

**200 TYLER STREET SUBCOMMITTEE  
(BLUE RIBBON COMMISSION)  
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES  
MONDAY, JANUARY 25, 2016**

The 200 Tyler Street Subcommittee held a regular meeting on Monday, January 25, 2016 at 7:00 P.M. at the East Haven Senior Center, 91 Taylor Avenue, East Haven, CT 06512.

Chairman Paul Carbo called the meeting to order at 7:00 P.M. and proceeded to ask everyone to stand for pledge of allegiance.

Commissioner Charles Lang makes a motion to appoint Danelle Feeley as temporary clerk.

Commissioner Robert Limoncelli seconds the motion.

Voice vote: all in favor-none oppose-none abstain. Motion carries.

**Item #1:**

Roll Call: 5 members present –none absent; a quorum was present.

**Item #2:**

Approval of the January 9, 2015 regular meeting minutes

**Item #3:**

Approval of the January 12, 2016 public hearing minutes

**Item #4:**

Approval of the January 20, 2016 public hearing minutes

Commissioner Marlene Asid makes a motion to approve the minutes of the previous three meetings (items #1-3 listed above).

Commissioner Steven DeLucia seconds the motion.

Voice vote: all in favor-none oppose-none abstain. Motion carries.

An unidentified member of the audience asks if they can speak louder and Chairman Carbo explains that this meeting is for them, the public is welcome to be there but the meeting is really just for them.

A second unidentified member of the audience says that is terrible and then yells that the meeting is for everyone so they can be informed about what is going to happen at

Town Council. He says “for you to sit there and say this meeting is just for us is bull-crap. You speak up and let these people hear.”

**Item #5:**

Review all options for building and, if necessary or desired solicit additional/follow-up public opinion.

- Chairman Carbo says they are there tonight to review all of the options that are in front of them, they did get another option tonight from the 200 Tyler Street group which was being passed around the table. He says that some people were able to tour the building today and get an idea.
- Mr. Brancati says two of the Commissioners were able to get an idea of the conditions of the facility and determine the up side or down side for reuse. As a side note, the pool heater went out again this weekend which heats the water in the pool. They did not call a contractor, he told Bob Parente to call the Gas Company at this point because it is a gas valve instead of spending more money he wants the Gas Company to come over and see what it would be. So far this month between the boiler that went out again and the water valve and heating system it has cost \$10,000. He thinks when the tour was done; the condition of the building was obvious.
- Chairman Carbo says that is no surprise, they know what it is.
- Commissioner DeLucia says it was far worse than he imagined.
- Mr. Brancati says there is asbestos, tiles on the floor in the main corridor. They don't know exactly what is inside the walls, the contractor that was in there a month or so ago didn't break walls out. They can tell from the tiles, that the asbestos is considerable.
- Chairman Carbo says it is going to have to be abatement that is done to it. He enters in the paper from the Tyler Street Committee, he would say it goes into the same category they have there, which is for municipal use and government center. It is pretty much along the same lines. Again, as he has been stating all along in front of them they have two directions to go. One direction is basically Town funded with grants or whatever is needed to do it, and the other would be private multi-use/senior housing etc. As far as receiving a few at the last public hearing, those were education based. Mr. McCann has asked what they went by to disregard the education and as he said before, it came from John Finkle who said it was a consensus of the Board of Education and the Superintendent. As far as this Committee is concerned, there is no reason for them to vote on anything education based unless told otherwise. As Mr. McCann says what if the Board of Education did want that school back, that is something they would have to work out. As far as what they have in front of them right now, it is basically two directions so it can be talked about more. As far as he is concerned this Committee needs to look at the two ideas and take a vote on it. They don't have to take a vote on it tonight; if they are more comfortable on another night it is up to the Committee folks.

