

EAST HARTFORD TOWN COUNCIL

Robert J. Park

TOWN COUNCIL CHAMBERS

February 15, 2022

2022 FEB 17 PM 3:30

PRESENT

Chair Richard F. Kehoe, Vice Chair Donald B. Bell, Jr. (via Teams),
Majority Leader Sebrina Wilson, Minority Leader John Morrison,
Councillors Angela Parkinson, Awet Tsegai, Thomas Rup, Travis
Simpson and Harry Amadasun, Jr.

TOWN CLERK
EAST HARTFORD

ALSO PRESENT

Mayor Michael Walsh
Eileen Buckheit, Development Director
Rich Gentile, Asst. Corporation Counsel
Mike Andreana, Pullman and Comley
Michael Ceccorulli, Pullman and Comley

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Kehoe called the meeting to order at 7:31p.m. The Chair stated that this meeting was also available to the public through the "Teams" platform.

The Chair announced the exit locations in accordance with Connecticut General Statutes §29-381, after which the Council joined him in the pledge of allegiance.

AMENDMENTS TO THE AGENDA

MOTION

By Sebrina Wilson
seconded by John Morrison
to **amend** the agenda as follows:

under COUNCIL ACTION ON EXECUTIVE SESSION MATTERS, add

1. The pending Contract Claim by UniFirst Corporation.
2. The pending Superior Court Action known as Faith Snay, PPA Tonda Downes, Et al. v Board of Education of the Town of East Hartford Et al., Docket No. HHD-CV-19-6114583-S.

Motion Carried 9/0

OPPORTUNITY FOR RESIDENTS TO ADDRESS THE COUNCIL ON AGENDA ITEMS

Mayor Walsh (1) shared a communication from the East Hartford Public Schools stating that in alignment with state guidance, masks will not be required in public schools after February 28, 2022. The mask mandate will be lifted in Town Buildings on the 28th as well. (2) Bids were opened on January 6th and Goman and York were selected to assist the town in creating the Silver Lane Development Plan pursuant to the City and Town Development Act. (3) A presentation of National Development's plan for Rentschler Field

was provided to the Town Council and public on February 8th. (4) A presentation updating the Town Council and community on the Jasko Development on the Showcase Cinema site was held on February 10th. (5) Tyron Harris has been hired as the Town's Human Resources Director starting March 7th. The interview process for Fire Chief begins next week and the Finance Director search is still in process. (6) The ceremonial signing of the recently settled Police Contract occurred on February 14 in the Mayor's Office. The Mayor thanks all Police Officers for their service to the community. (7) The Brian Aselton Snow Dash hosted 218 runners on February 6th. (8) The Mayor's Recommended Budget for FY 23 will be shared with the council in the next 10 days. The mill rate has declined but there is a revaluation shift away from commercial properties toward residential real estate. (9) A new "Ask the Mayor" social media campaign has begun. (10) The Town's FY 21 audit and Financial Report were completed and have been filed per State law. (11) The Sifi fiber project is progressing with in ground installation beginning in April. (12) Public Works is in the process of patching potholes. The Mayor encouraged the public to use the "My East Hartford" app to report potholes so that they may be addressed.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

February 1, 2022 Executive Session

MOTION By Sebrina Wilson
 seconded by Travis Simpson
 to **approve** the minutes of the February 1, 2022 Executive Session.
 Motion carried 9/0.

February 1, 2022 Public Hearing

MOTION By Sebrina Wilson
 seconded by Tom Rup
 to **approve** the minutes of the February 1, 2022 Public Hearing.
 Motion carried 9/0.

February 1, 2022 Regular Meeting

MOTION By Sebrina Wilson
 seconded by Awet Tsegai
 to **approve** the minutes of the February 1, 2022 Regular Meeting.
 Motion carried 9/0.

February 8, 2022 Special Meeting

MOTION By Sebrina Wilson
 seconded by Tom Rup
 to **approve** the minutes of the February 8, 2022 Special Meeting.
 Motion carried 9/0.

February 10, 2022 Special Meeting

MOTION By Sebrina Wilson
 seconded by Travis Simpson
 to **approve** the minutes of the February 10, 2022 Special Meeting.
 Motion carried 9/0.

To accommodate those present, the following motion was made.

MOTION By Sebrina Wilson
 Seconded by Tom Rup
 to take item 8E out of order
 Motion Carried 9/0.

Eileen Buckheit, Development Director introduced Mike Andreana and Michael Ceccorulli from Pullman and Comley to review the changes to the Development and Tax Agreements that were initially presented at the February 10th Special Meeting regarding the Showcase Cinema site project.

Mike Ceccorulli summarized the modifications of the Development Agreement which provided a budget of expenses and delegated responsibilities of both the town and the developers with regards to the project.

Mike Andreana summarized the Tax Agreement modifications, clarifying tax payouts in accordance with the proposed enterprise zone statute. The developer is required to use good faith efforts to create and preserve jobs for local residents during construction and operation of the property with regards to job postings and the process of procurement of goods and services from local businesses. An annual written report will be provided to the Mayor detailing these efforts during development.

