

**Act Number:** 09-011 (Special Act)

**Bill Number:** 5286

**Senate Pages:** 5668, 5701-5703 **4**

**House Pages:** 2300-2307 **8**

**Committee:** Planning and Development: **15**  
110-116, 145-147, 231-233,  
402-403

**Page Total:** **27**

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**CONNECTICUT  
GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
SENATE**

**PROCEEDINGS  
2009**

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mhr  
SENATE

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SENATOR LOONEY:

Yes. Thank you, Mr. President. Moving to Calendar Page 4, Calendar 455, House Bill 5018. Mr. President, I would move to place that item on the Consent Calendar.

THE CHAIR:

There is a motion on the floor to place Calendar Number 455 on the Consent Calendar. Without objection, so ordered, sir.

SENATOR LOONEY:

Thank you, Mr. President. On Calendar Page 5, Calendar 458, House Bill 6447; Mr. President, that item is marked go.

And, Mr. President, moving to Calendar Page 7, Calendar 593, House Bill 5286. Mr. President, would move to place that item on the Consent Calendar.

THE CHAIR:

Motion on the floor to place Calendar Number 593 on the Consent Calendar. Without objection, so ordered, sir.

SENATOR LOONEY:

Thank you, Mr. President. Moving to Calendar Page 8, Calendar 606, House Bill 5883; Mr. President, would move to place that item on the Consent Calendar.

THE CHAIR:

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**CONNECTICUT  
GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
SENATE**

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SENATE

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Mr. Clerk, please call Consent Calendar.

THE CLERK:

Immediate roll call has been ordered in the Senate on the Consent Calendar. Will all Senators please return to the chamber. Immediate roll call has been ordered in the Senate on the Consent Calendar. Will all Senators please return to the chamber.

Mr. President, those items placed on the Second Consent Calendar --

THE CHAIR:

Mr. Clerk, please hold for a second.

I'm trying to hear the Clerk call the Consent Calendar and I'm sure you don't want to miss that vote either, so if I could have your attention and quiet, please.

Mr. Clerk.

THE CLERK:

The items placed on the Second Consent Calendar begin on Senate Agenda 1, substitute for House Bill 6486, substitute for House Bill 6649. Senate Agenda Number 3, House Bill 6394. Today's Calendar, Calendar Page 3, Calendar 317, Senate Bill 586; Calendar Page 4, Calendar 455, House Bill 5018; Calendar Page 7, Calendar Number 593, Substitute House Bill 5286; Calendar Page 8, Calendar 606, substitute

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for House Bill 5883; Calendar Page 9, Calendar 619,  
House Bill 6343; Calendar 626, House Bill 6476;  
Calendar 629, substitute for House Bill 6232; Calendar  
Page 10, Calendar 634, House Bill 6544; Calendar 636,  
substitute for House Bill 6483; Calendar Page 11,  
Calendar 649, substitute for House Bill 6466; Calendar  
Page 13, Calendar 663, substitute for House Bill 5254;  
Calendar Page 15, Calendar 680, substitute for House  
Bill 5821; Calendar Page 16, Calendar 684, House  
Bill 6231; Calendar Page 17, Calendar 689, substitute  
for House Bill 5421; Calendar Page 18, Calendar 695,  
substitute for House Bill 6419; Calendar Page 19,  
Calendar 699, substitute for House Bill 6284; Calendar  
Page 21, Calendar 711, House Bill 5099; Calendar 712,  
substitute for House Bill 6025; Calendar Page 22,  
Calendar 718, substitute for House Bill 5861; Calendar  
Page 23, Calendar 720, substitute for House Bill 5108;  
Calendar Page 32, Calendar 450, House Bill 6233;  
Calendar 467, substitute for Senate Bill 1031; and,  
Calendar Page 35, Calendar 205, substitute for Senate  
Bill 948. Mr. President, that completes the items  
placed on the Second Consent Calendar.

THE CHAIR:

Will you please call the Consent Calendar? The  
machine will be open.

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THE CLERK:

The Senate is now voting by roll call on the Consent Calendar. Will all Senators please return to the chamber. The Senate is now voting by roll call on the Consent Calendar. Will all Senators please return to the chamber.

