



DEPARTMENT OF DEVELOPMENT SERVICES – PLANNING DIVISION
REPORT: 8-24 Review of Municipal Improvements at 275 Pearl Street
 for consideration October 26, 2021.

STAFF REPORT

TO: Planning & Zoning Commission
PREPARED BY: Aimee Chambers, Planning Director
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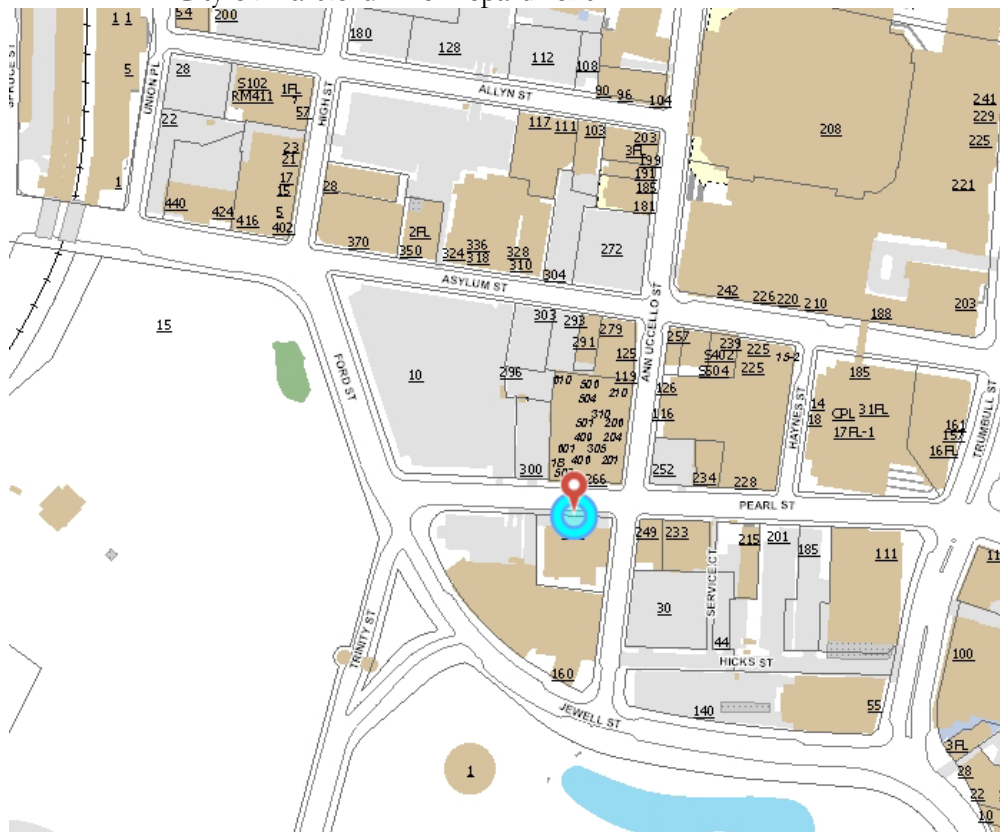
PROJECT: Purchase and Sales Agreement for
 275 Pearl Street
PARCEL ID: 246-335-010
P&Z-COMM-2021-0519

ZONE: DT-2, Downtown District

TYPE: Review of Municipal Improvements Per CGS Section 8-24

APPLICANT: Court of Common Council

OWNER: City of Hartford Fire Department



Overhead View – Hartford GIS 2021

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Referral notice dated October 12, 2021 - Communication from Mayor Bronin to the Court of Common Council subject to review and approval of a Term Sheet for the project, to enter into a purchase and sales agreement and ground lease with the development team of Wonder Works Construction Corp. of 275 Pearl Street.

KEY APPLICATION TIMELINES

- Referral Date – October 12, 2021
- Date Received: October 13, 2021
- Scheduled to be heard by PZC on Tuesday, October 26, 2021;
- Council Public Hearing Date: October 18, 2021;
- Council Meeting Date: Monday October 25, 2021

LEGAL STANDARD

Standard for Application Type:

The Commission advises the city council and city agencies about municipal improvements in accordance with 8-24 of the general statutes and section 1.3.10 of the Zoning Regulations. The Commission must primarily consider whether the municipal improvement will be completed in a manner consistent with the comprehensive plan of development.

