

October 3, 2017

Via email

Hoboken City Council President Jennifer Giattino
Hoboken City Council
City Hall
94 Washington Street
Hoboken, New Jersey 07030

Re: Eminent Domain Ordinance

Dear Council President & City Council members:

The ordinance coming before the Council this Wednesday night “authorizing the acquisition by purchase or condemnation of . . . 901 Sinatra Drive . . . owned by Union Dry Dock and Repair Company” is ill-advised and misguided for a number of reasons as follows:

- Eminent domain, the government’s power to take an individual’s private property without their consent, is a drastic action that should be used sparingly and judiciously, and only as a last resort. It is ill-advised to threaten its use at the inception of a complex land transaction such as this. This ordinance could jeopardize the ultimate success of this effort or delay its resolution for a number of years.
- The Mayor has taken this action without consulting with any City Council members or the Council Subcommittee on Community Development North. Nor has she consulted with neighborhood residents or FBW who have a vested interest in making this site part of Hoboken’s waterfront park.
- Turning this important and complicated matter into an open political issue a month before a mayoral election is certainly poor timing at best. On January 1, less than three months away, there will be a new mayor and two or three new City Council members. Since the acquisition of this site could take a number of months, even a number of years, it makes sense for the next administration develop the path forward in how to secure this site as public open space.

- A year ago, FBW retained Andrew Strauss of Andrew Strauss & Associates-Planners of Trenton, New Jersey who has specialized since the 1980s in the acquisition of land for public purposes. We have consulted with him on a regular basis for the past year and acquired considerable knowledge about the Union Dry Dock property and the owner's attempts to sell over the past 16 years. Through Mr. Strauss, we have learned that there are a number of options for securing the site as public open space. Direct acquisition by the City of Hoboken is only one of several potentially available options.

It is critical that the City Council not just table this item, but also resolve to work swiftly to find the most cost-effective way to acquire UDD as part of a master plan to keep Hoboken's shoreline a continuous public park.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ron Hine", written over a horizontal line.

Ron Hine
Executive Director

cc: Mayor Dawn Zimmer