



**CITY OF DANBURY**  
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**ZONING COMMISSION**  
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**MINUTES**  
**SEPTEMBER 28, 2021**

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The web based meeting (hosted on Zoom) was called to order by Chairman Theodore Haddad Jr. at 7:30 PM.

Present were Sidney Almeida, Candace Fay, Ryan Hawley, Angela Hylenski, Rick P. Jowdy, James Kelly, Michael Masi, Robert Melillo, Theodore Haddad Jr., and Alternates Jason Eriquez and Nelson Merchan. Also present was Planning Director Sharon Calitro.

Absent was Alternate Thomas Nejame.

Mr. Melillo led the Commission in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mrs. Fay made a motion to accept the August 28, 2021 minutes. Mrs. Hylenski seconded the motion and it was passed unanimously with nine ayes (from Mr. Almeida, Mrs. Fay, Mr. Hawley, Mrs. Hylenski, Mr. Jowdy, Mr. Kelly, Mr. Masi, Mr. Melillo, and Chairman Haddad).

Chairman Haddad spoke briefly about why this meeting is being held via Zoom versus in-person.

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**PUBLIC HEARINGS:**

Petition of 29 Federal Road LLC & Robert W. Schmus, 21, 29, 33-35, and 39 Federal Road (K11123, K11125, K11126, & K11127) for Change of Zone from IL-40 to CG-20.

Chairman Haddad read the legal notice. Mr. Melillo read the Planning Commission recommendation which was positive. Mrs. Calitro read the Planning Department staff report dated August 11, 2021.

Attorney Tom Beecher spoke in favor of this petition. He said the property owners are both present this evening: Tony Rizzo Jr. representing 29 Federal Road LLC, which owns three of the properties, and Robert Schmus, who owns one property. He said the public hearing was rescheduled from the August meeting because there was a zoning violation on one of the properties. He said these properties total approximately 1.655 acres and are located on the eastern side of Federal Road across the street from properties zoned

CG-20. He added that the majority of the properties on the western side of the road are already zoned CG-20 and if this is approved, there will still be fifteen properties zoned IL-40 on Federal Road. He spoke about the current and past uses on the subject properties noting that at least two of them have a long history of commercial use. He said the zoning becomes an issue because if they are being used commercially, they cannot expand the businesses because the use is non-conforming. Also, only two of the four lots proposed to be rezoned meet the minimum lot size requirements for the CG-20 Zone and all of the lots are undersized for the IL-40 Zone. He continued saying that rezoning would allow changes in use on all the lots to any use allowed in the CG-20 Zoning District, subject to approvals. He then spoke about consistency with the Plan of Conservation & Development, saying that although this proposal is not consistent with the Land Use Plan Map, that map has not been updated since 2002 and does not reflect the rezoning of the property across the street from these lots. He added that this is consistent the POCD because it will encourage the expansion of the businesses located on these properties. This proposal does not represent a significant loss of industrial land and also these properties are not served by either public water or sewer services, which does limit their viability as IL-40 land. He said there is a consistent demand for commercial land and these properties in many ways are more suited to commercial development. They also meet most of the zone change criteria in the Regulations.

Tony Rizzo Jr., 29 Federal Road LLC, spoke next. He said Attorney Beecher covered everything. The only thing he wanted to add is that if this is approved, it will allow them to continue what they started and clean up these properties.

Chairman Haddad thanked them for acting quickly and getting the violation cleaned up. Robert Schmus, the owner of 39 Federal Road then said he really is working on cleaning up his property, and once it is done, he wants to repave the lot and reside his building.

Chairman Haddad asked if there was anyone to speak in opposition to this petition and one person came forward.

Paul Rotello, 13 Linden Place, City Councilman for the sixth ward, said he is concerned that this rezoning could have a deleterious effect on the abutting properties. He said he wanted to remind the Commission that we are not making IL-40 zoned land anymore and every year we rezone more of it to commercial. He added that someday Danbury won't even be considered for industry.

