



Land Use-Urban Redevelopment Committee – Board of Representatives

Harry Day, Co-Chair

David Kooris, Co-Chair

Committee Report

Date: Tuesday, June 30, 2015

Time: 7:30 p.m.

Place: Legislative Chambers, 4th Floor, Government Center

The Land Use-Urban Redevelopment Committee met as indicated above. In attendance were Co-Chair Day, Co-Chair Kooris and Committee Member Reps. Fountain, McGarry, McNeil, Okun, Reeder, Ryan and Summerville. Also present were Reps. de la Cruz, McMullen and Mitchell; Chris Dellaselva, Law Department; Michael Handler, Director of Administration; Lou Casolo, City Engineer; Lynn Drobbin, Stamford Historical Society and approximately 25 members of the public (see the attached public hearing sign in sheets for [LU29.041](#), [LU29.043](#) and [LU29.044](#))

Co-Chair Day called the meeting to order at 7:52 p.m.

Item No.	Description	Committee Action
11. LU29.041	RESOLUTION <u>and Public Hearing</u> ; Authorizing the Acquisition by Negotiation or Eminent Domain of Rights of Way for the Greenwich Avenue/Southfield Avenue @ Selleck Street Intersection Improvement Project. 05/01/15 – Submitted by Mayor Martin 05/05/15 – Approved by Planning Board 05/14/15 – Approved by Board of Finance 05/26/15 – Approved by Committee 06/01/15 – Approved by full Board for Public Hearing	Approved 9-0-0

Co-Chair Day opened the public hearing on this item. Mr. Poola gave a brief review of the project and noted that there have been several public meetings about this project. The estimated construction cost is \$2,000,000. Jon Fleming stated that he owns a business on Davenport Road and expressed concerns about the impact of the rerouting of traffic on Davenport Road on his business. There being no other members of the public wishing to speak, Co-Chair Day closed the public hearing. A motion to approve this resolution was made, seconded and approved by a vote of 9-0-0 (Reps. Day, Kooris, Fountain, McGarry, McNeil, Okun, Reeder, Ryan and Summerville in favor).

¹ Video Time Stamp 00:02:38

2. [LU29.043](#) RESOLUTION and Public Hearing; Approving a Memorandum of Agreement re: the Purchase/Sale of 713 Bedford Street and Moving the Hoyt-Barnum House to 1508 High Ridge Road.
05/21/15 – Submitted by Mayor Martin
06/02/15 – Approved by [Planning Board](#)
06/11/15 – Approved by Board of Finance
- Held in
Committee
5-4-0**

Co-Chair Day opened the public hearing. He stated that discussion on this item would necessarily also embrace issues relating to subsequent items on the agenda, and that the Committee would not be strict about limiting the scope of public comment so long as it related to any of the related items on the agenda.

Mr. Handler read the following statement into the record:

Before you this evening, are four items which are an integral part of the City's plans to build a new headquarters for the Stamford Police Department. The overall project I am certain is not a surprise to this Board, as you have all played an integral role in various aspects thus far – funding through the capital budget process and the approval of the contract to purchase 671 Bedford Street, to name a few. The City's plan was first announced by the Mayor at a press conference on February 12th with subsequent progress articles written in the Stamford Advocate.

Early on, the City reached out to our valued partners within the community with expertise in historic preservation. The City invited members of the Stamford Historical Society, Historic Preservation Advisory Commission, and Historic Neighborhood Preservation to collaborate in the process because we recognize that they are resident experts in this area. In fact, much of what you will be voting on this evening on agenda item 2 came from input of the various boards and commissions. It is important to note, that there was one significant demand that the City could not include in the MOA with the Stamford Historical Society – which was that we plan, fund and complete the major tasks related to the move of the Hoyt Barnum House prior to completing the application for demolition. While the City acknowledges that this would have been optimal to quell any perceived anxiety surrounding our commitment to the successful move of the Hoyt Barnum House, circumstances involving the health and welfare of the members of the Stamford Police Department made that sequencing impossible. Nevertheless, I would like to assure the Board of Representatives that the City is committed to successfully moving the Hoyt Barnum House to 1508 High Ridge Road, where we hope it can be enjoyed by the community for years to come. I see no reason why we cannot work together to ensure that we develop a responsible and cost effective plan to move the House. We welcome input from the appropriate Boards and Commissions and we hope that everyone will be mindful that we do in fact have a larger overall project that needs to be managed with fairly aggressive timelines.

