

MAJORITY OFFICE/MICROSOFT "TEAMS"

REAL ESTATE ACQUISITION AND DISPOSITION COMMITTEE

JULY 26, 2022

PRESENT Councillor Angie Parkinson, Chair; Councillors Awet Tsegai and Tom Rup

ALSO Michael Walsh, Mayor  
PRESENT Eileen Buckheit, Development Director  
Richard Gentile, Assistant Corporation Counsel  
Town Council Vice Chair Don Bell  
Connor Martin, Chief of Staff  
Mike Goman, Principal, Goman and York

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Parkinson called the meeting to order at 6:05 p.m.

AMENDMENTS TO THE AGENDA

MOTION By Tom Rup  
seconded by Awet Tsegai

to take agenda Items in the following order to accommodate those present:  
Item 4B- 1437-1439 Main Street;  
Item 5A; 860 Main Street/Church Corners Inn;  
Item 4A- 3 Hillside Avenue

Motion carried 3/0.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

April 12, 2022 Meeting

MOTION By Tom Rup  
seconded by Awet Tsegai  
to **approve** the minutes of the April 12, 2022 meeting.  
Motion carried 3/0.

OPPORTUNITY FOR RESIDENTS TO SPEAK

Janet Pearson, Owner of Eden's Florist, 1429 Main Street, is looking acquire the property at 1437-1439 Main Street and spoke to her intended use for the space to enhance her current business. Eileen Buckheit, Development Director made note that Ms. Pearson's business would be eligible for financial support provided by the recently approved ARPA Small Business Assistance Program, as business expansion is applicable to the program's intent. Ms. Pearson expressed her concern as to whether she would be able to afford the property. While the program will not provide the funding to acquire the property itself, funding could be provided to support projects related to converting the land once it's acquired.

### 1437-1439 Main Street

Rich Gentile, Assistant Corporation Counsel, shared that the Town foreclosed on the property in 2015 due to delinquent taxes. The property initially held a house that was taken down due to fire damage. As a precedent, similar piece of land located on Main Street was sold by the town for less than market value to an abutting property owner with the stipulation that the acquired parcel be combined with the owner's existing parcel.

The Committee discussed the fair market value for the property as well as the merits of a small business in the community looking to expand. Director Buckheit recommended that the lot be sold for as little as possible, taking into consideration the success of the business and its value to the community as a whole.

MOTION        By Tom Rup  
                      seconded by Awet Tsegai

move that this committee: (i) not seek bids with respect to the transfer of 1437-1439 Main Street (the "Property"); (ii) negotiate directly with Eden's Lodge LLC which is interested in acquiring the Property, ( "Eden"); (iii) recommend that the Town Council waive the appraisal requirement set forth in Town Ordinances 10-19(c); and (iv) recommend that the Town Council transfer the Property by Quit Claim Deed to Eden's Lodge LLC for \$10,000 subject to Connecticut General Statutes 8-24 review and a Connecticut General Statutes section 7-163e public hearing, and subject to the requirement that as part of the transaction conveying the property to EDEN, Eden combines the Property with the property it owns at 1429 Main Street, East Hartford, Connecticut, such that 1437-1439 Main Street and 1429 Main Street shall henceforth comprise one parcel.

Motion carried 3/0

Next steps for the property will be a Connecticut General Statutes 8-24 review by the Planning and Zoning Commission and scheduling of a Public Hearing before the Council's final vote to approve the sale.

### 860 Main Street / Church Corners Inn

The Committee reviewed background information on the property and discussed its current living quarters. Recently members of the committee and Director Buckheit participated in walk-throughs of the building to confirm that conditions are extremely poor. Financials for 860 Main were provided by the administration for committee review. Goman and York serve as property advisors for the Town, and administration has recruited an architectural firm to perform an existing conditions analysis and a structural analysis on the property. An environmental assessment and hazardous waste assessment will also be performed to better estimate the cost of interior demolition of the building.

Mike Goman, Principal of Goman and York, discussed the potential uses of the property and the process for evaluating market data to establish the value of the property.

Mayor Walsh summarized the current vision for improvements to Main Street as a whole and the property's connection. The Mayor also discussed the impact that the renovation of the building would have on its current residents and actions that would be taken to provide support for them.

Mr. Gentile shared that three appraisals were done on the property. After factoring in the improvements that would be required upon acquisition, the administration has determined a fair price for the property to be \$950,000. The Committee discussed the estimated costs upon the Town's Police and Fire Departments' calls to service the property as well as the opportunity for funding support via the state's Community Investment Fund (CIF) and the Capital Region Development Authority (CRDA).

MOTION        By Tom Rup  
                     seconded by Awet Tsegai

to support the Town's acquisition of 860 Main Street for the sum of \$950,000 and send this matter back to the full Town Council for action as a Committee of the Whole.

Motion carried 3/0.

### 3 Hillside Avenue

The Committee reviewed previous discussions on the property that is currently being offered to the Town as a donation. Chief of Staff Martin advised that the administration is not in favor of performing an environmental assessment on the property as the Town Engineer has already provided results of a previous assessment on the abutting property. Currently the address has roughly \$400.00 in taxes due. Mr. Gentile stated that the outstanding taxes will need to be brought up to date before the property can be acquired and while many efforts have been made, the validity of the property's title is not entirely sound.

The Committee discussed the repercussions and potential challenges of acquiring the property as it currently stands.

MOTION        By Awet Tsegai  
                     Seconded by Angie Parkinson

That the Real Estate Acquisition and Disposition Committee recommends to the Town Council that, subject to C.G.S. 8-24 review by the Planning and Zoning Commission, and subject to the payment of all outstanding taxes due to the Town of East Hartford, the Town Council: (i) accept the gift of whatever interest and title The G. William Miller Trust and Edward Miller, or their heirs, trustees, executors or assigns, hold in property known as 3 Hillside Avenue (the "Property"); and (ii) waive the requirements of Town Ordinances section 10-18(b) with respect to obtaining an appraisal of the property, a survey of the Property, and a Phase 1 Environmental Report on the Property, such waivers being in the best interests of the Town, given the fact that this conveyance is a gift, there is a property description of the property based on old surveys in the East Hartford Town Clerk's Office, and

this property appears to have had either residential or non-commercial farming uses for over 100 years.

Motion carried 2/0 (Abstain: Rup)

#### ADJOURNMENT

MOTION      By Awet Tsegai  
                  seconded by Tom Rup  
                  to **adjourn** (7:35 pm)  
                  Motion carried 3/0.

cc:      Town Council  
            Mike Walsh, Mayor  
            Eileen Buckheit, Development Director