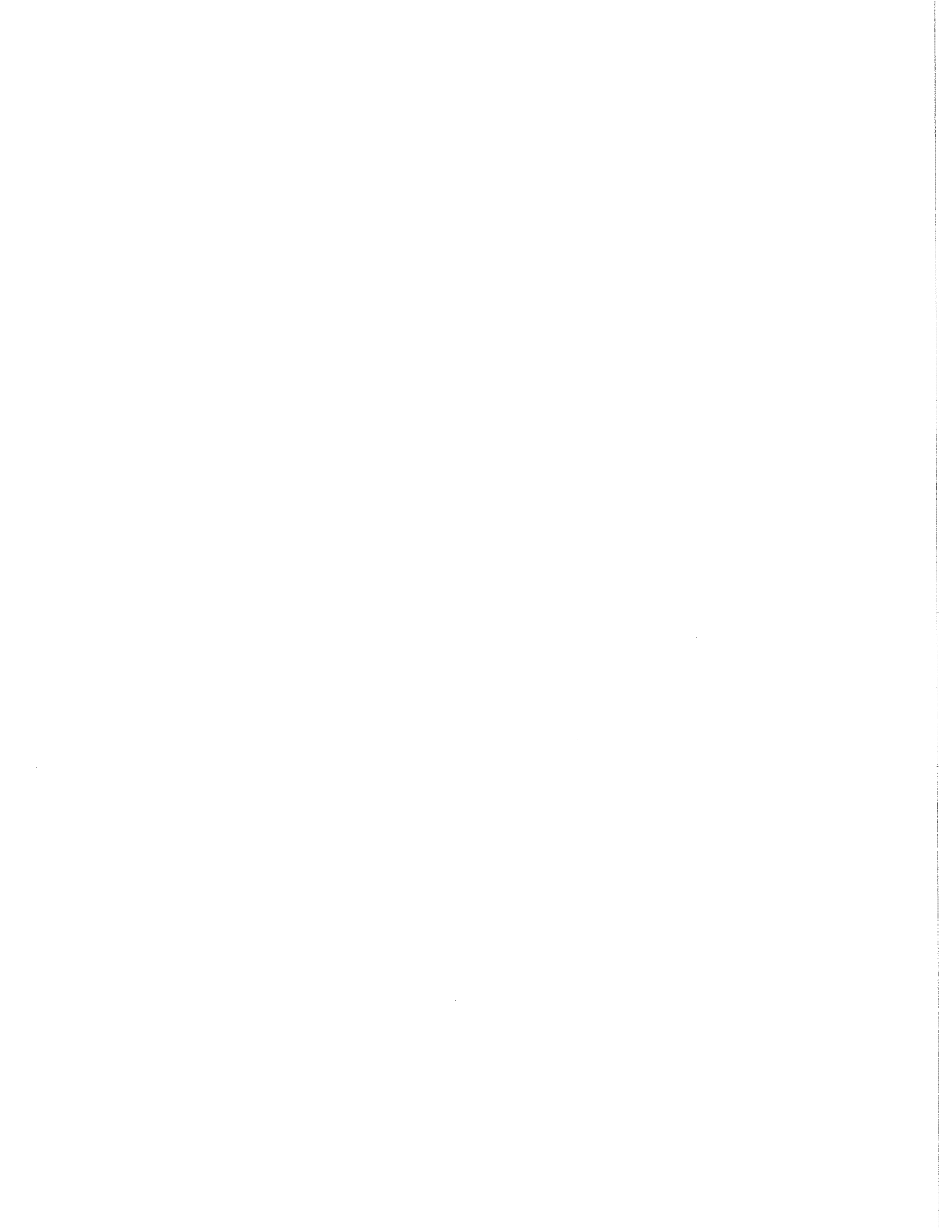


There Are No Angels in the Room

A History of the Woodin Street Fence
Compiled by Steven G. Mednick
For the Legislative Council of the Town of Hamden
31 December 2014



To the residents on both sides of the divide

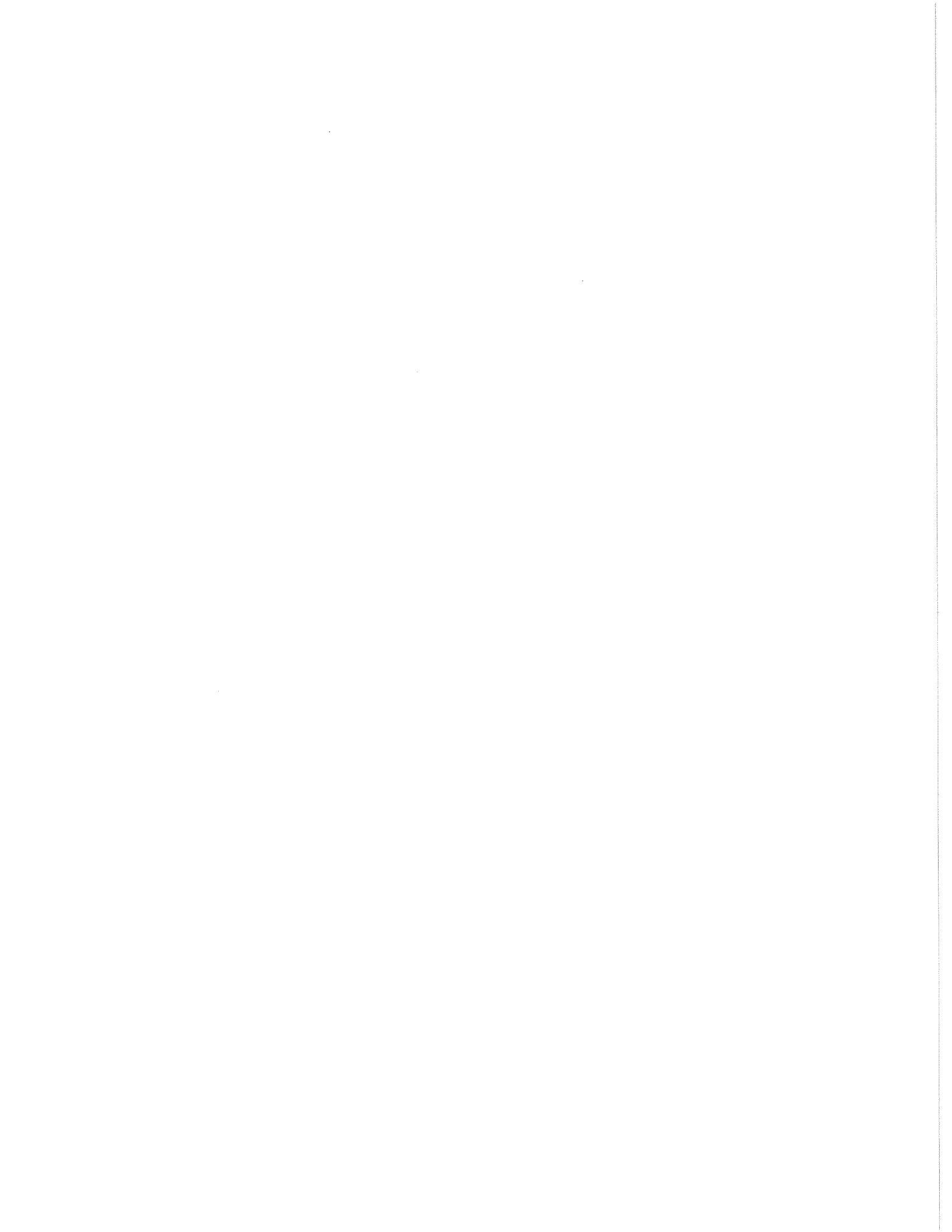


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Introduction

In the spring of 2014 the Hamden Legislative Council asked that the story of “the fence” separating New Haven and Hamden be fully researched and documented. This story covers more than sixty years and takes place along Woodin Street at the border between the two municipalities.

First of all, the “fence” is actually more than one fence. More accurately it is a series of fences. Portions of the fence were erected by the Housing Authority of the City of New Haven (“HANH”), others by private developers and yet others by the town of Hamden. The first fence was built in the early 1950s with the knowledge and understanding of both communities. In the late spring of 2014 the most conspicuous portion of the fence was demolished by HANH. It is between these two events that this story takes place.

This document is not a legal, strategic or tactical plan nor does it provide the groundwork for a call to action on behalf of the Town of Hamden or any of its residents. I was simply asked to write an honest account of what happened during the epoch of the fence.

There have been many contemporary news accounts of the infamous fence. The **New York Times** has described a 12-foot fence:

...(s)eparating Hamden, a working-class suburb, from three public housing projects in the neighboring city of New Haven...Five-inch long silvery, bolted strips link sections of the fence. Its thick metal grating fractures views of neighbors’ homes ten paces away. Added-on pieces of fence drop into vacant spaces among tree roots, screening even squirrels’ holes. The projects are walled off on three sides¹.

More recently, the **Boston Globe** referred to the fence as one that:

...has endured for more than half a century; longer than the DMZ separating North and South Korea. Longer than the barrier dividing Israelis and Palestinians. Longer than the Berlin Wall. Every wall has a story. The story of this one, and the battle to tear it down, shows how complicated race and class have become in America².

¹ Benjamin Mueller, “What Doesn’t Love a Wall”, **The New Journal**, 20 December 2012 (hereinafter, “What Doesn’t Love a Wall”).

² Farah Stockman, “Breaking barriers in New Haven...For six decades, a fence in Connecticut has been a divide of race and class” **Boston Globe**, 21 October 2014 (hereinafter “Breaking barriers in New Haven”).

A local account from the **New Haven Independent** stated:

...For years, the projects have been separated from Hamden by a tall, double-layer chain link fence. That fence has stood as a symbol of closed opportunity to project tenants: They have to take two buses, and sometimes travel hours, to get to jobs or shopping just past the fence across the town border³.

The straightforward charge of the Hamden Legislative Council was to trace this unique tale of two communities and to chronicle this long running episode. The rise and fall of the fence exemplifies the aspirations, hopes, fears and preconceptions of those who live and have lived on each side of the divide. It is a story of economic⁴ and racial demography that necessarily harkens back to the beginning of the story in the late 1940s when a poor farm, pauper's cemetery and piggery sat on the border of the two towns on the southerly street line of Woodin Street.

It is unlikely that this document will please everyone (or anyone for that matter) since just about anyone who reads it will do so with either a preconception of the truth, or amidst the shadows cast by self-interest. Charles Blow recently described his home-town as a place "separated by a shallow ditch and a deep understanding"⁵. Those words apply to this story and to the generations of people who lived on either side of the divide.

Many fought vigorously to build the fence, rebuild the fence and to make it impenetrable. There are others who saw multiple generations live lives of dead-end isolation in a community that descended to a very sorry state. Still others in public life closed their eyes and ignored what stood in plain sight and was allowed to fester for over sixty years. Most anguishing of all is the indisputable fact that had anyone engaged in the simple exercise of due diligence this prolonged epoch of misunderstanding over who maintained legal rights to the land upon which the fences were erected could have been concluded many years ago. It would not have taken anymore than someone looking at the original land transfers by conducting and actually reading a title search to reveal that the law permits a property owner the unequivocal right to take down any fence erected on the property they own.

The text of this report relied very little on personal accounts or recollections, as they tend to be self-serving and often grossly inaccurate.

³ See, Thomas MacMillan, "Will New Haven's Berlin Wall Fall?" **New Haven Independent**, 24 December 2009 (hereinafter, "Will New Haven's Berlin Wall Fall?").

⁴ This was from a 2012 account where the median income on the Hamden side was \$71,358 versus \$12,989 on the New Haven side.

⁵ Charles M. Blow, "Fire Shut Up In My Bones" (2014: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt), p. 7.

Instead this report is based upon the vast archive of records at New Haven City Hall, Hamden Town Hall, the Office of the New Haven City and Town Clerk, the New Haven Housing Authority, New Haven Free Public Library, New Haven Museum and Yale University. Additionally, this report also relies on two outstanding treatises: one prepared by Professor Robert Solomon of the University of Southern California⁶ and the other by Adam Wolkoff, a Columbia student at the time, a University of Connecticut law school graduate and currently a PhD candidate at Rutgers University⁷. I am deeply indebted to both of these scholars and hope that this country lawyer did not cross any lines since, as you will observe, I have borrowed generously from both of them with extensive attribution. These two sources provide an outstanding foundation for the retelling of this story.

Acknowledgments. I also want to acknowledge the cooperation of Mayor Scott Jackson of Hamden and Mayor Toni Harp of New Haven and their administrations. Both Mayors inherited the legacy of the fence and under their administrations this story has come to an end. There were, and probably remain, wounds that will fester. It was not easy getting the cooperation of some of some of the other institutions involved, yet in the end I received access to all the records needed to retrieve and review the facts.

I am also grateful to the residents of the Woodin Street area for their assistance. It is they who will likely read this document most critically. I met with Sherry Roberts, Joan Howell, Christine Burton and Anthony Gambardella at Town Hall and a smaller group in my office. They are dedicated neighbors who, I am certain, will continue to question public authority regarding their neighborhood. Whether one agrees or disagrees with their views, they represent a constituency that has raised questions since the 1950s when the Pine Rock Association first voiced concern over the relationship between the two municipalities and their common border.

I am also mindful of the generations of West Rock residents who lived in a remote and isolated community shut off by their leaders in City Hall and fenced in and cut off from an access to a convenient roadway that, for decades, has remained so close yet so far. The residents of Brookside, Rockview and Ribicoff deserved better. The current residents of West Rock as well as those in

⁶ Robert Solomon, "Building a Segregated City: How We All Worked Together", 16 St. Louis U. Pub. L. Rev. 265 at 291 (hereinafter referred to as "Building a Segregated City' at ___"). Professor Solomon served as Executive Director and as a Commissioner of the New Haven Housing Authority during a period when I served as a Commissioner from 1996-2005.

⁷ Adam Wolkoff, "Creating a Suburban Ghetto: Public Housing at New Haven's West Rock, 1945-1979 (hereinafter referred to as "Creating a Suburban Ghetto' at __"). Adam Wolkoff broke the ground on a great deal of the history of West Rock. This public story benefits enormously from his scholarship.

the Woodin Street area will now be afforded the access necessary to weave together these communities into a neighborhood fabric of two municipalities.

Now that the fence is gone public it is incumbent upon the public authorities on both sides of the municipal boundary to address both the hopes and trepidations of all constituencies.

Finally, I want to give a nod of gratitude to the public officials who commissioned this report. The Town of Hamden is very lucky to have the leadership of Council President James Pascarella and his colleagues on the Legislative Council all of whom, I am certain, had to climb some rocky terrain to move forward with this report. I am especially mindful of the leadership and strong advocacy provided by Council members Jack Kennelly and Michael R. Colaiacovo, Jr., both have represented their constituents vigorously. Some may question the cost and/or the value of this project; however, if you actually read the entire report you will see that litigation and federal review were threatened by HANH as the end-game was played out. When weighed against the extraordinary costs of any ensuing litigation and other regulatory actions history will likely show that the Legislative Council acted wisely in bringing closure to this sixty year period of division between two venerable municipalities.

Regardless of one's point of view, it is important to understand the forces at play during the saga of the fence as both communities now grapple with the real task of governance and providing public services to its residents.

Steven G. Mednick
31 December 2014

Chapter 1 – Beginning at the End

The West Rock Development (“West Rock”) sits on a tract of land that was developed as moderate and low-income housing in the 1950s. The property consisted of Brookside, a state-funded moderate-income housing development, and Rockview, a federally-funded low-income housing development that opened in 1951⁸ and 1952⁹, respectively. The Ribicoff Cottages, subsidized housing for the elderly and disabled, were opened in the summer of 1966 and expanded in the 1970s¹⁰. A portion of West Rock fronts on Woodin Street in the Town of Hamden. Woodin Street is a public right of way that is traceable as far back as 1844¹¹. The “notch” of HANH property is contiguous to Woodin Street and was annexed to the City of New Haven in 1908. It has been owned by the City since some time in the 1880s.

The southerly street line of Woodin Street is also the municipal boundary between New Haven and Hamden as established by §2 of House Bill 208 on April 12, 1939:

That portion of the town line between the city of New Haven and the town of Hamden running along the center line of the highway known as Wooding Street shall be changed to a line coincident with the southerly street line of said Wooding Street as established at the time of the passage of this act¹².

Prior to 1939 the municipal boundary ran along the centerline of Woodin Street. At the time of the legislative enactment the City of New Haven owned the land contiguous to Woodin Street.

A review of the land records of the City and Town of New Haven and the Town of Hamden, title searches and the assessment maps of the two municipalities leads one to a number of objective conclusions.

First, HANH is the fee owner of the property upon which West Rock was developed. The property is bordered by the New Haven-Hamden Town Line

⁸ See, "Governor hails completion of Brookside development," **New Haven Evening Register**, 27 October 27, 1951.

⁹ "First tenants begin moving into Rockview," **New Haven Register**, 29 December 1952.

¹⁰ Besides Brookside and Rockview the old Springside Farm also included the Ribicoff Cottages built in the 1960s and the extension built in the 1970s as well as Oriental Masonic Gardens which were replaced by Westville Manor.