THE CHAIR:

Have all Senators voted? If all Senators have voted, please check your vote. The machine will be closed. The Clerk will call the tally.

THE CLERK:

Motion is on adoption of Consent Calendar  
Number 2:

Total Number Voting	36
Those voting Yea	36
Those voting Nay	0
Those absent and not voting	0

THE CHAIR:

Consent Calendar Number 2 passes.

Senator Looney.

SENATOR LOONEY:

Thank you, Mr. President. Mr. President, would move for immediate transmittal to the House of Representatives of any items voted on, on Consent Calendar Number 2, requiring additional action by the

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HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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Total Number Voting	139
Necessary for Passage	70
Those voting Yea	139
Those voting Nay	0
Those absent and not voting	12

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

The bill as amended passed.

Will the Clerk please call Calendar Number 204.

CLERK:

On Page 33, Calendar Number 204, Substitute for  
House Bill Number 5286 AN ACT ESTABLISHING THE  
GREENWAY COMMONS IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT IN THE TOWN OF  
SOUTHINGTON. Favorable Report of the Committee on  
Finance, Revenue and Bonding.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Representative Sharkey.

REP. SHARKEY: (88th)

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I move  
acceptance of the Joint Committee's Favorable Report  
and passage of the bill.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

The question is acceptance of the Joint  
Committee's Favorable Report and passage of the bill.  
Will you proceed, Sir?

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REP. SHARKEY: (88th)

Yes, thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, this is a bill that establishes an improvement district within the Town of Southington, and this is a bill that we heard testimony on in the Planning and Development Committee, and we're very impressed with.

The Greenway Commons area of Southington consists almost entirely of a former industrial building and property that has been contaminated environmentally.

It has been lying fallow in the Town of Southington for decades now, fallow, yes, and as a result there's been a blight on the community.

This re-use of the property by a developer is something that's very exciting and something that the Town of Southington has embraced, and what the developer and the Town of Southington have requested is that we establish a special taxing district within the Town of Southington to enable tax increment financing, so that the rest of the property can be cleaned up, converted to a mixed use development that works very much along the lines of the Smart Growth Initiatives I think the Legislature is beginning to embrace as we go forward.

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So, with that, Mr. Speaker, with that support of the bill I would ass that the Clerk has an amendment, LCO Number 6239. I ask that it be called and I be given leave of the Chamber to summarize.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Will the Clerk please call LCO Number 6239, which will be designated House Amendment Schedule "A".

CLERK:

LCO Number 6239, House "A" offered by  
Representative Aresimowicz.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

The Representative seeks leave of the Chamber to summarize the Amendment. Is there objection to summarization? If not, Sir, you may proceed with summarization.

REP. ARESIMOWICZ: (30th)

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, this is one of two amendments that we are going to be proposing to this bill today that makes some technical amendments.

This one, in particular, clarifies and corrects an error in the underlying bill with regard to quorum requirements, and I move its adoption.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

The question is on adoption of House Amendment  
Schedule "A". Will you remark on the Amendment?

Remark on the Amendment?

If not, let me try your minds. All those in  
favor of the Amendment, please signify by saying Aye.

REPRESENTATIVES:

Aye.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Those opposed, Nay. The Ayes have it. The  
Amendment is adopted. Will you remark further on the  
bill as amended? Representative Sharkey.

REP. SHARKEY: (88th)

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Clerk  
also has an amendment, LCO Number 5895. I ask that it  
be called and I be given leave of the Chamber to  
summarize.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Will the Clerk please call LCO Number 5895, which  
will be designated House Amendment Schedule "B".

CLERK:

LCO Number 5895, House "B", offered by  
Representative Aresimowicz.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

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The Representative seeks leave of the Chamber on summarization. Is there objection to summarization? If not, Representative Sharkey, you may proceed with summarization.

REP. SHARKEY: (88th)

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, this is the second of the two technical amendments that we are offering to this bill. This one is Line 5 and it just includes a reference to the General Statutes that are necessary to establish those taxing districts.

I move its adoption.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

The question is on adoption of House Amendment Schedule "B". Will you remark further on House Amendment Schedule "B".

If not, let me try your minds. All those in favor please signify by saying Aye.