- Chairman Carbo asks the committee to go around the table and discuss whether they are comfortable taking a vote tonight or on another night.
- Commissioner Asid states that she is not comfortable because she still wants to take a tour of the facility, she may have some questions based on the building as she isn't familiar with it.
- Commissioner DeLucia says he is comfortable taking a vote tonight after seeing what he saw today, it pretty much sealed the deal for him.
- Commissioner Limoncelli says he is comfortable taking a vote tonight for a number of reasons. What they have done behind the scenes, what staff has done for them, he'd like to thank staff for the input they gave. They consulted with a lot of people, including Sal Brancati, the Town Engineer, Director of Finance, the Assessor, Purchasing Agent, Board of Education, a private Developer and he believes Sal spoke with Rosa DeLauro. The input they got from them is helping them make this decision. With the two public hearings they had, they only had 31 people come and speak to them. Most of them did not include any financing option. Without an option for financing or anything on the horizon for financing, he can only see one or two ways that they can go. \$65,000,000 to convert the building is about a \$500-\$600 tax increase, he can't speak for everybody but he knows he doesn't want to pay another \$500-\$600 when paying \$11,000 as it is. They can put restrictions in the development agreement that he is very confident Sal can negotiate for keeping the pool, auditorium, a place for community use, youth center, historical society, etc all in the development agreement request. Although this has been 5 weeks and they have been criticized about it being a short period of time, he knows for about 2 years on the Economic Development Commission they have been looking at this school for different projects and they met with the 200 Tyler Street people at least once and talked to them. Over the course of a year to a year and a half he has been looking at it with Sal. He is very comfortable with taking a vote tonight; he feels he has sufficient information.
- Commissioner Lang says he has no problem with taking a vote tonight either. He agrees with Commissioner Limoncelli about the amount of time that has been put in by the Administration and staff. He remembers when he was on the Council when Arthur was alive; they looked into doing something with medical. They tried to do something with the Doctors in New Haven, a lot of time and energy was put into it and it didn't pan out they didn't want to come in here. As it turns out, the building they did go in up in Foxon, they are moving out of there now so it might not have been a very good thing. There are items on there that they want to protect and put something in the contract in writing if it is purchased by a contractor and turned into housing plus the areas they want. He is definitely going to suggest that they 100% save those- the historical society, something for the kids, etc. There are Towns with basketball courts open until midnight, the swimming pool is used every day yet we have these facilities and don't man them, you can only go there seasonally or hourly, it should be available at all times not just on a schedule of when we can get somebody there and pay them. They have things for the kids to do then don't open them up and allow them to do it. He can't see paying the money they are paying year in and year out for this

building; he looks at it as a big pigeon coop. He was in there years ago and if anything it is worse now than it was then. The amount of money the \$200,000-\$300,000 a year is disgusting. He has no problem voting on what to do with this. Knowing that it is only a suggestion they are giving the Mayor, what they do after that is in the Town Council and the Administration's hands. He is ready to vote anytime.

- Chairman Carbo says his opinion on this is with the Board of Education basically looking at scrapping 2-3 schools, he is in favor of doing something for the Arts but he thinks a smaller building that won't require as much work as 200 Tyler Street that they can invest in but not have to pay for 20 years, he thinks there are other alternatives that they can be using. He thinks that he wants to get this on the tax roll. As a taxpayer, he does not want to be paying for this. Everyone that has said there is grant money available, he's spoken with folks at the State of Connecticut and they basically told him he is barking up the wrong tree. Anyone can stand there and tell him money is available but he has not seen one piece of evidence that there is. That's why he has made up his mind.
- Commissioner Asid says she is ready based on what everyone has said. She wasn't quite sure all of what they would consider being mixed use. She knows for sure based on all of the information they have that she is not recommending for Education and to take it over for municipal use would be far too costly to even consider. However, she does not want to lose sight when talking about mixed use if it's being used for senior private mixed use, they would have to make stipulations in negotiating. She feels very strongly in addition to the pool and gymnasium that they have a place or a plan for the arts and historical society. Whether the arts are in that building or a future plan in one of the closed schools, she doesn't want to lose sight of that because the arts are very important to her. Also, looking at a teen center.
- Commissioner DeLucia says the teen center for sure, that has to go in there.
- Commissioner Asid says she was just looking at the summary sheet and wanted to make sure her concerns were in there and she thinks they were also the concerns of the community. Based on that, she is ready to vote as to what their recommendation is.
- Chairman Carbo says again, what the Mayor does with their recommendation is fully in his court, what Town Council decides to do is fully their vote. In reviewing what they have, they have given the public the opportunity to bring suggestions. He thanks Ms. Hargraves for the work she has done she has definitely put her time into it.
- Commissioner Asid says she grew up in North Haven and during the baby boom they couldn't build the schools fast enough and then the boom died so they started closing schools. The first one they closed was turned into a Rec. center where there are all sorts of activities for the Town. Later on the Town funded a new High School. Her High School where she went was torn down and she is still here and okay, she survived. She can understand the historical value of the school building that is there now, she would not want to see the façade destroyed. She thinks, from what she has heard as far as costs that it is beyond the Town's people to take care of it.

