

LAND AND BUILDING USAGE ASSESSMENT COMMITTEE

Meeting Minutes

Monday, May 20, 2024

Present: Kristen Furtak-Chair, Warren Breece, Dave Murphy-BOE, Brian Walsh

Absent: Angela Aresco, Shaun Manning-BOS, Ken Woodward

Others: First Selectman Ryan Curley, Chris Reilly (Lexington Partners)

1. Call meeting to order

Chair Kristen Furtak called the meeting to order at 6:31 PM at the Buck-Foreman Community Room, 265 Main Street, 2nd Floor, Portland, CT.

2. Roll Call of Members

3. Approve Agenda

Brian Walsh made a motion to approve the agenda, seconded by Warren Breece. Vote unanimous, motion carried.

4. Approve Minutes: April 15, 2024

Brian Welch made a motion to approve the April 15, 2024 minutes, seconded by Warren Breece. Vote unanimous, motion carried.

5. Recap Tour of Gildersleeve School and Brownstone Intermediate School with Chris from Lexington Partners.

Chris Reilly shared the following:

- Both properties are beautifully maintained.

Gildersleeve:

- Doesn't lend itself for adaptation, not for assisted living or adult community.
- Best for single family home development.
- Who should take care of demolition? Whoever could do it more efficiently, town or developer.

Brownstone:

- Intriguing with a few options for a developer. Front is gorgeous. It should be preserved.
- Newer portion might be demolished.
- Challenge of older part, i.e., auditorium and cafeteria and how to use the space. Maybe community theater but it would be costly.
- May be opportunity for a hotel, condos or multifamily.

- The back side would have opportunity because it overlooks the quarry. The garden piece has significant value, especially with the spa coming in. The more the spa is developed, the more valuable Brownstone becomes.
- **Timing is your friend.**
- What is challenge for a hotel? The building is so attractive that the windows would be the challenge to cut it into hotel size rooms. The ceiling height is spectacular.
- Another challenge is a turnoff on Main Street; coming in from the side would be tricky. Or you could have the entry on the back side, taking advantage of the quarry view.
- The other piece of land across the street makes it more interesting. Someone could come in with creativity for the greenhouse.
- You could easily do a multi or hotel in the back. The complication would be parking. An architect could design that; maybe like a horseshoe with a view on the back.
- There is tremendous value. The back side is where the value is. Solar source would be valuable. (You have to own the system to get the value.)
- Private/Public Partnership: Development is so expensive right now. You must get the development over the hurdle. Most towns don't want to stay in a partnership. The only other partnership with the town would be possibly a housing authority situation. An income stream could be developed for a public/private partnership.
- Developer Challenges: Pre-Covid you could get a loan for 75% of construction. Post-Covid you're lucky to get 50 or 55%. You can't find equity going into a deal. Money is expensive at this point. If you build with a certain energy standard, you might be able to get help from the State of CT. If a 20-year loan, you may be able to get help. CPACE is a tool that can finance energy efficiency and renewable energy improvement on commercial property. It has to be engineered.
- The theater area may be an opportunity for a restaurant.
- Could apply to state for demolition costs; they have been understanding and helpful to get those monies. Grants have been very creative. A great program must come through the town or agency of the town. Chris will get info on it.
- There is more value because Agogliati Field is there.
- Gildersleeve demo: Ceiling tiles may have issues, maybe costing \$1-\$1.5 million.
- Chris again emphasized that time is your friend!

6. Matrix Exercise for Thoughtful Uses of Gildersleeve School and Brownstone Intermediate

Kristen made minor changes to the matrix and will distribute. (Changes not visible to recording clerk.) Keep part of Gildersleeve and keep Park & Rec portion for after-school and morning program with access to the field.

Ryan Curley expressed concern regarding the future growth of the town if Gildersleeve were to be sold.

Brian Walsh sees rooftop developments to be very popular at this time. If everything is removed, the demolition cost comes down. A question was raised as to if there was no building there, what would the land be worth?

Ryan said we may not know what we will do going into the referendum but we may know what our options would be.

7. Next Steps – Report Submission Logistics

- Building out the matrix and working on the report.
- Ryan Curley suggested giving an update at a BOS meeting in June (Ryan will coordinate, possibly on June 10).
- The committee may want to meet before the BOS meeting.

8. Public Comment

9. Adjournment

Kristen made a motion to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Brian Walsh, vote unanimous; meeting adjourned at 7:35 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Sharon Hoy
Committee Clerk