REPRESENTATIVES;

Aye.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

All those opposed, Nay. The Ayes have it. The Amendment is adopted.

Will you remark further on the bill as amended?  
Will you remark further on the bill as amended?

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REP. SHARKEY: (88th)

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, now that the bill has been amended, I would urge my colleagues' support for this bill.

I would also remember that, remind Members of the Chamber that this was actually a bill that was approved by this House and the Senate last year. It was amended with some other provisions, which the Governor ultimately vetoed, but I think the Governor has already indicated her support for this portion of the bill, and for that reason, I think we should all be endorsing it again this year.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Thank you, Representative. Will you remark further on the bill as amended? Representative Aman.

REP. AMAN: (14th)

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I also urge support of this bill. I think it does the concept that the Planning and Development Committee has been urging all year, in that we are looking to develop a brownfield.

It also does one of the things that we're concerned about in mandates, that this bill is

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enabling legislation. It allows the Town of Southington to set up this district. It does not require them to do it.

I think it does solve an age-old problem for them, and I look forward to a very successful project being built in Southington, and therefore urge my colleagues to vote for this. Thank you.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Thank you, Representative Aman. Will you remark further? Representative Zalaski.

REP. ZALASKI: (81st)

Yes, Mr. Speaker. I would like to just thank the Committee for all their work on this bill, and I could speak for the people of Southington and the entire Southington delegation. I want to thank everybody and hope they'll support this bill. Thank you.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Thank you, Representative. Will you remark further on the bill as amended? Will you remark further on the bill as amended?

If not, staff and guests come to the Well of the House. Members take their seats. The machine will be opened.

CLERK:

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The House of Representatives is voting by Roll

Call. Members to the Chamber.

The House is voting by Roll Call. Members to the Chamber, please.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Have all the Members voted? Have all the Members voted? Members please check the board to make sure your votes are properly cast.

If all the Members have voted, the machine will be locked and the Clerk will please take a tally.

The Clerk please announce the tally.

CLERK:

House Bill Number 5286 as amended by House Schedules "A" and "B".

Total Number Voting	139
Necessary for Passage	70
Those voting Yea	139
Those voting Nay	0
Those absent and not voting	12

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

The bill as amended is passed.

Any announcements or introductions?

Representative Ryan.

REP. RYAN: (139th)

**JOINT  
STANDING  
COMMITTEE  
HEARINGS**

**PLANNING AND  
DEVELOPMENT  
PART 1  
1 – 346**

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COMMITTEE

February 18, 2009  
11:00 A.M.

believe we require about 30 copies so that all the members of the committee will have access to your written testimony. Representative Sharkey tells me it is 40 copies. I believe those are the applicable ground rules for this morning's hearing.

And the first person signed up on our agency elected legislator's list is Representative Zeke Zalaski, so we invite him to come forward.

REP. ZALASKI: Good morning, thank you Senator Coleman, Representative Sharkey, members of the Planning and Development Committee, I am State Representative Zeke Zalaski from the 81st District in Southington. This is the first time I've come and spoke to your committee and I appreciate you having me here today.

I just wanted to speak briefly on HB 5286, an act establishing the Greenway Commons Improvement District in the Town of Southington. I wanted to explain how important it is to the Town of Southington. It is at no cost to the state. The bill did pass last year but had two attachments on the floor of the house and the governor chose to veto it. I was told by the governor's staff that it wasn't vetoed because of our piece of the bill but because of the other two pieces.

I'd like to also bring up the economic development coordinator from Southington, he can speak a little more on the -- you know, on exactly what we're going to do with the Greenway Commons, if you wouldn't mind. His name is Lou Perillo.

SENATOR COLEMAN: We don't mind. As part of the

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ground rules, I should have mentioned that we do encourage group testimony at this public hearing, so those of you who are perhaps here together and would like to speak on the same bill or bills, we do encourage you to come forward as a group.

Good morning, sir.