- Chairman Carbo says something he doesn't think a lot of people realize is how much space 200,000 sq.f.t is. People are saying there is a good Fire Department and Police Department which is true. What else are they able to put in there? People talk about the arts- they would have use of the auditorium anyway. Whatever solution they decide on and whatever the Mayor goes with, he believes they need to retain use of those three items such as the pool, gymnasium and auditorium and whatever developer works with them has to do it or they don't work with them.
- Commissioner Limoncelli says he walked into the auditorium today and was told it is a 1,000 seat auditorium; he never knew it was that big. Sal had mentioned the possibility of putting a wall up half way down and retaining 500 seats and the stage so the arts and performances or indoor graduations or whatever else can be held there, so that is a plus. Foxon Rec- the school on North High Street, what is that for?
- Chairman Carbo says that is just for Foxon Recreation and there really isn't a lot there. It is a very small building; there is no gymnasium, nothing like that. Some of the other schools they are talking about closing do have gymnasiums and auditoriums so it's not like they wouldn't have somewhere to put the arts. If they deem one of those pieces of property viable, it's not to say they couldn't build off of it as well.
- Mr. Brancati adds that mixed use is the direction that he is hearing. So that it is clear to everyone, whatever recommendation ends up going to the Council, the Council may need to be informed but no action is taken at this point with the Council. Once a development agreement or document is negotiated between the development side and the municipal side, that document would be submitted to the Council and that is the document they would work with going forward making adjustments and working things out. The Council will get a document when they have one negotiated.
- Commissioner Limoncelli says that could be 4, 5 or 6 months away.
- Mr. Brancati says it could be several months away.
- Chairman Carbo says another thing to keep in mind is that they did have two public hearings and that would be the same for the Town Council, they would have the ability to speak as well as Zoning and Board of Finance. These are all things that would have to take place in the process; this is just the first step.
- Town Attorney Joseph Zullo says he has two things that Sal asked him to look into today; he didn't have time to give them to him because they had Administrative Services earlier. He asked him to look into and work with Paul Rizza to get financing info so they would have an understanding of the cost of debt service if they chose to go a municipal route. This year their debt service payment was about \$5.43 million scheduled to go down to \$4.38 million in the next fiscal year mostly because they continue to retire old debt. It doesn't sound like they are considering an education option but even if they did and there was 70% reimbursement- assuming a \$58 million project- they would be responsible for \$17.5 million (30%). That would be about \$1.6 million a year. He had Paul Rizza run an actual amortization schedule/debt schedule based on our cost of bonding and principal and interest every year. The payments range between \$1.6

million and \$900,000 the very last year. On the assumption that a mill is about \$2.2 million even at 70% reimbursement you are looking at least a .75 to 1 mill increase just to be able to absorb that. If you take into account a project where none of it is reimbursable at approximately \$58 million, it would be about \$4.98 million dollars a year in new debt service which would bring our debt service to about \$9.28 million, which would be the highest amount of debt service they would have carried since about the late 90's. Again, that would be about a 2.25 mill tax increase to be able to fund that (NOTE: Mill rate figures were corrected at the conclusion of the meeting by Atty. Zullo, who indicated he had misread his numbers. The correct figures are noted herein). That is taking into account the retirement of the High School bonds; this debt schedule takes into account the fact that we are retiring the High School bonds. Contrary to what some people may believe, even with retiring those bonds they are still going to be taking on more debt service than they have. The other thing Sal asked him to look into were the comments about the condensed meeting schedule. He went back to the 200 Tyler Street Re-use Committee that was formed in 2011 by the prior administration; he's not saying one schedule justifies another schedule but that committee met 8 times. Ironically, they are also meeting 8 times. It met over a relatively condensed period with no public hearings, no minutes or agendas. He actually had to go and dig the Mayor's calendar out of archive to get the dates that they met. The only records that exist are the ones that are before them, there was actually another plan that they were not able to get their hands on because none of them were filed with the Town Clerk's Office. With respect to the pace at which they met, it is actually exactly in line with the pace that the prior Commission met. He wanted to relieve any stress they might have been feeling about that. Those were the two things Sal asked him to look into and would have presented but they were at Administrative Services.