Attorney Beecher spoke in rebuttal saying that these parcels are a small triangular piece of land located across the street from the CG-20 zone and he does not think any industrial use would even consider these parcels. Mr. Hawley asked if there was any consideration given to the potential traffic impact this rezoning could have. Attorney Beecher said there was not really an issue since there are no specific plans for changes of use on any of these properties.

Chairman Haddad asked Mrs. Calitro if she had any additional staff comments and she said she did not, her staff report included everything. Mr. Melillo made a motion to close the public hearing. Mr. Jowdy seconded the motion and it was passed unanimously with nine ayes by voice vote.

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Petition of 3 Lake Avenue Extension LLC to Amend Sections 2.B., 5.B.2.b.(19), and 5.B.5.g. of the Zoning Regulations. [Amendments to existing definitions, defining a new use (“transitional shelter for the homeless”), & adding this new use as a special exception use to the CA-80 zone.]

Chairman Haddad read the legal notice. Mrs. Calitro read the Planning Department Staff Report dated September 9, 2021. Mr. Melillo read the Planning Commission recommendation which was positive (passed with four votes in favor and one abstention) and included the recommendation that the Zoning Commission consider adding a requirement that if this use is proposed for a site, the site or structure shall be limited to one principal use.

Chairman Haddad then said based on how the links are listed on the agenda, he wanted to label the exhibits as follows:

- Ex. 1 -Letters in opposition received prior to 9/23/21 posting of the agenda.
- Ex. 2 -Letters in opposition received after the 9/23/21 posting of the agenda.
- Ex. 3 -Letters in favor received after the 9/23/21 posting.
- Ex. 4 - Information received from the Applicant after the 9/23/21 posting.
- Ex. 5 - Letters in opposition received today 9/28/21.
- Ex. 6 - Correspondence from Police Chief Ridenhour.

Attorney Timothy Hollister, from the Hinckley-Allen law firm in Hartford spoke in favor of this petition. He said with him tonight are an associate from his law firm, Ryan Hoyler, and Rafael Pagan, Executive Director of Pacific House, and Jerome Roberts, who is the manager of the Danbury facility. He said due to the pandemic, state officials looked for single room occupancy facilities to be used as shelters to replace the congregate housing type of shelters. At the height of the pandemic there were over eight-hundred hotel rooms in the state being used. The Super 8 Motel was selected by the State to be used to shelter the homeless in the spring of 2020. For a time, it was used as both a hotel and a shelter. Pacific House was brought in to help run the shelter aspect of the use. He said this shelter use has continued under Governor Lamont’s Executive Order which was extended today to the middle of February 2022. He said they are here tonight because the shelter use is not permitted in the CA-80 zone. The Danbury Zoning Regulations only allow shelters in the C-CBD and RH-3 zones. He said earlier this year, Pacific House purchased the hotel with Department of Housing funds and that was followed by the submittal of a use variance application for this site. Opponents to that application questioned if they really had a hardship which is required for a variance to be granted. It became apparent that if that variance was granted, the opponents would appeal the approval. He said in June of this year, he was contacted by Pacific House to determine what could be done. It was determined that the appropriate means for an approval would be before this Commission and that an appeal of a properly legislated decision by this Commission would be highly unlikely to succeed. The petition language was prepared to allow for a combination of emergency beds and supportive services on this site. It is proposed as a special exception use to allow for detailed conditions to be imposed on the approval. He said the proposed use is consistent with other uses permitted in the CA-80 zone. He said every unit can be counted toward the City’s Affordable Housing unit count. He added that they agree with the recommendation suggested by the Planning Commission. He then stated that this is not spot zoning as

defined in Fullers Land Use Law & Practice book and citing case law. In closing he said this proposal is a public health and safety necessity, and consistent with the City's comprehensive plan.

