

**Neighborhood Committee Meeting / Conference Call
Meeting Minutes
Connecticut Convention Center
100 Columbus Boulevard, 5th Floor
Hartford, CT 06103
Thursday, November 10, 2016
8:30 a.m.**

PRESENT:

Members: Mayor Luke Bronin, Board Chair Suzanne Hopgood, Mayor Marcia Leclerc (via phone), David Jorgensen (via phone)

Advisory Member: Donald Chapman

Guests: Ralph Knighton, Al Gary and Abe Ford from Toraal Development

Staff: Michael Freimuth, Kim Hart and Jane Bisson (Trinity intern)

The meeting was called to order at 8:30 a.m.

1. **State Innovation Place Program** – Ms. Bisson reported on the new Innovation Place Program established as part of the Connecticut Innovations / CTNext legislation passed last session. The program is designed to foster innovation and entrepreneurship in compact, mixed-use geographic areas. The Metro Hartford Alliance and a coalition of Hartford and East Hartford entities was recently awarded a \$50k Innovation Place planning grant to develop an action plan focusing on the Parksville, Coltsville, Hartford Hospital/Trinity College, Homestead/Albany and Downtown areas of Hartford, as well as the Goodwin College and Rentschler Field areas of East Hartford.

An RFP has been issued for a consultant to assist with the creation of an action plan and once an action plan is in place, the coalition will look to apply for an implementation grant under the program. Proposals are due in April, 2017 and winners will be announced in June.

It is unclear at this time how the Innovation Place Program will impact CRDA projects in this area, but staff will continue to monitor the coalition's work and offer assistance as needed.
2. **Minutes** - The minutes of the October 14th meeting were approved on a voice vote.
3. **Brckett Knoll Housing Project** – Mr. Knighton walked the Committee through Toraal Development's plan to construct 14 two-family owner-occupied homes on the site of the former

Brackett Park School on Westland Street. This work represents Phase II of a project that was initiated in 2006 with the construction of six such homes. The developer is seeking CRDA assistance with construction of a Naugatuck Street extension required for the project, as well as with additional funding to cover mortgage gaps.

Mr. Knighton explained that the two-unit homes allow buyers to occupy one and rent the other out as a source of income. He indicated that potential buyers have been identified for the new homes, with at least nine tenants already vetted and ready to work with Toraal's identified mortgage partners. Buyers will be required to attend a CHFA home-ownership training program.

Mr. Knighton also indicated that when Brackett School was demolished in the 1970's, the brownstone foundation was left in place and the site backfilled. As a result, contractors encountered large pieces of the foundation during excavation for Phase I of the project and were forced to remove them. Similar issues are expected during Phase II and Committee members inquired as to whether the stone could be salvaged for use elsewhere in the City.

Following a brief discussion, the following resolution was approved on a voice vote:

Resolved: The Neighborhood Committee hereby approves the use of \$1,555,000 in CRDA Neighborhood funds for the Brackett Knoll project on Westland Street. Of this total, \$630,000 shall be used to assist the developer, Toraal Development LLC, with site acquisition and site improvements related to the construction of 14 two-family owner-occupied homes. CRDA shall utilize the \$925,000 balance for the extension of Naugatuck Street through the project site. Such assistance shall be subject to 1) full CRDA Board and State Bond Commission approvals; and 2) such fiduciary terms deemed appropriate by the Executive Director.

- 4. Neighborhood Fellows Security Program -** Ms. Hart reported on the Neighborhood Fellows Security Program. Capital Workforce Partners (CWP), the entity that operates the Jobs Funnel, has advised that in order to ensure that CRDA has an adequate number of trained "Fellows" available for neighborhood projects, the Authority needs to fund a specific training class geared toward individuals identified in the legislation. Ms. Hart reminded Committee members that the legislation is geared toward Hartford youths aged 18 to 24 who are at risk of being perpetrators or victims of gun violence.

The Bowles project is the first CRDA project to be required to utilize Fellows and Ms. Hart reported that the nature of the demolition phase is such that only two or three trained individuals would be needed. CWP believes such a small number could be found amongst existing Jobs Funnel graduates and the project would not need to wait for a specific training class to be completed.

Mayor Bronin asked that CWP work with the Youth Service Corps, which he feels would be a good resource in identifying at-risk youth.

The next meeting of the Neighborhood Committee is scheduled for ***Friday, December 9, 2016.***

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 9:10 a.m.