¹¹ See, letter from Jonathan D. Nichols, First American Title Insurance Company dated 12 August 2013 (HANH Archives).

¹² See, §2 House Bill 208, 12 April 1939.

along the southerly street line of Woodin Street¹³. This boundary is confirmed by a review of the land records, assessment maps and title reports prepared by First American Title Insurance Company¹⁴. This is also confirmed by an A-1 survey commissioned in conjunction with this report (“Wescott and Mapes Survey”). The Town Line Survey confirms that all the property to the south of the town line is owned by HANH and that the only land north of the boundary stands in the right of way of Woodin Street¹⁵.

Second, there is no fee owner of any land contiguous to the southerly street line of Woodin Street since there is no land within the Town of Hamden contiguous to the street line. However, within the street line there is a right of way on the Hamden side of the boundary¹⁶. The Hamden Assessment Maps do not show any property, either publicly or privately owned, contiguous to the southerly street line of Woodin Street.

Third, the Wescott and Mapes Survey confirms that there is a 50’ foot right of way from the border with New Haven (the southerly street line) to the property lines across from the West Rock site¹⁷. Accordingly, Woodin Street is a public right of way and the Town of Hamden has no legal right to restrict access to it¹⁸.

¹³ See, the Land Records and Assessment Maps of the City and Town of New Haven and the Town of Hamden.

¹⁴ See, “Commitment for Title Insurance Form” from First American Title Insurance Company dated 30 June 2011.

¹⁵ See, Town Line Survey of Woodin Street between Fawn Ridge Drive and Thorpe Drive New Haven/Hamden Connecticut prepared by Westcott and Mapes, Inc., dated 17 December 2014.

¹⁶ See, Land Records and Assessment Maps of the Town of Hamden

¹⁷ See, Westcott and Mapes Survey.

¹⁸ A report from First American Title Company also described Woodin Street (a/k/a Wooding; a/k/a Warner) as “an old historical street which likely developed as a public right of way without any transfer of fee title to the town. We examined the lands records at certain times, such as the layout of the road, relocation of the town line, acceptance of the road by the town, etc and found no evidence of any transfer of fee title to the Town of Hamden...In such a circumstance, the presumption is that the abutting owner owns the fee title to the centerline of the road, subject to the right of way in favor of the public”; See, letter from First American Title Insurance Company dated 19 September 2013 (See, HANH Archives). The road was shown on maps in 1844, 1868 and 1934 (land on the south side already owned by the City of New Haven and, while the road was apparently adopted in 1934 there were no deeds or takings of fee title associated with the layout of the street). The town line was moved from the center of “Wooding Street”; however, there were no deeds to the roadway associated with the movement of the town line that placed Woodin Street entirely within the town line of Hamden. Woodin Street was, again, accepted in 1976 by the Legislative Council on 5 January 1976/9 February 1976/1 March 1976, as one of several streets “that were merely named and never accepted into the Town Highway System”. Again, there were no deeds or takings found associated with the acceptance. Moreover, a title report from the time of the development of the Ribicoff Cottages confirms the ownership of the property on the “New Haven-Hamden Town Line...the Southern line of Woodin Street”; See, Title Opinion of the Law Office of White Brothers, dated 14 June 1965 (HANH Archives).

Fourth, there is no evidence that the land within the right of way on either Woodin Street or Thorpe Drive was ever deeded from the prior owner¹⁹. In the case of Woodin Street one-half of the street was within the City of New Haven prior to the boundary shift in 1939. There is no evidence that the City of New Haven ever transferred a fee interest to the town of Hamden or any other party²⁰. Based upon this information, it is reasonable to posit that HANH, as the adjoining owner, owns the land beneath that portion of Woodin Street fronting on the property to the centerline, in accordance with the right of way as set forth in Connecticut law. In the case of Thorpe Drive one might argue that fee ownership either belongs to the adjoining owners or remains with the developer who acquired the 3.5 acre parcel in 1952²¹. An additional title search would be required to accurately determine fee ownership on Thorpe Drive²². Such information does not impact the issues addressed in this report.

Finally, any part of the fence erected by the Town of Hamden within the right of way encroaches upon HANH's property and/or its property rights. The Wescott and Mapes Survey does not show the line of the demolished fence; although it does show pieces of the fence that remain elsewhere on the property. The A-1 Survey shows that the remaining "chain link fence meanders back and forth crossing the town line at several points along the easterly portion of the project"²³.

The legal implication of the right of way is: HANH has a *right of legal access* from its land to that portion of Woodin Street that adjoins its property. In other words, it has the right to make improvements within the right of way so long as those improvements do not permanently interfere with public travel along the public highway. Under common law a public highway creates no interests in fee and, thus, abutting landowners are presumed, if there is no

¹⁹ See, Memorandum from Marc Shaiken dated 1 December 2013 ("Shaiken Memorandum") (HANH Archives).

²⁰ See, fn 18, above.

²¹ See, Shaiken Memorandum. According to the memorandum the property was acquired by the Franklin Construction Company, Inc. from Louis F. Tagliatela in November of 1952, recorded on 18 November 1952 in Volume 324 at Page 142 of the Hamden Land Records. The developer conveyed sixteen subdivision lots between 1953 and 1957 none of the deeds expressly included fee or easement rights to the original owners. The developer did not convey Thorpe Drive to any party. However, Mr. Shaiken did not search the original lot purchasers or their successors. Apparently, Thorpe Drive was accepted into the town's "system" of streets on 29 November 1956. According to Shaiken the minutes of the Board of Selectmen on November 29th refers to the Map by Frederick C. Hahn revised on 26 August 1955 and disclosed "...a tentative approval only, subject to report and recommendation of the Town Engineer".

²² However, Franklin Construction did convey to the town of Hamden a "spite strip" on Thorpe Drive presumably to give Hamden some control over access to the property from that street; See, Volume 326 at Page 87 of the Hamden Land records.

²³ See, Westcott and Mapes Survey Notes 5.B.

evidence to the contrary, to own title to the fee beneath a public highway to the centerline of the road²⁴.

The right of access also encompasses many rights to the owner of property: the right of access from his or her land to that portion of the highway upon which the property has frontage, including the right of “free ingress and egress from the owner’s abutting land to the public highway²⁵”; and, the right to make improvements to the road insofar as such improvements do not interfere with the use of the highway or the public easement for travel²⁶. In short, HANH has a private right of access to Wooden Street that would include, inter alia, the right to make improvements such as the right to construct driveways and a road for access to the property.

The right is not absolute and is thereby subject to the right of a local government to protect the safety and welfare of the public and to guarantee the public’s right of passage along the highway. The exercise of governmental authority, however, must be in accordance with the general statutes and the police powers granted to municipalities by the State of Connecticut. This includes public safety concerns, such as traffic control or other “highway purpose”²⁷. In the case of public safety the opportunity for Hamden to voice those concerns might have been during New Haven’s land use approval process where the city considered the approval of the Planned Development District underlying the development of West Rock²⁸. The failure of the town to raise any concerns upon appeal likely barred Hamden from taking unilateral action to

²⁴ See, **Peck v. Smith**, 1 Conn. 103, 111, 128, 146 (1814); See also, **Luf v. Southbury**, 188 Conn. 336, 341 (1982).

²⁵ See, **Johnson v. Watertown**, 131 Conn. 84, 92 (1944); See also, **Knothe v. Zinzer**, 96 Conn. 709, 713-714 (1921)

²⁶ See, **Double I Limited Partnership v. Planning and Zoning Commission of Glastonbury**, 218 Conn. 65, 74 (1991); See also, **Finch v. Boston & P.R. Co.**, 59 Conn 414, 420 (1890); See also, **Newton v. New York, New Haven & Hartford Railway Co.**, 71 Conn. 420, 426 (1899), **Pendleton v. MacDonald**, 6 Conn Supp. 5 (1938), **Canastota Knife Co. v. Newington Tramway Co.**, 69 Conn. 146 (1897), **Antenucci v. Hartford Roman Catholic Diosan Corp.**, 142 Conn. 349, 356 (1955). See also, C.G.S. §13a-139, which provides abutting property owners the right to improve the land within the untraveled portion of a public highway easement.

²⁷ **Note:** While this is not a defined term in Connecticut, it is hard to reconcile the concern about crime with any legitimate interest of the Town may have in the regulation of its streets. Any legitimate traffic concern would need to assess actual data as opposed to conjecture or anecdotal information. Anyhow, it should be noted that the construction of the fence was not undertaken by the Town of Hamden in any official sense. While residents have clamored for the fence for over 60 years, Hamden did not build the fence with the sole exception of the LOCIP fence in 2005, which fortified a fence that was built by HANH over the years. Hamden’s insistence on maintaining the fence in the face of HANH’s new found clarification of ownership and control might pose problems. Also, any actions beyond the ministerial matters such as curb cuts and the width of street openings might be problematic as well.

²⁸ See, C.G.S. §8-8. Under that statutory scheme Hamden had the right to notice of the land use application, an opportunity to be heard and comment and a right to appeal; see, C.G.S. §8-7d(f).

either interfere with or frustrate the intent of the adopted PDD²⁹. HANH does, however, need to comport with appropriate local regulations such as requirements governing street openings or curb cuts³⁰.

The facts are clear and irrefutable and the law establishes well-understood standards of analysis. What is blurred is how and why this static set of facts was not understood by the City of New Haven, HANH or the Town of Hamden during an odyssey that has lasted over sixty years.

²⁹ See, **Wellwood Columbia v. Hebron**, 295 Conn. 802, 812-814 (2010). The case recognized that landowners abutting a public highway have a private right of access to that highway and interference with that right constitutes an aggrievement permitting the landowner with a cause of action for the harm to its right. Such action might also establish a taking or inverse condemnation in violation of Sec. 11 of the State Constitution and the Fifth Amendment of the United States Constitution, **Wellwood** at 811-813; See also, **Cone v. Waterford**, 158 Conn. 276, 279-280 (1969)

³⁰ See, Hamden Code of Ordinances §96.01-08 (2012); See also, C.G.S. §§8-25 through 8-26 and 13a-71.

Chapter 2 – The New Deal: 1937 Housing Act

A. The 1937 Housing Act and the Creation of the New Haven Housing Authority. In 1937, in the shadow of the New Deal, Congress passed the **Wagner-Steagall Act**³¹, which was designed to “...stimulate a moribund construction industry”³². Support for the housing program was “engendered by the dual crisis in housing and in construction trades employment”³³. The 1937 Act provided for subsidies to be paid from the U.S. government to local public housing agencies to improve living conditions for low-income families. According to Professor Solomon great strides were made in a short period of time: “By the end of 1938, thirty-three states passed enabling legislation and two hundred and twenty-one local authorities were established. New Haven proved particularly adept in securing federal loans”³⁴.

In June of 1938 Mayor John W. Murphy was petitioned by a cross-section of citizens to establish a local housing authority³⁵. On July 11, 1938³⁶ the New Haven Board of Aldermen created HANH as the public housing agency and on July 27th of that year Mayor Murphy appointed a five member Commission³⁷. Within short order HANH proceeded with the large-scale housing developments:

Date	Development	Neighborhood	Units
9/1/40	Elm Haven	Dixwell	487 ³⁸
11/1/41	Quinnipiac Terrace	Fair Haven	248
1/13/42	Farnum Courts	Wooster Square	300 ³⁹

However, with the exception of the West Hills Defense Housing Project in the western part of New Haven⁴⁰ there were no further developments until McConaughy Terrace, in the West Hills area in 1948 (300 units). McConaughy

³¹ United States Housing Act of 1937, Pub. L. No. 75-412, 50 Stat. 888 (1937).

³² See, “Building a Segregated City” at 291.

³³ R. Allen Hays, **The Federal Government and Urban Housing** (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1985, 89, cited by Douglas W. Rae, **City: Urbanism and Its End** (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003), 274 (Hereinafter, “City: Urbanism and Its End” at __).

³⁴ See, “Building a Segregated City” at 291-292.

³⁵ **Annual Report of the Housing Authority of the City of New Haven, 1959-1960**, p. 5. (“1959-1960 HANH Annual Report”)

³⁶ See, Aldermanic Journal 1938.

³⁷ 1959-1960 HANH Annual Report, p. 5.

³⁸ Id., p. 5.

³⁹ **Annual Report of the Housing Authority of the City of New Haven, 1953**, p. 7 (“1953 HANH Annual Report”). In discussing this progress, Professor Solomon cited “Authority Completes Housing Plan Details”, **New Haven Register**, 7 January 1940.

⁴⁰ See, “Building a Segregated City” at 296; citing “West Hills Housing Project to be Formally Opened Nov. 1”, **New Haven Register**, 29 October 1942.

was built utilizing state-guaranteed bonds as part of Connecticut's 1947 moderate-income housing legislation⁴¹.

Following the war, housing shortages remained as war-time workers remained in New Haven, veterans returned home and there was virtually no war-time construction⁴². Post-war inflation also depressed the market⁴³ and thus, without significant financing from the state and federal governments' large-scale public housing could not have been constructed⁴⁴. Nevertheless, the lack of money did not silence the debate or repress housing advocates. In fact, the contrary was true. There were groups advocating the needs of war veterans, such as the New Haven Veterans Council, the Central Labor Council⁴⁵, the Citizens Housing Emergency Committee⁴⁶ and the "housers", unreconstructed New Dealers who advocated for the development of affordable public housing for the poor⁴⁷. In post-war New Haven HANH found that there still wasn't enough subsidized housing in the city⁴⁸.

By way of background it is important to understand the "thrust and parry" between Mayors and HANH over the years. In his outstanding analysis of the development of a "city farm" Adam Wolkoff describes the tension between Mayor Celentano and HANH, a municipal agency "funded largely by the federal government, and thus fiscally independent of the city"⁴⁹. There was also the battle between Mayor Celentano who advocated "low-income housing and was ambivalent about the moderate-rental program⁵⁰ and his political nemesis Richard C. Lee, who, ironically, pressed for "more private building, more ownership housing and consolidation of housing programs within the Housing Authority"⁵¹.

⁴¹ See, "Creating a Suburban Ghetto" at 61; citing correspondence from Mayor William Celentano to CT Governor Chester Bowles, 18 February 1949, William C. Celentano Papers. New Haven Colony Historical Society, New Haven, CT, Box XIX, Folder A-1 (Hereafter referred to as Celentano Papers "Celentano Papers").

⁴² See, "Building a Segregated City" at 298.

⁴³ 1959-1960 HANH Annual Report, p. 6.

⁴⁴ See, "Creating a Suburban Ghetto" at 62.

⁴⁵ Id. at 62-63.

⁴⁶ See, "Building a Segregated City" at 298.

⁴⁷ See resolutions signed by these organizations in Celentano Papers, Box XIX. Folder A-2; and "Vets happy over homes," **The New Britain Herald**, 4 November 1951: "Citizens unit presses plea for action," **New Haven Register**, 4 October 1947.

⁴⁸ Nicholas Medina Mora, "The Town and the City," **The Yale Herald**, 28 September 2012 (hereinafter, "The Town and the City").

⁴⁹ **Note:** This is a circumstance that would repeat itself over the years in New Haven and other jurisdictions throughout Connecticut and the nation; See, "Creating a Suburban Ghetto" at 61.

⁵⁰ Id. at 63.

⁵¹ See, "Building a Segregated City" at 299 citing **New Haven Journal Courier**, 19 October 1949.

As a result of this dynamic Mayor Celentano and HANH forged an alliance of necessity for the obvious reason that HANH "...was the only city agency with access to federal housing subsidies and also because as one of the city's most visible and active agencies it was good at public relations"⁵². On the other hand, HANH needed the Mayor with the power of eminent domain at his disposal⁵³.

B. The Roots of West Rock. In 1948 Mayor Celentano proceeded with plans to take advantage of the state's moderate rental legislation, according to Wolkoff, to avoid criticism from Democrats who could point to successes in other communities⁵⁴." As a result the Mayor asked his Special Committee on Moderate Rental Housing to find sites on which to build more state-financed projects. By January 1948 they identified 100 acres at the city-owned Springside Farm as the best location for a moderate income development and by April of 1948 a proposed transaction was communicated to the Board of Aldermen ⁵⁵ The following excerpt from the description in the Report of the Special Committee on Moderate Rental Property is instructive to understanding the outcome of the story you are reading:

100 acres of land comprising a part of Springside Farm, bordering on Woodin Street.

Thus, from a time prior to the development of West Rock the prospective land transfer "bordered on Woodin Street"⁵⁶. The item passed on June 7, 1948⁵⁷.

The hope was that funding would eventually be found to accommodate the Mayor's desire for low-income units in the state housing mix in January 1949, when Governor Chester Bowles⁵⁸, replaced Governor Shannon⁵⁹. However, in the end the Bowles' bill, adopted on June 8, 1949, enabled the financing of

⁵² New Haven Corporation Counsel George G. DiCenzo to William L. Hadden, Attorney General of Conn.. 4 October 1946, Celentano Papers. Box IX, Folder D; "Lee Abolishes Housing Post of Dimenstein." **New Haven Register**, 17 February 1954; HANH regularly held open houses to advertise their units, and also published photo-filled *Annual Reports* from the late 1930s until the early 1950s to attract support for their mission. See, "Creating a Suburban Ghetto" at 61.