Also speaking in favor was Executive Director of Pacific House, Rafael Pagan. He said this organization was started in Stamford, CT about 35 years ago. They are dedicated to providing housing for the homeless and also the development of housing options for these people. He said they have built over fifteen homes in southern Fairfield County and their mission is to work in partnership with the business community to be a major resource for those who need help. They came into the Danbury facility in May and after a year, the State determined that the hotel should be purchased and Pacific House was asked to facilitate the process. The hotel was purchased in May 2021 and up to that point, it was still operating as both a hotel and the shelter. In August 2021, the Pacific House staff took over the operation of the emergency shelter operation. He said Mr. Roberts would speak about the daily operation of the shelter. Mr. Almeida asked who ran the shelter before the August takeover. Mr. Pagan said the owner of the hotel operated with some City staff. Mrs. Fay asked for clarification on this being open 24 hours per day. Mr. Pagan said the previous shelters in Danbury that were run by the City were only open in the evening, so the residents had to go out onto the streets during the day. By being open 24 hours per day, the residents do not have to leave during the daytime. He added that their primary focus is to get these people out of the shelter and into permanent housing. Mrs. Fay asked if these residents are allowed to come and go freely. Mr. Pagan said they are, they can work with counselors to find jobs and housing and if necessary obtain medical services. He continued saying they have a strict evening curfew with the only exception being if a resident is working or has an emergency situation that has been pre-approved. There was discussion as to what happens when someone attempts to enter after the curfew. Mrs. Fay asked if Pacific House has any educational partners in the Danbury area to assist in training the residents so they can find jobs. Mr. Pagan said they do not yet have that but they intend to develop a training program. He added that they have a zero tolerance on drinking or drugging; there are no paraphernalia, substances, or weapons allowed in the facility. He said the residents are scanned at the entry. Mrs. Fay then asked how they deal with altercations, and if they have police on site. Mr. Pagan said they do not have in-house police; the staff is trained to a certain extent and the police are called if needed. Mr. Hawley asked how policy has changed since Pacific House took over. Mr. Pagan said it was running as a hotel previously, so it was difficult to impose shelter regulations, but now it is operated as if it had always been a shelter.

Speaking next was Jerome Roberts, manager of the Pacific House operation. He said there are about 86 rooms in the four-story building and 40 rooms are used as emergency shelter rooms. There is a bathroom, a small refrigerator and a microwave in each room. They generally house about 60 people per night. And about 114 people have been moved into permanent housing since they started here. He reiterated that their goal is to get these people into permanent housing of their own. He said basic needs are addressed in the shelter although they also offer mental health, substance abuse, and addiction services. Mr. Roberts reiterated much of what has already been said. He said all staff are vaccinated and guests are COVID tested and encouraged to get vaccinated. He said the shelter is only on two floors and there is a separate entrance for the support services that they offer. The curfew is 9 PM, and the residents must go through a metal detector to enter the premises. The staff performs physical perimeter checks to be sure all is

secure and rounds are done each evening, all bags and personal items are checked to be sure nothing illegal is brought in. There was more discussion about the various social service agencies that work with them to help these people. Also some questions from the Commission members regarding how after curfew entries are handled. Mr. Roberts said each resident is assigned a case manager to help them determine how best their needs can be met.

Mr. Melillo asked Attorney Hollister if he meant to say this petition is site specific. Attorney Hollister said although this is an amendment to a specific zone, it contains criteria that makes it site specific which was added to limit the properties in CA-80 where this would be applicable. Mr. Melillo said he was hoping for a different answer and requested that the Commission get an opinion from Corporation Counsel to address the spot zoning versus does it apply to the entire CA-80 zone issue. Chairman Haddad pointed out that two other locations in the CA-80 zone were noted in the Planning Department staff report. He said they would ask Corporation Counsel for an opinion since tonight's hearing will be continued. He noted that at this point in the meeting, there were 105 participants in the Zoom platform.

Attorney Hollister then said he would welcome an opinion from the City's Corporation Counsel on this issue. He added that he understands Mr. Melillo's concern as it applies to CA-80 and it was intended that the locational criteria included in the proposed amendment would limit the geographic areas. He said he would submit the revised language to include the recommendation from the Planning Commission. He added that their team is well aware of the opposition's website which makes claims that there is no data to support. He said the Police Chief's memo does not show any increase in criminal activity, so the choice here is between a facility where clients are supported by staff trained to help them find a better life or a transient hotel where the homeless are sheltered but get no support services. He said the model as described by Mr. Pagan and Mr. Roberts will stabilize the area and hopefully help these people find permanent housing.

