

**Regional and Economic Development Committee
Conference Call
Draft Meeting Minutes
January 11, 2024
3:00 PM**

Members Present via Microsoft Teams: Randal Davis, Pam Sucato, Matt Pugliese and Mayor Connor Martin

Other Board Members Present via Microsoft Teams: Board Chair David Robinson

Staff Present via Microsoft Teams: Mike Freimuth, Tony Lazzaro and Kim Hart

Guests Present via Microsoft Teams: Eileen Buckheit, (Town of East Hartford), Patrick Pentalow (City of Hartford)

Mr. Davis called the meeting to order at 3:02 p.m. and the minutes of the November 9, 2023 meeting were approved on a voice vote.

Project Updates

A. Albany and Woodland

Mr. Freimuth reminded Committee members that the City has tried unsuccessfully for a number of years to develop the vacant 2.3-acre property at the corner of Albany Avenue and Woodland Street in the heart of the Upper Albany neighborhood.

A developer was selected in early 2023 and plans approved for a 32,000 square foot commercial building, including restaurant space, a bank and City Health Department offices. Total development costs were estimated to be around \$13 million and funding from both CRDA bond funds and City Revolving Loan funds were approved by the Board in March of 2023.

Since that time, construction cost estimates have increased significantly and the project is now expected to total \$19.4 million, including Health Department fit out. To fill the gap, the City is proposing to increase its contribution from the Revolving Loan Funds held by CRDA from \$7.0 million to \$12.85 million. The City will grant an additional \$1.05 million directly to the developer.

Mr. Freimuth noted that the \$5.5 million CRDA construction loan approved by the Committee and Board in March of 2023 will not change. The \$1.75 million in Revolving Loan Funds approved in April for distribution as pre-development funding, however, has been increased to \$3.1 million.

Mr. Davis noted that the additional pre-development funds will cover a variety of preconstruction expenses, including environmental remediation, until April 2024.

The following resolution was offered and approved:

The executive director is authorized to grant up to \$12.85M of City funds consistent with the CRDA/City of Hartford MOU of December 3, 2021 to Community Development Properties Woodland Inc (or such acceptable single purpose entity). Such funds would be distributed as a grant, with up to \$3,100,000 released as pre-development funding. All funding shall be subject to such fiduciary terms and conditions as deemed necessary and appropriate by the executive director and CRDA counsel.

B. Other Project Updates

Mr. Freimuth reported on the following:

- 1) **Carbone's Restaurant** – On December 15th, the State Bond Commission approved funding to relocate the restaurant to Front Street and plans are being developed.
- 2) **235-237 Hamilton** – The capital stack for this project has been assembled.
- 3) **Bond Hotel** – The equipment required for the elevator replacement has finally been delivered and is currently being installed. The project should be completed in a few months.
- 4) **Hilton Hotel** – Construction on both the hotel and residential portions of the project are nearing completion and should be open in March.
- 5) **Parkville Market** – Phase 2 of the project is moving forward.

Mayor Martin reported on the following:

- 1) **Silver Lane Plaza** – The site was acquired by the Town via eminent domain and all of the tenants in the middle building have been relocated. Demolition of that building will begin shortly under a contract with CRDA. Six tenants remaining in the other two buildings will also be relocated. The Town is currently reviewing a development proposal received in response to its RFP.
- 2) **Former Showcase Site** – The developer has secured its financing and the Town expects to have the site transferred and construction started by April of this year.

Finally, Mr. Freimuth noted that the November RED Committee meeting and December Board meeting both included lengthy discussions regarding the purchase of Parcel A within the Bushnell South project area. Additional conversations with the relevant parties are ongoing and Mr. Freimuth expects to have a compromise proposal ready for the Board's consideration on January 18th.

The next meeting of the Regional & Economic Development Committee is scheduled for February 8, 2024.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 3:14 p.m.