⁵³ *Id.*, at 61.

⁵⁴ *Id.*, at 63.

⁵⁵ See, Journal of the Board of Aldermen of the City of New Haven 1948 ("Aldermanic Journal ____"), pp. 210-225 ("Aldermanic Journal 1948"). B.M. Pettit, executive director HANH to Celentano, 2 January 1948. Celentano Papers, Box XVIII, Folder W-1; "Report. To the Members of the Mayor's Housing Committee," 30 January 1948. Celentano Papers, Box XV, Folder W- I; See, "Creating a Suburban Ghetto" at 63.

⁵⁶ See, Report of the Special Committee on Moderate Rental Housing" dated 9 March 1948, Aldermanic Journal 1948, p. 218.

⁵⁷ See, Aldermanic Journal 1948, p. 306.

⁵⁸ Chester Bowles to Celentano, 8 March 1949, Celentano Papers, Box XIX. Folder A-1.

⁵⁹ James C. Shannon to Celentano. 21 April 1948. Celentano Papers, Box XVIII, Folder W-I.

moderately priced rentals and low-cost homes available for purchase⁶⁰ but did not allocate funds for low-income housing.

The same year Congress adopted the "housing and slum-clearance bill", the Housing Act of 1949 and by August of that year HANH had applied to the Public Housing Administration to reserve a preliminary loan for eight hundred units of low-rent public housing⁶¹. The 1949 Act was hailed by HANH in its annual report: "This legislation stated as its policy the goal of 'a decent home and suitable living environment for every American family'"⁶².

C. Converging Forces. As we see, by the late 1940s there were multiple converging forces which led to the development of land that stretched to the border New Haven and Hamden on the south side of Woodin Street. First of all, Professor Solomon points to the overwhelming need for housing: "By early 1949, a New Haven Housing Authority survey showed a need in the city for 6,952 homes or apartments, approximately 3,000 of which would replace substandard dwellings. Over seventy percent of applications to the Housing Authority were from veterans"⁶³.

Second, the 81st Congress had enacted the Housing Act of 1949⁶⁴, mandating a six-year program to provide over eight hundred thousand new low-rent units across the country, through long-term loans by the Public Housing Administration to local housing authorities⁶⁵. Incidentally the Housing Act was also the impetus for the redevelopment efforts which moved slowly under Mayor Celentano and later accelerated during the energetic "model city" years of the Lee Administration⁶⁶.

Third, early neighborhood redlining resulted in a diversion of mortgage funds from economically and racially diverse working class neighborhoods to more homogenous areas, thereby accelerating urban decay and middle-class flight from cities⁶⁷, which was exacerbated by inexpensive mortgages through

⁶⁰ See, letter from Mayor William Celentano to Governor Chester Bowles, 21 March 1949, Celentano Papers. Box XIX, Folder A-1; Bowles to Celentano, 21 June 1949, Celentano Papers, Box XIX. Folder A- i.

⁶¹ See, "City to seek 800 low rent housing units," **New Haven Register**, 21 August 1949.

⁶² 1959-1960 HANH Annual Report, p. 6.

⁶³ "Building a Segregated City" at 299; citing "Survey Shows 6,952 Homes Needed In City", **New Haven Journal-Courier**, 30 March 1949.

⁶⁴ Pub. L. No 81-171, 63 Stat 413 (1949).

⁶⁵ See, "Building a Segregated City" at 301-302.

⁶⁶ See, Robert A. Dahl, "Who Governs" (Yale University Press, New York and London 1961), p. 116

⁶⁷ See, "City: Urbanism and Its End" at 263-274. Rae cites the most well-known study of the HOLC and its effect on America's urban spatial hierarchy is Kenneth Jackson, *Crabgrass Frontier*. 190-218; Amy Miller. "Redlining and the HOLC," *Journal of Urban History* 29 (2003):

the Federal Housing Administration ("FHA") and the Veterans Administration ("VA") so that a wider range of citizens could afford to purchase new homes in the suburbs⁶⁸.

This convergence resulted in the fact that "many of New Haven's poor and ill-housed citizens turned to City Hall for help, and they expected the mayor to answer their demands⁶⁹." Groups, such as the Citizens' Housing Council of Greater New Haven, Inc., in 1949, issued a challenge: "We are in the midst of a disaster. Not as spectacular as a flood or fire - not as quickly over as an earthquake. But a disaster which strikes at the heart of the American family, and at the heart of the American city."⁷⁰

With the funds from the 1949 Act, HANH expanded the "mid-town" Elm Haven⁷¹ and Farnum developments⁷². The 1949 Act also provided the impetus for the development of a "city farm" that HANH had purchased from the City of New Haven⁷³.

394-420 complicates Jackson's thesis by showing how banks and mortgage brokers used resources other than the HOLC surveys to red-line American cities.

⁶⁸ "Creating a Suburban Ghetto" at 60.

⁶⁹ See, "Citizens unit presses plea for action." **New Haven Register**, 4 October 1947. Also, see letters and memos about the crisis to the Mayor in Celentano Papers, Box IX. Folder D; See also, "Creating a Suburban Ghetto" at 60.

⁷⁰ Citizens' Housing Council of Greater New Haven, Inc.. "WHAT WE HAVE FOUND OUT ABOUT THE NEED FOR LOW-RENT HOUSING" (undated, stamped 30 March 1949). 4, Celentano Papers, Box XIX, Folder A-1.

⁷¹ 1959-1960 HANH Annual Report, p. 6.

⁷² "Building a Segregated City" at 299, citing "Farnam Court and Elm Haven To Be Expanded", **New Haven Register**, 26 November 1949.

⁷³ 1959-1960 HANH Annual Report, p. 6.

Chapter 3 – Springside Farm: Isolated and Beautiful

A. **A Remote Notch of Hilly Swampy Land.** HANH began looking for land outside the center city. The reporter Nicholas Medina Mora tells the story of an army veteran who bought his Hamden home in 1950 at a time when Hamden was a rural suburb of New Haven, twenty minutes outside of the city. “All of this used to be farmland,” the veteran told Mora, standing outside his house and making a broad gesture with his hand⁷⁴. That farmland was Springside Farm, “a notch of hilly, swampy land in the northwestern corner of New Haven, sandwiched between West Rock Ridge State Park and the border with the suburb of Hamden⁷⁵”, or, what Professor Douglas Rae called, “a splendidly rural setting near West Rock”⁷⁶.

The remote site was four miles from the green and had been the locale for a myriad of public institutions. As described by architect Douglas Orr: “This particular area is pretty much isolated with regard to the City of New Haven and probably economically would be more closely related to the Town of Hamden⁷⁷.” Professor Solomon described it thusly:

The location of Brookside at Springside Farm on a sixty-acre, city-owned tract was not raised as an issue. Springside Farm was a bucolic spot near the back of West Rock, which, along with East Rock, are two starkly beautiful sheer cliffs of glacial deposits. East and West Rocks, New Haven's most distinctive geologic formations, quite literally marked the spot where a southern glacier stopped moving and melted. Their beauty can be seen in paintings of the Hudson River School, where the foreground contains open land and farm animals, not real estate development. Springside Farm was as isolated as it was beautiful⁷⁸.

The city acquired 257 acres of the land from Orville Selden on May 4, 1882⁷⁹. At the time the land was located in Hamden although the site that was

⁷⁴ See, “The Town and the City”.

⁷⁵ See, “Creating a Suburban Ghetto” at 65.

⁷⁶ See, “Urbanism and Its End” at 139.

⁷⁷ See, Douglas Orr, “Preliminary Study for Development of Moderate Rental Housing: Springside Area,” 3 November 1949 (HANH Archives). See also, “Creating a Suburban Ghetto” at 65.

⁷⁸ See, “Building a Segregated City” at 301.

⁷⁹ See, letter from Frank J. Wrinn, Searcher of Records, Office of the Director of Public Works to Mayor William Celentano, dated 3 March 1950; See, Volume 37, Page 517 of the Hamden Land Records (Celentano Papers, Box XVII, Folder M). Another parcel was purchased from Sylvanus Butler on January 23, 1888, as recorded in Volume 395, Page 449 of the Land Records of the City of New Haven. There were also title records that showed a grant from Orville Selden to Fair Haven Water Company dated 25 March 1862 and recorded 4 April 1862 at Volume 27, Page 549 of the Hamden Land Records. See also, “Creating a Suburban Ghetto” at 65.

to become an almshouse was annexed by New Haven in 1883⁸⁰. The property was used for “poor relief even before the Civil War⁸¹” and an almshouse⁸² and workfarm for the poor and indigent⁸³ was relocated from Martin Street, now known as Edgewood Avenue in New Haven, in either 1886⁸⁴ or 1888⁸⁵.

There is another account attributable to Attorney Bernard Pellegrino which stated that New Haven bought the land in 1893 for the purpose of operating a town farm on land in Hamden for which the City of New Haven would be obligated to pay property taxes to the Town of Hamden. In 1908 the City petitioned the General Assembly to change the City boundary north to Woodin Street, presumably to eliminate the tax obligation⁸⁶.

Although it contained ideal land for suburban development, this area had a far from typical development history⁸⁷. In the 1930s Arnold Dana urged further isolation of the almshouse, combined with upscale development of this area:

The Almshouse (Springside) occupies a choice location for first-class residences. Once again, remove this establishment to some low-priced location beyond the crowded city limits, and develop or put on the market the current 300 acres or thereabouts (1,800 lots). As an exceptionally fine situation for the best class of city homes...this tract, it would seem, should be gradually marketable by some first-class real estate firm at not less than \$3,500 per lot.

⁸⁰ See, Everett G. Hill, “A Modern History of New Haven and Eastern New Haven County” (New York - Chicago: The S.J. Clarke Publishing Company 1918). Although please note that the so-called “notch” remained in Hamden.

⁸¹ See, “Creating a Suburban Ghetto” at 65.

⁸² There is also a small cemetery on Woodin Street (historically, it was Wooding Street). It is located just to the west of Belden Brook, opposite the beginning of Mueller Drive, in Hamden; however is on the New Haven side of the border with Hamden. The gate of the cemetery is badly damaged. The plaque explaining what it is, was removed by HANH during the demolition of the fence in the spring of 2014. The cemetery has no marked graves, and is simply a mown grassy clearing with a single stone cross erected at the back, and one small path leading part of the way in, from the gate. Residents of the Springside Home (which was located nearby), which served as an almshouse for New Haven, were buried there.

⁸³ Celentano Papers, Box XXVII, Folder M; The New Haven Union Company. Institutions and Features of the City of New Haven, Conn, (undated, 1898?), 78. (available at New Haven Colony Historical Society).

⁸⁴ “City: Urbanism and Its End” at 140. See also, Mary Hewitt Mitchell, History of New Haven County, Connecticut. Chicago: Pioneer Historical Publishing, 1930.

⁸⁵ See, Kate Ohno, New Haven Preservation Trust and John Herzan, Connecticut Historical Commission, *Edgewood Park Historic District, New Haven, CT*, nomination document, 1986, National Park Service, National Register of Historic Places, Washington, D.C.

⁸⁶ “Boston Officials Hear Protest by Pine Rock,” *The Hamden Chronicle*, 27 July 1950, p. 1.

⁸⁷ “City: Urbanism and Its End” at 139-140

In other words the property presented "a choice location for first-class residences" instead of a home for the indigent⁸⁸. The proposal went nowhere⁸⁹.

B. Cooperation between New Haven and Hamden? A struggle ensued. Since most of the Springside Farm site remained undeveloped at the end of the 1940s, HANH turned its eyes to West Rock⁹⁰ and asked Mayor Celentano and the Board of Aldermen to "donate" the West Rock tract for the location of a new housing project⁹¹.

The City Plan Commission was reluctant to support the development at the site. In a report dated October 27, 1949 officials concluded⁹²:

- "The site is isolated from the developed portions of the city itself and is geographically more a part of the Town of Hamden than of New Haven".
- "The shape of the Springside area, as defined by an arbitrary town line, has no rhyme or reason and is a deterrent to the proper development of that area and the adjoining area in Hamden⁹³".

It is interesting that the City Plan Department recommended:

...immediate consideration be given to the development of this area in cooperation with the Town of Hamden: (a) to make most effective use of that entire section – now restricted by an arbitrary town line; (b) to work out satisfactory arrangements for streets, utilities and other services needed by both communities in that section; (c) to consider the advisability of an adequate joint-use elementary school to serve Springside area and the growing adjacent area in Hamden; (d) to determine the desirability of neighborhood shopping and community facilities for that entire section⁹⁴.

⁸⁸ "City: Urbanism and Its End" at 140; citing Arnold Guyot Dana, *New Haven's Problems: Whither the City? All Cities?*

⁸⁹ Id., at 140.

⁹⁰ See, "The Town and the City".

⁹¹ See, "Creating a Suburban Ghetto" at 65.

⁹² See, **Report on Proposed Development of Springside Farm New Haven, Conn.**, dated 27 October 1949, p. 1. Celentano Papers, Box XIX. Folder A-2 ("October 1949 Report").

⁹³ **Note:** Both Pieter J. van Heiningen, Superintendent of Parks and Charles E. Downe, City Plan Engineer identified Springside Farms as "probably the best in the entire city for this housing project"; See, Memorandum to Mayor William J. Celentano, Jr. from both Pieter J. van Heiningen, Superintendent of Parks and Charles E. Downe, City Plan Engineer, dated 4 November 1948 (HANH Archives). See also, "Creating a Suburban Ghetto" at 66.

⁹⁴ See, October 1949 Report of the New Haven City Plan Commission (HANH Archives) (Hereinafter "October 1949 Report").

The City Plan report was a prescient piece of work that forecast most of the underlying issues that would follow this development through the last half of the 20th century into the early years of the 21st.

Mr. Wolkoff reported that while city officials “were wary of the fiscal and social costs of the site’s isolation, the vocal demand for new housing and the opposition of the community to projects near existing neighborhoods convinced Celentano that Springside was the best site available for development”⁹⁵. This was in spite of the fact that the city had little connection to the site as was reported by the architect who designed Brookside. Yet the report also strongly suggested a need to comply with the Housing Law of 1949 by accommodating the “future need for housing to serve as living space for families to be relocated during the progress of any slum clearance or urban redevelopment program”⁹⁶.

The Mayor and the City Plan Commission, in 1949, favored building the housing on a different site (the Farnum site) since it was closer to existing city infrastructure as opposed to the isolated Springside Farm location, which was a mile walk from the nearest bus stop in Westville⁹⁷. The determination led to a row between Mayor Celentano, who did not want to give away valuable land and HANH Chair and founder, Dr. C.E.A. Winslow, a professor of public health at Yale University, who steadfastly adhered to the view that the Springside Farm location was the better site⁹⁸. HANH issued its own report to counter the October 1949 City Plan report. This report focused on cost savings of building on a “donated” Springside Farm as opposed to a costly acquisition of the Farnum site and that the project should move forward in order to access State guarantees which would lapse on December 1st⁹⁹.

Throughout the fall of 1949 the Mayor continued to reject the Springside Farm site: “The city must consider the housing problem in relationship to all

⁹⁵ See, “Creating a Suburban Ghetto” at 65.

⁹⁶ See, October 1949 Report.

⁹⁷ See, letter from City Plan Commission to H.M. Pettit (HANH Consultant), dated 7 November 1949, Celentano Papers, Box XIX, Folder A-2. See, “Creating a Suburban Ghetto”, p. 66.

⁹⁸ “Creating a Suburban Ghetto” at 66. According to Wolkoff, “The city would also have to destroy a profitable piggery on the site that consumed about one-fifth of the garbage collected in New Haven”. Appendix to Report of Special Committee on Moderate Rental Housing, 10 April 1948. Celentano Papers. Box, XVIII, Folder W-1. The pigs earned the city \$20,000 in yearly gross income, as five truckloads of garbage were brought for them to grub through per day. “City Piggery at Springside to be Closed,” **New Haven Register**, 28 January 1951.

⁹⁹ See, Report of the Housing Authority to the City of New Haven Regarding Proposed Moderate-Rental Housing Project”, dated 7 November 1949, p. 1 (“HANH Archives”).

other urgently needed municipal improvements," he argued. As Wolkoff remarked; "The proposed units would have to wait¹⁰⁰."

C. The Momentum Shifts. Mr. Wolkoff observed a shift in Mayor Celentano's stance due to at least, three factors¹⁰¹. First, the issue was being advocated by a "...diverse coalition, from newly-arrived African-American munitions workers to white blue-collar veterans. Second, perennial mayoral candidate Richard C. Lee, acting on a tip from the Chair of the State Housing Authority, used Mayor Celentano's inertia as a cudgel reminding voters: "If we had action a year ago, instead of too little and too late just a few weeks ago, these homes could have been erected and occupied by this time and that the City faced the loss of the \$4,871,000 originally allocated for the project." Third, against this political onslaught on indecisiveness was the actual fact that people in "Westville, a streetcar neighborhood in the northwest corner of the city...opposed the construction of more public housing in their backyards"¹⁰².