Chairman Haddad then said at this time, he would read two letters in favor of this petition which were received at the Planning & Zoning office. The first letter was from Seila Mosquero-Bruno, Commissioner from the State of Connecticut, Department of Housing, and the second letter was from Robert Botelho, Victorian Associates, who is a local developer who has worked extensively to create housing in Danbury. Chairman Haddad then asked if there was other who wanted to speak in favor of this petition and several people indicated they wanted to speak.

Mayor Joe Cavo read a prepared statement saying that he is in favor of this and the reasons for it.

Probate Judge Dianne Yamin spoke about being chairperson for the 2005 Ten Year Plan to End Homelessness. She said this was a group made up of 30 individuals from the business and social service community whose goals were to (1) increase the permanent supply of housing, and (2) ensure adequate services and housing were available to assist the homeless. She said their concept was to provide a place where the homeless could find the needed services to help them find permanent housing. She spoke in great detail about their findings and the proposals they made. She said it seems that Pacific House intends to provide all of this and that she supports this petition.

Constantino Rago, said he is a Danbury resident and also a clinical mental health counselor. He said he is speaking because he does not approve of the way the opposition is portraying the homeless population. He said he opposes their strategy of fearmongering and their promotion of the risk of child endangerment. He said this type labeling is unfairly characterizing the homeless as dangerous individuals. He said that absent a viable alternative, this shelter should be allowed to continue to operate.

Joe Simons said he is a volunteer with Dorothy Day and Off the Streets, which are two of the organizations that Pacific House teams with in Danbury. He said since he has been working with them, he has been impressed with their professionalism and what they are able to provide. He said the work they have already done in Danbury is remarkable, citing the 114 people who were once in the shelter and now are in permanent housing. He said he supports this proposal and believes that if community also gives their support, they will be able to end homelessness in Danbury.

Pat LaMarche, a national homeless advocate located in Carlyle, Pennsylvania. She said that although she is not from our community, she wanted to say that she is overjoyed that Danbury is considering this shelter. She also mentioned that the opposition is not being fair and is characterizing the homeless as a dangerous population. She said the other thing she wanted to say is that keeping the shelter open 24 hours a day is important because for the residents, this is their home for however long they are living there.

Chairman Haddad asked if there was anyone else to speak in favor of this petition and there was no one. He said this hearing will be continued this evening and anyone who did not speak will have the opportunity at the next meeting. He said since there is no one else to speak in favor, he will call for the opposition. He said before we call for those who want to speak, he will read the letters received in opposition. He said all of the letters are attached to the agenda, either as Exhibit 1 or Exhibit 2. First, he read a list of names of people who each signed a form letter in opposition:

Harry & Jill Kuhn	Samantha Ben-Feery
Cheynetta Carter	James Filomio
Geneth Mayernick	Bruce Pierce
Kristy Tooker	Carolyn Pierce
Paul Tilkins	John Burns
Robert Genualdi	Catherine Summa
Tim Bigham	Patrick Summa
Michael Carter	Pete DiBenedetto
Patrick McNuly	John Kocor
Israel Giron	Dave Grant
Joseph Badaracco	Richard Aronson
Emmett Handrahan	Maureen Aronson
TJ McVay	Carol deBourbon
Stephen J. O'Connor III	Jonathan Orr

He said if anyone wanted to read their own letter into the record, they should tell him. He then read individual letters in opposition from the following people.

Richard Aronson	Creston Patterson
Sylvia Blake	Cynthia Doto
Carol deBourbon	Stefan Marquardt
Wendy DaCosta	Donald Woodin
Amy Kohn	Jan Anthony
Dr. James Nolan	Jean Anthony
Sarah Passell	James O'Hara

Chairman Haddad said some of these letters were regarding the decision to hold this meeting via Zoom and he hopes the people who wrote them heard his explanation at the beginning of the meeting regarding this. He then read the letters in opposition from the following people:

Suzanne McLean	Kathy Bates
Virginia Crowley	Harriet Lebetkin
Mark Nolan	Ernesto Rodriguez
Robert Steinberg	Peggy Stewart
Donald Kelly	Luciana Shortal

Chairman Haddad then called on the people who wanted to read their own letters.

