. Goldberg stated that this resolution is necessary for the City to proceed with the takings.

In response to questions from the committee, Ms. Goldberg stated that she had held public hearings on behalf of the Director of Administration, and that Laura Leboski of the engineering department had attended. Three property owners failed to respond to repeated notices. Ms. Goldberg explained that this is typical when the impact of a taking

on an owner is minimal. She stated that the settlements generally result in the owner receiving more than the appraised value of their property, as disruption to the business caused by the plan is taken into account. All settlements must be approved by engineering, the FTA and the Corporation Counsel. She does not have the authority to agree to settlements, only to make recommendations to the Corporation Counsel. She oversees independent contractors who assist the residential and commercial tenants with relocations.

Chair Day closed the public hearing at 8:04 p.m. A motion to approve the resolution was made, seconded and approved by unanimous vote. (Reps. Day, McGarry, Raduazzo and Summerville in favor.)

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 2. LU28.040 | RESOLUTION & **public hearing**; of a license agreement between the City and the Mill River Collaborative in connection with properties located at 1050 Washington Boulevard, et al. | Approved 4-0-0 |

Chair Day noted that required notice of the public hearing had been published, and opened the public hearing. There were no members of the public present wishing to speak, and Chair Day left the public hearing open in the event members of the public who wished to speak arrived.

Mr. Puryear explained that:

- For the past two years, the City has entered into license agreements with the Mill River Collaborative to permit the Big Apple Circus to use the 1050 Washington Boulevard properties (the Archstone site).
- The Mill River Corridor Plan originally contemplated acquisition of the 1010 Washington Boulevard site, but the price has remained too high and, in the meantime, the City was able to acquire the Archstone site which is not part of the MRC contract with the City.
- The MRC intends to stage a number of upcoming events which will involve the use of the Archstone site.
- Rather than doing separate license agreements for each separate event, the MRC and the City have decided to enter into an annual license agreement which gives the City the right to approve all events.
- Reckson donated funds to put topsoil and seed on the property, and the MRC and the City wish to keep the property looking pleasant and make it usable for events while a long-term decision is made regarding its use.
- Upcoming events include a cherry blossom festival in May, a Moroccan festival in June sponsored by the City, Rocking on the River in June, and “It’s my Park Day” in October, when the park will be substantially complete.
- The license agreement is similar to the prior agreements except for the 1 year term, the renewal provision and the process for the City’s approval.

Chair Day closed the public hearing at 8:17 p.m. A motion to approve the resolution was made, seconded and approved by unanimous vote. (Reps. Day, McGarry, Raduazzo and Summerville in favor.)

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 3. LU28.038 | APPROVAL; of a contract with Gray Organschi for architectural services in connection with the Mill River Park "porch." | Approved 4-0-0 |

Mr. Casolo stated that he has been working with Mr. Puryear on the development of this contract.

- Gray Organschi is an architectural firm located in New Haven which has been working under a contract for $92,000 for Phase 1.
- Phase 1 shaped the scope of the work, and included the schematic design for the canopy and the conceptual design of the carousel.
- This contract is for Phase 2 (which was included in the original RFP), which was originally valued at $210,000.
- This package is $326,000, with the increase relating to the moving of the carousel out of the footprint of the canopy and into a much larger space.
- The Collaborative will be contributing the money to make up the difference in the cost.
- The contract has been approved by the Board of Finance

Mr. Puryear described the new location and facility for the carousel.

- It will be in a 4000 sq. foot enclosed building which will permit year-round operation and make it available for private events
- The noise of the carousel will be kept away from the quiet and calm area envisioned in the canopy location.
- The increased cost is due to the increased requirements of the larger space, including the need to hire a landscape architect

A motion to approve this item was made, seconded and approved by unanimous vote. (Reps. Day, McGarry, Raduazzo and Summerville in favor.)

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 4. LU289.039 | REVIEW; policies regarding installation and presence of banners on utility/light poles in the City of Stamford. | Report Made & Held in Committee |

Chair Day explained that this issue was raised because Harbor Point has hung banners on city-owned property and this is an unregulated activity. The Code currently provides only for the hanging of banners by the DSSD. Mr. Orgera explained that he has been approached about hanging banners in the South End and believes there should be a regulatory process for this. There is a current prohibition on advertising on City right-of-ways, and hanging of banners on private property is regulated by the Zoning Board. The DSSD ordinance looks at hardware and wind load. He would like similar regulations for other entities and areas, with the content dictated by safety. Members of the committee expressed the concern that the banners be non-commercial, and promoting the City rather than an entity's own interest and that the approval process be through the Operations Department.

Chair Day stated that this matter would continue to be reviewed by the Committee and that the Committee would look to the Corporation Counsel's office for assistance once the new Corporation Counsel is hired.

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 5. | LU28.035 | REVIEW; easement process over city-owned parks and city-owned land. | Held in Committee |

Chair Day stated that this item should remain held pending the hiring of a Corporation Counsel.

Chair Day adjourned the meeting at 8:50 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Harry Day, Chair

*This meeting is on video.*