

**West End Civic Association and NRZ
Board Meeting Minutes
Connecticut Conference United Church of Christ
October 4, 2016**

PRESENT: Jim Barry, JoAnne Bauer, Kyle Bergquist, Dorothy Lovett Buckley, Cristina Chillogalli, Ruth Fortune, Toni Gold, Lakisher Hurst, David Jorgensen, David Klein, Jan Klein, Bongsi Magubane, Kurt Malec, Melissa Marciri, Kathy McCormock, Ed McEachin, Jamie McPike, Anne Thompson.

ALSO PRESENT: Rich Armstrong, Jill Barrett, Mark Borton, Michael Coulonn, Casey Hardin.

1. WELCOME/ANNOUNCEMENTS

Ms. Magubane welcomed everyone including the guests. Everyone introduced themselves.

2. MINUTES

Mr. Klein moved to approve the September minutes and recommended we change the heading to West End Civic Association and NRZ. Mr. Bergquist seconded and all approved.

3. FINANCIAL UPDATE

Mr. Klein said the Farmers' Market continues to draw upon WECA's support, but is expecting \$3,800 in outstanding income. During the month, WECA paid the United Methodist Church \$2,000 for the use of their building for general meetings and other meetings.

4. I-84

Mr. Armstrong provided some historical and factual background on the i-84 project. After exploring many alternatives, his team proposed moving forward with the lowered version – highway brought down to ground level – to the Federal Highway Administration. Various studies show the lowered version is the best alternative, though it would require moving the railroad tracks (likely to remain flat with the new station above the tracks) and lead to the demolition of some current structures. They have met with all property owners of buildings likely to be affected by the project and all seem to understand.

Many local streets will go over the highway, be redesigned and reconstructed. The Sisson Ave ramps would shorten thus freeing up about 20 acres of land for the City for housing, businesses or local road expansions. East-bound and west-bound will hug each other and free another 20 acres near Bushnell. They are also considering a bridge deck – a cap – over the freeway in certain areas to better connect the City. The lowered version improves the highway design entrance from Exit 48, eliminates the Asylum St and High St ramps. West Ends commuters will have some shift in their commute paths.

A draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) will be available to the public in mid-2018, followed by a public hearing in summer/fall 2018. A decision will be made in summer 2019 with construction tentatively starting around 2021-2023.

5. HARTFORD HEALTH WORKS

Mr. Borton of Hartford Health Works presented an economic development plan for the City. The proposal/plan focused on manufacturing of precision parts to generate thousands of jobs in Hartford. They faced some challenges coming up with funds and are now fundraising. The key piece in the plan is workforce development because access to talent matters to employers.

To implement the plan, they would buy a 120,000-square-foot building on Holmstead St to host workforce development/training. The building is connected to public transportation and has the potential to be redeveloped. The 3-floor building would offer education space and rental space to manufacturing companies.

They hope to close by the end of the year, begin construction in 2017 and open in mid-2018. They also want to be complimentary with other development projects in Hartford.

6. NOVEMBER GENERAL MEETING UPDATES

Mr. Malec reminded the group that the next general meeting is Wednesday, November 9 at the Methodist Church. Mayor Bronin will be the sole guest speaker and will address neighbors on the state of the City after a few short WECA announcements from AH&R and others. Mr. Malec asked sector representatives to relay questions from their constituents so he can provide them to the Mayor before the meeting, though there will be some time for Q&A. A save-the-date will go out in mid-October, followed by an e-blast on November 1.

Mr. Malec will release the print newsletter prior to the general meeting.

Ms. Magubane said other NRZs have topic specific board meetings open to the entire neighborhood. She suggested relocating the monthly board meetings to a larger venue to accommodate and encourage more neighborhood participation. After some discussion of better balancing WECA's NRZ and civic association duties, concerns about the board meetings becoming too long and less productive under the proposed format, a majority agreed to move the next board meeting to the Methodist Church. A portion of the meeting will focus on public safety due to increased crime in the area.

7. TIF/FAA UPDATE

Ms. Barrett and Ms. Gold will address the group at the next meeting due to time constraints.

8. COMMITTEE UPDATES

Public Safety: Mr. Jorgensen announced that an undercover operation at 175 Kenyon led to a major arrest. Officers arrested the perpetrator who was previously arrested 23 times in Hartford alone and was released 3 months ago on a \$300,000 bail. They found firearms and drugs.

Mr. Jorgensen listed the following crimes from last month: 8 burglaries happened near the Farmington corridor, multiple stolen vehicles, street robberies, assaults, and 11 larcenies which include packages from front doors. The staff shortage within the Hartford Police Department (HPD) affects their ability to fight crime. In the meanwhile, neighbors should lock their doors, keep their house lit, take valuables out of their car, and alert the HPD if they see something. The HPD, with permission, can use residents' video cameras and are in the process of getting cameras in major locations.

9. OTHER BUSINESS

Some neighbors are upset that the next City Planning & Zoning Commission meeting will be held on Yom Kippur. Mr. Jorgensen will write the letter that Ms. Magubane will send to the Commission on new letterhead that Ms. Hurst will prepare.

Meeting adjourned at 9:05pm.