

*~AD HOC REPORT~*  
**Lease and Purchase - 98 Elm Street**  
*Tuesday, February 21, 2023*

Chairman DiGilio called the meeting to order at 6:02 p.m. on Tuesday, February 21, 2023. Present was Committee Member Warren Levy; and absent was Committee Member Farley Santos. From the City were Robin Edwards, Assistant Corporation Counsel; Dan Casagrande, Outside Counsel; Dan Garrick, Director of Finance; Sharon Calitro, Director of Planning; John Kleinhans, Mayor's Office. Also present was Jeff Rieck, Director of the Danbury Housing Authority. Ex Officio Members present were: Councilmen Buzaid, Rotello, and Chianese. Present from the public were six unidentified individuals.

Mr. Casagrande provided a brief overview of the proposed lease and purchase agreement between the City and the Danbury Housing Authority. The plan is to convert the property located at 98 Elm Street into a homeless shelter. The agreement allows the City to assign rights & obligations to purchase the property to a third party (Pacific House) if the entity obtains State funding for the purchase. Furthermore, he noted that Pacific House has reached a settlement with the Zoning Commission regarding the rezoning of 3 Lake Avenue (a temporary homeless shelter); however, the litigation and settlement do not affect the purchase of 98 Elm Street. He noted that he received a letter from resident Benjamin Boto expressing concern regarding the litigation, demolition requirements, and use of the property at 98 Elm Street for a shelter.

The shelter is considered a non-conforming use of the property. Ms. Calitro noted the lease and purchase agreement will need to be reviewed by the Planning Commission. Mr. Rieck confirmed that the Housing Authority's Board approved the sale of the property. The vacant property has 20-units in turn-key condition. Mr. Casagrande confirmed the entire property (2 buildings) was taken into consideration during the appraisal. Mr. DiGilio noted that Pacific House was invited to attend the meeting and provided a letter supporting the plan.

Mr. Rotello suggested rehabilitating the front building instead of demolishing the structure to save time. Mr. Casagrande confirmed the State requires the front building to be demolished, due to the structures poor condition and environmental issues. Mr. Chianese inquired about the settlement and funding requirements, and Mr. Casagrande clarified that Pacific House does not have an obligation to purchase the property if they do not get funding, regardless of the litigation settlement. Ms. Calitro confirmed the City previously approved a site plan for a 20-bed homeless shelter at that location. Mr. Casagrande confirmed the Planning Commission has the authority to require safety features and crime prevention measures for the shelter.

Mr. DiGilio clarified the operational procedures intended for the proposed shelter. Mr. Chianese suggested that safety/operational plans be included in any agreement. Mr. Rotello favors adding language to an agreement to protect the safety of the neighborhood. Mr. Levy anticipates the proposed homeless shelter will improve the community, if managed properly. Mr. Chianese recommended continuing the meeting so that wording for an agreement can be prepared. Mr. Casagrande clarified that the recommendation from the Ad Hoc will be subject to a Planning Commission report, if approved by the City Council, the City will schedule a public hearing.

***A motion made by Councilman Levy, and seconded by Chairman DiGilio, to recommend to the City Council, to authorize the Mayor to execute the purchase & sale agreement of 98 Elm Street, subject to receipt of a report and recommendation from the Planning Commission.*** The motion carried unanimously.

***A motion made by Councilman Levy, and seconded by Chairman DiGilio, to adjourn.*** The motion carries unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 6:35 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,  
Vinny DiGilio, Chair  
Warren Levy