



City of Bristol
Bristol, Connecticut

BUILDING CODE BOARD OF APPEALS

June 3, 2025 at 3:45 PM at
Bristol City Hall
Council Chambers
111 N. Main Street
Bristol, CT 06010

MINUTES DRAFT

1. Call to Order

Chairman John Lodovico called the meeting to order at 3:45 p.m.

2. Report and comments on the on-site review of 9 Divinity Street

The meeting at City Hall was a continuation after an on-site visit at 9 Divinity Street on Monday June 3, 2025 at 3:00 p.m. There was no deliberation at the on-site visit and no votes were taken at 9 Divinity Street.

3. Public Comments

None.

4. Discussion of Bristol Building Code Board of Appeals Commissioners and to take any action necessary

Mr. David Hoopes appeared on behalf of his client, the owner of 9 Divinity Street. He called Mr. Arturo Torres to the podium, the proposed buyer of 9 Divinity Street in Bristol, CT. Mr. Torres spoke about his business in construction, demolition and masonry. He further discussed some of the properties he has rehabbed in the past. He discussed working with an architect named Robert Hurd, who was also at the on-site visit, and discussed the minimum amount needed to rehab this property which was \$800,000. Mr. Torres was asked if he was prepared to spend that amount to rehab the property and he said he had the funds to do so. Mr. Hoopes asked Mr. Torres if he has paid his contractors and Mr. Torres responded "No." Mr. Hoopes acknowledged there is a language barrier. Attorney Steeg, from Corporation Counsel, then asked for some clarification on Mr. Torres' past projects. Attorney Steeg asked if he has paid his contractors and Mr. Torres said he does not owe any money. Mr. Torres reiterated he has the funds to complete the proposed \$800,000 project for Divinity. Attorney Steeg asked if he was able to go through with the closing on 9

Divinity, how long he would anticipate finishing and Mr. Torres said “A couple years.” Attorney Steeg further asked for clarification from Mr. Torres on if he had legal representation and asked if he understood that Mr. Hoopes represents the current owner of 9 Divinity, not him. Attorney Steeg asked why he hasn’t finished his other projects. Mr. Torres stated he does not have the man power right now. Attorney Steeg asked if Mr. Torres needed an interpreter as it appeared there was a language barrier with Mr. Torres. Chairman Lodovico made some comments about the significant resources and timeline needed to repair 9 Divinity Street. Attorney Steeg gave a brief overview of the ownership history of 9 Divinity with the current owner and further discussed that the current owner has decided not to repair this property despite owning it for the last 24 years. This building has been “demolished by neglect.” Now via her appeal, she has found a buyer who is alleged to be capable to do what she could not do.

Mr. Hoopes had Robert Hurd on the phone, the architect who was at the onsite inspection earlier. Mr. Hoopes asked for his opinion on whether or not it is possible to rehab this building. Mr. Hurd stated his conservative estimate of the rehab costs would be. Mr. Hoopes asked him to discuss his experience working with Mr. Torres.

Mr. Hai Dang then came up to the podium and introduced himself as a realtor who is a former developer. He represents both the parties, the seller and the buyer. He shared he’s known the seller (Ms. Castaneda) for over 25 years. He went on to clarify that all the contractors of Mr. Torres have been paid and there is no lack of funds. He shared that he oversaw a project of Mr. Torres involving a restaurant in Hartford.

Attorney Steeg then spoke about how the panel has to decide “What is unreasonable to repair the structure?” He went on to state that the current owner did nothing with it and has left it to the city to demolish. He went on to point out that the proposed buyer has testified to not finishing projects and would like the city and its residents to simply rely on his word. Attorney Steeg stated that they are defending the chief building official’s demolition order.

Mr. Hoopes did rebut some of the points made by Attorney Steeg and stated he had a clean asbestos report.

Chairman John Lodovico initiated a discussion regarding all the testimony thus far and thanked everyone for walking the property and presenting their information. He stated he felt that the negatives are outweighing the positives. He agrees with the chief building official. He has concerns about the timeline, money, etc. Michael Labarre agreed that the negatives outweigh the positives and would like to see it be saved but there is doubt that it will happen.

MOTION: To Uphold the Chief Building’s Demolition Order of 9 Divinity Street.

BY: Michael Labarre

Seconded: William Lacarte

For: All in favor

Against: None

Abstained: None

5. **Adjournment**

Chairman John Lodovico called to adjourn the meeting at 4:23 p.m.

DRAFT