After the 1949 election the momentum shifted¹⁰³. In the immediate aftermath groups such as the New Haven Veterans Council¹⁰⁴, Central Labor Council of New Haven¹⁰⁵ and the Greater New Haven Industrial Union Council supported "...the use of the Springside site to the N.H. Housing Authority for the erection of 450 modern rental units and 250 low cost rental units"¹⁰⁶. By February of 1950 a resolution regarding the "Immediate Construction of Additional Rental Housing Project and Facilities in New Haven" was introduced

¹⁰⁰ See, letter from Mayor William Celentano to C.E.A. Winslow, 28 November 1949. See, also letters dated 7 and 12 November 1949. Celentano Papers, Box XIX, Folder A-2. See also, "Creating a Suburban Ghetto" at 66.

¹⁰¹ See, "Creating a Suburban Ghetto" at 66-67.

¹⁰² See, Press Release. Richard Lee, 31 October 1949. Celentano Papers, Box XIX, Folder A-2. See also, *Id.*, at 67.

¹⁰³ Wolkoff (at 65) observed: "Nevertheless, Celentano and the Housing Authority had many reasons to support this location for a new project. Lacking the resources and the political will to engage in large scale urban redevelopment, vacant land was their simplest option for locating new housing. Yet tracts of open space large enough to accommodate hundreds of households were a rare commodity in built-over places like New Haven, where 'the central city housing authority can only gaze fondly at greener pastures beyond the city line and then resume scouring city limits for possible sites (citing, M. T. Cooke, Jr. 'Housing Site Problems—a review of the site selection experience of 12 cities since 1949.' *NAHO Journal of Housing* (February 1952): 48). In November 1949, the City Plan Commission studied this problem for the mayor and concluded that only two sites in the city were topographically feasible and affordable for large scale development: the Springside Farm and the level acreage known as the Farnum tract in the West Hills neighborhood" (Citing, Pieter J. van Heiningen (Superintendent of Parks) and Charles E. Downe (City Plan Engineer) to Celentano. November 2, 1948 (HANH Archives).

¹⁰⁴ See, Resolution received by Mayor William Celentano on 30 November 1949. Celentano Papers, Box XIX, Folder A-2; See also, letter from Richard F. Carroll, Sr. Vice President, New Haven Veterans Council, dated 4 January 1950 in the *Aldermanic Journal* 1950, p. 27.

¹⁰⁵ See, Resolution dated 3 December 1949. Celentano Papers, Box XIX, Folder A-2.

¹⁰⁶ See, Celentano Papers, Box XXVII, Folder M.

before the Board of Aldermen¹⁰⁷. The item progressed with the publication and approval of the Majority Favorable Report on February 14th which, again, referenced the fact that the property ran southerly "from South line of Woodin Street along division line of New Haven-Hamden boundary"¹⁰⁸.

The Mayor vetoed the action to transfer the property free of charge on February 24th¹⁰⁹: "...[T]he resolution as passed by the Board of Aldermen gives no consideration to the increased annual cost to the City initially and gives no consideration to the increased annual cost to the City through the proposed elimination of the piggery and the added cost of garbage collection¹¹⁰".

It was clear that something had to be done and by March of 1950 the Mayor and HANH agreed to "friendly condemnation" proceedings over a portion of the Springside tract on which to *build 300 moderately priced units*¹¹¹. This followed the Mayor's February veto of an earlier resolution as it would have transferred the property to HANH without any consideration¹¹². On March 23rd when the Mayor resubmitted the resolution he suggested that "the payment of a fair price (would) be established by the Court"¹¹³. A later letter indicates that the Mayor negotiated a price of \$18,000.00 with HANH¹¹⁴.

On June 23, 1950, the City Plan Commission, citing the angry opposition of Westville residents¹¹⁵, reversed its earlier opinion and supported the location

¹⁰⁷ See, Aldermanic Journal 1950, p. 28.

¹⁰⁸ See, Aldermanic Journal 1950, p. 100.

¹⁰⁹ See, Aldermanic Journal 1950, p. 105. See, "Mayor to Veto Directive for Housing Site: Celentano to Attempt to Sell 30 Acres of Springside Tract to Authority", **New Haven Register**, 15 February 1950. It should be noted that in the newspaper account it was noted that the Springside Farm land "...is located on the south side of Woodin Street along the Hamden town line".

¹¹⁰ See Veto Message dated 24 February 1950. Celentano Papers, Box XXII, Folder D.

¹¹¹ See, an exchange of letters between C.E.A. Winslow to Mayor William Celentano dated 15 and 16 March 1950, respectively. Celentano Papers, Box XXVII, Folder M.

¹¹² See, Celentano Papers, Box XXVII, Folder M.

¹¹³ See, letter from Mayor William Celentano to the Board of Aldermen, dated 23 March 1950. Celentano Papers, Box XXVII, Folder M. See also, See, Aldermanic Journal 1950, p. 141.

¹¹⁴ See, letter from Mayor William Celentano to HANH, dated 30 June 1950. Celentano Papers, Box XXVII, Folder M.; See also, letter from Mayor William Celentano to the Board of Aldermen, 10 July 1950. Celentano Papers. Box XXVII, Folder M.

¹¹⁵ After the City Plan Commission proposed building 100 units of low-income housing on a piece of farmland on Valley Street in June of 1950. The turnaround by the City Plan Commission was based, in part, on "...in view of the protest of residents of the Westville area against construction of low-rent housing on the Parker site". The City Plan Commission decided to add the 100 units to the original 300 planned by HANH. See, letter from Angus M. Fraser, Vice Chair of the City Plan Commission, dated 23 June 1950, Celentano Papers, Box XXVII, Folder M.). See, "Housing Board Gets Site Offer from Aldermen," **New Haven Evening Register**, 2 May 1950; "Fresh Views Asked on Plan for 100 Units," **New Haven Journal Courier**, 2 May 1950; "Valley Street Housing Plans Going Through," **New Haven Journal Courier**, 3 May 1950; "Group to Fight More Housing In Valley St.," **New Haven Evening Register**, 4 May 1950; "Mayor

of the 100 (later 200) units of low-income housing on the Springside land adjacent to the proposed moderate-rental project; thereby, concentrating development to one area...West Rock¹¹⁶. HANH also decided to name the development "Brookside" after Selden and Wilmot Brooks which ran through the property¹¹⁷.

On June 30th another track was being laid when the Mayor called a special meeting of the Board of Aldermen to approve the sale of another section of Springside to the Housing Authority to build those 200 low income apartments, the eventual Rockview development¹¹⁸. This urgent action was based upon contingencies established by the federal government ("time is of the essence"¹¹⁹) and the Mayor agreed to proceed in the same manner as the Brookside transaction with "a price" to be negotiated with HANH.¹²⁰ The property was transferred on June 30, 1950¹²¹.

to Get Valley Street Plea," **New Haven Evening Register**, 5 May 1950; "Appeal Due to McGuire In Housing Row," **New Haven Register**, 7 May 1950; "Group Fighting Housing Plan Calls Meeting: Westville Area Residents Engage Attorney to Oppose Project," **New Haven Evening Register**, 6 June 1950; "Project Protest Meeting Tonight," **New Haven Journal Courier**, 7 June 1950; "Fight Widens on Westville Housing Plan," **New Haven Evening Register**, 8 June 1950; "Westville Group on Protest Named," **New Haven Journal Courier**, 15 June 1950; "Approval Still Awaited Here On Valley St. Plan," **New Haven Journal Courier**, 21 June 1950; "100 Low-rent Units Proposed At Springside," **New Haven Journal Courier**, 24 June 1950; "Reply Awaited on Low-Rental Housing Shift," **New Haven Evening Register**, 25 June 1950; "Westville Section Residents Protest Proposed Housing," **New Haven Journal Courier**, 28 June 1950 and **New Haven Evening Register**, 29 June 1950; "Reply Readied on Switch of Housing Plans: City Hall Has Hopes of Getting Low-Cost Units at Springside Site," **New Haven Register**, 2 July 1950; "Housing Site Seen Shifted to Springside: Authority Willing to Make Change If City Will Make Concessions," **New Haven Evening Register**, 3 July 1950; "\$15,500 Talked For 20 Acres at Springside," **New Haven Journal Courier**, 6 July 1950; "Mayor To Ask Land Sale for Housing Site: Will Urge Aldermen to Approval Disposal of Springside Tract," **New Haven Evening Register**, 6 July 1950.

¹¹⁶ See, letter from the City Plan Commission, dated 23 June 1950 in the Aldermanic Journal 1950, p. 275. This was a long time coming. As recently as April 1950 the City Plan Commission was trying to determine whether "its endorsement" of the friendly condemnation was even necessary; See, "Housing Group Hits New Snag at Springside: Authority Still Requires Approval of City Plan Commission", **New Haven Register**, 24 June 1950

¹¹⁷ See, "Housing Project Named 'Brookside'", **New Haven Register**, 22 June 1950.

¹¹⁸ See, letter from Mayor William Celentano to the Housing Authority, 30 June 1950. Celentano Papers, Box XXVII. Folder M.

¹¹⁹ See, letter from George W. Crawford, HANH Vice Chair to Mayor William Celentano, 1 July 1950. Celentano Papers, Box XXVII, Folder M.

¹²⁰ See, letter from C.E.A. Winslow to Mayor William Celentano. 15 March 1950. Celentano Papers. Box XXVII. Folder M. Despite this cooperation, both sides would spend subsequent months disputing a "fair" price for the Springside land; City Plan Commission. 23 June 1950, Celentano Papers, Box XXVII. Folder M;

¹²¹ See, "Housing Authority Gets Springside," **New Haven Journal Courier**, 1 July 1950; See also, "Authority Gives \$45,840 to City for Springside," **New Haven Register**, 2 July 1950 (**Note:** Presumably the price included both Brookside and Rockview).

D. West Rock Is Approved Yet Divisions Remain. In spite of the Mayor's acquiescence the development of "Brookside" remained controversial. The New Haven Real Estate Board urged the Board of Aldermen not to approve the HANH's proposal, for seven reasons:

- It was too expensive;
- An unwise state investment since it was predicted that "...within a few years, there would be a sizable number of vacancies in the proposed units";
- Units were not planned for low-income families, which had the greatest need;
- Too few families would benefit;
- There was no evident need as only 350 people had indicated an interest in renting the units";
- The basic principle underlying Brookside was unsound since the bulk of New Haven property owners "managing an annual income of \$1500 to \$2000, should not be required to help pay the rent for people whose income was double his"; and
- The destruction of individuality. Large-scale housing uniformity bordered on "machine thinking" and "mass thinking" and was "a swing in the direction of socialism and communism."¹²²

Another account suggests that HANH "...ignored the Regional Planning Authority, which was formed as a mediating agency for such disputes between communities, and gone on with plans to construct the project next to Hamden A and B residential zones"¹²³.

In spite of these objections the City and the Board of Aldermen were moving forward. The Board of Aldermen approved the Springside Farm matter on July 10, 1950 by unanimous consent¹²⁴

E. A Property Description. It is noteworthy to point out that the property description contained in the deed prepared for the Brookside land transfer included the following text on the very first line¹²⁵:

¹²² "Building a Segregated City" at 300-301.

¹²³ "Boston Officials Hear Protest by Pine Rock," **The Hamden Chronicle**, 27 July 1950.

¹²⁴ See, Aldermanic Journal 1950, p. 271.

Beginning at a point on the New Haven - Hamden Town Line distant Southerly 431.28' from the Southerly line of Woodin Street, when measured along said Town Line¹²⁶.

Moreover, the land that was transferred for the federal project was bounded northerly by Woodin Street following the Hamden-New Haven line for over 2,000 feet¹²⁷.

A common theme in this history is the fact that from the outset, in plain sight, there was no doubt that the property owned by HANH was entirely within the City of New Haven.

¹²⁵ **Note:** The legislative action coincided with the "friendly condemnation" and, thus, was conveyed by Judgment in favor of Housing Authority of the City of New Haven recorded 30 June 1950 in Volume 1664 at Page 247 of the Land Records of the Town and City of New Haven. The Second Piece was conveyed on 1 March 1952 in Volume 1692 at Page 109 of the land records. This Third Piece was conveyed on 14 June 1965 at Volume 2277 at Page 407 of the land records (Ribicoff Cottages). The fourth piece was conveyed by the Dwight Building Company to HANH in Volume 2411 at Page 847 (Ribicoff Cottage Extension).

¹²⁶ **Note:** An easement was granted upon petition from the New Haven Water Company for an easement extending from Woodin Street in the Town of Hamden over land of the City of New Haven to the north boundary of the Brookside Housing Project on the Springside site"; see, Aldermanic Journal 1950, p. 381.

¹²⁷ See, letter from Mayor William Celentano to the Housing Authority, 10 July 1950. Celentano Papers, Box XXVII. Folder M.

Chapter 4 – Protests from Pine Rock

A. A Gathering of Irate Citizens. On July 8, 1950, the day before Aldermanic action, Hamden First Selectman Michael J. Whalen wrote to the Board of Aldermen and Mayor Celentano “respectfully” urging the local legislators to

...reconsider the proposed plan of the city of New Haven to locate low-rent housing units at Springside Farm...the problems arising from the location of these units on property adjoining a newly developed residential area in Hamden vitally affects the property owners in that areas. We therefore, request your co-operation in giving due consideration to the interest and protection of these property owners¹²⁸.

At the same time a “gathering of approximately 150 irate citizens” was meeting to protest against the development of the proposed housing development on the twenty-acre parcel at Springside. First Selectman Whalen assigned Hamden’s attorney to represent the interests of the residents. At this juncture the residents were seeking “injunctive action against the city of New Haven” and “demanding” lowering of their tax assessments “by at least two-thirds” if the project was developed¹²⁹. It would appear that from the beginning the Pine Rock area residents were concerned about access to Woodin Street:

At present the only outlet to the development is Woodin Street in Hamden, but (Hamden’s attorney) stated that he had been in communication with an agent of the City Planning Commission who assured him that streets will be developed into the proposed housing area connecting with New Haven streets and that a school is also being planned for construction within the development¹³⁰.

It is intriguing that the Attorney did not say that Woodin Street would be closed to West Rock. To the contrary he declared that Woodin Street would not

¹²⁸ See, letter to New Haven Board of Aldermen and Mayor William C. Celentano from First Selectman Michael J. Whalen, dated 8 July 1950. See, Aldermanic Journal 1950, p. 279. **Note:** It has been interesting to me that Hamden residents did not protest the “piggery” that was located in the notch.

¹²⁹ It is interesting to note that the same Hamden residents who were worried about the loss of property value did not think that the location of a “piggery” on the same property had any impact on their property. See, “Piggery Loss Gives City New Garbage Task,” **New Haven Evening Register**, 13 September 1951. The piggery was in the notch that used to be part of Hamden; see, “Bids Sought by City for Garbage Job,” **New Haven Evening Register**, 4 October 1951.

¹³⁰ See, “Irate Hamden Home Owners Protest Springside Project,” **New Haven Evening Register**, 8 July 1950.

be bearing the entire burden of traffic generated by the development. It was also evident, at the outset, that HANH wanted access to Woodin Street, Mr. Wolfe expressed the: "...desirability for a connecting street to be built through the property....connecting into Woodin Street¹³¹"

The New Haven City Plan Commission confirmed the desirability of access to Woodin Street one month earlier when it stated that "the north end of the subject site is adjacent to Woodin Street which gives access to Dixwell Avenue and a secondary shopping area". Dixwell Avenue was cited as "one of two important secondary shopping areas". The City Plan Commission viewed Woodin Street as "a hard surface road in fair to good condition" that could easily be utilized. More significantly it characterized the Hamden neighborhood as "predominantly park and farm land" with an "area of privately owned one-family homes...about one-half mile east of site and continues to Dixwell Ave." The City Plan Report also stated there were "scattered dwellings in immediate area of site...(and)...there are no principal types of families living in areas surrounding the site"¹³².

When you read the City Plan Report you begin to wonder whose rights were being vindicated on the Hamden side. If the characterization of the Hamden neighborhood was accurate, what neighborhood was actually affected by the development of West Rock? Was Hamden protecting a neighborhood, or the development rights of a developer of an expanding suburban tax base?

Regardless, the Town of Hamden was taking the gloves off. During this time the First Selectman sent telegrams to the members of the Connecticut delegation to the United States Congress¹³³, indicating that "Hamden property owners protest the location of low-rent housing units at Springside Farm in New Haven¹³⁴. They urge your co-operation in withholding any federal grant to the housing authority pending further investigation¹³⁵". The delegation immediately responded as follows:

- United States Senator Brian McMahon replied: "Locale of low-rent housing units is up to local housing authority. I have no power to

¹³¹ See, letter from Robert Wolfe to Mayor William Celentano dated 25 April 1950 (HANH Archives)

¹³² See, City Plan Report dated 23 June 1950 (HANH Archives).

