



**CITY OF HARTFORD
Planning & Zoning Commission
260 Constitution Plaza – Hartford, CT**

MEETING MINUTES

January 24, 2023

The Planning & Zoning Commission held a Virtual Regular Meeting at 6:00 p.m. on Tuesday, January 24, 2023.

Attendance

Present: Chair Josye Utick, Commissioners Gary Bazzano, Aaron Gill, Jonathan Harding, David McKinley, and Alternate Commissioners Guy Neumann and Juliana Garcia-Uribe.

Absent: Alternate Commissioner Raul Irizarry.

Staff Present: Erin Howard, Attorney Rich Vassallo, and Evelyne St-Louis.

Regular Meeting of the Planning & Zoning Commission

I. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Josye Utick called the meeting to order at 6:04 p.m. seated Alternate Commissioner Guy Neumann and Juliana Garcia-Uribe.

II. APPROVAL OF

a. Agenda for January 24, 2023.

Director **Erin Howard** stated there were no changes to the Agenda since posting.

Commissioner Jonathan Harding made a **MOTION** to **APPROVE** the agenda as presented, **SECONDED** by Commissioner Gary Bazzano. The Agenda was approved by a vote of **4-0**.

b. Minutes for January 10, 2023 – **APPROVED**.

III. APPLICATIONS RECEIVED

*Indicates the official Date of Receipt for an application and start of the Public Hearing Timeline. Preliminary Application Documents are available at:
<https://www.meetinginfo.org/groups/30>

IV. APPLICATIONS CARRIED FORWARD

*Indicates that an application was received in a prior meeting and that the public hearing timeline has begun. Preliminary Application Documents are available on meetinginfo.org in the meeting associated with the "Application Received Date" below.

- a. **92 Weston Street** – Request for Special Permit for Adult Use Cannabis Hybrid Retailer. Owner: Freeport Realty V LLC. Applicant: Arrow Alternative Care Inc. c/o Meaghan Miles, Carmody Torrance Sandak & Hennessey LLP. Anticipated Public Hearing Date: February 14, 2023. Open Hearing Deadline: March 16, 2023.
- b. **53 Benton Street** – Request for Special Permit for the Urban Farm use. Owner & Applicant: Hartford Land Bank Inc. Anticipated Public Hearing Date: February 14, 2023. Open Hearing Deadline: March 16, 2023.
- c. **176 Clark Street** – Request for Special Permit for the Urban Farm use. Owner & Applicant: Hartford Land Bank Inc. Anticipated Public Hearing Date: February 14, 2023. Open Hearing Deadline: March 16, 2023.
- d. **138 Irving Street** – Request for Special Permit for the Urban Farm use. Owner & Applicant: Hartford Land Bank Inc. Anticipated Public Hearing Date: February 14, 2023. Open Hearing Deadline: March 16, 2023.
- e. **330 New Park** – Request for resubdivision of the subject property per the Hartford Subdivision Regulations. Owner: DP 103 LLC. Applicant: Benesch Engineering. Anticipated Public Hearing Date: February 14, 2023. Open Hearing Deadline: February 16, 2023.

V. PUBLIC HEARINGS

- a. **Zoning Text Amendment** – Proposed changes to Section 8.14.2.H of the Zoning Regulations to increase the permitted maximum dimensions for the “Informational Sign” type from 4 square feet to 8 square feet. Applicant: Northeast Neighborhood Partners c/o Patrick McKenna. Application Received Date: January 10, 2023. Open Hearing Deadline: March 16, 2023.

Senior Planner **Evelyne St-Louis** presents the staff report.

Commissioner **David McKinley** asks Staff to explain how much time is typically needed to process a sign permit. **Commissioner McKinley** inquires about this due to his concern that requiring a permit for informational signs would impose an excessive administrative burden on both Staff and applicants.

Vice Chair **Aaron Gill** asked Staff to clarify the type of signage envisioned with the text amendment and to provide real-world examples. Staff member **Evelyne St-Louis** explains that examples could include directory signs installed internally with a campus or site, oriented inward, and not located in the front or corner side yards.

The applicant, Patrick McKenna, briefly addresses his proposed text amendment and explains the specific context of the Swift Factory campus, which has multiple buildings.

Commissioner Gary Bazzano makes **MOTION** to **ACCEPT** the proposed resolution with reference to Exhibit A for proposed text amendments to Section 8.14 Exempt Signs. Commissioner Guy Neumann **seconded** the motion. The

Commission unanimously **ACCEPTED** the proposed resolution with reference to Exhibit A.