Renée Kahn read the following statement into the record:

² Video Time Stamp 00:14:54

When the issue of relocating the Hoyt Barnum House from its present original site on Bedford Street arose, I had misgivings. As far as I was concerned, the house's primary asset as an historic building was that it was on its original late 17th century site, a trip into the past in an ever-expanding modern city. Moving it elsewhere would permanently rob it of its major significance: a bucolic survivor of Stamford in Colonial times. I was told, however, that there was no alternative and that this was a "good deal" for all concerned. The City desperately needs a new police station and the Society wants the building "closer to home" so they could make greater use of it. Made sense.

But, as time went on, gnawing doubts appeared. Was this really the best way to go for both the City and the Society? It certainly wasn't the cheapest. Doing some "back of the napkin" calculations, it looked like it might cost the taxpayers at least 3/4 million dollars more than keeping the building where it is and fixing it up. I needed to go back to Square One and examine the premises on which the decision was based.

I was hearing that there was no alternative, however after 30 years in the preservation business, I have learned that when a developer (city or private) tells me that something "can't be done", it usually means that he doesn't want to do it for whatever reason. Who said that a new police station required a totally cleared site? Did anyone ever ask a really talented architect to come up with some schematic drawings that kept the HB in place? How would you remove the rock on the site? Blasting? What would be the impact on the neighborhood? What are the cost differences between the present plan and one that kept the house in place? Unquestionably, keeping the house is the cheaper option for the taxpayer BY FAR. We have a good idea of what fixing up the old house will cost; we don't know what the cost of dismantling the house and/or moving it intact elsewhere would be. What if it came to more than the estimated one million dollars? Who would be responsible then? No one wants a pile of stone and wood sitting in perpetuity on the Society's side lawn.

Now, let's examine the project from the SHS's side, assuming the at least 200K will go in their coffers either way. If the City repairs the HB House on its present site, it will have new working plumbing and assigned parking space in the new Police garage, solving two of its present problems. The SHS will own a remarkable building, listed on the National Register of Historic Places (one of the first in the nation) on ITS ORIGINAL SITE. If the building gets moved, this listing may be removed. What happens if in fifty years the Society wants to move to bigger, better headquarters elsewhere? Will it then move the HB House once again? This is assuming that it survives the first move.

If using the building on its current site is a problem for the Society, I suggest that some creative thinking go into adaptive reuse. The days of little old ladies in Colonial costume giving tours are over. What else could go into the building that would make it useful to the Society? There are lots of ideas out there; all of them successful elsewhere: a State Tourism Center, an antique shop, offices, headquarters for a non profit to name but a few.

Unfortunately, I don't think the City boards are in a position to approve this project without a lot more investigation into alternatives. Otherwise, they are unnecessarily wasting taxpayer money.

I recommend that you hold this in committee until schematic drawings and cost comparisons of keeping the building on its present site are prepared.

Wes Haynes read the following statement into the record:

I am here tonight on behalf of Historic Neighborhood Preservation to comment on the MOA.

HNP's interest in the MOA is two-fold. We remain as always an advocate for preserving Stamford's historic buildings, and since the establishment of HPAC last year, we are also guardians of the historic preservation review process. This MOA is flawed on both accounts, in the way it is written as well as the way it has been processed. Forwarding it to the Board of Representatives without corrective revision to ensure the preservation of Hoyt-Barnum and the compliant participation of HPAC under its ordinance invites unnecessary runaway costs and delay.

