

**Regional and Economic Development Committee
Conference Call
Approved Meeting Minutes
September 9, 2021
3:00 PM**

Members Present via GoToMeeting: Committee Chair Marcia Leclerc, Board Chair Suzanne Hopgood, Randal Davis, DECD Deputy Commissioner Alexandra Daum, Bob Patricelli

Guests Present via GoToMeeting: Marc Nicol (Riverfront Recapture)

Staff Present via GoToMeeting: Mike Freimuth, Anthony Lazzaro and Kim Hart

The meeting was called to order at 3:03 p.m. by Mayor Leclerc, who asked for a motion to approve the minutes of the April 8, 2021 meeting. Ms. Hopgood moved the motion and Mr. Patricelli seconded it. The minutes were approved on a voice vote.

1) Three new funding resolutions were considered:

- a. **East Hartford – Silver Lane Area (\$9m)**: Mayor LeClerc walked Committee members through funding requests for three projects planned by the Town to support development along Silver Lane. These include \$2 million for the acquisition of, and improvements to, Applegate Lane and another \$2 million for improvements to the Ring Road that links the former Showcase Cinemas site to Silver Lane. A third project would utilize \$5 million for the acquisition and redevelopment of the nearby Silver Lane Plaza.

Mr. Patricelli raised a question about the purchase price of Silver Lane Plaza and Deputy Commissioner Daum asked why the Committee was approving funding prior to a final cost estimate. Mr. Freimuth replied that the cost of the roadway and landscape improvements had been provided and that no funding agreement for the project would be signed until the acquisition costs had been finalized. He noted that CRDA has at times approved funding for land acquisition prior to the negotiation of a price because the buyer needs a funding commitment in place before making an offer and these projects include remediation work and such costs cannot be pinned down until further investigation is done. Further, setting a number prematurely sets price expectations, both high and low, that can change.

Committee members noted that the resolution did not include acquisition costs, so Mayor LeClerc offered the following amended resolution:

Resolution: The Regional and Economic Development Committee recommends that the CRDA Board authorize the Executive Director to apply to the State Bond Commission for \$9 million from the designated East Hartford/CRDA Capital Authorizations in order to provide

a grant in aid to the Town of East Hartford for the purposes of site acquisition and making roadway and other improvements to facilitate development in the Silver Lane Corridor.

The resolution was moved by Chair Hopgood and seconded by Mr. Davis. It was approved on a voice vote.

- b. **Additional Improvements to Great River Park (\$1.55m)** - Mayor LeClerc summarized the list of additional improvements planned to Great River Park in East Hartford. These include new paving, lighting, fencing, erosion control, improved ADA access and new signage for the Founders Bridge pedestrian walk. Mr. Nicol spoke on behalf of Riverfront Recapture, the entity receiving the grant and overseeing construction of the improvements, and provided additional information to the Committee. The Mayor emphasized that such improvements will not only enhance the Park, but will support the planned development of nearby Founders Plaza

Mayor LeClerc offered the following resolution:

Resolution: The Regional and Economic Development Committee recommends that the CRDA Board authorize the Executive Director to apply to the State Bond Commission for \$1.6 million from the designated East Hartford/CRDA Capital Authorizations in order to provide a grant in aid to Riverfront Recapture Inc. for the purposes of making improvements in and around Great River Park in East Hartford.

The resolution was moved by Mr. Davis and seconded by Chair Hopgood. It was approved on a voice vote.

- c. **Church Street Parking Garage Repairs (\$5m)** – Mr. Freimuth reported on the deterioration of certain areas of the Church Street Garage in Hartford. While CRDA has already put funds into the facility for repairs, significant work is still needed. Mr. Freimuth noted that construction work will likely require closing off certain sections of the garage and it could impact garage revenues. This, in turn, could impact the XL Center budget, as Church Street Garage revenues have helped underwrite the arena for a number of years.

Mayor LeClerc offered the following resolution, which was approved on a voice vote.

Resolution: The Regional and Economic Development Committee recommends that the CRDA Board authorize the Executive Director to apply to the State Bond Commission for \$5 Million for required repairs to the Church Street Parking Garage in Hartford.

- 2) **Regional Agricultural Market** – Mr. Freimuth and Ms. Hart reported that HR&A, the consultant assisting CRDA with long-term planning, will be presenting their preliminary findings via Zoom the week of September 20th. Mr. Freimuth responded to a question from Mr. Patricelli, indicating that the timing of HR&A's final report will not preclude CRDA from requesting bond funds from the General Assembly. He also noted that CRDA does have some funds on hand to deal with any critical maintenance issues that may arise. The Committee also discussed whether efforts to develop nearby MIRA property and Brainard Airport might have an impact on the Regional Market.

- 3) **Goodwin Drainage** – Mr. Freimuth reported that a Phase 3 of the drainage project will be funded with federal ARPA funds allocated to the Town of East Hartford. Mayor LeClerc indicated that the Town Council has approved the funding arrangement and Mr. Lazzaro indicated that he is reviewing a draft MOU from the Town. It was noted that the ARPA funds carry extensive reporting requirements and that the MOU should limit CRDA’s obligations in terms of reporting.

- 4) **Parkville Market** – Mr. Freimuth noted that the Market is about to refinance the \$3.5 million CRDA note for Phase I and funds will be used for future projects in the Parkville neighborhood, including Phase 2 of the Market. Additional City funds (possibly ARPA) will also be utilized in the neighborhood.

The next meeting of the Regional & Economic Development Committee is scheduled for October 13, 2021.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 3:52 p.m.