¹³³ See, "Hamden Board To Protest Plan for Springside," **New Haven Journal Courier**, 8 July 1950.

¹³⁴ **Note:** It was later reported that the Brookside units would be larger family units with up to four bedrooms; see, "Larger Units Are Planned for Brookside: Moderate-Rental Project to Have 15 Apartments With 4 Bedrooms Each", **New Haven Register**, 24 July 1950.

¹³⁵ See, Telegrams to United States Senators Brian McMahon and William Benton and United States Representative John A. McGuire dated 8 July 1950 @ 11:59 A.M.

withhold federal funds. Will be happy to look into the matter and write you further when I have all the information¹³⁶”.

- United States Representative John A. McGuire stated: “(the Federal Housing Administrator) informs me that the Springside Farm Development is a moderate income project as distinct from a low rent development and as such, is State financed and receives no federal grants...the moderate income housing program is under complete control of the State...”¹³⁷.

B. New Haven Moves Forward. The Board of Aldermen approved the sale of the Springside property to HANH on July 10, 1950 in spite of the presence of “60 Hamden residents...who protested the use of this land for the construction of 200 low-rent housing units”. Hamden’s town attorney continued to express concerns about the “actual plans for...outlets...on Woodin Street” and also urged the South Central Connecticut regional Zoning Committee to object to the development¹³⁸. Mayor Celentano approved the Aldermanic action on the 11th of July¹³⁹. A newspaper account discussed the issue:

Despite protests originating in Hamden, the aldermen are due to take favorable action, on a proposal to sell 20 acres of Springside land to the Housing Authority...The tract on which the Authority plans to place 200 low-rent units, is near Woodin Street, which forms the boundary between New Haven and Hamden. Hamden residents are raising the same objections to the property as were raised by property owners at West Hills and Westville when the development was slated for Valley Street¹⁴⁰.

Mayor Celentano made it clear that he did not ignore Hamden when he replied to the First Selectman: “this decision was not made hastily. It came about after a great deal of consideration with reference to this matter. You can well understand that we, in the City of New Haven, unlike the towns around us, have had terrific pressure brought upon us for additional housing and since time is of the essence and we have various deadlines to meet, the action, of necessity, after due consideration, was taken at last night’s meeting by unanimous consent”¹⁴¹.

¹³⁶ See, Telegram from Senator McMahon to First Selectman Whalen dated 8 July 1950 at 4:43 P.M.

¹³⁷ See, letter from United States Representative John A. McGuire, dated 11 July 1950.

¹³⁸ See, “City Approves Sale of Land At Springside,” **New Haven Journal Courier**, 11 July 1950.

¹³⁹ See, “33-acre Sale Is Approved by Celentano,” **New Haven Journal Courier**, 12 July 1950.

¹⁴⁰ See, “Major Items Await Action of Aldermen: Charter Committee and Springside Issue Before Board Tonight”, **New Haven Register**, 10 July 1950.

¹⁴¹ See, letter from Mayor William Celentano to First Selectman Whalen, dated 11 July 1950.

C. A Fence “Will Bar Even Pedestrian Traffic”. The protests continued after the Aldermanic approval with Hamden officials. However, New Haven city officials moved to quell the protest:

It was learned meanwhile that the city officials have definite plans to remove many of the objections. No street will be cut from Woodin Street into either the 200 low-rent units or the 300 moderate rental housing quarters to be erected in the same area. All roads in the projects will connect with Wintergreen Avenue, a city street¹⁴². *A fence in the Woodin Street area will bar even pedestrian traffic from the project along Woodin Street*¹⁴³ (emphasis added).

Yet even with the apparent concessions from New Haven, Hamden residents were urged to send their views to John C. Kane, the Regional Federal Housing Director in Boston¹⁴⁴...and send their views in they did! A memorandum prepared for the Connecticut Civil Liberties Union by Professor Andrew Wiese of San Diego State University summarizes the comments of the letter writers:

- “These plans would place the units adjacent to Residence A property”¹⁴⁵;
- “It is possible they will seek an outlet for traffic...on Woodin Street...it will make a main traffic thoroughfare out of Woodin Street, and create a major hazard for people with children”¹⁴⁶;
- “I strongly object to any site plan which would include a street connecting the proposed project with Woodin St...access will not only create danger for our children, but will considerably lower property values, since Woodin Street is at the present time a highly residential street in a suburban area”¹⁴⁷;

¹⁴² The Board of Finance reviewed the Brookside off-site improvements including attaching Wintergreen Avenue to the development; see, “Housing Site Improvements Costs \$110,000: City Funds Would Provide Road, Bridge, Sewers,” **New Haven Journal Courier**, 21 September 1951.

¹⁴³ See, “Hamden Group Pushes Fight to Bar Housing: Continue Protest After Aldermen Sell 33 Acres For Springside Project,” **New Haven Evening Register**, 11 July 1950; See also, “Hamden Group Opposes City Housing Project,” **New Haven Evening Register**, 13 July 1950. It is not clear where counsel obtained his information since the “final working drawings and specifications for Brookside did not include any site instructions regarding the placement of a fence”; See, letter from Bernard E. Loshbough, Administrator of the Connecticut Housing Authority to Robert Wolfe dated, 31 July 1950 (See, HANH Archives).

¹⁴⁴ See, “Hamden Protest Crowd is Small,” **New Haven Journal Courier**, 13 July 1950.

¹⁴⁵ Professor Wiese citing a letter from Reardon to Kane, dated 13 July 1950 (HANH Archives).

¹⁴⁶ Professor Wiese citing a letter from Hopkins to Kane, dated 13 July 1950 (HANH Archives).

¹⁴⁷ Professor Wiese citing a letter from K. Skinner to Kane, dated 13 July 1950 (HANH Archives).

- “The property owners of New Haven, being voters in New Haven will not allow it to be built near their residential districts; and I, one of several hundred property owners of Hamden, can not see why our personal property has to be jeopardized”¹⁴⁸.

In order to keep the pressure on, the Hamden neighbors set up a war chest: “...to carry the matter to the courts if necessary to stop the construction of these low-rent units.”¹⁴⁹

Several weeks later, Senator McMahon reiterated the position conveyed by Congressman McGuire: “...this (Springside Farm Development) is under the province of the local authority”¹⁵⁰. Senator McMahon correspondence included an additional letter from Acting Commissioner Warren Jay Vinton of the Public Housing Administration in Washington. The Acting Commissioner made the following points¹⁵¹:

- “...the basic responsibility for the provision of the low-rent dwelling units is reserved to the various localities”;
- (the federal role) is restricted to the furnishing of technical aid and advice, and assuring compliance with statutory requirements”;
- Site selection “...is a responsibility of the local housing authorities and, is, therefore, a matter of local determination”;
- Final site selection approval by the Public Housing Administrator is “...based on consideration of the land selected in meeting certain requirements such as local zoning, relation to local plans for long range city planning, availability of utilities, transportation, schools, shipping and recreational facilities, and all other facilities necessary to the health, safety, and general welfare of the tenants”¹⁵².

The Acting Commissioner requested that the Boston Field Office to “look into the situation and advise”¹⁵³.

¹⁴⁸ Professor Wiese citing a letter from M. Marrines to Kane, dated 13 July 1950 (HANH Archives).

¹⁴⁹ See, “School Needs Pose Problem at Brookside,” **New Haven Evening Register**, 15 July 1950.

¹⁵⁰ See, letter from U.S. Senator McMahon to First Selectman Whalen, dated 25 July 1950.

¹⁵¹ See, letter from Acting Commissioner of the Public Housing Administration, dated 21 July 1950.

¹⁵² **Note:** It is hard to understand how development met the standards of the Public Housing Administration.

¹⁵³ See, letter from Acting Commissioner of the Public Housing Administration, dated 21 July 1950. A second letter from the Acting Commissioner, dated 25 July 1950, was sent through the auspices of United States Senator Benton on 2 August 1950.

D. Preserving a “wooded area” or No Outlet into Woodin Street. In early July of 1950 residents of the Pine Rock neighborhood hired an attorney Edward Becker to represent the interests of the Pine Rock Civic Association. At a meeting of residents the town’s attorney, Bernard Pellegrino, informed the neighbors that New Haven had been “entirely uncooperative” and, thus, it was necessary to take this issue to the federal government, including the PHA. It is interesting that a report in a Hamden newspaper did not address the issue of Woodin Street access:

...The wave of protest first arose when the New haven Housing Authority announced that it had purchased 33 acres of land on the Springside Farm for a low rental housing project. Hamden property owners in the Michael Street vicinity rejected this move when it was disclosed that the project will come as close as 68 feet to Hamden property in some spots. Several residents, along with Attorney Pellegrino, attended the New Haven Board of Aldermen meeting, but they were given no attention....the Hamden residents are not protesting the construction of the low rental project, but are urging that the building sites be moved in a southerly direction about 300 feet so as to insure a definite ‘wooded area’ will be maintained between the project and their homes”¹⁵⁴.

The reporting was a little fuzzy since the protests seemed focused on a state funded project, Brookside, and the locus of the protest was the PHA in Boston. Attorney Becker must have been aware of the second development, although that is not clear when you read the papers at the time. However, Becker forcefully presented the case for the neighbors. By the end of the month of July he traveled to Boston to meeting with Charles Newell the Assistant Director of Development for Public Housing to advance the case against the development on the Springside Farm site¹⁵⁵.

Becker’s argument was premised on that fact that the protest should not be viewed as a “neighborhood matter” but rather should be considered a town-wide concern since all Hamden taxpayers would “...have to pay for the widening of Woodin Street to accommodate over 2,000 New Haveners and for the construction of larger culverts for two brooks in the vicinity of the project”. Moreover, he argued that the burden would apply disproportionately to other Hamden residents since “the Pine Rock District *will become undesirable to home builders because of the nearness to the low rent project*”¹⁵⁶ (emphasis added).

¹⁵⁴ “Pine Rock Residents Pledge Fight to Block City Housing Project,” **The Hamden Chronicle**, 20 July 1950.

¹⁵⁵ “Boston Officials Hear Protest by Pine Rock,” **The Hamden Chronicle**, 27 July 1950.

¹⁵⁶ *Id.* Becker’s statement seemed to confirm the City Plan Commission characterization of a sparsely populated residential area on the Hamden side of the border as well as speculation that the town was trying to protect developers.

Hamden residents petitioned HANH to close off the “through street entering into Woodin Street”¹⁵⁷.

Becker forged ahead. He informed the Boston officials that the New Haven development would “clear a slum area in the city by constructing the low rent project in the Wooden Street area” on a “wedge shaped plot of land...which juts away from New Haven”¹⁵⁸. On September 28, 1950 Attorney Becker, on behalf of the Pine Rock Civic Association, sent a letter to the First Selectman of Hamden requesting his support to assure that there would not be “an outlet into Woodin Street”¹⁵⁹. The letter stated that the “approved layout of the Springside Farms Project...does not provide and outlet into Woodin Street”¹⁶⁰. Attorney Becker requested the “further co-operation” of the Selectman and its Town Counsel Bernard Pellegrino to “make sure that a street is not cut through and across the town boundary at some future time...I am sure that you are well aware of the reasons why such access would be contrary to the best interests of the people of Hamden as a whole as well as to the people in the immediate area”¹⁶¹.

On October 10, 1950 the Hamden Board of Selectmen petitioned the Chair of the Town Planning and Zoning board to make “...sure that a street is not cut through and across the town boundary at some future time”¹⁶². The request of the Pine Rock Civic Association was passed through without change.

In October of 1950 Senator Benton forwarded a letter from the Federal Housing Commissioner John Taylor Egan which stated the following:

- The Housing Authority “...first selected a site in the Westville area and a considerable amount of preliminary work was done in connection with the proposed site. You may recall that this site was finally abandoned because of the protests made by property owners in that area”.
- “Subsequently the Local Housing Authority selected a new site in the Springside Farm area and this site has been approved by our Boston Field Office”.

¹⁵⁷ See, “95 Families to Be Moved Form Project,” **New Haven Journal Courier**, 2 August 1950; and, “95 Families Are Seen Out In Rent Projects,” **New Haven Evening Register**, 3 August 1950.

¹⁵⁸ “Boston Officials Hear Protest by Pine Rock,” **The Hamden Chronicle**, 27 July 1950.

¹⁵⁹See, letter from Attorney Edward Becker to First Selectman Michael J. Whalen, dated 28 September 1950.

¹⁶⁰ Id.

¹⁶¹ Id.

¹⁶² See, letter from Hamden Board of Selectmen to Attorney John Q. Tilson, Chair of Town Plan and Zoning, 10 October 1950.

- The local authority "...is completing the preliminary planning for the development of a project in the Springside Farm area"¹⁶³.

The Commissioner in his letter stated that the Public Housing Administration and local housing authority "assured the protestants that specific objections in regard to planning matters will be given careful consideration". At the time, the Commissioner indicates that he was "...informed that these assurances have satisfied the majority of the complainants"¹⁶⁴.

Did the Commissioner know something that was not published anywhere? Did the federal government play a role in preventing ingress and egress onto Wooden Street? Did FHA require the building of the fence? As you will see those questions are never really answered. There are several indications that this was the case.

First, Professor Wiese cites a letter from Director Kane of the FHA that states that his office will not approve any plans including street access to Woodin Street¹⁶⁵. Second, there is a passage in the "Development Programs" prepared for the Public Housing Administration which stated that while "no final plan has been formulated....City officials have always indicated their willingness to accept streets and 'cul de sac' streets that conform to their minimum requirement of 40' paved area with turnabouts of 50' radius in 'cul de sac' streets."¹⁶⁶

On the other hand, in the "Development Program" for Rockview, filed three days later, it was noted that "Woodin Street, adjacent to the north end of this project, is a hard surface road in fair to good condition"¹⁶⁷. Moreover, the Board of Aldermen's resolution of support there was a "public highway reasonably adequate for public travel to and from" the property¹⁶⁸.

In spite of the contradictions, it would soon become apparent that some deal or understanding had, in fact, been reached. There is a clear indication of such an accord during the construction process when, about a year later, the Fusco-Amatruda Company requested a temporary access road from Woodin Street to the Brookside site. HANH Director Robert T. Wolfe replied:

¹⁶³ See, letter from Commissioner Egan of the Public Housing Administration from October 1950.

¹⁶⁴ Id.

¹⁶⁵ Professor Wiese citing a letter from Director Kane to HANH, dated 7 August 1950 (HANH Archives).

¹⁶⁶ See, Development Program dated 1 December 1950 (HANH Archives).

¹⁶⁷ Id.

¹⁶⁸ See, Aldermanic Journal 1950, 10 July 1950.

...I do not feel that we can concur with this suggestion because our conversations with representatives of the Town of Hamden have at all times been predicated on the decision made early in the design of the project that a dead-end street would effectively eliminate any traffic from or to the project through Woodin Street¹⁶⁹.

E. A Remote and Isolated Location. The journalist Benjamin Mueller succinctly characterizes the underlying forces at the time of the construction of Brookside and Rockview:

HANH built the West Rock projects in the 50s after more desirable public housing plots were exhausted. In fact, the land on which the projects were built was once Hamden property. On maps, it looks as if someone cut into Hamden's otherwise smooth border with a scalpel and heaped the dirty plot into New Haven. The land had been a pig farm before the projects were built, undesirable from the start. 'New Haven clearly found the most remote corner to put lots of poor people,' Leslie Creane, Hamden's town planner said¹⁷⁰.

It is intriguing, instructive and metaphorical that no one cared enough about this remote and isolated location to even cut the ribbon or place a ceremonial shovel in the ground: "New Haven...is getting a little bit less ceremonial. Work at Brookside...was well begun before anybody noted that there had been no official groundbreaking ceremony"¹⁷¹.

¹⁶⁹ See, letter from Robert T. Wolfe to The Fusco Amatruda Company, dated 4 September 1951 (HANH Archives). It is interesting to note that around the time Brookside was opening the developer of Thorpe Drive deeded to the Town of Hamden what is known as a "spite strip" one foot "along Woodin Street" and 290 feet "along Thorpe Drive" recorded in Volume 326 at page 87 of the Hamden Land Records on 16 January 1987; See report of Marc Shaikin dated 1 December 2013 (HANH Archives).

¹⁷⁰ See, "What Doesn't Love a Wall".

¹⁷¹ See, "Nobody Cared About Having Ceremony," **Sunday Herald**, 22 October 1950; See also, "Ceremony Is Dropped At Brookside Project," **New Haven Evening Register**, 12 October 1950..

Chapter 5 – The Die is Cast: Isolation

A. Housing Is A Vital Concern to Our People. So it was that the West Rock Development was isolated from the City of New Haven as well as spurned by the Town of Hamden. Yet forward West Rock progressed. At the end of 1951 the family of Thomas Cavin was the first of three hundred families welcomed to the moderate income community at Brookside (state funded) by Governor John Lodge and Mayor Celentano: “Housing is a problem of such vital concern to our people”¹⁷². A year later two hundred low income families moved into Rockview (federally funded), in the geographic notch that is surrounded by Hamden. As Mr. Wolkoff observed in the early years West Rock was relatively balanced: manufacturing based jobs; children were predominantly baby boomers; an integrated and diverse racial make-up, approximately, 1/3 of the residents were “non-white”¹⁷³.