Benjamin Doto III, said he has lived at 17 Ridge Road for over twenty years and also operates his business out of an office he owns at 248 Main Street. He said he is very familiar with the downtown shelters as well as the Super 8 location. He said he is representing himself and his neighbors only, he is not here professionally as a civil engineer. He said he understands that the Commission is in an awkward position and he appreciates their consideration. He said it seems the State is pushing this project forward noting that they funded the purchase of the hotel before any approvals were granted. He spoke briefly about the previous Zoning Board of Appeals application. He said the neighborhood has been patient and have endured the impacts that this shelter has had on the area, but their problem now is the permanence of this shelter. They also do not approve of the applicant redefining the definition of homeless shelter. He said this size of this shelter is over a 700% increase over what a shelter is normally permitted in Danbury which is twenty people. He questioned where the applicant's proposed conditions came from because it seems like they were included just to make sure that the hotel is the only location that can meet them. He said despite their attempts to disguise this, it is truly the definition of spot zoning. He continued saying that the reason Danbury has a twenty-bed limit on shelters is so the shelter does not overwhelm the neighborhood it is located in. He said this hotel is not an ideal location to house people as there is no open space, decks or outdoor area for people to use. He said it is discriminatory placement to locate this next to a Housing Authority project where mostly working people and minorities live. He said this is also a violation of Federal HUD (Housing & Urban Development) policy because the Housing Authority residents were not notified that CDBG (Community Development Block Grant) funds were used to purchase the hotel. He also questioned the Pacific House model, because this proposal is nothing like what they have in Stamford, where there a several sites instead of everything being located in one building. He presented a few photo exhibits showing some of the activities that have occurred in the area since the shelter has been there. These included loitering in groups, drug dealing and usage, sexual activities, and the

shelter residents wandering about on private property. He said he would submit all of his exhibits to the Planning Office tomorrow. In closing, he said he and the other neighbors have endured all of these disruptions and problems for eighteen months and they have been patient, but they do not want to see this become a permanent situation.

Eileen Curran, 18 Fairlawn Avenue, said most of the City is unaware of this plan to turn the hotel into a permanent shelter. She said she is not against the homeless, she is against the fact that proper procedure has not been followed with respect to this getting approval. She said Danbury has more than enough housing to support its needs. She then spoke about their website <https://protectourchildrendanbury.com/> and clarified the reasons they started it. She said she would be submitting the petition in opposition tomorrow to the Planning Office but noting that they have over 780 signatures and are still collecting them. She added that the shelter is not following the rules that other shelters in the City have been required to follow. No one wants to see people sleeping in the street but we also don't want to see increased drug and sexual activity going on in this neighborhood. She said this "mega" shelter has been harmful to this area of the City and asked that this be denied and a more suitable location be found for this shelter.

Jeff Berlant, said he is a Fairlawn Avenue resident. He said he and the other people speaking tonight are the face of the website and the neighborhood. He said he is in daily contact with both police and fire professionals in the City and they have been told to keep things happening at the shelter quiet. They have been told to change drug overdose reports into wellness reports so it looks like nothing is happening there. He said he has over twenty screenshots of police calls that he will submit. He then read his letter in opposition into the record. He said that their group invited the two mayoral candidates to address them and were told that this is a done deal politically so the candidates did not want to discuss it. Mr. Berlant said he would submit all of the screenshots and they include dates of when they were taken. He said this is not a good thing for the people who live in this area and it should not be approved.

Margie Heron, Fairlawn Avenue, said she grew up off of Merrimac Street so she is familiar with this area. She said since the shelter has been there, she and her children no longer feel safe in their neighborhood. She said many of the people on her street have put up security cameras and they also have a neighborhood watch group. She read a letter from a friend of hers (Katherine Allen) regarding an encounter she and her children had with a homeless person from the shelter riding across Lake Avenue in an office chair. She said he stopped at each car to look inside it and bother the people riding in it and it really scared her and her children. Mrs. Heron then said keeping our children safe is essential and as long as this shelter is located here, we cannot guarantee that safety.