LOUIS PERILLO: Good morning, Senator Coleman, Representative Sharkey, members of the committee, my name is Louis Perillo and I'm the Town of Southington economic development coordinator. We consider the HB 5286, the establishment of the Greenway Commons improvement district in the Town of Southington vital to our community. If you ever have the chance to come to downtown Southington, the town has invested over 1.4 million dollars in a revitalization. The revitalization has done tremendously well. We've seen an investment of almost 10 million dollars from private developers coming into the area. The vitality is there. This particular area is 14 acres and we consider it the anchor to our downtown area. It is a former CHECK ideal forging and pecto forging site. It borders a river. It is no longer viable as a heavy industrial site. We'd like to see these Greenway Commons Development in there as an anchor to continue the vitality. As stated by Representative Zalaski, there's no cost to the state.

Why is it important to the state? It represents approximately 1,000 jobs. It's a 70 million dollar investment into this community and the state. They are condominiums, so that means the town as well as the state will enjoy conveyance tax revenues. There is also the multiplier effect

of the 70 million dollars that would be pumped in over a period of time, and given these economic conditions that we're facing, we think it's extremely important and timely. There is sales tax from the construction that will be going on. It also represents some permanent jobs, real estate brokers and agents, appraisers, the banking community as well.

And again, I'm here for any questions you may have.

SENATOR COLEMAN: Thank you for your testimony. Is it Mr. Perillo?

LOUIS PERILLO: Yes.

SENATOR COLEMAN: Can you state your full name and spell your last name for us for the record?

LOUIS PERILLO: Louis A. Perillo the third,  
P-e-r-i-l-l-o, Town of Southington economic  
development coordinator.

SENATOR COLEMAN: Thank you.

Are there any questions either for  
Representative Zalaski or Mr. Perillo?

Senator Fasano.

SENATOR FASANO: Thank you.

Mr. Perillo, how big an area are we talking  
about? Do you have an idea acreagewise?

LOUIS PERILLO: It's 14 acres. It's solely owned  
by the developer. It's in the heart of our  
downtown area what we consider an anchor area.

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SENATOR FASANO: And it's owned by one developer?

LOUIS PERILLO: Yes, sir.

SENATOR FASANO: A private person I'm gathering?

LOUIS PERILLO: Meridian Development Partners who will be testifying.

SENATOR FASANO: And the idea would be to allow this to be developed and then allow taxes and benefit assessments to be assessed upon people who come and develop within that piece; is that my understanding?

LOUIS PERILLO: What this would allow is a special taxing district, what the state has done for five other communities, and it provides increment financing based on the real estate revenues that would be generated. The developer could then go and sell bonds to help assist with the up-front costs of remediation. This site has several buildings on it that are basically beginning to become a blighted situation which is obviously a detriment to our community, especially since there's so much investment that has been pumped in currently.

SENATOR FASANO: Are their current people or current businesses operating on these 14 acres?

LOUIS PERILLO: Not on the 14 acres. The business went out several years ago. It was a former forging site. The jobs were lost. And this is no longer served by rail. It has the Greenway Commons Rails to Trails Program adjacent to it. So it's not really an area that is going to be viable nor conducive to heavy industrial development, so we feel that

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this is the highest and best use for the property and will continue to create jobs and vitality to our area.

SENATOR FASANO: And within the district taxes you talk about, it just wouldn't be benefit assessment taxes or some extra real property taxes. Did you mention also the ability to collect sales tax on goods and services sold in there?

LOUIS PERILLO: Well, a component will be 24,000 square feet, but the sales tax would come from some of the construction equipment that's going to happen. You're talking a 70 million dollar infusement into the Southington area. Southington doesn't benefit from any of the sales tax, but all the multiplying effect of the jobs, the products that will be used in developing 264 condos and 24,000 square feet of retail is substantial.

SENATOR FASANO: So the idea is to create this district, the potential assessments, income, if you would by virtue of creating this taxing district would help to offset the construction costs vis-a-vis bond costs to develop this piece and then ongoing thereafter to keep it, you know, looking nice or whatever.

LOUIS PERILLO: It's my understanding that it offsets the remediation and demolition costs. This is a site that has been operating as a heavy industrial area for approximately 100 years. It has extensive contamination and that's for selling of the bonds to assist with the remediation.

SENATOR FASANO: And I know that the developer is here to talk. Is this a Connecticut Brownfield site?

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LOUIS PERILLO: Yes, it is.