This MOA is a cart before the horse. Successful preservation projects, both in terms of execution and cost control always result from careful front end planning, but that is not the process identified in the MOA. The assumptions in the MOA of the projected budget, as well as the desired benefit, are drawn from thin air. Without basic planning on the method of the move and its relocation on the new site, project costs cannot be determined, and the budget is open-ended and likely well off target. Moreover, house museums are in trouble across the country, with the recent history of Hoyt-Barnum a case in point. Prudence and normal practice dictate that a non-profit cultural institution embarking on expanding its campus with such a challenging use should prepare a master plan or at least conduct a feasibility study to assess the market, nail down development and operating costs, and prepare a case statement for grant funding. Such planning is a threshold to build confidence and support among the community at large and outside funders. The absence of such planning places the City's considerable investment at risk. A master plan or feasibility study should be made part of this MOA.

Beyond use, the long term care of Hoyt Barnum is a major concern of HNP, for the relocation will more than likely result in the loss of Hoyt-Barnum's National Register status, a substantial loss of prestige and attractiveness to donors and visitorship. National Register status is a hard earned credential like an advanced educational degree, opening doors to opportunities and expanding marketability. It is up to the building owner to put National Register status to work, which the Historical Society did in the 1970s when the building was restored with federal matching funds. More recently this credential would have earned Hoyt Barnum a higher score against less prestigious State Register properties in the competitive race for State restoration funds for roof replacement and plumbing repairs had they been sought. Because federal and state preservation standards discourage relocation, relocated State Register properties like the future Hoyt Barnum are ranked as less historic and are the least competitive grant applicants in the

historic property pool. Is the City prepared to shoulder the maintenance costs in the long term? The MOA should include explicit stewardship provisions, such as an easement requiring periodic inspection of the building by a qualified outside party to protect the City's investment and the resource.

The project would be well-served by a meeting among representatives of the SHPO, Land Use Committee, HPAC, Engineering, Stamford Historical Society and HNP to visit the two sites and resolve differences over the scope of architectural services and clarify SHPO's and HPAC's expectations for project compliance. The SHPO is willing to come to Stamford for such a meeting. This should occur before the selection of the restoration architect and advancement of the MOA to allow incorporating clarifications into the document.

HNP has cooperated fully with the Administration, HPAC and Engineering in developing the rfp for the architect and offers these comments with the aim of making this a better project. Coming to terms with relocating the house has been a painful issue for our board, the majority of whom would prefer that it stay in place. It is hard for preservationists to imagine downtown Stamford without this landmark which has been recognized as a charming curiosity for over a century, and to accept that downtown will not be graced again by another three century old building until 2158, 143 years from now, long after everyone in this room, our children, and grandchildren have departed this earth. And that is assuming that St. John's rectory on Atlantic Street survives the interim.

Haste makes waste. We do not want to lose this building or end up with another unsuccessful use at the end of this difficult and costly process. We urge you to fix these problems now in the interest of ensuring that Hoyt Barnum remains a valuable and vibrant resource that Stamford can be proud of while avoiding unnecessary costs and delays resulting from poor planning and non-compliance.

Esther Giordano spoke in opposition to the relocation of the Hoyt Barnum House, stating that the House should be kept in its current location.

Tod Bryant, the President of the Norwalk Preservation Trust, spoke in opposition to the relocation of the Hoyt Barnum House, noting that integrity of location is a primary factor for the National Register of Historic Places. He also noted that an action could be brought under CGS §22a-19a, which permits a claim for unreasonable destruction of a building on the historic register.

Phyllis Mazik stated that the asbestos in the current police station could be abated and the building could be modernized and continue to be used.

Lynn Drobbin, the Chair of the Historic Preservation Advisory Commission, stated that HPAC had sent a memo to the City on 4/21/15 regarding the research and steps to be taken prior the decision to move the building and prior to the application for a demolition permit. She noted that since the 6/2/15 meeting of the Planning Board, the City has worked closely with HPAC and HNP on the RFP. HPAC stands by its decision to support the move of the house, but wants documentation; to have the City work with the SHPO re: the National Register status; the identification of the costs and the responsible party for the work that needs to be done; and would like the Architect to evaluate whether the 2 buildings can exist together.

Brian O'Neill, a member of the SHS, expressed concern over the process by which this began and is in opposition to moving the House.