**CITY OF HARTFORD
PLANNING & ZONING COMMISSION RESOLUTION
TEXT AMENDMENT REGARDING INFORMATIONAL SIGNS (AN EXEMPT SIGN TYPE)**

- Whereas,** The City of Hartford Planning and Zoning Commission reviewed the proposed zoning text amendment to Hartford’s Zoning Regulations (the Regulations) Section 8.14.2.H, to increase the permitted maximum dimension of the informational sign type (an exempt sign type) from 4 square feet to 8 square feet; and
- Whereas,** Section 1.3.5 of the Regulations requires that the Commission consider the Plan of Conservation and Development (POCD) and state on the record its findings on the consistency of the proposed text amendment with such plan; and
- Whereas,** Section 8 of the Regulations regulates both permanent signage and temporary signage, and specifies which signs are exempt from regulation; several different types of exempt signs are listed in Section 8.14.2, of which “informational signs” is one sub-type; and
- Whereas,** Per Section 8.14.1, exempt signs are: permitted in all districts; do not require a sign permit for installation, unless otherwise specified; are not required to meet any sign type standards, unless otherwise specified; and are not counted in the total permitted area of signage on a lot per the requirements of Section 8.2.2; and
- Whereas,** Relative to maximum sign area limitations imposed by the Regulations for other sign types, the requested change in maximum sign area for informational signs appears reasonable and is further mitigated by the requirements that the signs be “not legible beyond the property line of the lot [...] or from any right-of-way” and “oriented inward upon a lot and intended solely for the information of employees, students, faculty, or visitors”; and
- Whereas,** Informational signs currently do not require a sign permit prior to installation; and
- Whereas,** While the POCD does not address signage in an explicit way, the POCD’s Grow400 chapter does speak to the need to support Hartford’s diverse business ecosystem, including small and innovative businesses; the POCD’s Live400 and Move400 chapters also state the need to connect people to resources and generally improve wayfinding signage to guide pedestrians to key assets in the

city; as such, the proposed text amendment is not inconsistent with these goals and does not appear to contradict the POCD's objectives; and

Now therefore Be It

Resolved, The City of Hartford Planning & Zoning Commission hereby **FINDS** that the proposed Zoning Text Amendment is consistent with the Plan of Conservation & Development; and

Resolved, The City of Hartford Planning & Zoning Commission hereby **APPROVES** the proposed zoning text amendment to Hartford's Zoning Regulations shown in Exhibit A, which proposes to modify Section 8.14.2.H of Hartford's Zoning Regulations to increase the permitted maximum dimension of the "informational sign" type (an "exempt sign" type) from 4 square feet to 8 square feet, with the following condition of approval:

Be It Further,

Resolved, This 24th day of January 2023.

EXHIBIT A

[APPROVED ZONING TEXT AMENDMENTS ARE SHOWN **IN RED**]

Section 8.14.2.H. Informational Signs. Any sign not exceeding ~~4 square feet~~ **8 square feet** and not legible beyond the property line of upon which it is situated or from any right-of-way and signs oriented inward upon a lot and intended solely for the information of employees, students, faculty, or visitors.

- b. **Citywide Parking Study** – Proposed adoption of citywide parking study completed by THA. Public Hearing Opened: Tuesday January 10, 2023.

Public comments that were submitted online were read into the public record. Director **Erin Howard** responded to submitted public comments.

Commissioner **David McKinley** drafted an alternate resolution in order to incorporate some of the Commissioner's observations and potential concerns with the Citywide Parking Study. This document was not be reviewed during this meeting due to insufficient time. Commissioner McKinley's draft resolution document will be posted for public view on MeetingInfo ahead of the next Planning & Zoning Commission meeting so that Commissioners and members of the public can review and gather their thoughts prior to the next meeting.

Commissioner Aaron Gill makes a **MOTION** to **CONTINUE** this item until the next meeting. Commissioner Gary Bazzano **seconded** the motion. The Commission unanimously **CONTINUED** this item.

- c. **POSTPONED - Frog Hollow Neighborhood Plan** – Proposed adoption of the Northeast Neighborhood Plan completed by FHI Studio. Public Hearing Postponed to February 28, 2023.
- d. **POSTPONED - Northeast Neighborhood Plan** – Proposed adoption of the Frog Hollow Neighborhood Plan completed by Kounkuey Design Initiative. Public Hearing Postponed to February 28, 2023.
- e. **POSTPONED - Upper Albany Neighborhood Plan** – Proposed adoption of the Upper Albany Neighborhood Plan completed by Kounkuey Design Initiative. Public Hearing Postponed to February 28, 2023.