SENATOR FASANO: It is? Okay.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

SENATOR COLEMAN: Thank you, Senator.

Representative Sharkey.

REP. SHARKEY: Just a quick question. To what degree is the proposed development including other existing programs like, for example, the Home Connecticut Program in working with the town, as you are familiar, I think with that program creating the opportunity to with the town, between the developer and the town, kind of working on the adoption of zoning regulations? I know there is a special taxing district you can qualify this way to enable density bonuses for additional housing which bring down the -- and creates more affordable housing. Are there other more creative ways of doing the mixed use development using some other existing programs?

LOUIS PERILLO: Our town created what's called the redevelopment overlay district to allow for greater density in this specific area. I'll allow the developer to speak specifically as to other programs. I believe we're too preliminary at this stage to get into the actual construction and the types of construction, giving the marketability of units at this time. We did stipulate that they would be condos as opposed to apartments. The reason for the stipulation is the resales of a condo and the homeownership benefits versus the opportunity for an investor to take the money away continually. Generally

speaking you're going to have turnover with  
condos which reflects the opportunity for  
conveyance tax to the local community of  
Southington as well as the. State.

SENATOR COLEMAN: Representative Zalaski.

REP. ZALASKI: And just if you would want, we could  
have the contractor or Howard Schlesinger  
could do that piece now, if you would like.  
He's down on the list in public testimony. If  
you want he has -- do you want him to do it  
now? It's up to you.

SENATOR COLEMAN: Why don't we take him in due  
course. If you haven't signed the list, why  
don't we have him sign the list.

REP. ZALASKI: He's on the list.

SENATOR COLEMAN: Okay, good.

Any further questions?

If not, thank you for your testimony,  
Mr. Perillo.

LOUIS PERILLO: Thank you, Senator, I appreciate  
it.

SENATOR COLEMAN: Next on our list is Mayor John  
DeStefano.

MAYOR DESTEFANO: Thank you, Senator Coleman,  
Representative Sharkey, members of the  
committee, it's my first time testifying this  
year, which I'm sure is a delight for all of  
you, but wish you all well in your tasks this  
year. I've submitted written testimony on  
behalf of four bills that have to do with  
local option taxes, and I want to speak to

SB 393  
SB 397  
HB 5524  
HB 5540  
HB 5542

Our next speaker from the public officials is Representative Mazurek followed by Senator Caligiuri.

REP. MAZUREK: Thank you. Good morning, everyone, Chairman Sharkey and representatives on the Planning and Development Committee, I'm here to speak in favor of House Bill 5286, that's on the Southington Greenways Commons Improvement District.

This is truly a shovel-ready project in Southington. It will take a blighted piece of property that is currently not on the tax rolls completely unused and it will return it in a few years to the rolls in Southington and allow for apartments, commercial development. This is a win/win situation. It does not obligate -- this legislation will not obligate the Town of Southington to any financial requirements. It will also not obligate the State of Connecticut to any financial requirements. You might recall that this bill passed last year overwhelmingly in the house and in the senate.

Unfortunately we did have it piggy-backed with a few other similar projects that in fact would have obligated the State of Connecticut, at least in the governor's mind, to expend some funds on those other projects and because of that the governor vetoed the bill. Her office did contact me. She told me she had no objections to the Southington project, it was a great project, but in fact it was the amendments that were attached to it that in fact made her veto the whole bill. She said she looked for a way that she could improve that one project and then veto the others. She said there was no way around it. But

again it's a win/win situation for the town of Southington and the State of Connecticut, and I hope you'll look favorably upon this bill and move it forward through the committee process.

I thank you and I'll answer any questions that I could that you might have.

REP. SHARKEY: Thank you. And we heard testimony earlier from your economic development director in Southington, so I've become more familiar with the project. But are there any questions from other members of the committee? All right.

REP. MAZUREK: Thank you, all.

REP. SHARKEY: Thank you, Representative.

Senator Caligiuri followed by Representative Morin. I would just add before you start, Senator, that we're coming up on our one hour for public officials, so, if we could, we'll have your testimony and Representative Morin's and then after that we'll start going to the public list following that, and we'll start straddling between the two lists.

