

## **Land Use Meeting – Public Hearing – May 27, 2020 - LU30.40 (formerly LU30.032)**

I am Genevieve Cal, owner of 274 Washington Blvd. with my siblings. My property is under the threat of Eminent Domain for not only the front yard to be used for street widening but also for a full take of my house and yard to be used in a land swap between two neighbors. I am adamantly opposed to this plan, and have made my views known to Attorney Cynthia Anger. I have heard nothing back from her over the last month nor received anything in writing.

How can something like this be imposed upon my property for private use?

### **I AM AGAINST EMINENT DOMAIN FOR THE CITY TO TAKE MY FULL PROPERTY.**

After over 70 years of paying taxes, we don't want the property lines broken.

You have already received a copy of my April 20 letter to Attorney Anger outlining how I first heard of the road widening from articles in the Stamford Advocate. Afterwards, a letter was sent to my sister's name informing us that the city was interested in acquiring 610 sq. ft of the property to widen the street. In March, after the BOR was made aware of the loss that the church would suffer, I received a call awhile later about the City's plan to take our house and full property and then another call with a slightly higher amount offered. This is a convenient way for the city to make them whole but is not for the benefit of public use but rather for private use. This was a big surprise to me, and I was told that I was not a lawyer and did not know the law.

There were no details of how much land each would get, and the City has not sent me any further information, but I recently found out that the condos are getting  $\frac{3}{4}$  of my land for their own scenery! While I do not feel that the street widening of Pulaski and Washington Blvd. is necessary, I understand that the City of Stamford is allowed to take the front of my property as they say it is for the benefit of public use. (Even though it seems to be more for the needs of BLT and Charter Communications thus adding to traffic congestion).

Our home is on the National Registry of Historic Neighborhoods from the 1986 designation where there should be some protection against the City taking it by Eminent Domain with their plan to demolish and break up the property lines. The house is not abandoned or irrelevant to me and my siblings, as it has been in our family for many generations. In fact, up to not too long ago, there were renters residing in the house, some moving out for personal reasons, others when they found out about the plan for the widening.

My parents belonged to Holy Name church as did all my siblings and myself still as of this date. We all went to Holy Name School as did my children, and I continue to be a parishioner, there. I have great respect for their project of building townhouses to ensure a financially viable future, but the City needs to come up with a better solution and not take my house and land in this manner to satisfy the dilemma that they created.

I will appreciate your support to vote against Eminent Domain.

Sincerely,

Genevieve K. Cal

Land Use Meeting – Public Hearing – May 27, 2020 - LU30.40 (formerly LU30.032)  
Eminent Domain

By way of introduction my name is Bernadette Jachimcyk (Ya him chick) and I have lived and been affiliated in the area in question for over 80 years. I grew up there as well and am a very active person at Holy Name of Jesus Parish.

I am here to defend and request that Eminent Domain not be used for this situation. My question is who is actually going to benefit by “taking” the property from the rectory and the neighboring property supposedly to widen Washington Blvd? I lived in the area when Pitney Bowes expanded and the traffic in the area did not require the expansion of the road and there was much more traffic than now.

Again I ask who will benefit from this so called lane situation - the new parking garage or the neighbors? Will the builders get a tax break and then when the time to pay taxes will disappear as did the Swiss Bank? Will there be a need for the garage as many are moving from the south end high rises north to open space as they are finding that they can work from home and don't need to commute to New York City which is closed and will probably not return to full capacity as leases are not being renewed. But I digress according to the Conn Gen Stat 48-10 definition of Eminent Domain this acquisition of the property is not legal. According to the statute, the amount of money needs to be market value so that the amount that is offered for the property should be the same that was paid for the building that was demolished for the parking garage.

This eminent domain subject should be completely dropped and not permitted to take these properties for private benefit. It is not for any of the reasons stated in the state statute as a reason to take these properties.

Thank you for listening to me in this situation, and I will greatly appreciate it if you would seriously consider the disadvantages to the neighborhood as opposed to the benefit of a developer who will vanish after they profit and leave the neighborhood a mess.

And as a sideline note, Holy Name church is already surrounded by enough high rises diminishing its skyline stature and beauty in the neighborhood.

Thank You. Bernadette Jachimcyk

## Land Use Meeting – Public Hearing – May 27, 2020 - LU30.40 (formerly LU30.032)

Good Evening. My name is Elizabeth McCauley, South End property owner with my mom, Estelle. The proposal for Eminent Domain now includes swapping the land of 274 Washington Blvd. between 2 adjoining neighbors which I find to be very shocking. A home that is on the National Register of Historic places no less.

The owner did not have due process of any timely or written communication, and is NOT in agreement for their land to be divided and dished out for private entities. I am very torn in my support, being a lifetime communicant of Holy Name of Jesus Church and fully endorse their long term lease project and the anticipated funds for keeping the parish thriving into the future.

But, Genevieve Cal is a lifelong family friend, so I need to express how difficult it has been to see how she is being treated by the City of Stamford. Really shame on the City for creating a double jeopardy of taking her front yard and then proposing a full take to resolve the dilemma that they created!!?

At the last BOR meeting, someone mentioned that the process of how we got here was not important, and was ancient history. That everyone needs to move forward and do the “right” thing – but let’s back up to acknowledge that the history was certainly NOT the “right thing” and the committee should consider the root cause of how so much misinformation and inappropriate means was used to get to this point leaving a senior citizen in this predicament. As Mrs. Cal has mentioned, she first found about Eminent Domain in the newspaper . . . she was later told by phone that she was not a lawyer and knew nothing about the law of public vs. private use . . . City officials used obituaries rather than probate records to determine inheritors? plus to date she has received nothing in writing!

While the Committee may want to move forward with the Street Widening project, taking people’s front yards (even though it is for the benefit of BLT and Charter), they should most definitely NOT agree to the land swap being the solution and to treat a longstanding citizen, resident and parishioner with respect.

In reference to this “new lane that goes nowhere”, all might want to wait until there is a better understanding of new traffic patterns as the Gov. recently said that this is the end of daily commuting as we know it. Articles written by transportation experts say, post corona virus will be a new world for commuters, and we can flatten the commuting curve on roads and rails including a lower demand even for parking and garages. In fact, Darien is going to turn their parking lots into designated outdoor activity areas. Metro-North president, Catherine Rinaldi, says it will be years, if ever, before ridership gets back to pre-Covid 19 levels. Why not readjust thinking to determine if this is really worth the time and money in light of known changing circumstances.

Certain Land Use members will disagree based on their supposed conversations with local corporate managers, but nothing can be guaranteed as people’s views about safety and necessity is changed forever. Telecommuting and the technology that goes with it are here to stay. And is this, (including bike lanes) really worth disrupting people’s lives and property for? Think about if it were you or someone from your family going through this type of forced loss against their will.

When some City officials say it is time to do the right thing even at the expense of a few, remember in Genesis 18:24, God said that even if there was only one righteous person in a forbidden city, He would spare that City for the sake of the one person.

Hopefully, you will all decide to do the same and vote against Eminent Domain.

Thank you,  
Elizabeth and Estelle McCauley