



State of Connecticut
GENERAL ASSEMBLY
STATE CAPITOL
HARTFORD, CONNECTICUT 06106-1591

House Bill 5619

**An Act Conveying Certain Parcels of State Land and Requiring a Study of
Certain Real Property**

Testimony of

**Government Administration and Elections Committee
March 14, 2016**

Senator Cassano, Representative Jutila, Senator Gerratana, Representative Alexander, Senator MacLachlan, Representative Smith, and members of the Government Administration and Elections Committee, we write to submit comment for the record regarding Section 6 of House Bill 5619, An Act Conveying Certain Parcels of State Land and Requiring a Study of Certain Real Property. Section 6 conveys to the City of Middletown the Shepherd Home, a building on the southwest corner of the Connecticut Valley Hospital campus, for the purpose of providing permanent supportive housing (PSH), with a preference for homeless veterans. Shepherd Home has been utilized to serve the homeless since 1988, in an ongoing collaboration between DMHAS, DAS, the City of Middletown, and a non-profit provider. The building has been leased to the City, which in turn leased it to the non-profit Mercy Housing and Shelter Corporation. Transitional housing for homeless individuals was provided from 1988 until 2014, at which time the state and federal resources involved were redirected to provide permanent supportive housing, a more cost effective model with better outcomes for those served. This change created an opportunity to redevelop Shepherd Home as permanent supportive housing as well, utilizing a vacant, historic structure and furthering the state and local goal of ending chronic homelessness.

With this as the goal, the City of Middletown, DAS, DMHAS, and the Middlesex County Coalition on Housing and Homelessness (MCCHH) have worked collaboratively since early in 2015 to lay the groundwork for a successful rehabilitation and repurposing of the Home. While structurally sound, any future use of the building will require significant capital expenditures, and Shepherd Home is included on the National Register of Historic Places. Redevelopment as permanent supportive housing allows access to diverse funding streams now being made available for rehabilitation of structures to be used as PSH. Such financing requires that the developer either own or hold a long term lease for the property to be redeveloped, and it was determined that conveyance of the building was necessary to meet this requirement. In anticipation of successful conveyance, on December 9, 2015, the City issued a Request for Proposals seeking applications from developers with expertise in permanent supportive housing and associated funding streams. Three proposals were submitted by the deadline, from very well qualified Connecticut non-profit organizations with substantial development and service provision experience. Those proposals are currently under review, and the City anticipates selecting a developer in the near future.

Conveyance of the Shepherd Home to the City of Middletown and its subsequent transfer or lease for use as permanent supportive housing with a preference for veterans will allow a vacant, historic structure to be used to advance the goal of ending chronic homelessness, both a significant human need and a major policy initiative in Connecticut. Section 6 is the result of a substantial and longstanding collaboration between the City of Middletown, Executive Branch agencies, and non-profit organizations, which provides a strong foundation for eventual success. We urge your support for Section 6 of House Bill 5619.



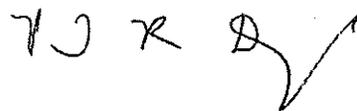
Rep. Matthew Lesser



Rep. Joe Serra



Sen. Dante Bartolomeo



Sen. Paul Doyle