SENATOR CALIGIURI: Okay. Good morning, Mr. Chairman, ranking member Fasano, members of the committee, for the record my name is Sam Caligiuri, I am a state senator representing the 16th District which comprises Southington, Cheshire, Waterbury and Wolcott, and I'm here this morning to testify briefly on two bills.

And let me start with the one you just heard about because like Representative Mazurek, I'm here to support House Bill 5286, An Act

SB 375

Establishing the Greenway Commons Improvement District in the Town of Southington.

Very quickly because I think you've really heard the essence of it already, the Town of Southington has spent over a million dollars renovating the downtown area, and this project is a purely private investment of dollars in what will be a mixed residential and commercial facility which will end up being the anchor for the downtown area in which the town has already invested over a million dollars. This legislation is simply enabling. It would allow the town to form a special taxing district so that the revenue from that special taxing district can be used to pay the debt service on the bond that will be issued by the developer, not by the town, to finance the project. We rarely have opportunities, it seems to me, where private investors are willing to pony up entirely. That's the case here. And because this is purely enabling and it was passed last year, as you know, I would ask you to please allow it to pass again this year.

The second bill is Senate Bill 375, an act authorizing bonds for the state for loans to municipalities for employee pension funds. Very briefly, this is a companion to a law that was passed by the General Assembly in 2007. Public Act 07-204 created a program run out of the treasurer's office and OPM which enables municipalities to take out low interest loans to eliminate or reduce their unfunded pension liability.

May I wrap up, Mr. Chairman? Thank you. And we passed that and I thank the General Assembly for passing that because over half of Connecticut's municipalities have some level

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SENATOR COLEMAN: Other questions?

Seeing none, thank you, Mr. Flynn.

SIMON FLYNN: Thank you very much.

SENATOR COLEMAN: Howard Schlesinger is next.

HOWARD SCHLESINGER: I have a couple of boards that I was going to put up on the easel, if that's okay.

SENATOR COLEMAN: Yes, you may do that.

HOWARD SCHLESINGER: Senator Coleman, Representative Sharkey just left, I think, and members of the planning and development committee, my name is Howard Schlesinger and I am a partner in Meridian Development Partners. Thank you for giving us the opportunity to speak in favor of House Bill 5286, which is the proposed legislation for the creation of Greenway Commons Improvement District in the Town of Southington. Meridian Development Partners is a New York City based real estate development firm and investment firm that specializes in projects involving environmentally challenged property. Our goal is to transform distressed real estate into economically viable and physically attractive developments that are responsive to the needs of the community that we work in.

The Town of Southington which is depicted on this first map here is similar to many towns throughout the country. It grew up around a factory and that factory provided the jobs for the townspeople and revenue for the local community and the region. When the factory closed a few years ago it left the town with a contaminated Brownfield that has now become

blight at the center of the town. That's the current condition that it is now just at the center of the Town of Southington.

Our development plan is to transform this blighted property into a new and vibrant community. It will include housing, retail, a park, community access to the Quinnipiac River, which didn't exist before, and incorporating the Greenway Rails to Trails which has become a destination for runners, bikers and joggers up and down the trail.

Right now when they pass through Southington there is blight and homeless seeking shelter and abandoned and dangerous buildings. This can be changed into a gateway into Southington with access to the river and we're also incorporating one of the buildings to remain from the original setup which was going to become a museum which will house the history of the town and of this factory. We've received all of our zoning wetlands and site plan approval from the Town of Southington -- I'll speak faster -- and with the town's continued cooperation we seek a special assessment district for the extensive environmental cleanup and for the infrastructure that has to be repaired. This cleanup will also protect one of the town's main wells that supplies water to the township. It will significantly enhance our ability to structure a tax-based financing and proceed quickly with the demolition remediation creating a financial and legal -- preventing any financial and legal liability to the town. The town will not be involved with the bonds. We will be responsible as the district owner for the bonds and there will be no obligations to the township or to the state.

This approach is consistent with similar towns that established this kind of program. The special assessment district that was done in Bridgeport, Stamford, Derby, East Lyme and Georgetown and proving to be successful. This is becoming a common way to get this kind of financing done and this special district has been used throughout the country to accomplish these kind of challenging properties. This district is a discretionary tool that can be used only if we finance the environmental cleanup and related activities and only issue with the agreement of the Town of Southington when we form an interlocal agreement with them.

