

SB1082 Environment

Public Hearing 3-22-13

An act concerning brownfield redevelopment

Sessions Factory

I ask the legislature to support this bill in an effort to hasten redevelopment of what otherwise would be unusable or underused properties. Cities and towns need to be able to overcome the problems created in the past when little or no environmental regulation existed, and the current regulations which make cleanup unrealistic due to economic costs. Owners stuck with these headaches are not likely to pay property tax and maintain structures that produce no income. In the case of the building I rent from, the owner has told the city numerous times "here take the keys, it's yours".

I ask for your support as a city councilman wanting to see property improved and back on the tax role, as a prospective investor interested in the purchase of one such property and as an assistant to the management company trying to take care of that same building.

Let me take a minute to describe the property. It is the J H Sessions & sons building. Located in Bristol on rt.72 273 Riverside ave. It was built in 1905 and has approx..90,000 sq. ft. on four floors. They produced hinges and hardware for steamer trunks and audio equipment boxes. Their operations covered cutting forming stamping plating and painting metal parts. Because of the plating there is pollution from chromium and acids. Painting waste and solvents leached out from painting.

Oil soaked floors in the stamping and machining areas add to the environmental problems. In spite of these issues the building does serve as a storage facility and there are several building trades contractors on the site. We have had a couple of artist studios move in. Several spring manufacturers and machinists got their start there a few years ago and have since moved to better facilities.

If cleanup were to happen this place could serve as a small business center. Perhaps as an incubator set-up. The building is structurally sound and architecturally pleasing, but suffering from decay and is in need of improvements. New ownership is needed to tackle the problems, and that is only possible with changes to the current system.

The city of Bristol is proceeding with formation of a non-profit to take over the building and other distressed properties through tax foreclosure. The prospect of excessive cleanup costs is a major deterrent to completing the task.

If the city were able to take over the building and secure cleanup funds the building could be saved from further deterioration. New ownership would save a landmark and improve the property. The prospect of once again collecting property taxes is also desirable, along with job creation possibilities. I believe new ownership is the best way to overcome the shortcomings of the existing owners and reverse the spread of blight.

Thank you

Eric Carlson

Bristol City Council



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