



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

Harry Day, Co-Chair

David Kooris, Co-Chair

# **Committee Report**

**Date:** Tuesday, September 1, 2015  
**Time:** 7:30 p.m.  
**Place:** Republican Caucus Room, 4<sup>th</sup> Floor, Government Center

The Land Use-Urban Redevelopment Committee met as indicated above. In attendance were Co-Chairs Day and Kooris; and Committee Member Reps. Fountain, McGarry, Okun, Ryan and Summerville. Absent or excused was Rep. McNeil. Also present were Rep. Zelinsky; Ellen Bromley, Social Services Commission Coordinator; Lou Casolo, City Engineer; Rachel Goldberg, Peter Sciarretta and Reverend Tommie Jackson, URC; John Leydon, Esq.; Deborah Billington and Lindsey C. Miller.

Co-Chair Day called the meeting to order at 7:40 p.m.

<b>Item No.</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Committee Action</b>
1. <a href="#">LU29.049</a>	RESOLUTION <u>and Public Hearing</u> ; Authorizing the Acquisition of rights of Way - Highway Purposes Partial taking of 492 West Main Street for Intersection Improvements of West Main Street & West Avenue. 06/25/15 – Submitted by Mayor Martin 06/30/15 – Approved by <a href="#">Planning Board</a> 07/09/15 – Approved by Board of Finance	<b>Approved 7-0-0</b>

Co-Chair Day opened the public hearing and left it open during the discussion of this item. Mr. Casolo explained that this project will permit the opening up of the intersection and resolve the difficulty of left turns by creating designated left turn lanes. Private entities are providing the right-of-way for the NE, NW and SE corners. In response to questions from the committee, he stated that;

- the specific cost of the acquisition will be determined after the appraisal
- the property to be taken is less than 3000 ft<sup>2</sup>
- the owner of the property is Stamford Green Company, L.P.
- every corner will have sidewalks and crosswalks
- the current parking on West Main Street will be eliminated

In response to a question from a member of the public, Dave Avery, Mr. Casolo stated that the taking goes approximately 7-8 feet into the property.

There being no further 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 7-0-0 (Reps. Day, Kooris, Fountain, McGarry, Okun, Ryan and Summerville in favor).

2. [LU29.006](#) RESOLUTION and Public Hearing; authorizing the sale of city-owned property to Garden Homes Management. **Approved 5-0-2**
- 11/20/13 – Submitted by Chair Day
  - 12/09/13 – Placed on Pending Agenda
  - 06/30/15 – Approved by Planning Board
  - 07/09/15 – Approved by Board of Finance
  - 07/15/15 – Held in Committee

Co-Chair Day opened the public hearing and left it open during the discussion of this item. Ms. Bromley explained that this Resolution is in conjunction with the approval of the discontinuance of Stanley Court last month. The discontinuance was necessary for the sale of the property to Garden Homes, which will be developing affordable housing on the site.

Mr. Leydon distributed a [corrected property description](#). He noted that:

- The property was appraised at \$450,000 by Cushman & Wakefield, effective 4/28/15
- This proposal is for the western half of Stanley Court
- Garden Homes is working with the City and Inspirica to possibly develop 54 units of affordable housing on the eastern half of Stanley Court
- Garden Homes owns and controls the entire development site and plans access to Washington Boulevard
- The development will be 150 units, including 22% affordable at various levels (5% at 25 % AMI; 10% at 50% AMI; and 7% at 60% AMI)
- Most of the units will be studios or 1 bedrooms
- The details of the 8/16/13 letter regarding the relocation of existing tenants will still apply to the then current tenants; new tenants are not being offered the relocation options because they were told of the plans at the time they moved in
- The 25% affordability threshold is being done voluntarily; it is not required

There being no 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 5-0-2 (Reps. Day, Kooris, Fountain, McGarry and Summerville in favor; Reps. Okun and Ryan abstaining).

