



Pedro E. Segarra
Mayor

SWIFT ACTION ON CAPITOL WEST BUILDING ESSENTIAL

---NEWS AND COMMUNITY RELEASE---

(March 28, 2011) --- With more than 50 business and community people, including the MetroHartford Alliance, Hartford Business Improvement District, and Greater Hartford Transit District, standing behind him, Hartford Mayor Pedro E. Segarra urged swift action today in support of the City taking the Capitol West property by eminent domain so that this signature eyesore can be torn down and the property redeveloped.

“Make no mistake, while some would have you believe that this project is too costly, the cost of inaction would be far greater and far more devastating in the long run,” said Mayor Segarra.

Earlier this month, the Hartford Redevelopment Authority voted 4-1 in favor of the City acquiring the property through eminent domain. The City Council has scheduled a public hearing for April 18; the Mayor urged City Council members to expedite that hearing date in order to move the process forward as quickly as possible. Today’s news conference took place in a parking lot of The Hartford, which also has direct line of site to the blighted Capitol West building. Mayor Segarra thanked The Hartford for its patience and desire to be a partner with the City in order to invest in major quality of life improvements for residents, businesses, and visitors alike.

MetroHartford Alliance President Oz Griebel said, “The MetroHartford Alliance salutes the City and The Hartford in moving towards the acquisition and demolition of the Capitol West building and making the site available for green space and future development. It’s yet another great example of the private sector’s investment in Asylum Hill and its ongoing commitment to vibrant neighborhoods throughout the City that are attractive for residents, employees, businesses, and visitors.”

The Hartford Business Improvement District, which represents private property owners in the Downtown and Asylum Hill neighborhoods, where the Capitol West building is located, was founded in 2007 on the basis of two core beliefs: public safety and cleanliness. The HBID’s Executive Director Mike Zaleski said, “There is no denying the Capitol West building is a public safety hazard that needs to be addressed. And there is no question it is an unkempt mess. The property drags the rest of the neighborhood down.”

Community leaders have been very vocal about revitalizing the Asylum Hill neighborhood. Bernie Michel, the Chairman of the Asylum Hill Neighborhood Association commented on the progress that has been made so far: The Boys and Girls Club of Greater Hartford; Asylum Hill Congregational Church renovations; the Lincoln Culinary Institute; new parking garages for The Aetna; St. Francis Hospital and Medical Center adding a 10-story addition; and The Hartford’s new Data Center. “None of the thousands of people who drive-by on I-84 or enter the neighborhood from Downtown see any of those improvements without first seeing the Capitol West building. So, their opinion is formed not by our progress but by this one derelict structure,” Michel said.

Vicki Shotland, Executive Director for the Greater Hartford Transit District, also commented on the perception issue. “Union Station is a destination for over 700,000 passengers and visitors annually. It is a tremendous embarrassment for those waiting for a bus or train to have Capitol West within their line of site. The building creates a negative image for those not familiar with Downtown Hartford, and that initial perception takes away the good that this city is trying to create.”

This project is one of 60 development projects the City of Hartford is currently pursuing across the City that have been shared with Governor Malloy. The Mayor believes that seeing the Capitol West demolition and redevelopment through to completion will represent a major achievement for the city, region, and state.