Land Use & Urban Redevelopment Committee Report
for the May 2, 2005 Meeting of the Board of Representatives

The Land Use & Urban Redevelopment Committee met at 7:00 p.m. on Tuesday, April 26, 2005 in the Legislative Chambers. Present in addition to Co-Chairs Day and White were Committee Representatives Boccuzzi, Greenberg, Mitchell, Nakian and Summerville. Representatives Clear, Diamond and Franzetti were excused. Also attending were Representatives Adams, Cannady, Coppola, Hunter and Zelinski.

Also present were Rachel Golberg from the URC, Antonio Iadarola, Lou Casolo and Laura LaBosky from the Engineering Department, Zoning Enforcement Officer James Lunney, and eleven members of the public who appeared for the public hearing.

A public hearing was held with respect to Item 1 of the agenda, as noted below.

The following agenda items were taken up:

1. LU26.058 RESOLUTION & public hearing; regarding final authorization of the acquisition of rights of way for the Stamford Urban Transitway Project.

Another public hearing was held on this matter, at which ten members of the public spoke.

The first speaker was William Hennessey, attorney for a number of affected property owners some of whom had not yet reached agreements with the City with respect to compensation. Mr. Hennessey urged that the Committee and the Board approve the Resolution without further delay so as to enable the process to move forward.

Four of the remaining speakers (Attorney Frank Baker, Ed Czescik, Lynne Czescik Tranos and Barbara Surwilo) represented the Czescik family's property interests and voiced concerns about the process for valuation of the affected properties and the costs of relocating a small business, but (with the exception of Ms. Turwilo who urged a delay) all favored approval of the resolution.

Attorney Leo Gold appeared on behalf of a number of owners and urged that the appraisals be reconsidered, but he did not oppose the resolution. Mr. Al Sanseverino, as owner of two parcels, felt that he was being unfairly compensated for the loss of parking spaces, but did not oppose the resolution. Mr. Herb Hauser said the delay in adoption of the resolution was complicating his ability to relocate his business and urged adoption of the resolution. David Cingari questioned why the property he rents is being affected when there is

space across the street that in his opinion could have been used instead. Zofia Brice argued that she should be compensated for her business loss in operating her deli, but supported adoption of the resolution.

Ms. Goldberg stated that approximately twelve agreements with affected owners had been reached, and that several more were in negotiation. She urged the public speakers to submit appraisals to support their claims, and again reviewed the multi-tiered process designed to assure fairness in compensation.

Mr. Iadarola stated that the City had already incurred a cost of at least $20,000 resulting from the one-month delay in adopting the resolution, and that further delay would expose the project to much larger costs and could endanger portions of the federal funding.

Co-Chair Day thanked the members of the public, and pointed out that (a) the Board of Representatives has no control over the process, which is dictated by the City Charter and state and federal law; (b) the Board's role under the Charter is to approve the Director of Administration's Report and authorize the City to proceed; (c) the Charter allows the Board to *reduce* but not increase the appraisal amounts; (d) the Board's only other alternative would be to vote no, which would result in, at best, a delay involving huge cost increases and possible forfeiture of federal funding (on the next phase if not this one), and at worst, abandonment of the project altogether; (e) the City is by no means bound by the Report in terms of negotiating fair amounts; and, finally (f) there are ample and extraordinary guarantees of fairness at the local, state and federal level.

The public hearing was closed and a motion was made and seconded to adopt the resolution. Co-Chair White stated that he would vote against the resolution, consistent with his long-standing opposition to the project. Reps. Summerville, Boccuzzi and Nakian all argued in favor of the resolution, noting that the public speakers did not oppose it and that the risk of delay was great. Rep. Mitchell stated that she would abstain because of her concern that owners were being penalized for environmental remediation costs. Rep. Greenberg stated that he would abstain because he felt that the process was being unduly rushed.

The Committee voted 4-1-2 in favor of adoption of the resolution.

Approved

2. LU26.059 REVIEW; zoning enforcement process, policies and procedures for dealing with illegal housing units within the City of Stamford.

Zoning Enforcement Officer James Lunney appeared and reviewed the many challenges he faces in dealing with complaints relating to illegal housing units.

He stated that with the departure of Steve Kleppin, the department is more understaffed than ever. The Committee members urged acceleration of the hiring schedule to fill not only the recently vacated position but also the new position provided for in the City budget.

The Committee agreed to continue reviewing this item at upcoming meetings.

Held

Respectfully submitted,

Harry Day