STANDARD SPECIFIC TO THE USE

CT GS Section 8-24;

Zoning Regulations Section 1.3.10: Review of Municipal Improvements

C. Review Criteria:

- (1) In reviewing proposals for municipal improvements, the commission shall focus primarily on whether the municipal improvement will be completed in a manner consistent with the comprehensive plan of development.
- (2) The Commission shall not base its decision solely on financial matters (including but not limited to the cost to the city of the municipal improvement).

Plan of Conservation & Development

Eight Overall Priorities

Density - fill vacant lots, attract new visitors, and increase residential population by 10% throughout the city

Ten Key Recommendations

Play - Become the state's live music capital

Grow400 – Construction across the city: Facilitated new construction and rehabilitation in all parts of the city, growing the grand list and creating jobs.

COMMENTS RECEIVED (DEPARTMENTS, AGENCIES, NRZs, PUBLIC)

No comments have been received.

ANALYSIS

The Economic Development Division has submitted a resolution to Council to enter into a purchase agreement with Wonder Works Construction for the sale of a city owned property located at 275 Pearl Street. Wonder Works responded to an RFP that the Economic Development Division put out in early 2021.

In accordance with 8-24 of the general statutes and section 1.3.10 of the Zoning Regulations, the Planning and Zoning Commission must consider whether the disposition is aligned with the City's Plan of Conservation and Development and make recommendation back to Council who will then take action on the request. Planning Division staff have communicated to the Clerk's office that the next regularly scheduled PZC meeting since the date of referral is after the Council meeting. Staff expect the Clerk's office to communicate this to Council on October 25.

The property is a disbanded Harford Firehouse, which formerly housed Engine Co. 4 and Ladder Co. 1. The building has been vacant since January 2020. The developer proposes the conversion of the former Firehouse into a mixed-used development comprising 4,000 sq. ft. of commercial space and 40 residential units. Through the proposal, the 4,000 sf commercial space on the ground level is restricted to be used for a restaurant/entertainment use. The developer has requested that the City of Hartford enter into a ten-year agreement to fix the tax assessment on the property to make the project economically feasible, as allowed under CG.S. Sec. 12-65b. The resolution before Council would authorize such an agreement in addition to providing approval of the disposition.

The Plan of Conservation and Development's (PoCD) Eight Overall Priorities includes density; to fill vacant lots, attract new visitors, and increase residential population by 10% throughout the city. Furthermore, the Grow400 section indicated that new construction and rehabilitation in all parts of the city is a priority, as well as growing the grand list and creating jobs. This project will bring another 40 market rate units online in the downtown footprint. Furthermore, it will increase the vibrancy of downtown by reserving 4,000 of the ~39,000 building for entertainment use. The Play400 section sets the goal of Hartford becoming the state's live music capital. This project is well aligned with opportunity to satisfy that goal.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends approval of this application.

A draft resolution follows.

ATTACHMENTS

1. Court of Common Council Referral dated October 12, 2021
2. Letter from the Mayor to the Council President dated October 12, 2021

REVIEWED AND EDITED BY,

Aimee Chambers, Director



CITY OF HARTFORD
PLANNING & ZONING COMMISSION RESOLUTION
275 PEARL STREET
8-24 REVIEW OF MUNICIPAL IMPROVEMENTS INVOLVING THE SALE AND
REDEVELOPMENT OF A FORMER HARTFORD CITY FIREHOUSE

Whereas, The City of Hartford Planning & Zoning Commission reviewed the referral from the Court of Common Council regarding a purchase and sale of City owned property at 275 Pearl Street to Wonder Works Construction for redevelopment into a mixed-use entertainment assembly and residential space; and

Whereas, The referral was received from the Court of Common Council on October 13, 2021; and

Whereas, The subject property is located in the DT-2, Downtown district; and

Whereas, The role of the Planning & Zoning Commission in an 8-24 review is primarily to determine whether the municipal improvement will be completed in a manner consistent with the comprehensive plan of development; and

Whereas, The proposed improvement is consistent with the stated goals of the Plan of Conservation & Development in that:

The Eight Overall Priorities names density - to fill vacant lots, attract new visitors, and increase residential population by 10% throughout the city; and

The Grow400 Section names – Construction across the city: Facilitated new construction and rehabilitation in all parts of the city, growing the grand list and creating jobs.

Now therefore Be It

Resolved, The City of Hartford Planning & Zoning Commission hereby **recommends/does not recommend** approval of the conveyance of City owned property at 275 Pearl Street to Wonder Works Construction, per referral from the Court of Common Council on October 12, 2021.

Be It Further,

Resolved, This 26th day of October, 2021.