Location and geography would serve as credible predictors of the problems that would face West Rock over four generations from the Baby Boom to Generation Z. The lack of proximity to New Haven services and infrastructure either in downtown, Westville or Amity resulted in remoteness of a suburban community without the transportation access enjoyed by most two car families. Proximity to a Hamden neighborhood offered opportunities for infrastructural and social integration which was denied by a closed door policy. Dixwell Avenue was and remains a vibrant arterial road that moves traffic between New Haven and Hamden. However, access to Dixwell Avenue was closed to the people of West Rock. The decision to isolate and restrict the access of West Rock residents was made and would remain in place, rock solid without alteration, for decades.

It is both worthy of note and a matter of irrefutable fact that from the time Mayor Celentano signed the deed to HANH the property was contiguous to Woodin Street. On the basis of my review I could find no deed restriction or any other written agreement that placed any limitations on the use of the land. In addition, when the plans for Brookside were revealed to the public a newspaper account noted:

The developed area is divided approximately in half by the main project street which sweeps gracefully from its connection with Wintergreen Avenue on the southwest to the north end of the property. Further extension of this street system to connect with Woodin Street is possible

¹⁷² See, Governor Hails Completion of Brookside Development”, **New Haven Register**, 27 October 1951.

¹⁷³ See, “Creating a Suburban Ghetto” at 69.

should traffic requirements warrant it in the future¹⁷⁴.

In fact when Brookside opened in October of 1951 there was no mention of restricting access to Woodin Street.

However, by the time Rockview opened in the fall of 1952 things had changed. By that time it was evident that the federally funded low income housing project would not have access to Hamden. Perhaps it was the intercession and pressure of the Pine Rock Civic Association with a sympathetic Federal Housing Agency (the predecessor to HUD) that did the trick¹⁷⁵. All of a sudden the following storylines appeared in the press:

- “Rockview is within a few yards of Woodin Street, Hamden, but there will be no access to that street”¹⁷⁶.
- “Rockview was erected by the Fusco-Amatruda Company on a section of the former Springside farm not far from Brookside, a state built housing project. It is close to Woodin Street, Hamden but there is no access to that highway from the development”¹⁷⁷.

It was evident that a development, already isolated from New Haven would be further isolated, on the Hamden side, from a minor artery that could connect its residents to services and infrastructure¹⁷⁸.

¹⁷⁴ See, “First Units of Brookside Will Be Ready in Spring: Foundations Completed for 34 Buildings at Springside”, **New Haven Evening Register**, 11 February 1951 (“First Units of Brookside”).

¹⁷⁵ **Note:** It appears that the Town of Hamden did take advantage of the extension of sewer lines built by the City of New Haven to service West Rock. At one point it appeared that Hamden rejected the opportunity; however, it does appear that there was a brouhaha regarding a reasonable level of payment from Hamden to New Haven; See, “Finance Board Members Criticize Hamden Sewer Payment of \$12,785,” **New Haven Evening Register**, 13 April 1951; See also, “Finance Board Votes Hamden Sewer Plea,” **New Haven Journal Courier**, 22 September 1950 and “Housing Site Improvements Cost \$110,00: City Fund Would Provide Road, Bridge, Sewers,” **New Haven Journal Courier**, 21 September 1950. Although it seems that there was a see-saw effect, according to the Hamden newspaper: “\$75,000 Saving In Sewer Costs Expected by United with City,” **Hamden Chronicle**, 14 September 1950; “City Approves Sewer Hookup With Hamden,” **Hamden Chronicle**, 28 September 1950; “Town reverses Decision on Sewer Project,” **Hamden Chronicle**, 12 October 1950; and, “Not Worth It?” **Hamden Chronicle**, 19 October 1950.

¹⁷⁶ See, “32 Families Move Dec. 1 To Rockview: Full Occupancy of 202 Low-Rent Units Expected Before Feb. 28,” **New Haven Evening Register**, 22 November 1952.

¹⁷⁷ See, “First Tenants Begin Moving Into Rockview: Seven Families Entering New Project Unit at Springside”, **New Haven Evening Register**, 29 December 1952; See also, “Housing Units in Rockview to Open Sept. 15,” **New Haven Evening Register**, 9 July 1952.

¹⁷⁸ **Note:** Neither of the filed site plans for Brookside or Rockview included any fence on the Hamden line, although the Rockview Plans clearly show that there was no outlet into Hamden. See, “Brookside Moderate Rental Project, Housing Project R-35, Joseph Della Valle and Bradford

B. Present At The Creation. There is no doubt that Pine Rock residents stood in opposition and sought to thwart the project and if not stop the project at the very least it would place restrictions on the mobility and access of those who lived at West Rock. The more pertinent question is what actually occurred to restrict access?

Among the theories, claims and anecdotal stories are the following:

- One account stated that West Rock would open to Woodin Road "should traffic requirements warrant it in the future"¹⁷⁹;
- Another insinuated that a memorandum from the Federal Housing Administration suggested that the federal government would accede to Hamden residents' demands to keep the road closed¹⁸⁰. This position is verified by a memorandum prepared for the CCLU stating that Director Kane of the FHA would not approve any plans including street access to Woodin Street¹⁸¹.
- Yet another report referred to "Notes" about deliberations in 1950 which demonstrated that New Haven helped build the fence, whose purpose was described as "to keep low-income families out of Hamden...Though H.A.N.H. did not begin with these intents," the notes go on to say that "pressure from white neighborhoods in New Haven forced (HANH)...to build a higher-density project in an isolated corner of New Haven, and whites in Hamden forced them to insure that these families would stay there."¹⁸²
- The same journalist, in another publication, intimated that the fence was built by Hamden¹⁸³.

S. Tilney, Architects, 13 July 1950; and, "Low Rent Housing Development Project Connecticut 4-0- 1951 Shilling and Goldberg, Architects.

¹⁷⁹ See, "First Units of Brookside"; **New Haven Evening Register**, 11 February 1951; See also, "First tenants begin moving into Rockview," **New Haven Evening Register**, 29 December 1952.

¹⁸⁰ See, "Building a Segregated City" at 302.

¹⁸¹ Professor Wiese citing a letter from Director Kane to HANH, dated 7 August 1950 (HANH Archives).

¹⁸² See, Benjamin Mueller, "In Connecticut, Breaking a Barrier Between a Suburb and Public Housing", **New York Times**, July 11, 2014 (hereinafter "Breaking a Barrier"). Mueller's piece is a bit convoluted and includes the following passage: "According to the notes, officials of the Housing Authority of New Haven felt responsible for an earlier effort to shove public housing residents to the edge of the city, a decision that hindered access to transportation and jobs. (The parcel of land that housing officials chose had previously served as a pig farm.) To appease their suburban neighbors, New Haven officials helped them in their own residents".

¹⁸³ Benjamin Mueller also incorrectly reported in 2012 that the fence was built by Hamden; see, "What Doesn't Love a Wall". Mueller expanded on these observations as a **New York Times**

- A recent explanation concludes that white storekeepers and clerks of Hamden protested, until the two municipalities struck a deal: a fence would separate the public housing tenants in New Haven from the homeowners of Hamden ¹⁸⁴.
- Another publication indicated that the fence was constructed by New Haven officials when Hamden officials objected in 1950 that increased traffic from the then-proposed projects would be a peril to children in the streets in Wooden Street area which lacked sidewalks and were winding¹⁸⁵.
- An appraiser speculated that there was "...oral agreement was entered into by Robert Wolfe, former Director of the Housing Authority and John DiNicola, former Mayor of the Town of Hamden, that access would not be utilized by the New Haven Housing Authority to Woodin (sic) Street¹⁸⁶.
- A citizen group in Hamden believed there was a 1950 agreement between the Town of Hamden, City of New Haven and the Housing Authority¹⁸⁷.

I am sorry to report that there is no smoking gun, no written agreement, no recorded restrictive covenant or other official record of the building and reinforcement of the fence that we know came to pass. However, as we saw earlier, there is tangible evidence for lodging responsibility for the restricted access and the building of a fence. The first instance of confirmation was the 1951 letter from Robert T. Wolfe which confirmed that an agreement with Hamden prevented the use of Woodin Street as a point of egress and ingress to the West Rock property¹⁸⁸. Evidence of the installation of the fence is found in a letter from Robert T. Wolfe, the Executive Director of HANH¹⁸⁹ to Mayor Richard

reporter a couple of years later: "*Built by Hamden* in the 1950s to keep crime out of an aspiring middle-class neighborhood, the fence choked off access to jobs for public housing residents and obstructed emergency responders. Anger festered in the projects, and unemployment rates surpassed 75 percent. By 1990, New Haven's violent crime rate nearly tripled the national average. Rocks sometimes flew over the fence, once battering a Hamden school bus". See, "Breaking a Barrier" (emphasis added).

¹⁸⁴ See, "Breaking Barriers in New Haven".

¹⁸⁵ "Adams Defends Deterrent," **New Haven Register**, 6 May 1968.

¹⁸⁶ See, letter from William H. Ball to Housing Authority of the City of New Haven, dated 18 June 1970 (HANH Archives).

¹⁸⁷ Letter from West View Civic Association to Mayor DeNicola, 12 June 1986.

¹⁸⁸ See, letter from Robert T. Wolfe to The Fusco Amatruda Company, dated 4 September 1951 (HANH Archives).

¹⁸⁹ Mr. Wolfe was appointed Executive Director in November 1949; see, "Robert T. Wolfe Named Director of Housing Here," **New Haven Evening Register**, 8 November 1949.

C. Lee in 1957:

...the existing fence which was installed by the developer of the Thorpe Drive Project, and half of which was paid for by the Housing Authority, is not the type that will carry an additional strand of mesh to increase its height. The developer used channel posts to carry a 4 foot fence purely to stop encroachment on his private property and a replacement would require a completely new fence¹⁹⁰.

The 1957 letter confirmed that the original fence extended from the "Woodin Street line all along the New Haven-Hamden line and returns Southwesterly for a distance that is indicated on the sketch at 120 feet at which point it stops".

In the 1957 letter Mr. Wolfe also acknowledged an issue with vehicular traffic leaving HANH property. He noted to Mayor Lee that it also appeared that access to Woodin Street was "effectively stopped by the installation by the owner of the house directly over the New Haven-Hamden line at the foot of Thorpe Drive of a wire mesh fence for the length of her property since this is the point at which the traffic occurred. This is not a permanent installation and while the property owner's land is freshly landscaped, I do not believe that the solution here will be cross traffic because of the fear of getting stuck. *I believe that the solution here would be to return a fence Westerly at the point indicated by a dotted line for a distance of approximately 60 feet which would make it impossible for cars to circle the end of it intending to drive to Thorpe Drive since at that point the terrain is marshy and actually a water course in the Spring and Winter. I am planning to install this fence*"¹⁹¹.

The Wolfe correspondence leaves little doubt that HANH was involved in the placement of the fence whether in permitting the developer to build "...a series of short wire fences around the border of the project to discourage residents from using their neighbors' backyards as shortcuts" as suggested by Mr. Wolkoff or on its own. What is evident, based upon news accounts and correspondence is that HANH had a role in addressing the issues raised by the adjoining Hamden neighborhood¹⁹².

C. A Remedy for Isolation? Many years later Professor Solomon pointed to the intentional isolation of West Rock:

Although Brookside and Rockview were within a few feet of Woodin Avenue in the suburb of Hamden, there was no access from Rockview to

¹⁹⁰ See, See, Robert T. Wolfe to Mayor Richard C. Lee. 26 April 1957, Series I, Box 11:294, Richard C. Lee Papers. Yale University Archives, New Haven. CT. Hereafter cited as Lee MSS.

¹⁹¹ Id.

¹⁹² See, "Adams Defends Deterrent to Accidents," **New Haven Register**, 6 May 1968.

Hamden¹⁹³. That additional isolation was intentional, further isolating the residents of Rockview from any sense of greater community. ...To this day, that isolation remains; the only change to the few feet of grass between a street within Rockview and Woodin Avenue is the addition of a metal fence which prevents pedestrians as well as motor vehicles from entering Hamden¹⁹⁴.

In order to remedy the isolation and lack of access, New Haven embarked on a series of projects providing “dedicated” services to West Rock. As far back as 1952 the City supported the development of a shopping center when HANH announced a plan to build a supermarket:

The problem of providing adequate shopping facilities is a new one for the New Haven Housing Authority. Brookside, which is now being occupied and Rockview, in the early construction stage are more than two miles by highway from the nearest retail stores in Westville...The sites of both projects border on Woodin Street, the boundary between New Haven and Hamden. But the City will not cut connecting roads through to Hamden. *While officials have not said so officially it is known that Woodin Street will not be linked with the streets in the project, so that the business of the residents will be diverted, as far as possible, to New Haven businesses*¹⁹⁵ (emphasis added).

Four years later the shopping center was still being discussed by another Mayor, Richard C. Lee:

This area suffers today...because of the past lack of a comprehensive approach to this development...A new school has just been completed, an addition to the Sheriden Junior High School is under construction, and a central playground...to complete these important community facilities, a shopping center is now in the final discussion stages¹⁹⁶.

¹⁹³ See, “First Units at Brookside”, **New Haven Register**, 11 February 1951.

¹⁹⁴ See, “Building a Segregated City” at 302-303.

¹⁹⁵ See, “Shopping Centers Seen For 2 Housing Projects: Authority to Act Soon on General Food Store for Brookside and Rockview Residents – Future School and Church Sites Also Considered”, **New Haven Register**, 29 October 1951 (“Shopping Centers Seen...”)

¹⁹⁶ See, Statement of Mayor Richard C. Lee, 7 March 1955; See, Aldermanic Journal 1955, pp. 128-129. See also, “Lee Endorses Shopping Mart at Brookside: Mayor Hopes to Expedite \$165,000 Unit Near Housing Project,” **New Haven Evening Register**, 18 February 1955; “Shopping Center Gets Green Light,” **New Haven Journal Courier**, 17 March 1955; “Housing Board Seeks Plot For Shopping Center,” **New Haven Journal Courier**, 21 February 1956. The shopping area became a priority for the Mayor since he had “...heard grumbling from aldermen about the lack of a shopping center there, as well as complaints from project residents who have to take a bus to Westville center to do their shopping.” See, Memorandum from Peter F. Villano, Office of the Mayor to Robert T. Wolfe, 16 January 1956 (HANH Archives).

As Mayor Lee's statement suggests, in the interim the Katherine A. Brennan School was constructed in 1954: "A new Springside School at the present site from all points of view is the most desirable solution. Construction costs will be less; no transportation will be required; adequate site area is available at no cost; and the school would become an ideal community school in the center of the neighborhood—a focal point for educational and recreational programs¹⁹⁷."

On the other hand, exacerbating the isolation was the decision to "*dead end*" the development with no access to Woodin Street. The development would be oriented to the central city four miles away rather than the contiguous suburb. The developments roads were only accessible from one access point on the New Haven side. Undoubtedly, as a contemporary reporter speculated, City Hall had practical motivations for pointing the project's tenants towards the city.

While officials have not said so officially, it is known that Woodin Street will not be linked with the streets in the project, so that the business of the residents will be diverted, as far as possible to New Haven businesses.

This road design also quieted Hamden's protests that the project would increase traffic on quiet Woodin Street and lower homeowners' property values.¹⁹⁸

D. A Series of Short Wire Fences. The journalist Benjamin Mueller refers to a "series of short wire fences", a four-foot tall chain link fence intended to keep crime out of an emerging yet aspiring middle-class neighborhood¹⁹⁹. As a result of this barrier, not only could a West Rock tenant not drive to Woodin Street, he or she could not walk to Woodin Street, "without breaking the law because they would have to trespass on their suburban neighbors' lawns"²⁰⁰ or by cutting a hole in the fence.

It is interesting to note Mr. Wolkoff's surprising observation about the early West Rock residents, stating that "(T)his spatial isolation may not have

¹⁹⁷ Charles E. Downe to Celentano, 15 September 1950 (HANH Archives).

¹⁹⁸ "Shopping centers seen" **New Haven Evening Register**, 29 October 1951; Wolkoff seems to refer to the same letters from Woodin Street residents to PHA, described by Professor Wiese written between 13-16 July 1950 (HANH Archives). While Wolkoff and Wiese saw these letters in 2014 I could not find them. Retail was not constructed until June of 1956; See, "Mayor Opens Center," **New Haven Journal Courier**, 21 June 1957; and, "Shopping Center to Rise At Last," **Sunday Herald**, 28 October 1956.

¹⁹⁹ See, "What Doesn't Love a Wall".