VI. Non-Public Hearings

- a. **8-24 Review, Referral from the Court of Common Council** – Item 3.1. on the November 28, 2022 Court of Common Council Agenda, to authorize the City of Hartford to acquire the property at 81-99 Bartholomew Avenue (also known as 236 Hamilton Street, parcel ID 160-485-005).

Director **Erin Howard** presented the Staff Report. Staff finds this proposal to be consistent with the POCD. Staff recommends approval of this 8-24 Review application.

Commissioner David McKinley makes **MOTION** to **ACCEPT** the proposed resolution as presented. Commissioner Gary Bazzano **seconded** the motion. The Commission unanimously **ACCEPTED** the proposed resolution as presented.

CITY OF HARTFORD
PLANNING & ZONING COMMISSION RESOLUTION
8-24 REVIEW OF MUNICIPAL IMPROVEMENTS FOR THE PROPOSED PURCHASE
OF 81-99 BARTHOLOMEW AVENUE

- Whereas, The City of Hartford Planning and Zoning Commission reviewed the referral from the Court of Common Council regarding the proposed resolution to purchase the property known as 81-91 Bartholomew Avenue from Champlin-Packrite, Inc; and
- Whereas, The referral was received by the Planning and Zoning Division from the Court of Common Council on January 10th, 2023; and
- Whereas, The subject property is located in the Parkville National Historic District; and
- Whereas, The City of Hartford has previously entered into a purchase option agreement for the property located at 81-99 Bartholomew Avenue; and
- Whereas, The project furthers the POCD's development goal of building the 10 Transformative Projects, promoting developments in entrepreneurship and advanced manufacturing, and recasting Parkville as an arts and innovation hub; and
- Whereas, The role of the Planning & Zoning Commission in an 8-24 review is to determine whether the Municipal Improvement will be completed in a manner consistent with the comprehensive plan of development; and
- Whereas, This 8-24 Review application is generally consistent with the Plan of Conservation and Development (POCD); namely, building the 10 Transformative Projects (Grow400), growing an innovation ecosystem (Grow400), and recasting Parkville as an arts and innovation hub (Play400);
- Now therefore Be It
- Resolved, The City of Hartford Planning & Zoning Commission hereby **RECOMMENDS** approval of the proposed resolution per section 8-24 of Connecticut's General Statutes to authorize the City of Hartford to purchase the property known as 8191 Bartholomew Avenue from Champlin-Packrite, Inc.
- Be It Further,
- Resolved, This 24th day of January, 2023.

VII. New Business

- a. Southwest/Behind the Rocks Neighborhood Plan Presentation by Kevin Rivera of FHI Studio.
- b. Asylum Hill Strategic Plan Presentation by Ted Carroll of AHNA
- c. Desegregate CT “Work Live Ride” Presentation by Pete Harrison of Desegregate CT
- d. Director’s Report
 - i. Director **Erin Howard** updates the Public and the Commission that WebEx has updated their terms and conditions and may or may not require password login for public meetings.
 - ii. Director **Erin Howard** states that the department has transitioned to utilizing a new permitting software, called Accela Civic Platform. She emphasizes that the City is still working on making improvements to the software to make it more user-friendly, and would like the Commission and community to give feedback regarding their user experience.
- e. Chair’s Report

Regular Meeting of the Inland Wetlands and Watercourses Commission

VIII. Applications Carried Forward

*Indicates that an application was received in a prior meeting and that the public hearing timeline has begun. Preliminary Application Documents are available on meetinginfo.org in the meeting associated with the "Application Received Date" below.

- a. **100 Leibert Rd** – Request for Inland Wetlands and Watercourses Permit to conduct regulated activity within the wetlands for construction and extension of a multi-use trail including turn around areas, vista areas and a precast concrete arch structure for the crossing of Meadow Brook pursuant to sections 4.3 and 6.1 of the City of Hartford Inland Wetlands and Watercourses Regulations. Owner: City of Hartford. Applicant: State of CT Department of Transportation. Application Received Date: November 22, 2022. Anticipated Public Hearing Date: February 14, 2023. Open Hearing Deadline, with 65-day extension: April 1, 2023.

IX. Adjournment

Commissioner Jonathan Harding made a **MOTION** to adjourn the meeting, **SECONDED** by Commissioner David McKinley and the meeting was adjourned at 9:30p.m.

**** Documents are available at <https://www.meetinginfo.org/groups/30>**

Respectfully Submitted by:

Maliha Ahsan, Executive Assistant