Rachel Halas, said she lives in the West Terrace neighborhood and her perspective is different because she recently retired from the Danbury Police Dept after 25 years. She said her first assignment after joining the force was the downtown area which included New Street and Spring Street. At that time the City shelter was on New Street and Dorothy Day was on Spring Street. She said she quickly learned that the areas around these shelters were a haven of drugs, sex, and general criminal activity. She said at first, she believed that the police presence could make a difference, but the negative activities never stopped. She then spoke about her time on the bicycle patrol, which was designed to improve relations with the public and the businesses by having a police presence. It was then she realized that people did not want to patronize the businesses



located in the downtown because the homeless were hanging around the streets and bothering people. She then said the people who are in favor of this do not really understand the true nature of what this shelter brings to a neighborhood. Her husband is a firefighter and EMT and he has told her about how they minimize the reporting of the calls to the shelter. She cited various locations in the neighborhood where the activities occur and the police are called to. She mentioned a recent incident when she was in the drive-up line with her kids at McDonalds and she saw a man in the parking lot in full cardiac arrest due to a heroin overdose. She said the picture the applicant is painting is not the reality; all of the efforts and money put into controlling what goes on at the shelter is not working. She said Mr. Roberts said they scan people for drugs and alcohol, but there is no means or technology to do that. She continued saying that this is not the right location for the shelter and that is proven by the increase in calls for police and medical services. She suggested that anyone asking for FOI (freedom of information) needs to increase the scope to include all of the streets in the immediate area of the shelter. Lastly she spoke about her time in the special victims unit where crimes against children are investigated. She said she did not feel confident listening to how they vet the residents for admittance to the shelter. She said she is bothered by the idea that things are not being reported as they really are in an effort to make things sound much better than they really are.

The next speaker, Barbara Davis, said if you put 3 Lake Avenue Ext. in on the national sex offender registry, it shows up that there is an individual residing there who is on the list. Ms. Davis then said she lives at 15 Ridge Road, which is part of the West Terrace neighborhood. She said although the application says it complies with the Zoning Regulations and case law, there are more compelling reasons to deny this than to approve. She mentioned the enabling legislation in the Connecticut General Statutes (Section 8-2) which is where the Zoning Commission's power comes from and said this application does not comply with that. She added that the City's Plan of Conservation & Development states that Danbury alone cannot and should not be expected to meet all of the housing needs of the region. She said there is no need for her to elaborate on the negative impact this has had on the area as many of her neighbors have already provided documentation to prove this. She said the applicant is attempting to sidestep that they purchased this site without receiving the proper approvals and it should not be up to this Commission to correct their error. She asked that the Commission vote no on this petition based on the facts presented by their constituents as well as the City approved documents and State legislation.

Patrick Heron, 27 Fairlawn Avenue, said he is a lifelong resident of Danbury and also a professional firefighter/EMT in Danbury. He said he is often called upon to respond to drug overdoses both at the McDonalds and the Gulf gas station. He said this type of drug activity is present in the Mill Ridge area where there are a significant number of school-age children and he is concerned about the impact on them. Additionally, he also fears that this activity will create negative impacts to the businesses in this area.

Clay Pierce, 103 Long Ridge Road, had his wife read his letter in opposition into the record. The letter spoke about how he loves the City and cannot see why people want to destroy it. It also said that he owns rental properties in the downtown and after Dorothy Day was closed he noticed that he no longer had daily calls regarding problems at these locations. He said wanting to help the less fortunate is not a noble cause if it makes others suffer. Everyone deserves to feel safe and secure, but this proposal is too

big to control. He said if this does get approved, it should include a clause requiring annual review and renewal of the approval.