Showcase Cinema Development and Tax Agreements

MOTION By Angie Parkinson
 seconded by Harry Amadasun
 to **adopt** the following resolution:

WHEREAS, the Town of East Hartford, Connecticut (the “Town”) is the owner of certain real property and all appurtenances thereto known as 936 Silver Lane, 942 Silver Lane, 944 Silver Lane, 960 Silver Lane, 285 Forbes Street (a/k/a 285 Forbes Street Rear) and 291 Forbes Street (the “Property”); and

WHEREAS, the Property was the subject of Town’s Request for Proposals Bid #21-05 published on October 5, 2020 (the “RFP”); and

WHEREAS, Jasko Zelman 1, LLC (“Jasko”) submitted a proposal for the development of the Property (the “RFP Response”), which RFP Response set forth preliminary concept plans for the development of the Property including not fewer than 360 multifamily market-rate apartment units (the “Project”); and

WHEREAS, based upon Jasko’s concept plan and proposed scope of development of the Property, the Town selected the RFP Response as the successful respondent to the RFP; and

WHEREAS, the Town and Jasko entered into a Purchase and Sale Agreement for the Property with an effective date of September 24, 2021 (the

“Purchase and Sale Agreement”) following the authorization thereof by the Town Council at a special meeting held on September 13, 2021; and

WHEREAS, the Purchase and Sale Agreement contemplates the negotiation and execution by the Town and Jasko of (i) a development agreement with respect the development and construction of the Project on the Property, and (ii) a tax modification agreement to modify the local real property taxes for the Project and the Property; and

WHEREAS, the Town and Jasko intend to enter into the Development Agreement, a draft of which has been provided to the Town Council (the “Development Agreement”), with respect the development and construction of the Project on the Property; and

WHEREAS, the Property is to be included within the boundaries of the adjacent Enterprise Zone by action of the Town Council and approval of the State Commissioner of the Department of Economic and Community Development; and

WHEREAS, under the provisions of Section 32-71(e) of the Connecticut General Statutes, property and projects within an Enterprise Zone are eligible for real property tax abatements and deferrals as the Town deems necessary; and

WHEREAS, the Town and Jasko intend to enter into the Tax Modification Agreement, a draft of which has been provided to the Town Council (the “Tax Agreement”), to modify the local real property taxes for the Project and the Property for a period of twenty-seven (27) years at a rate of \$2,100 per apartment unit plus annual tax increases of 2% per year; and

WHEREAS, the Town believes that the development of the Property and the execution of the Development Agreement and the Tax Agreement are in the best interests of the Town.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT HEREBY

RESOLVED: That the Development Agreement, substantially in the form as presented to this meeting and made a part hereof as fully as if set forth herein, with such changes, omissions, insertions and revisions as any Corporation Counsel of the Town shall deem advisable, are hereby approved; and Michael P. Walsh, Mayor, in the name of the Town, is hereby authorized to execute said Development Agreement.

RESOLVED: That the Tax Agreement, substantially in the form as presented to this meeting and made a part hereof as fully as if set forth herein, with such changes, omissions, insertions and revisions as any Corporation Counsel of the Town shall deem advisable, are hereby approved; and Michael P. Walsh, Mayor, in the name of the Town, is hereby authorized to execute said Tax Agreement.

RESOLVED: That the Mayor, or any designee of the Mayor, is hereby authorized to make, execute and deliver all such additional and supplemental documents, and to do and perform such acts and to take such actions as may be necessary or required for the consummation of the transactions provided for and contemplated by the Purchase and Sale Agreement, the Development Agreement and the Tax Agreement and any supplements or amendments thereto.

On call of the vote, motion carried 9/0

At this point, the Council returned to the order of the agenda.

Annual Pension and OPEB Fund Review:

Segal Company- Pension Contributions for FY 2022-23

Henry Nearing, Plan Actuary, reported that the Actuarially Determined Contribution (ADC) for FY2022-2023, after employee contributions, a 7.5% discount rate and a 3¼% amortization increase, is \$20,560,000. This amount takes into consideration some differences in the pension plan actual experience versus anticipated experience regarding employee compensation, longevity of plan participants and other factors. Overall Plan Population will continue to gradually decrease as many new and recent Town and Board of Education hires are not eligible for pension benefits. As of June 30, 2021 there are \$16.1M in investment gains to be reflected in future years with \$33.1M gain in the 2020/2021 plan year.

3D/L Capital Management: Discussion of the Town's Portfolio- Equity Side

John O'Connor, President of 3D/L Capital Management, Inc., and Ben Lavine, Co-Chief Investment Officer of 3D/L Capital Management, Inc., presented the investment returns on the equity portion of the Town's pension and OPEB portfolio for the period from July 1, 2020 through June 30, 2021. 3D/L manages three accounts for the town: Pension Equity Account – which is a stock account, Other Post-Employment Benefits (OPEB) and a cash management account. Asset Allocations are balanced amongst sensitive, cyclical and defensive sectors.

Fiducient Advisors: Discussion of the Town's Portfolio- Fixed Income Side

Christopher Kachmar, Chief Investment Officer of Fiduciary Investment Advisors (FIA) addressed the Council on the annual investment returns of the fixed income portion of the Town's pension and OPEB trust funds. Current low interest rates serve as an impediment to growth in the fixed income portfolio.