Greg Bailey, the Treasurer of the SHS, stated that the SHS understands the concerns regarding the moving of the House and, in a perfect world, would prefer it to stay. In general, the SHS agrees with moving the House to the new location where it would be more usable, more accessible and serve the community better. The SHS thinks the job can be done in a proper way that will preserve the house. He stated that any cost over \$1 million will be incurred by the City.

Patrick Hale of Cos Cob spoke in opposition to moving the house.

Co-Chair Day closed the public hearing.

Mr. Handler stated that all of the issues raised in the public hearing weighed into the City's decision.

Mr. Casolo described the interactions the City has had with the SHP and the plans the City has regarding the moving and preservation of the House:

- He met with the SHPO in June and determined what future meetings he needs to have
- He has made a commitment to work closely with the SHPO and the NPS
- He has been working with HNP
- He plans to meet with the SHPO Board in November and February
- The architect doing this work must be someone with prior experience in order to deconstruct it in a way that will be least disturbing to the building
- The hearth can be moved
- He will be discussing keeping it on the National Register with the SHPS
- He is committed to meeting with the NPS

In response to questions from the Committee, Mr. Casolo, Mr. Handler and Mr. Dellaselva responded as follows:

- the Police Department architect is currently doing a needs assessment and has not looked at the possibility of building around the House at this point
- The demolition notice was a way to begin the process, given the six month delay provision. They are not planning any demolition for 6 months to a year
- They are committed to getting the police in the new building by July, 2018
- The bidding process for the deconstruction would be in Spring, 2016 with the house being moved in September, 2016
- Police stations are not generally designed to be more than 2 stories tall
- There is pressure from OSHA to move people out of the current police headquarters. There is a risk to keeping the police in the current building because they would not be able to do repairs in the ceiling.
- One of the goals was to leave the House in good hands, while recognizing the SHS' financial difficulties
- The Police Department building will only be a successful project if the move of the House is also successful

- The site of the new department does not include the current department building because the police can't be moved out of the current building while the work is being done
- The City will be buying the property, but will not own the House. The delisting of the House will not result in a loss of funding for the City
- Although the delisting might result in a loss of grant funding in the future, the costs of alternative locations for the Police Department would be a great deal higher
- The City applied for the demolition permit on behalf of both the SHS and City out of an abundance of caution because the property will be changing hands.

A motion to hold this item was made, seconded and approved by a vote of 5-4-0 (Reps. Day, Kooris, McGarry, Reeder and Ryan in favor; Reps. Fountain, McNeil, Okun and Summerville opposed).

- ³3. [LU29.044](#) RESOLUTION and Public Hearing; Approving the extension of the lease for the property at 1508 High Ridge Road Pursuant to the Memorandum of Agreement re: the Purchase/Sale of 713 Bedford Street and Moving the Hoyt-Barnum House to 1508 High Ridge Road (LU29.043).
 05/21/15 – Submitted by Mayor Martin
 06/02/15 – Approved by [Planning Board](#)
 06/11/15 – Approved by Board of Finance
- Held in
Committee
7-0-0**

Co-Chair Day opened the public hearing. Brian O'Neill stated that the lease extension should be a separate item from the Memorandum of Understanding. There being no other members of the public wishing to speak, Co-Chair Day closed the public hearing.

A motion to hold this item was made, seconded and approved by a vote of 7-0-0 (Reps. Day, Kooris, Fountain, McGarry, Reeder, Ryan and Summerville in favor).

- ⁴4. [LU29.047](#) RESOLUTION; Approving demolition (disassembly and reassembly) of the Hoyt-Barnum House located at 713 Bedford Street.
 06/02/15 – Approved by [Planning Board](#)
 06/04/15 – Submitted by Chris Dellaselva
- Held in
Committee
5-1-1**

A motion to hold this item was made, seconded and approved by a vote of 5-1-0 (Reps. Day, Kooris, McGarry, Reeder and Ryan in favor; Rep. Fountain opposed; Rep. Summerville abstaining).

