

BOARD OF REVIEW - DANGEROUS BUILDINGS MINUTES
Wednesday, January 23, 2019, 5:00 PM

Committee members present: Chair Gary Schnip, Alderwoman Stacy Gould, Tucker Braddock, James Heist and James Quarto

Committee members absent: Darryl Wickham

Others Present: Building Official James Troeger, Blight Officer Brittany Williams, City Planner Deanna Rhodes and Damien Spozanza

1. Call to Order: Chair Gary Schnip called the meeting to order at 5:25 PM.
2. Determination of a Quorum: It was determined that a quorum was present.
3. Acceptance of Minutes: On a motion by Jim Heist, seconded by Tucker Braddock, the minutes of the November 28, 2018 meeting of the Board of Review (BOR) were approved as presented.
4. Public Comment: Damien Spozanza spoke to the committee. He is a developer who works in inner-city neighborhoods in New London and Norwich. He would be interested in being a preferred developer of city-owned properties that the city would like to see redeveloped. He and his partners are trying to improve neighborhoods while also assuring retirement income for themselves.

City Planner Deanna Rhodes explained the current process for disposition of city properties. During the last year a property disposition procedure was created. Deanna and Director of Public Works Ryan Thompson facilitate the procedure which includes a request for input on each property from city-wide department heads and city leaders. Ryan and Deanna then review all of the comments and make recommendations to Public Works Committee (PWC). The PWC then reviews the information and makes recommendations to the City Council. The City Council then moves forward once they have recommendations. The procedure assures that the properties are well vetted. This procedure seems to be working well. They are currently on round 4 of the procedure.

Deanna noted that there is new interest in developing some of the properties. She reported that Damien has spoken to Norwich Community Development Corporation (NCDC) President Bob Mills. Damien would like first right of refusal on redevelopment of city-owned properties. Bob has said we must go through a vetting process of potential developers who may be interested in this type of arrangement. Deanna has drawn-up some recommendations. Building Official Jim Troeger noted that in the past there were three choices in disposition: 1) homestead, 2) auction, and 3) developer. All involved vetting except auction. In the past, auctions were the least effective in achieving the city's goals for property redevelopment. Several potential options were discussed.

Deanna clarified that the homestead program works well. However, the city's attorney has expressed interest in clarifying the role of the Board of Review and committees of sale. She recommends working with the attorney to clarify the definitions of the committees and perhaps create a new ordinance. Alderwoman Gould and Tucker Braddock will contact Attorney Michael Driscoll on this issue and meet with him.

5. Communications: None
6. Blight updates/concerns:
 - a) 62 North Main Street: Blight Enforcement Officer Brittany Williams reported that the owner has made no improvements. Jim T reported the value of the existing liens exceed the value of the property. Britt reported the taxes are paid.
 - b) 554-556 East Main Street: Jim T reported this property is still in the compliance period.

- c) Jordan's Retaining Wall: Britt reported there have been no improvements.
- d) 38 West Main Street, Marina Towers: Britt reported she spoke to the marina owners. The vegetation was trimmed.
- e) 61 Lincoln Avenue: Britt reported the building department is working on the issues with this property.
- f) 31-33 Cliff Street: Britt reported there has been no change. She is working on the properties around it. The city is taking ownership of this property.
- g) 62 Plain Hill Road: Britt said a foreclosure is in process by the city. By spring 2019 the city should have ownership.
- h) 212 Prospect Street: Alderwoman Gould reported that Norwich Public Utilities (NPU) is going to take the building down.
- i) 87 5th Street: Britt reported that DPW re-boarded the structure. It has been condemned. There is a water heater in front of the house.
- j) 34-36 Slater Avenue: Britt reported fines are continuing. No owner has come forward. The house is empty.

7. Watch List:

- a) 231 Broadway: Britt reported the fines continued. There have been building permits pulled for interior work.
- b) 6 Huntington Avenue (storage structure): Britt reported over \$3,000 in fines have been assessed.
- c) 253 Broadway: Britt reported the owner passed away. Human Services had requested that the building department stop communication due to health concerns. There is a relative interested in the property.
- d) 241 Broadway: Britt reported that building permits have been issued. Work on the roof has started.
- e) 337 – 341 Main Street (YMCA): Britt had no report.
- f) 7 Woodlawn Terrace: Britt had no new report.

8. Foreclosure in Progress:

- a) 29 Boswell Avenue: Alderwoman Gould reported Attorney Wickless said the foreclosure is complete. The city owns the property. It has been sent to the realtor as of January 7, 2019 by City Council Resolution.
- b) 26 Elijah Street: Alderwoman Gould reported it is owned by Shetucket Ridge. The foreclosure is still in process.

9. City Owned Properties:

- a) 270 West Thames Street: No report.

- b) 13 Baltic Street: Alderwoman Gould reported that the title is still being cleared. The city should have clear title within 45 days.
- c) 11 Lake Street: Alderwoman Gould reported that the City Council approved funds to demolish the structure. The bid specs are still being reviewed.
- d) 482-492 Norwich Avenue: Alderwoman Gould reported that the property disposition committee recommended to sell the property.
- e) 43 Fountain Street: Alderwoman Gould reported this property went to Realtor Fred Allen on January 7, 2019.
- f) 504 East Main Street: Alderwoman Gould reported that NPU will demolish this building.
- g) 702 New London Turnpike: Alderwoman Gould reported this will be discussed by the PWC.
- h) 23 Whitaker: Alderwoman Gould reported this property was put up for sale with Fred Allyn.

10. Other:

- a) Public Works Committee (PWC) Report: Alderwoman Gould had no further to report.
- b) RFP Checklist: No activity.
- c) 36 Huntington Avenue: Jim T brought this to the committee's attention. It is city-owned.

11. Next meeting: The next regular meeting will be Wednesday, February 27, 2019 at 5 PM.

12. Adjournment: On a motion by Tucker Braddock, seconded by Jim Heist, the Board of Review unanimously adjourned at 6:44 PM.

*Respectfully Submitted,
Melinda Wilson
Recording Secretary*