John Murphy, Town Treasurer and Chair of the Retiree Benefit Board stated that there will be a special meeting hosted virtually via Teams on Saturday February 19 from 9-12 regarding a review of bond investments and current interest rates.

Required OPEB Contribution Re: Section 10-52

The Chair stated that the town currently has roughly \$10 million in the OPEB Trust Fund which is set aside for health benefits for retirees. If there is a surplus in the Town budget, it first goes into the fund balance. Once the balance exceeds 10% of the annual budget, the addition is allocated to the OPEB Trust Fund. A little over \$2 million will be contributed towards health insurance costs due to last year's surplus.

OLD BUSINESS

NEW BUSINESS

Recommendation from Investigation & Audit Committee re: Appointment of Town Auditors for Fiscal Year ending June 30, 2022

MOTION By Awet Tsegai
 seconded by Sebrina Wilson
 to **appoint** the professional services firm of CliftonLarsonAllen, a.k.a. CLA, to provide auditing services for the Town of East Hartford for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2022 in the amount of \$74,700, as submitted in response to the Request for Proposal for Auditing services dated February 1, 2018.

Motion carried 9/0.

Plan of Conservation and Development Map Amendment: Rentschler Field

MOTION By Angie Parkinson
 seconded by Tom Rup
 to **amend** the Future Land Use Plan in the 2014 Plan of Conservation and Development to change land use designation from "Mixed Use" to "Light Industry" use with regards to the development parcel at Rentschler Field.

Motion carried 9/0.

Grant Application- Re: State Library Internal Connections Grant Program

MOTION By Harry Amadasun
 seconded by Travis Simpson
 to **adopt** the following resolution:

WHEREAS; libraries have a greater need than ever for high-speed Internet connections to provide more virtual programming to help their community's efforts to overcome digital inequity, and;

WHEREAS; the Connecticut State Library has made grant funds available to principal public libraries through the Fiber to the Library – Internal Connections Grant Program to fully leverage high-speed fiber connections to the Connecticut Education Network (CEN),

NOW THEREFORE LET IT BE RESOLVED; that Michael P. Walsh, Mayor of the Town of East Hartford, is authorized to make application to, and execute and approve on behalf of this corporation, any and all documents, applications, contracts, and amendments as may be required by the Connecticut State Library as they pertain to this Fiber to the Library – Internal Connections Grant Program.

On call of the vote, motion carried 9/0.

Section 10-4 Refund of Taxes: 297 Burnside Avenue

MOTION By Harry Amadasun
 seconded by Awet Tsegai
 that pursuant to Section 10-4 of the town of East Hartford Code of Ordinances, the Town Council **approves** the property tax reimbursement of \$7,400.15 to Oscar Ardon, Pastor of Iglesia Acanzando La Vision de Cristo, which represents the payment of taxes on June 9, 2020.

Motion carried 9/0.

Expansion of Enterprise Zone Boundaries

MOTION By Sebrina Wilson
 seconded by Tom Rup
 to **adopt** the following resolution:

WHEREAS, the Town of East Hartford, Connecticut (the “Town”) has established a municipal enterprise zone that includes a portion of Census Tract 5106; and

WHEREAS, the Town is currently considering multiple development projects in the Silver Lane area; and

WHEREAS, the expansion of the municipal enterprise zone would greatly assist the Town’s efforts to develop property in the Silver Lane area; and

WHEREAS, the Town desires to expand the current municipal enterprise zone to include a portion of Census Tract 5106 and a portion of Census Tract 5105, all as shown on the map attached hereto as Exhibit A; and

WHEREAS, State law requires that the Connecticut Department of Economic Development approve any expansion of a municipal enterprise zone; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT HEREBY

RESOLVED: That the Town’s Director of Development is hereby authorized to submit a request to the Connecticut Department of Economic and

RESOLVED: That the Director of Development is hereby authorized to make, execute and deliver all such additional and supplemental documents, and to do and perform such acts and to take such actions as may be necessary or required for the expansion of the Town's municipal enterprise zone as contemplated herein.

OPPORTUNITY FOR COUNCILLORS TO DIRECT QUESTIONS TO THE ADMINISTRATION

COUNCIL ACTION ON EXECUTIVE SESSION MATTERS

to **approve** a full and final settlement of all claims that UniFirst Corporation asserts against the Town of East Hartford related to that certain Customer Service Agreement entered into on or around April 15, 2014, by and between UniFirst Corporation and the Town of East Hartford, for the sum of One Thousand Seven Hundred Fifty and 00/100 Dollars (\$1,750.00).

to **accept** the recommendation of Corporation Counsel to fully and finally settle the pending Superior Court Action known as Faith Snay, PPA Tonda Downes, Et al. v Board of Education of the Town of East Hartford Et al., Docket No. HHD-CV-19-6114583-S, for a total sum of \$85,000.

ADJOURNMENT

Volume 91

Attest _____
Jason Marshall
TOWN COUNCIL CLERK