3. [LU29.029](#) RESOLUTION; Approving demolition of Buildings at 200 Strawberry Hill Avenue Site. **Approved 6-0-1**  
 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  
 04/28/15 – Held in Committee  
 05/26/15 – Held in Committee  
 06/30/15 – Held in Committee  
 07/15/15 – Held in Committee

Mr. Casolo stated that the City is moving forward with the construction and design. The ad for the National Trust website was published today and will run for 2-3 months. The ad offers the buildings for sale for \$1 or alternatively offers them for salvage. The 180 objection period under the demolition ordinance has passed. A motion to approve this resolution, subject to the approval of the Planning Board and the Board of Finance, if required, was made, seconded and approved by a vote of 6-0-1 (Reps. Day, Kooris, Fountain, Okun, Ryan and Summerville in favor; Rep. McGarry abstaining).

4. [LU29.002](#) REVIEW; construction work at Star Meadow Ranch, Erskine Road. (on 7/15) **Held until October**  
 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  
 06/30/15 – Held in Committee  
 07/15/15 – Report Made

Co-Chair Day stated that Ms. Emmett was not available but told him there was nothing to report. The trial is set for October. This item will be held until October.

5. LU29.052 REVIEW; Proposed Neighborhood Map. **Held**  
 07/07/15 – Submitted by Mayor Martin  
 07/15/15 – Held in Committee

Co-Chair Day stated that this item would be held due to the unavailability of the invited guests.

6. [LU29.039](#) REVIEW; Current and Future Purpose and Role of the Urban Redevelopment Commission. **Report Made & Held**  
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  
06/30/15 – Held in Committee

Co-Chair Day read the email he sent to Reverend Jackson and Ms. Goldberg in anticipation of the meeting:

Dear Tommy and Rachel,

As you know, the URC Review item is on the Land Use Committee's agenda for tomorrow evening. David, I and the Committee would like to focus on the URC's current-year budget and agenda, and what you foresee in the upcoming year or two as items that the URC will be dealing with. The Committee will be striving to understand whether, from a cost-benefit analysis, the City should be retaining the URC as it is currently structured, or rather fold its operations into another City function.

A lot of incorrect things were stated or implied about past activities of the URC, and David and I are pleased that we were able to set the record straight at the prior meeting in terms of eliminating misconceptions and understanding the many productive things the URC has accomplished. We regarded achieving that "reset" as an extremely important step so that we could evaluate the present and future dispassionately, unencumbered by a lot of fiction and rumor.

Having achieved a "reset" and now moving forward, I do believe the majority of City officials have come to believe--correctly or incorrectly--that the URC is outliving its usefulness. I think the burden will be on you two and the Commissioners to make the case that there are compelling reasons to leave the current structure intact.

We look forward to seeing you tomorrow evening.

Best,

Harry

Mr. Sciarretta stated that over the past 3 years, he has worked to reduce the costs of the URC. 2 years ago the Board reduced all operations from full time to part time and this past year he recommended, and the Board approved, further reducing all spending by 8½%. The agenda for the next 12 months is to complete current projects and to bring funds into Stamford and contribute to the vitality of the City.

Reverend Jackson stated that folding the URC activities for urban redevelopment into another agency may not benefit the City financially, since the same funds will still need to be spent. There is currently no other agency empowered by statute to do the necessary eminent domain and takings. Ms. Goldberg noted that there is a memo in the file dated 5/22/15 regarding alternate organizational structures. She began to list the

activities to be taken by the URC in the next 2 years. In response to questions from the Committee, Ms. Goldberg explained that there are federal statutory and regulatory requirements as a result of the receipt of federal funds for urban redevelopment and community development. Similarly, state statutes require an urban renewal agency with a 5 member board to implement the 3 urban renewal plans currently in effect. In addition, if the City staff were to take over this role, the staff would need to understand the federal and state statutory and regulatory requirements.

Co-Chair Kooris stated that he sees this as a 2 part inquiry: First, how to resolve the urban renewal process begun in 1964, which is not yet finished, and second, what is the role of the City (and the URC) in the future development of the City that the City seeks.

Committee members discussed the need to have a member of the administration present for these discussions and to get the list of current and proposed projects in writing, as well as a written explanation of why/if the URC is the best entity to handle these projects. Co-Chair Kooris said he would provide Ms. Goldberg with a written explanation of what the Committee is asking for and she agreed to respond to the Committee's request.

This item was held for future consideration with Corporation Counsel and City staff present.

Co-Chair Day adjourned the meeting at 10:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,  
Harry Day, Co-Chair

This meeting is on [video](#).