²⁰⁰ See, "Creating a Suburban Ghetto" at 71.

seemed so insidious to West Rock's residents". Some of his noteworthy observations²⁰¹:

- The "...cul-de-sac was postwar America's method for subdividing suburban acreage and fences were a normal means of asserting property ownership".
- If there was "...access to a car families had the mobility to travel on any roadway"²⁰².
- "West Rock's tenants were able to enjoy wide vistas, cleaner air, safer streets, and more space for their growing families", similar to many first generation suburbanites.
- "Separated from traditional social networks, the new tenants were open to community organization, and found common space in neighborhood institutions".
- "Isolation may also have served to decrease racial tensions in the integrated project. As a 1955 survey of integration in Connecticut's public housing projects speculated, 'interracial interaction' was more likely to materialize in places removed from the social pressures of the larger community: 'This may result from the white tenant's willingness to interact within a limited social environment where he has assurance that such behavior is socially acceptable and a reluctance to extend such interaction to areas beyond the project where he is not certain of the reaction of other whites to his conduct'²⁰³."

Wolkoff further quotes housing reformer Charles Abrams who pointed to New Haven's integrated public housing as an example of the "complete harmony" interracial housing could produce. In 1952, he was convinced that "*such*

²⁰¹ "Creating a Suburban Ghetto" at 71-72.

²⁰² **Note:** On the contrary, Wolkoff points out that "...for most of the day, when the male breadwinners took the cars to work, West Rock truly was an isolated place circumscribed by geographic boundaries and political decisions. With the only bus line from the project terminating in Westville, residents had little choice (short of trespassing across the lawns of homeowners in Hamden) but to depend on the more distant central city for their needs".

²⁰³ **Note:** Wolkoff (p. 72) cites Henry Stetler, "Racial Integration in Public Housing Projects in Connecticut," (Hartford: Connecticut Commission on Civil Rights, 1955), 43. This survey was based on a bi-racial sampling of 950 tenants from representative projects across the state. Sociologists frequently performed such studies in the 1950s. See Hans B.C. Spiegel, "Tenants' Intergroup Altitudes in a Public Housing Project with Declining White Population," *Phylon* (1960), Vol. 21. No. 1 (1st Qtr. 1960): 30-39 for a survey covering a comparable demographic five years later, and also for an overview of the literature on this subject.

projects may mark the most important gain in the struggle for racial equality since the Civil War."²⁰⁴

Whether "complete harmony" was achieved is not within the scope of this paper; however, in his anecdotal interviews Wolkoff finds what he describes as a "color-blind place"; a "cooperative atmosphere in which residents of both races shared resources and spent time together even outside of the project's borders"; a place where "...there were always enough kids around for a game of baseball or basketball". Wolkoff further documents how a racially balanced and mixed-income project at West Rock thrived by solving its own problems but also faced the burden of constantly integrating new and more diverse residents living in a "public neighborhood" whose visibility threatened neighbors' property values²⁰⁵.

Moreover, as the decade of the 1960s came "HANH's mobility policies, combined with increased housing opportunities in the region, pushed and pulled natural leaders out of the project. By the end of the 1960s, West Rock was becoming a semi-porous membrane: successful tenants moved out, but could not come in, and the ones that remained found themselves more politically and socially isolated than before"²⁰⁶.

²⁰⁴ "Creating a Suburban Ghetto" at 72, citing Nathan Straus, ed., *Two-Thirds of a Nation: A Housing Program* (New York: Albert Knopf, 1952), 226.

²⁰⁵ *Id.*, at 69-70 and 72.

²⁰⁶ *Id.*, at 69-70.

Chapter 6 – Petitioning for a Taller Fence

Instead of accepting West Rock's residents as neighbors, Wolkoff concluded that Hamden homeowners wanted to build a more substantial fence to separate them from the HANH development. The stated rationale was to protect the value of their property and fear of the expected²⁰⁷:

Many of them were first time homebuyers who may have expected their modest two- and three-bedroom homes to be a step towards better accommodations in the future. Resale value was essential, so signs of deterioration from the behemoth next door were unacceptable. Adding to their fears was the specter of interracial housing. The residents of Woodin Street did not need the HOLC to know that African-American neighbors would push down property values: at the time, this was self-evident. Living in a mostly white suburb on the outskirts of a city with a proportionally small population of African-Americans (5.4 percent according to the 1950 U.S. Census), they must have further resented the intrusion of 'undesirables' into their backyards.

In the first few years the fence was short enough to climb over. Most public housing tenants back then were white. Many were soldiers returning from the war; in fact, African American who made up about 1/3rd of the tenants mostly worked in munitions factories²⁰⁸.

Hamden residents could substantiate their fears with concrete examples of the trouble that escaped from the project. Wolkoff cites an example from July of 1955 where the owner of a neighboring farm complained to HANH that West Rock children were trespassing through his fields²⁰⁹. Two years later, in April of 1957, a child from Brookside apparently "kicked" a Hamden resident when she refused to return "a ball and a Baseball glove which had been thrown over the fence from the project side"²¹⁰. The source of the complaint focused on the use of a grassy area of West Hills for baseball²¹¹.

²⁰⁷ Wolkoff (at 74) cites the following proposition from Charles Abrams, *Forbidden Neighbors* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1955), 139: "The discrimination of realtors against African-Americans, Jews, and other groups was well known in the 1950s and even supported by many suburbanites who feared 'social deterioration' from the influx of these undesirable neighbors."

²⁰⁸ See, "Breaking Barriers in New Haven".

²⁰⁹ See, "Creating a Suburban Ghetto" at 75.

²¹⁰ See, "Breaking barriers in New Haven"; See also, "Creating a Suburban Ghetto" at 75.

²¹¹ See, letter from Robert T. Wolfe to Mayor Richard C. Lee. 26 April 1957, Lee MSS, Series I, Box 11:294, Richard C. Lee Papers. Yale University Archives, New Haven. CT. See also, "Creating a Suburban Ghetto" at 75.

In the aftermath of these incidents a petition from the residents of Thorpe Drive demanded that HANH erect “a substantial fence of sufficient height...behind the line fence already there”. The petition went on as follows:

In order to discourage thoroughfare from the Brookside project, through our properties, this fence should run from Michael Road, behind the houses whose backs face the project, all the way to Woodin Street, and at a sufficient distance up Woodin Street. The line fence there at present, extending from the first house #31 Thorpe Street to Woodin Street is almost completely demolished and no obstacle whatsoever...We feel it is not necessary to list the nuisances and damage that have already been inflicted upon us, including the *severe bodily injury* to one of our children²¹² (emphasis added).

It should be noted that the “severe bodily injury” was a cut a Hamden child received when participating in a “Stone and bottle throwing contest”²¹³.

At this point HANH balked at altering the fence: “Increasing the fence on the Housing Authority property would involve 420 feet of 10 foot fence at an approximate cost of Twenty-Two Hundred (\$2200.00) Dollars, and frankly this does not appear to be justified”²¹⁴. In a memorandum from Mayor Lee following receipt of the petition he asked Mr. Wolfe: “Will you please take care of this for me?”²¹⁵

While Mayor Lee sought action it was apparent that, even though the barrier served to stop West Rock residents from driving their cars across the grass separating Brookside Drive and Thorpe Drive, trespassing would continue to occur in March 1958 between Woodin Street and its near-intersections with Wilmot Road and Brookside Avenue.²¹⁶ Another example, cited by Wolkoff in May 1958 is a news photograph portraying a Woodin Street resident clearing away litter that blew in from Rockview²¹⁷.

²¹² See, “Creating a Suburban Ghetto” at 75. See also, “General Correspondence”; Petition of residents of Thorpe Drive. April 29, 1957. Lee MSS. Series I. Box 11:294.

²¹³ See, letter from Robert T. Wolfe to Mayor Richard C. Lee. 26 April 1957, Lee MSS, Series I, Box 11:294, Richard C. Lee Papers. Yale University Archives, New Haven. CT.

²¹⁴ Id.

²¹⁵ See, Mayor Richard C. Lee to Robert T. Wolfe, 29 April 1957, Lee MSS, Series I, Box 11:294.

²¹⁶ See, letter from Thomas R. Kelly, maintenance supervisor for HANH, to Frank Cattaneo, Chief of Police, Hamden, March 5, 1958 (HANH Archives). See also, letter from Robert T. Wolfe to Albert C. Demers, Assistant Commissioner of the Public Works Department, Division of Housing dated, 16 July 1959, which included a line item for “installation of 4’ chain link fence with top and bottom rail” (HANH Archives). See also, “Creating a Suburban Ghetto” at 75.

²¹⁷ Id., at 75. “TALK ABOUT LITTERBUGS: Joe Petrosky of Woodin St. has man-sized chore on his hands as he clears away a wire fence by his home which, he says, is frequently littered with loose papers. Petrosky claims the debris blows over from the City of New Haven Rockview Housing Project over the city line from his home.” **Hamden Chronicle**, 1 May 1958. However,

It would appear that a 4' chain link fence with a "top and bottom rail" was requisitioned in 1959²¹⁸. Yet apparently some did not feel enough had been done. Professor Wiese describes a circumstance in 1959 when developers of an adjacent Hamden subdivision suggested building a fence between West Rock and their development seemingly "to prevent any future accidents, which may result from the heavy traffic of automobiles along Woodin Street...We feel that the Housing Authority should protect the safety of the children residing at Rockview...We shall be glad to have such a fence constructed at our expense"²¹⁹. It is not clear what happened to what the Professor described as "a humanitarian gesture".

according to the executive director of HANH, The city of New Haven, with its infrequent trash collection, was probably more culpable for this problem. There is another extreme example of "tenant irresponsibility" supposedly borne out by the story of a two and one-half year old boy from Brookside who drowned, on March 14, 1961, in Selden Brook while playing unsupervised with his four-year-old brother. His mother was shopping and his father was inside taking care of an infant. See, letter from H.M. Orio & Company to Robert T. Wolfe. March 14, 1961 (HANH Archives). It should be noted that six years after the tragedy, in 1967, HANH had requested state funding for another fence on the Brookside property in order to avert future incidents like the drowning of a child in early 1961; See, Correspondence to and from Robert T. Wolfe and James Thomas Sullivan, Assistant Commissioner, Department of Community Affairs, dated 2 August and 7 August 1967, respectively. However, all was not adversarial. Wolkoff (at 75) suggests that these reports should not be viewed as definitive evidence that "...all relations between West Rock and its suburban neighbors were negative." Even the unfortunate woman who had been kicked by a Brookside child admitted that her neighbors in Project Building No. 4 were "cooperative and neighborly."²¹⁷ Moreover, the fact West Rock residents "...commonly crossed their neighbor's lawns to visit to Hamden suggest, if anything, that they had positive connections with families and businesses in the suburb". Instead, these incidents highlight "...an essential problem that the (West Rock community council) had no effective means of solving: that, as tenants of a public housing project, rather than a private development, they were burdened with collective responsibility for the mistakes of a few problem residents.

²¹⁸ See also, letter from Robert T. Wolfe to Albert C. Demers, Assistant Commissioner of the Public Works Department, Division of Housing dated, 16 July 1959, which included a line item for "installation of 4' chain link fence with top and bottom rail". This letter was cited by Wolkoff. I could not locate the letter during my 2014 search (HANH Archives).

²¹⁹ See, letter from Giordano Construction Co. to Robert T. Wolfe, dated 11 February 1959 (HANH Archives).

Chapter 7 – What’s Going On?

A. The 1960s: A Time of Transition. As West Rock moved into its second decade, the original tenants moved from its confines to be replaced by a new population that was poorer, more dependent on government assistance, less skilled and less racially diverse²²⁰. There were a number of reasons for these developments:

- Income limits were being enforced and residents with higher incomes were departing²²¹;
- “White flight” to the suburbs created housing opportunities for the former moderate income tenants in New Haven²²²;
- Manufacturing jobs declined in New Haven and the region, robbing unskilled workers of a path to the middle class at a time when the Great Migration was in full force²²³; and,
- Urban renewal caused an increase in the housing needs of African-Americans who disproportionately landed in public housing²²⁴.

The result of these influences was a shift from an economically and racially balanced community to a very different aggregation of citizens that came to inhabit West Rock in the 1960s and for the foreseeable future.

²²⁰ See, “Wage Limits on Moderate Rental Rise,” **New Haven Evening Register**, 5 May 1960; See also, “Hike in Rent Scheduled at City Projects: McConaughy, Brookside Families Affected by Boost Starting May 1,” **New Haven Register**, 20 March 1963. Wolkoff cites the shifting racial demographics stating that by 1962 “...the majority of applicants to family-sized public housing units in the city were African-American...African-American applicants outnumbered white applicants by 2 to 1” citing HANH “Report on Applications, Family Size, tenant turnover in both Low and Moderate Income Categories as of July 17, 1962,” Lee MSS, Series I, Box 37:803.

²²¹ “Creating a Suburban Ghetto” at 76: “As an improving economy and rising standards of living pushed up tenants’ wages during the 1950s and 60s, many families were too successful to remain in the projects because their annual incomes (after a detailed series of adjustments) exceeded the maximum allowable income for either “low-income” or “moderate income” projects,” citing HANH, “Report to (CT) Public Works Dept., Housing Division, on over-income tenants at Brookside.” April 29. 1963 (HANH Archives), a publication that I was not able to find.

²²² Wolkoff shows comparative data from a time in 1950 when there were “only 305 unoccupied, non-vacation, dwellings in the city” to 1960 when there “1,732 vacant units for rent, and 671 unoccupied dwellings for sale with a median price of \$18,500, as a result of “New Haven’s population gradually spread(ing) out into the suburbs”. In other words, the shift was driven by “white flight”. See, “Real Estate,” **New Haven Register**, 10 July 1966; 1950 Census of Housing. Vol.1. General Characteristics. Part 2:7-3; 1960 Housing Census. Vol.2, Metropolitan Housing (111-140), 124-11

²²³ See, “The Town and the City”.

²²⁴ See, “City: Urbanism and Its End” at 340-343.

West Rock was transitioning from "...an economically and racially diverse community to an African-American ghetto". Wolkoff, in his study, traces this shift. He makes a case that the "...isolation had both positive and negative consequences for West Rock when it was a working-class development...it was disastrous when the project became a welfare island."²²⁵ Professor Solomon is less sanguine, observing that "[t]he racist overtones of selecting such an isolated site seem obvious"²²⁶.

Isolation remained a concern of residents seeking a recreation program for West Rock in 1962: "The two housing projects in Rockview Brookside (low and middle income respectively) are isolated from any major artery, recreation facility, or business section. There is, of course, no recreational unit in the project area itself. The cost of transportation, in addition, makes travel to city areas for recreation extremely difficult for many families"²²⁷.

These problems were exacerbated by the shift from the years of President Lyndon Johnson's "Great Society" to the era of "benign neglect" during the Nixon administration. Economic stagflation during the six years of the Ford and Carter presidencies to the New Federalism of the Reagan Administration in the 1980s did not help matters²²⁸. The abandonment by the government and the decline of public investment well into the 1980s undermined the social compact precisely at a time when West Rock residents needed assistance the most²²⁹. The journalist Nicholas Medina Mora suggested that the convergence of several social phenomena in the 1960s resulted in the populating of New Haven's public housing projects with unemployed blacks. Together, racism and de-industrialization lead to the de-facto segregation of these developments²³⁰. Poverty, persistent joblessness, isolation and racial segregation on their borders, fortified the worst fears of the neighbors in the Wooden Street area.

The cataclysm was triggered by turnover rates which, on the one hand, are consistent with the notion of public housing as "transitional housing"²³¹. On

²²⁵ See, "Creating a Suburban Ghetto" at 57.

²²⁶ See, "Building a Segregated City" at 301.

²²⁷ See, Petition from Brookside Rockview Council dated 16 April 1962. Lee MSS, Series I, Box 52: 1045

²²⁸ Even prior to this time HANH was having a difficult time meeting its obligations; see, "Bill to Aid Residents of City Projects Killed," **New Haven Journal Courier**, 16 April 1958.

²²⁹ Another issue addressed by Mr. Wolkoff (at 77) was the gap between rental revenues and operational need citing a Brookside deficit. The problem was complicated by the downward shift on incomes as moderate income residents moved out. See, "Tenants push protests on project rentals," **New Haven Evening Register**, 7 March 1958.

²³⁰ See, "The Town and the City".

²³¹ See, William E. Keish Jr., "City Housing Director Wolfe reluctant landlord of 11,000." **New Haven Register**, 7 March 1964 ("Reluctant Landlord"). Mr. Wolkoff (at 76) illustrated this point with the words of HANH Director Robert T. Wolfe, as follows: "I see in our economy a large

the other hand, the instability fostered by such turnover was a harbinger of a community devoid of continuity, and it is a continuity of neighbors that is necessary to bind a healthy neighborhood. Mr. Wolkoff talks about the transition from a time when mixed income and interracial public housing yielded to options for “more affordable housing...in the area”. As “resident incomes grew” the ability for West Rock breadwinners to “graduate’ from the project into private homes²³² increased leaving behind those most in need.”

The turnover rate was a point of pride to HANH officials²³³, yet to residents it meant a lack of continuity. The massive and unrelenting change undermined the development of any positive community structure, institutions or activities. The library service initiated by the Community Council was discontinued; a teenage girls' club group was dissolved when the leader moved away; as did a big brother movement²³⁴. The social structures were eroding at a time when the population required more social services. The foundation was set for the perception and realities of crime that would plague West Rock until its demolition²³⁵.