Benjamin Chianese, 5 Briar Ridge Road, City Councilman for sixth ward, apologized that his camera is not working. He said everything he wanted to say has already been said. A lot of his constituents have spoken this evening. He said he also is president of a group that provides local transitional housing for women so he understands the needs. He said it is his job to listen to people and he hears that a lot of the negative things that have been said are true. He said he had tried with State Representative Ken Gucker to get the neighbors and the applicant together to discuss this but it did not happen. He then said since the Governor has extended the Executive Order, the City now has the time to form a group that can look at this and determine how best it should be handled. He said he agrees with Commissioner Melillo that this is a site-specific application. He said the homeless shelter issue needs to be addressed by a community working together not as it is being handled tonight. He said since they now have time, the applicant should withdraw and a plan should be drawn up that will address this. He asked that the pages 35-36 of the POCD (that Barbara Davis referred to) be made an exhibit because the applicant has said that this is consistent with the POCD but if you read it, you will see that it is not. He then said State and City contracts were mentioned but he has not been able to locate a copy of either of these. In conclusion, he said the fear of what has happened in the past with the other shelter locations has enabled us to anticipate what is happening in this area now. He said we must learn from the past or we are destined to repeat it.

Paul Rotello, 13 Linden Place, City Councilman for the sixth ward, said this meeting has been amazing. He said the level of involvement this evening has been impressive. The petitioner started off with a threat that if anyone challenges the petition they would be squashed in court. While out campaigning these past weeks, he and Councilman Chianese have been to over one hundred homes and there were less than half a dozen people who were ambivalent about this issue. The people who were opposed were upset that they were not included in the decision to put the homeless up at the Super 8. He said this amendment is not a solution to the homeless problem. He said the public does not feel like they are part of the solution.

Lisa Casagrande Koepfel, Crest Avenue, said she is the director of a small non-profit in Danbury that works with women and children (who are not permitted at the shelter). She said they are saying that services are offered at the shelter but the residents are not required to partake of these services. She added that it is big distinction between them being offered and them being used by the residents of the shelter. She said this is just too big an undertaking and would be better managed in small groups. This should not be a regional shelter because if we have to find housing for these people in other towns, then the shelter should be located in one of those towns that has an adequate supply of permanent housing available. Lastly, she said she believes that finding them employment should be part of the package.

Mr. Melillo said he received a message from Chairman Haddad that he was bounced out and is trying to get back in. Vice Chairman Jowdy called on the next speaker.

Spencer Young, 49 Concord Road, located in West Terrace, said he thinks this format is terrible. He said he was watching the meeting on YouTube and then found out he has to

join the meeting if he wanted to speak. He said he purchased his home in 2019 and thinks it is an amazing neighborhood. He then said he is terribly disappointed in this proposal, government overreach is not needed, nor is using taxpayer dollars to put a band aid on this problem. Providing free housing will not cure homelessness and finding housing for these people should be up to the churches, not the government. He suggested inviting the homeless into your home if you want to help. He said if this is approved, he will hold this Commission personally responsible and move out of Danbury.

Chairman Haddad returned to the meeting at this time. He questioned if the livestream of the meeting was still running. The secretary verified that it is still running.

Attorney Neil Marcus, said he is representing the interests of the E.M. Batista Family Limited Partnership, who owns the adjacent property on the western boundary of the hotel as well as other properties throughout the City. He said although he has a lot to say, he will wait until the next meeting since it already is quite late.

Chairman Haddad said they are going to continue this hearing so anyone who is present and did not speak will still have the opportunity to speak at the next meeting. He added that there will be no time limits so everyone will have the chance to have their say.

Mr. Melillo asked as a point of order if Attorney Hollister wanted to speak in rebuttal to the opposition's comments. Attorney Hollister said he would wait until the next meeting to address them.

Mr. Melillo then made a motion to continue the public hearing. Mrs. Hylenski seconded the motion and it was passed unanimously with nine ayes by voice vote.

Chairman Haddad announced that the next meeting will be held on October 26, 2021 and the deadline for submitting letters for that meeting will be October 20, 2021 at 5:00 PM.

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Chairman Haddad said there was no Old Business, no New Business, and nothing under Correspondence or For Reference Only. He asked if there was anything to discuss under Other Matters and there was nothing. He then reiterated that the next regular meeting will be held on October 26, 2021.

At 1:41 AM with no further business to discuss, Mr. Kelly made a motion to adjourn. Mr. Hawley seconded the motion and it was passed unanimously with nine ayes by voice vote.

Respectfully submitted,

JoAnne V. Read  
Planning Assistant