In the event that the taxing authority special assessment district is ever used, it only affects the developer or the successors of interest. The success of this project will be a success for the Town of Southington, the state and the idea that public and private working together can benefit the community. Thank you for helping with the development of this project.

Any questions?

SENATOR COLEMAN: Thank you for your testimony.

Are there questions from the committee?

Seeing none, thank you very much.

HOWARD SCHLESINGER: Thank you.

SENATOR COLEMAN: Kip Bergstrom.

KIP BERGSTROM: Good afternoon, Senator Coleman, good to see you again.

**JOINT  
STANDING  
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HEARINGS**

**PLANNING AND  
DEVELOPMENT  
PART 2  
347 - 695**

**2009**



Testimony for  
HB 5286 - AN ACT ESTABLISHING THE GREENWAY COMMONS IMPROVEMENT  
DISTRICT IN THE TOWN OF SOUTHLINGTON

By,  
Howard Schlesinger: Meridian Development Partners

Senator Coleman, Representative Sharkey and members of the Planning and Development Committee. My name is Howard Schlesinger and I am a partner in Meridian Development Partners. Thank you for giving us the opportunity to speak in favor of HB 5286, which is proposed legislation providing for the creation of the Greenway Commons Improvement District in the Town of Southington.

Meridian Development Partners is a New York City based real estate investment firm that specializes in projects involving environmentally challenged property. Our goal is to transform distressed real estate into economically viable and physically attractive developments that are responsive to the needs of the communities where they are located.

The Town of Southington, similar to many towns throughout the country, grew around a factory which provided jobs for the townspeople and revenue for the local community and region. When the factory in Southington closed, it left the town with a contaminated brown field that has now become blight in the center of the town. Our development plan is to transform this blighted property into a new, vibrant community. It will include housing, retail, a park with community access to the Quinnipiac River and incorporation of the Greenway Rails to Trails which has become a destination for runners, bikers and strollers, both new and old. Right now, when they pass through Southington, there is blight and homeless seeking refuge in dangerous, abandoned buildings. This can be changed into a gateway to Southington, the river and a renovated pump house that will remain as a museum commemorating the history that existed here for over 100 years.

Meridian has received zoning, wetlands and site plan approval from the Town of Southington for the development of the property. With the town's continued cooperation, Meridian seeks to create a special assessment district to assist in financing the extensive environmental clean-up, infrastructure and related pollution control improvements on the former Ideal Forging site. This cleanup will also protect one of the town's wells that supply the local water system. This district will significantly enhance our ability to structure needed tax-based financing and proceed quickly with demolition and remediation without creating any financial or legal liabilities for the town.

This legislation will allow the district to issue bonds that will not be obligations to the Town of Southington. Debt service on the bonds will be paid from new real estate taxes generated by the project improvements within the district pursuant to a tax sharing agreement between the district and the town. This approach is consistent with the town's established Brownfield Assistance Program. The bonds will also be secured by special benefit assessments on properties within the district.

The legislature has created special assessment districts like this before in Connecticut, including those in Bridgeport, Stamford, Derby, East Lyme and Georgetown. These districts are becoming a common way to help structure and execute tax increment financings that are otherwise difficult to do in Connecticut. Special assessment districts have also been used extensively throughout the country to finance public improvements related to development projects.

This legislation does not require the formation of the district; it simply allows the Town of Southington to create the district when petitioned by the property owner. Further, the district is a discretionary tool that will only be used if it helps finance the environmental clean-up and related activities. District bonds will only be issued with the agreement of the Town of Southington pursuant to an inter-local agreement that permits the district to use a portion of incremental real estate taxes. The inter-local agreement must be formally approved by the Southington Town Council.

The boundaries of the assessment District shall conform to those of the Greenway Commons Development, and will have no impact on property owners outside of the district. In the event that the taxing authority of the special assessment district is ever used, it can only affect Meridian, or our successors in interest.

The success of this project will be a success for the Town of Southington, the State, and the idea that the public and private sector can work together to benefit the community.

Thank you for helping bring the development of Greenway Commons to light.