The Committee next considered Item No. 6

³ Video Time Stamp 02:02:20

⁴ Video Time Stamp 02:05:57

- ⁵6. [LU29.045](#) RESOLUTION; Approving demolition of the Building located on the current Plotnick Property at 671 Bedford Street. **Approved 4-3-0**
05/21/15 – Submitted by Mayor Martin
06/02/15 – Approved by [Planning Board](#)
06/11/15 – Approved by Board of Finance

Mr. Handler stated that the closing on this property will be July 2, 2015. The architect will be designing the Police Headquarters with that property included. Committee members discussed whether this building would be repurposed. A motion to approve this item was made, seconded and approved by a vote of 4-3-0 (Reps. Day, Fountain, Okun and Ryan in favor; Reps. Kooris, McGarry and Reeder opposed).

- ⁶5. [LU29.029](#) RESOLUTION; Approving demolition of Buildings at 200 Strawberry Hill Avenue Site. **Held in Committee**
10/24/14 – Submitted by Mayor Martin
11/05/14 – 45 day extension by Planning Board
11/13/14 – Held by Board of Finance
02/24/15 – Report Made & Held until April
04/28/15 – Held in Committee
05/26/15 – Held in Committee

Mr. Casolo explained that he has been meeting with SHPO, Lynn Drobbin and Wes Haynes regarding the two caretaker cottages. The stay of demolition has expired. They are advertising in the Trust of Historic Properties to allow someone to move the properties. Ms. Drobbin stated that if no one accepts the offer, they would like documentation and possible salvage of the buildings. This item was held without objection.

- ⁷7. [LU29.046](#) RESOLUTION; Approving the Amended and Restated Agreement between the City of Stamford and the Mill River Collaborative. **Approved 6-0-1**
05/22/15 – Submitted by Mayor Martin
06/02/15 – Approved by [Planning Board](#)
06/11/15 – Approved by Board of Finance

Mr. Dellaselva explained that the restated agreement makes the relationship between the City and the MRC work better. Key changes are:

- Including the Archstone property
- Allowing the MRC to serve alcohol
- Increasing each party's financial commitment to \$500,000
- Requiring the MRC to comply with the Purchasing Ordinance
- Requiring quarterly financials from the MRC
- Clarifying City Representative representation on the MRC Board

⁵ Video Time Stamp 02:06:52

⁶ Video Time Stamp 02:11:32

⁷ Video Time Stamp 02:18:00

A motion to approve this resolution was made, seconded and approved by a vote of 6-0-1 (Reps. Day, Kooris, Fountain, Okun, Ryan and Summerville in favor; Rep. Reeder abstaining).

8. LU29.034 REVIEW; Use of property by Finnochio Bros. at 49 Liberty Place and Effects on surrounding neighborhood. **Held in Committee**
02/04/15 – Submitted by Rep. Mitchell
02/24/15 – Report Made & Held until April
04/28/15 – Report Made & Held in Committee
04/28/15 – Held in Committee
05/11/15 – Held at Steering

This item was held without objection.

9. [LU29.002](#) REVIEW; construction work at Star Meadow Ranch, Erskine Road. **Held in Committee**
11/20/13 – Submitted by Chair Day
01/28/14 – Report Made & Held in Committee
02/27/14 – Report Made & Held in Committee
03/25/14 – Report Made & Held in Committee
04/22/14 - Report Made & Held in Committee
05/27/14 – Held in Committee
07/01/14 – Report Made & Held in Committee
07/29/14 – Report Made & Held in Committee
08/11/14 – Held at Steering
09/23/14 - Report Made & Held in Committee
10/29/14 – Report Made & Held in Committee
02/24/15 – Report Made & Held until April
04/28/15 – Report Made & Held in Committee
05/26/15 –Report Made & Held in Committee
06/01/15 – Held by Full Board

This item was held without objection.

10. [LU29.039](#) REVIEW; Current and Future Purpose and Role of the Urban Redevelopment Commission. **Held in Committee**
04/08/15 – Submitted by Reps. Day, Kooris, Silver, Skigen, Buckman and Zelinsky
04/28/15 – Report Made & Held in Committee
05/26/15 –Report Made & Held in Committee
06/01/15 – Report Made & Held by Full Board

This item was held without objection.

Co-Chair Day adjourned the meeting at 10:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Harry Day, Co-Chair

This meeting is on [video](#).