- Commissioner Asid says and this condensed schedule doesn't mean it is a done deal they are just making a recommendation based on the data and information they were given.
- Attorney Zullo says even from here, whatever is recommended will go to the Mayor and whatever he decides to recommend will go to planning and zoning once prepared where there will be two chances for public comment; one at the public hearing and one at the actual planning & zoning meeting. Then it will go to the Town Council where there will be a meeting to set a public hearing where the residents can talk. There will be an actual public hearing, at least one, on an ordinance and there will be another opportunity for public comment when the ordinance is considered. That's assuming there are no other preliminary steps, but there at least 5 more opportunities for public comment, never mind additional investigation by the administration.
- Chairman Carbo reverts back to what was said before about education and if the money were available and they had the 70%. If he had heard or had any inclination from the Board of Education that they wanted to use the building then they would have considered that. They actually had three proposals that were education based but again, they have the letter from Mr. Finkle. He asked him the question and he said it was a general consensus that they were not going to

even consider 200 Tyler Street. If by chance they change their mind and go to the Mayor and say they want to use 200 Tyler Street then that is something that the Mayor can work out with them. But this committee was told they did not want to use it so they are looking at two proposals. There is one that the taxpayers would basically absorb and one that the developer would absorb. That is the direction they are looking at. These might change, the Mayor may look at this and say Senior Housing or a mix of businesses in there he doesn't know. He is looking at it from two ways, one they pay for and one someone else pays for. He is definitely in favor of someone else paying for it, not the taxpayers.

#### **Item #6:**

Discussion of and possible action concerning a recommendation to the Town of East Haven's ad hoc Land Disposition Committee and to the Mayor.

- Chairman Carbo says that he is going to do an open vote and states that he is going to vote for the multi-use for private housing and for the ability to retain their pool, gymnasium and auditorium.
- Commissioner Lang says he is in favor for what Chairman Carbo just said; senior housing/multi-use with the Town.
- Commissioner Limoncelli says that he would like to listen to a developer giving them an idea of what they can do for senior housing, to put that back on the tax rolls. As Chairman Carbo had said, putting some mixed businesses in there would be fine. That's how he feels and that is the way he would vote.
- Commissioner DeLucia says he feels the same as Commissioner Limoncelli. He doesn't want the tax payers to have to pay for this. He was in there today and it looks like it is going to cost a lot more money than what was said earlier. He sees it being more than \$65,000,000 to convert. This is his line of work; he has done a lot of school renovations in what he does. He looked at the square footage and compared it to other schools that he has done and electrically this looks like about \$6,000,000 - \$7,000,000 job which is usually 10% of what the whole contract is. He doesn't think that should fall on the taxpayer so he is going to go with the developer.
- Commissioner Asid says based on all the information that she has and the discussions that they have had she definitely will go for private development. She is not saying what it should be, but it should also be multi-use. They still need to retain part of it for themselves, but on their dime. They shouldn't burden the taxpayers, of which she is a taxpayer. Also, the recommendations need to be strong and veto power/plan for those that do not meet the expectations of what they want to happen.
- Chairman Carbo says that this committee should get together one more time to draft a letter for the Mayor so that they get those points in. He heard very strong comments regarding the type of housing that it is so that it stays senior housing. He knows that a lot of people feel that Messina Drive was a disaster because of something that Town Hall did, but that was all private development they had no

control over it, the land was private. If they have a good agreement in place and state what they want and don't want.

- Commissioner Asid says she agrees; that is why she mentioned not being comfortable to vote, her understanding was they were going to write a written expectations letter.
- Chairman Carbo says they are going to make a written recommendation to the Mayor he just wanted to get a feeling from around the table as to where they are going.
- Mr. Brancati adds that they may go through a couple developers before they find one that is willing to do exactly what is being laid out here for a development plan.
- Chairman Carbo says all of that has to go before the Town Council and they are the representatives of each of the districts.

Commissioner Lang makes a motion to accept the vote just taken.

Commissioner DeLucia seconds the motion.

Voice vote: all in favor-none oppose-none abstain. Motion carries.