Again, the pressure for social services arrived at a time when the underpinnings of the New Deal and Great Society were forced to compete with funding for a war in the Far East. Social services, which are a great part of the public housing culture in the 21st Century, were in the pre-conception stage. Mr. Wolkoff's study paints the picture of HANH Executive Director Robert T. Wolfe as one who believed that the private market would create the units necessary to absorb the demand of tenants and, as such, public housing was the last resort:

The Housing Authority was not prepared to answer this call; it was not until 1966 that officials admitted in their *Annual Report to the Mayor* that

group whose economic status will not permit them to independently acquire living accommodations in our market. They should be helped. If there is no other way of helping them, the government should do it.”

²³² **Note:** “Graduate” was the term used in a letter from New Haven Relocation Director A. Mermin to Lee. 24 March 1958, Lee MSS, Series I, Box 15: 396. See also, “Creating a Suburban Ghetto” at 76.

²³³ **Note:** Mr. Wolkoff (at 76) cites the turnover rate data: 1959 – 25.5%; 1960 – 15.8%; 1961 – 21.29%. Housing Authority of the City of New Haven. Report to the Mayor of 1961, 15 January 1962, Lee MSS, Series I, Box 52:1045; William E. Keish, Jr.. “Moderate-rent income limit raised,” **New Haven Register**, 11 November 1965.

²³⁴ See, Brookside Rockview Council Petition to Richard C. Lee, 16 April 1962, Lee MSS, Series I, Box 52: 1045. Emphasis added.

²³⁵ See, letter from Robert T. Wolfe to Chief Francis McManus, 1 November 1961 (HANH Archive); See also, Petition of Brookside Rockview Council to Richard C. Lee, 16 April 1962. Lee MSS, Series I, Box 52: 1045. See ,”Creating a Suburban Ghetto” at 78.

even their moderate rental projects would need "a high degree of social services"²³⁶.

In the mid-1960s Mayor Lee wrote to a New York Times reporter that "...this whole question of low-cost housing units degenerating into ghettos and into slums is an obsession with me" and "that an array of public services would be needed to address the move to transitional housing"²³⁷. It was equally clear a few years later that the Mayor was reluctant to invest further resources into the city's family housing projects: "Now we have a serious problem. The more we devote our time and limited funds to helping public housing families, the less we have to extend the program to the community at large, where the need for this program is great. This is not right."²³⁸

B. A Drive Way for the Ribicoff Cottages? Mayor Lee requested that HANH designate a parcel of land on the corner of Woodin Street and Thorpe Drive for an elderly housing project that would become the Ribicoff Cottages²³⁹. On March 1st the request was granted²⁴⁰. On May 12, 1964 HANH filed an application for a driveway that would give the thirty-eight unit elderly housing project access to Woodin Street²⁴¹. On May 18, 1964 the Town Engineer Pasquale V. Zullo asked the Hamden Board of Selectmen to consider the request²⁴². The driveway was designed to permit for parking on the premises and would have no access to the Brookside-Rockview property. At a meeting of the Selectmen a Hamden Minister supported the request: "He indicated to the

²³⁶ See, "HANH, Annual Report to the Mayor. 1966". Available at the New Haven Colony Historical Society; See also, "Reluctant Landlord," **New Haven Register**, 7 March 1964. See also, "Creating a Suburban Ghetto" at 79.

²³⁷ See, Richard C. Lee to Harrison Salisbury 27 March 1958, Lee MSS, Series I, Box 15:396.

²³⁸ See, letter from Mayor Richard C. Lee to Marie McGuire, Commissioner, Public Housing Administration, 25 June 1962. Lee MSS, Series I, Box 52; 1046. Wolkoff points out that Mayor Lee was responding to a city-wide "homemaking program" to teach "basic rules of living in urban society" to families all over the city where more than half of the participants were public housing residents. While Lee is often looked to as a big government advocate Wolkoff points to Lee's advocacy of precursors to "scattered site" housing and Section 8; See, "Lee predicts expansion of public housing needs," **New Haven Register**, 26 March 1956. Wolkoff makes a compelling point: "When Lee criticized public housing, he was referring to the in-town projects that were becoming blighted ghettos by the middle of the 1960s. Far from his radar, Brookside and Rockview became politically isolated at a time when they may have needed help the most".

²³⁹ See, letter from Mayor Richard C. Lee, dated 25 February 1965; Aldermanic Journal 1965, p. 143-144. It should be noted that at one point the Public Housing Administration opposed the development of the Ribicoff Cottages: "The problem is that of developing an area of approximately four acres in a tract adjacent to the boundary of another community. Access to the site must be created by building a road on fill across a swampy ground area"; See letter from H.R. Collins, Assistant Director for Development, Public Housing Administration to HANH, dated 12 July 1963 (HANH Archives).

²⁴⁰ See, Aldermanic Journal 1965, p. 143-144.

²⁴¹ See letter from Robert T. Wolfe dated 12 May 1964.

²⁴² See, letter from Pasquale V. Zullo to the Board of Selectmen, dated 18 May 1964.

board that a denial would have civil rights implications as several of the residents of the New Haven project are Negroes". That plea from Rev. Richard Smeltzer of the Hamden Plains Methodist Church was one of the few public utterances that addressed "civil rights" in relation to West Rock²⁴³.

On May 28, 1964 the Board of Selectmen postponed the vote until they received a report from Hamden's Town Engineer that assessed the impact of any additional traffic²⁴⁴. On June 22, 1964 an architect for the Housing Authority submitted an alternate plan that moved the curb cut to the "Southeast corner of the property"²⁴⁵. The Hamden Board of Selectmen postponed action on the request due to local residents concerns that access for a nine car driveway would cause a deleterious increase in "traffic" on Woodin Street and that "project residents will frequent the Woodin Street area", if the fence was removed²⁴⁶. On July 6, 1964 HANH's Executive Director agreed to an alternative approach that would assure no vehicular traffic from West Rock:

...there is no proposal whatever on the Authority's part to seek to create a through street from Woodin Street...(and HANH)...is not in any sense anxious to have a through street coming through Brookside Drive because of the number of children in the Brookside Project and the hazard that through traffic could readily cause²⁴⁷.

On July 9, 1964 the Hamden Board of Selectmen approved the driveway access for a "nine-car parking lot located on the southeast corner of the Housing for the Elderly project located on Woodin Street"²⁴⁸, granting "a driveway solely to provide entry to a nine-car parking lot located on the southeast corner of the Housing for the Elderly project located on Woodin Street"²⁴⁹.

C. Community Progress, Inc. Takes on the Fence: 1968. One of the fascinating strains in this history is the lack of any meaningful protest from the New Haven-side regarding the existence of the fence. Thus far, our history shows that the demand for the fence was generated by Hamden residents and their elected representatives. On the New Haven-side there was nothing but silent acquiescence.

This would change in 1968 at the end of a turbulent year when "New Haven was added to the list of cities that had experienced the agony of riots".

²⁴³ See, "The Woodin-Brookside Access Question," **New Haven Evening Register**, 27 May 1964.

²⁴⁴ See, Minutes of the Hamden Board of Selectmen, 28 May 1964, p. 2.

²⁴⁵ See, letter from Henry F. Miller to First Selectman John DeNicola, dated 22 June 1964.

²⁴⁶ See, "Hamden Selectmen Again Postpone Action on Woodin Street Access," **New Haven Journal Courier**, 2 July 1964.

²⁴⁷ See, letter from Robert T. Wolfe to First Selectman John DeNicola, dated 6 July 1964.

²⁴⁸ See, Letter from First Selectman John DeNicola to Robert T. Wolfe, dated 13 July 1964.

²⁴⁹ See, "City Wins Access Bid on Housing," **New Haven Journal Courier**, 10 July 1964.

For some it was the end of the era of the “Model City”²⁵⁰: “Washington had rewarded the city’s imaginative urban-renewal administration with a greatly disproportionate share of federal renewal money...Yet last week the model city was racked with the same virus of ghetto discontent that has plagued scores of other U.S. cities this summer”²⁵¹.

Ironically, West Rock was never part of the urban renewal efforts of the Lee Years²⁵² nor would it be the focus of “discontent” or protest.

As the 1960s was coming to an end, Mayor Lee had requested Joel Cogen the General Counsel of the Redevelopment Agency to conduct a review of HANH activities in which he concluded: “...in order to make the public housing program truly effective, both in terms of the tenants and the community, the Housing Authority needs to...review its priorities; (among other things) strengthen its relationship with tenants and with the public; involve tenants actively in decision making”. Cogen specifically cited the “Brookside-Rockview Community Council” as “...the first tenant organization to have a formal relationship with the Authority rather than with an individual project manager. However, the Council’s role has not yet been adequately defined”²⁵³.

Perhaps if the Community Council was “adequately defined” the issue of isolation and the fence would have been joined. In the absence of such leadership the role of challenging the fence was assumed by Community Progress, Inc. (“CPI”) an organization that was founded in 1962 as a non-profit community organizing entity whose mission was to spearhead citizen involvement on a neighborhood level²⁵⁴. CPI, in its literature, advanced the notion that “efforts be begun to turn the city’s drab public housing projects into communities”²⁵⁵. Mr. Wolkoff tells the story of CPI intercession, designed to assist West Rock’s residents and address long-standing complaints. With the help of CPI, HANH was finally providing its under-served tenants at Brookside and Rockview with necessary social services and advocacy²⁵⁶.

One of the high profile CPI interventions came in May 1968. CPI had published a monthly newsletter entitled the “West Rock News” which represents

²⁵⁰ See, Bill Ryan “He Who Once Rebuilt New Haven” **The New York Times**, 1 May 1994.

²⁵¹ See, **Time Magazine**, 1 September 1967.

²⁵² See, “City: Urbanism and Its End” at 330-331.

²⁵³ Joel Cogen to Richard C. Lee, “Report on the Programs, Policies, and Operations of the New Haven Housing Authority”, 20 March 1968, Lee MSS, Series I, Box 95:1683, p. 4. Cogen’s bias may have darkened his conclusions in this report. As the **Register** speculated in its 20 December 1967 article, Cogen was considered a strong candidate for assuming Wolfe’s job as director of HANH. See, “Creating a Suburban Ghetto” at 81.

²⁵⁴ See, Fred Powledge, “Model City” (Simon & Schuster, New York: 1970), p. 62-63.

²⁵⁵ Id., p.60.

²⁵⁶ See, “Creating a Suburban Ghetto” at 82-83.

the first piece of evidence of community resistance to the fence that had been erected in the 1950s. A letter from Hamden Mayor William M. Adams asserts the following:

As Mayor, I feel it is my responsibility to reflect the thinking and feeling of my citizens on this matter of the fence cutting off Brookside and Rockview from Hamden as indicated in the records of the past. This matter has come up before and the existence of the fence as a deterrent to accident has always prevailed. To my knowledge there are no new facts which would warrant a change at this time...the safety of the children and additional traffic loads to a road already overburdened far outweigh the point of increased revenue to Hamden merchants. This, in my opinion justified the existence of the existence of the fence as a deterrent to accident has always prevailed...²⁵⁷.

The West Rock News took issue by stating that Hamden residents were "more concerned with property values than they were with the safety of Brookside-Rockview children". The CPI report made several interesting allegations:

- The fence was constructed by New Haven officials when Hamden officials objected in 1950 that increased traffic from the then-proposed projects would be a peril to children playing in the streets in Wooden Street area. Most of the streets lacked sidewalks and were winding.
- "Concern for the safety of the Brookside Rockview children seems to be Johnny-Come-Lately:.
- "Residents of Rockview-Brookside are now cut off from any real contact with our city. There are no shopping centers, no recreation facilities...none of the parts of a real community".
- "There is practically total racial segregation"
- The residents of Brookside-Rockviews "...are affronted at the inaccessibility of their area to the facilities of other neighborhoods".

²⁵⁷ See, "Adams Defends Deterrent to Accidents: CPI Publication Presses Fence Issue," **New Haven Register**, 6 May 1968.

- Reasonable transportation lanes to shopping have been blocked by a fence built between their units and the one-family homes of Hamden, a few hundred feet away²⁵⁸.

The account in the **New Haven Register** made the following points:

- “If the fence were torn down and roads cut through from the housing projects to Hamden it would feed into Woodin Street. Traffic now detours around the Pine Rock quarry, a distance of up to two miles”.
- “Sections (of the fence) are frequently torn down enabling pedestrians to walk through instead of passing around the end, near the old cemetery on Woodin Street.”
- The question of a lack of shopping centers has been raised on several occasions. A developer built several stores, including a food store on the corner of Brookside Avenue and Wilmot Avenue, but after much vandalism to the stores and other problems, the businesses closed²⁵⁹.

Mr. Wolkoff viewed the CPI news letter as an instrument that gave tenants an opportunity “...to be vocal about their feeling of isolation and also to help design improvements to their neighborhood”²⁶⁰. The first opportunity came with the development of one hundred and fifty prefabricated units sponsored by the “Prince Hall Masons”²⁶¹, discussed below.

The 1968 article in the **New Haven Register** was the first and last news account of a protest over the fence from the New Haven-side of the equation until the mid-1980s²⁶². The truth is after almost two decades of use HANH did

²⁵⁸ Id.

²⁵⁹ Id.

²⁶⁰ See, “Creating a Suburban Ghetto” at 83.

²⁶¹ See, “Tenants Will Soon View ‘Instant Housing’ Plan,” **New Haven Register**, 27 December 1968.

²⁶² **Note:** Mr. Wolkoff (at 80) made the following observation regarding the May 1968 newsletter: “The problem with abandoning top-down control was that the Authority created a power vacuum in its projects. The Authority now had less ability to regulate the flow of tenants into the project and even less control over their exit, as loosened disciplinary standards made it easier for problematic tenants to avoid eviction. As we have discovered, West Rock’s visibility as a dense public housing project in a suburban area made it vulnerable to the mistrust of its neighbors, so tenant leaders labored (with mixed success) to legitimate and to protect their community by enforcing standards of proper behavior. These organizers needed the support of a housing authority which could regulate the community in ways they determined to be socially desirable²⁶². Thus, while concerned tenants could now join a city-wide board to monitor HANH policies, their power was contingent on the strength of a decapitated Authority.”

not have the funds to address the massive deterioration of its infrastructure.: "An inflationary spiral in the cost of labor, material, and utilities, the need to upgrade projects deteriorating under normal stress of hard use and age, and new demands for specialized services for tenants such as a security force and social welfare service will not be off-set by the present level of Federal assistance."²⁶³

D. Recriminations and Decline. When he opened up the Abraham Ribicoff senior public housing complex at the end of Brookside Drive in the summer of 1966, Mayor Lee was appalled at the sight of Brookside residents automobiles parked along the new project's roads as well as the condition of Brookside's buildings. "I don't wish to sound like Professor [Vincent] Scully," he wrote to Wolfe, but he wanted the Housing Authority to work on the design of its projects, including fixing the parking situation that was blighting his new development²⁶⁴.

The visit was almost allegorical tracing the long slide from a "cohesive residential neighborhood" in the "slumless city²⁶⁵" to a neighborhood that was deteriorating, in debt and in a transition toward serious economic decline and racial separation. It was also a time when HANH moved from the leadership of its long-time director Robert T. Wolfe²⁶⁶ to Edward White, Jr.²⁶⁷ It was a time of great turmoil and flux: CPI was clamoring about the fence and a member of Congress was investigating CPI; HANH was struggling to survive the challenges of debt repayment and meeting increased social need, as well as an investigation of HANH by Mayor Lee and the General Counsel and Executive Director of the Redevelopment Agency, Joel Cogen.

It was a time when "White, working-class families were fleeing the city projects, leaving behind densely concentrated poverty. Drug activity and violence rose, sometimes spilling into Hamden. Crime was so bad that residents say the New Haven Fire Department refused to enter the West Rock projects without a police escort."²⁶⁸

²⁶³ See, HANH Annual Report (1968). 23, 24 (HANH Archives).

²⁶⁴ See, letter from Mayor Richard C. Lee to Robert T. Wolfe, 7 July 1966, Lee MSS. Series I, Box 81: 1480. Vincent Scully, professor of architecture at Yale, was a vocal critic of the monolithic modernist style employed by Lee's urban renewal projects. See "City: Urbanism and Its End". 331-338,

²⁶⁵ See, Samuel Kaplan, New Haven Pursuing the American Dream of A Slumless City", **New York Times**, 7 September 1965.

²⁶⁶ "Wolfe Resigns," **New Haven Register**, 20 December 1967.

²⁶⁷ See, letter from Mayor Richard C. Lee to Father Timothy Meehan, HANH Chair 5 August 1967: "Without a doubt, Mr. White is one of the brightest and most capable people ever to have worked for the City. He is imaginative, gets along with people, writes very well and is very personable. The Housing Authority and its programs would thrive under this direction"; Lee MSS. Series I, Box 95:1684.

²⁶⁸ See, "What Doesn't Love a Wall".

