

**Regional and Economic Development Committee
Conference Call
Draft Meeting Minutes
May 9, 2024
1:00 PM**

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

Staff Present via Microsoft Teams: Mike Freimuth, Mark O'Connell, Erica Levis, Tony Lazzaro, Derek Peterson and Kim Hart

Guests Present via Microsoft Teams: Mike Zaleski (Executive Director - Riverfront Recapture), Marc Nicol (Director of Park Planning & Development - Riverfront Recapture) and Eileen Buckheit, (Development Director - Town of East Hartford)

Mayor Martin called the meeting to order at 11:07 p.m. and the minutes of the January 11, 2024 meeting were approved on a voice vote.

A. Riverfront Recapture Update

Mr. Zaleski and Mr. Nicol gave an update on Riverfront Recapture's Great River Park and Hartford/Windsor Line park projects, both of which include a CRDA funding component. Both projects have been significantly delayed due to ongoing permit issues, particularly with the Army Corps of Engineers. Mr. Nicol also noted that construction costs have gone up since the group's original funding requests were made.

In response to a question from Mr. Freimuth, Mr. Zaleski noted that the group has been in contact with the State's Congressional delegation for assistance with the permit delays, most regularly with Congressman Larson's office. Mr. Nicol noted that while such contact may move one project forward, other projects often fall further behind. Mr. Freimuth encouraged the group to reach out to the Congressman's office again to force the issue. He also asked Mr. Zaleski and Mr. Nicol to present an abbreviated version of their presentation at the May CRDA Board meeting.

Mayor Martin offered his support for the projects and volunteered to assist with rallying the mayors of other member towns to draft a letter of support. Mr. Pugliese also offered to sign a letter of support.

B. Former McCartin School – Housing Development

Ms. Buckheit outlined the project for the Committee. She noted that CRDA previously granted the Town \$1 million for the demolition of various blighted properties and that a portion of these funds were used for a hazardous building materials survey and demo design at the former McCartin Elementary School.

Ms. Buckheit reported that East Hartford intends to demolish the school and replace it with single-family housing. The Town is asking CRDA for \$4.5 million of their designated bond funds for abatement and demolition, as well as for the construction of certain site improvements - including roadways and utilities – required for residential development. Following completion of that work, the Town will issue an RFP for a housing developer to construct at least 16 single-family houses on the site.

Mayor Martin discussed the significance of the project for East Hartford, noting that most of the Town’s housing stock was built in the 1940’s and 1950’s. While these offer good starter homes, they are relatively small and families are forced to relocate to outlying suburbs as they grow and need more space. This project would add larger homes to their inventory, allowing families to remain in Town as they grow.

The following resolution was approved:

“The Executive Director is authorized to apply to the State Bond Commission for a total of \$4.5 million from the designated CRDA/East Hartford authorizations to provide a grant in aid to the Town of East Hartford for demolition, abatement and site work at the former McCartin school to allow for residential development on the site. The Executive Director is authorized to enter into appropriate assistance agreements with the Town of East Hartford for such grant and to utilize CRDA staff to assist the Town with these projects.”

- C. **2024 Meeting Dates** - Mr. Freimuth directed members’ attention to the list of 2024 meeting dates included in the agenda packet.

The next meeting of the Regional & Economic Development Committee is scheduled for June 13, 2024.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 1:41 p.m.