#### **Item #7:**

General discussion of overall disposition options.

- Attorney Zullo recommends a procedural process. He recommends that they discuss the aspects of the letter they would like to send the Mayor. For example, when they mentioned the mix-use they may want to include, based on public comment, what they might recommend to the Mayor and what they wouldn't recommend so the clerk has a chance to draft that. It would probably be helpful to have her at the next meeting with a draft after coordinating with them in writing it. It might help to give some ideas to work with.
- Chairman Carbo says one opinion is definitely senior housing and senior housing only. They definitely do not want to have low income housing.
- Commissioner Asid says if it is deemed senior housing for private use.
- Commissioner Limoncelli says senior housing would be preferable; he spoke with Sal about a number of projects that are going on in Town and senior housing saves the Town quite a bit of money in education costs and he thinks there would be less traffic in the area if it were just senior housing. He would like to see in the development agreement that they do annotate the pool, gymnasium, auditorium, historical society, arts and youth center. Most of the things they received from the 200 Tyler Street Committee and the 31 people that came and gave them some ideas, they have been thinking about and have given them some nuances in their decision.
- Commissioner Lang says the wing on the left hand side when you are facing the building, if that wing were to be removed- he is thinking about entrance and exit from that property. When he was young, that building wasn't there so you were able to go in and out of the building on two sides. If you are only able to go in and out on one side, that puts a lot of traffic onto Ure Ave in the back. Some



people were concerned about that and he would if he were living on that street; he lives on Bradley Ave close to the school but he would be concerned about that. If something could be put into the drawing or that contract where there would be another driveway in and out of there onto Tyler that would keep a lot of the traffic so it isn't all going out that back way. It is a dead end street, it's small and narrow he knows public services has a problem with the plowing and the parking on the street. It is something to be taken into consideration when they are talking about this. Everyone at this table is not going to be involved in drawing up the paperwork but there are going to be some things where if someone slips up on something he hopes there is someone else at the table that will catch it. They should get some good people involved in it.

- Chairman Carbo adds that as far as the building footprint, he would like to see something in there that keeps the footprint the way it is. Any expansion would not be allowable.
- Commissioner Asid says she is not familiar because she has to go in there still but in hearing about these wings, is there a chance either of the wings will be removed? Is there any demo involved?
- Commissioner Lang says that is not one of the original wings, those are something that was added on.
- Chairman Carbo says his point is if they remove a wing and want to build in that footprint, fine but no more than that; no expansion beyond that.
- Mr. Brancati says basically, he is saying to stay within the 4.81 acre site.
- Chairman Carbo says he will likely not be privy to the design but if they put this together they would like to hope they stick with their wishes and put that into the agreement.
- Mr. Brancati says they have a 4.81 acre site; any development that takes place must take place within the 4.81 acre site that is already there.
- Commissioner Limoncelli asks if Commissioner Lang means it goes around in a horseshoe.
- Commissioner Lang says when he was there that was an assembly area, they could go in and out of that side and buses would stop there. When they had fife and drum they would set up in the back which was the football field. But that building wasn't there so you were able to enter and leave on two sides so you weren't always going out Ure Avenue and always going out on the right hand side facing the building up by French/Tyler.
- Commissioner Limoncelli says so two lanes on the sides going in?
- Commissioner Lang says yeah one or two lanes so that it isn't all congested there for the people living on the street. If he lives there he would be upset about that. You wouldn't be able to close it off; right now it is open for emergency purposes. Maybe it can be a one way street, something could be done to try and alleviate any of the traffic in and out of there. If it is senior housing, a lot of them don't drive you get 55+ with two people in the family and one car, so there might not be that much traffic. Messina Drive doesn't have that much traffic and they have the shopping center right across the street. With the stop light there it's never backed up far maybe in the morning going to work but it doesn't have a lot to do with Messina Drive.

- Chairman Carbo asks the clerk to draft a letter and distribute it to them via email and then the committee will post one more meeting.

**Item #8:**

Adjournment of Public Hearing #1.

Commissioner Lang makes a motion.

Commissioner DeLucia seconds the motion.

Voice vote: all in favor-none oppose-none abstain. Motion carries.

Meeting adjourned at 7:36PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Danelle Feeley  
Temporary Clerk, 200 Tyler Street Subcommittee