

DRAFT
Neighborhood Committee Meeting / Conference Call
Meeting Minutes
Connecticut Convention Center
100 Columbus Boulevard, 5th Floor
Hartford, CT 06103
Friday, September 9, 2016
8:30 a.m.

PRESENT:

Members: Mayor Luke Bronin, Board Chair Suzanne Hopgood, Joanne Berger-Sweeney (via phone), Mayor Marcia Leclerc (via phone), David Jorgensen (via phone)

Advisory Member: Donald Chapman

Staff: Michael Freimuth and Kim Hart

The meeting was called to order at 8:30 a.m. The minutes of the August meeting were approved on a voice vote.

1. **Willow Creek Project (formerly Bowles Park)** – A group from Overlook Village Redevelopment Associates, including John McClutchy, Todd McClutchy, Tony Rowan and Kurt Harrison presented an overview of their project to the Committee. They were joined by Annette Sanderson and Tim Cifone from the Hartford Housing Authority. The group has requested assistance from CRDA in the form of a \$5 million grant to assist with abatement and demolition of 59 buildings at Bowles Park to make way for 62 new rental units and 29 new owned homes in the Blue Hills neighborhood.

Committee members posed a number of questions, including those related to relocation of the residents currently on site and maintenance of common areas once the project is completed. Mr. Jorgensen and Mr. Freimuth asked about the mix of rental versus owned units and whether it was the right fit for the surrounding neighborhood. The developers noted that they were confident the number of owned units was appropriate for the Blue Hills neighborhood, citing the current 70% to 75% homeownership rate. Mayor Bronin also noted that current neighborhood residents are supportive of additional owned units and have expressed concerns that construction of rental units alone would negatively impact the value of their own properties.

A resolution recommending the CRDA Board support funding for the Willow Creek Project -- subject to Bond Commission approval and negotiation of an agreement to repay an existing CHFA mortgage on the project site -- was approved on a voice vote.

2. **Swift Factory** – Dave Foster and Patrick McKenna from Community Solutions offered a presentation on the Swift Factory project, located on Love Lane within the City’s Promise Zone. The former gold leaf factory would be renovated as a “community food and job creation hub”, housing a number of food industry and health-oriented tenants, including a Hartford public schools commissary, Bears BBQ, an indoor hydroponic garden and a large community health center. The developers have requested \$4 million in assistance from CRDA, which will allow them to leverage additional funds.

A concern was raised by Mr. Freimuth about the strength of the LOI’s signed by interested tenants and the critical need to secure leases from the anchor tenants. He also invited the group to make a presentation to the full CRDA Board at a future meeting.

3. Mayor Bronin asked that the agenda for the next Neighborhood Committee meeting include consideration of \$800k in funding for road construction necessary for completion of the long-awaited Brackett Knoll project.

The next meeting of the Neighborhood Committee is scheduled for *Friday, October 14, 2016*.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 10:01 a.m.