



## **Waterfront Special Development District Commission**

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### **Minutes of Monday, November 20, 2006 Public Hearing**

Present were members: Chairman Patrick Rogers, Louis Torrado, Jay Gregory, John Pesce, Jacob Harpootian, Bruce Chick, William J. Fazioli, Jacob Harpootian, Steven Hardcastle; ex-officio members: Lori Capaldi, Steven Coutu; counsel: Attorney Robin Main; and staff: Jeanne Boyle and Roberta Groch.

The meeting began at 6:30PM.

#### **1. Chairman's Opening Remarks**

Chairman Rogers noted that Mr. Lynch was excused from attending the meeting due to a family issue.

#### **2. Approval of Minutes**

##### **A. Minutes of October 16, 2006**

Motion to approve was made by Mr. Harpootian and seconded by Mr. Chick. Unanimous vote to approve with no changes.

#### **3. New Business**

##### **A. Audit**

Mr. Paul Dancereau and Ms. Joanna LaRue discussed the audit performed on the Waterfront Commission accounts. It was a two-year audit, from July 2004 to August 2006 and gave an unqualified opinion. There were four unreconciled items and three recommendations.

Chairman Rogers said that all of the auditors' recommendations have been adopted. Director Boyle said that the recommendation to change the fiscal year end from October 31 to June 30 has been adopted: this would make it easier to apply for certain grants. Director Boyle and Ms. LaRue both commended Stephanie Camille for her organization of all of the records.

##### **B. Presentation by Fuss & O'Neill**

Mr. Dean Audet, Vice President

Mr. Jim Riordan, Project Manager

Fuss & O'Neill gave a presentation on the Draft "Does It Make Sense?" Stormwater Management Study.

The study determined that stormwater is a key issue to the development of the District. Stormwater is currently being handled on-site by developers, but as the area becomes developed, the smaller parcels will be too constrained for this method. There is currently nothing for upland

drainage in the District, nor are there shared facilities. The consultants said that there are grants available for construction if a municipality has a stormwater plan in place. They stated that RIDEM will require controls to reduce pollutants in the Seekonk and Providence Rivers in the future if outfalls are a significant source: the goal for these Rivers is for them to be fishable and swimmable by 2012. They have already required the town of Narragansett to install controls along the Ten Mile River. Maintenance of these controls will also be a future expense. Mr. Riordan presented several possible ways of financing the controls, including the creation of a stormwater utility district.

Mr. Hardcastle asked if the City is doing better than average in its stormwater controls maintenance: Mr. Riordan answered yes. There was a general discussion of what a filter strip is. Filter strips slow down stormwater runoff into water bodies. As the water is absorbed by the vegetation, pollutants are removed by the strips. Mr. Harpootian asked if these strips would preclude development: Mr. Audet answered yes, but stated that the area adjacent to the Rivers cannot be built on anyway, as it is part of the CRMC-required Urban Coastal Greenway. Mr. Torrado asked what the benefit of the strips is: Mr. Audet stated that the end result is an increase in stormwater quality. Mr. Harpootian asked how much area could a 25' x 20' strip drain: Mr. Audet stated that it could drain seven acres. Mr. Harpootian asked how many the District would need: Mr. Audet stated that a mix of controls is needed for the District.

Mr. Fazioli asked if there were other stormwater utility districts in Rhode Island: Mr. Riordan answered no, they have not taken off in New England. Burlington, Vermont has one and Chicopee, Mass. is looking at creating one.

Mr. Rogers stated that the Commission has received a grant through Senator Reed's office to fund a stormwater management plan for the District. There was a discussion of finding a match for the RIDEM funds, which require a 50% match: Mr. Riordan stated that he believed other State and Federal funds could be used as a match. Mr. Rogers stated that the chances of receiving these bond funds were probably better if a plan was in place: Mr. Riordan agreed. There also was a general discussion on the grants available.

Mr. Harpootian asked Mr. Coutu if these funds could be used outside of the District regarding flooding: Mr. Coutu replied that the funds are for stormwater quality, not for the City's flooding issues, but that lessons learned in the District could be applied City-wide. Mr. Gregory asked if the utility district would be for the City or just for the waterfront: Ms. Boyle replied that if a utility district works in the waterfront district it could be used as a pilot for the rest of the City. Mr. Coutu asked what could be done for the rest of the City: Mr. Riordan answered that small upland controls could be used.

Ms. Boyle stated that a stakeholders meeting will be held in January for developers, their engineers, the Commission, the CRMC and the Conservation Commission. Mr. Pesce asked if current developments were eligible for funds: Mr. Riordan replied that the next grant round would probably be in June 2007.

### **C. Tax Increment Financing (TIF)**

Director Boyle discussed her and Mr. Fazioli's attendance at a one-day TIF seminar in Baltimore. She stated that it is a very complex process. Ms. Boyle explained that TIF is a tool that allows municipalities to promote economic development by earmarking property tax revenue from increases in assessed values within a designated TIF district. TIF expenditures are often debt financed in anticipation of future tax revenues as a way of raising local matching funds for federal grants. The base-year property values in the TIF are compared to the anticipated future property values as a result of a development. Tax increment financing carves out the difference between the two (the "increment") and reserves it for the exclusive use of an economic development authority, while the base-year assessed value stays in the local government tax base. The increment can then be used to fund infrastructure improvements within the TIF district. She said that the District needs approximately \$15 million in sewer and water upgrades, new roads, site remediation, and stormwater controls. The Commission could fund these with: a bond issue, but would have to compete with other City infrastructure needs, impact fees, or a special assessment district. TIFs are used all over the country. Ms. Boyle stated that it might be helpful to engage a TIF consultant.

Chairman Rogers asked if there are follow up items for this subject: Ms. Boyle answered that a brief presentation on TIFs could be given at the next meeting, possibly by an outside person with knowledge of the subject. She said that a memo from the Waterfront Commission to the City Council could be put together proposing a joint workshop on the subject. She added that staff will work with Mr. Coutu and private developers to determine infrastructure needs. Chairman Rogers asked if the consultant would be hired independently or with the City Council: Ms. Boyle replied that the Commission will hire the consultant and present to the City Council. Mr. Gregory asked if an RFP for the TIF consultant would be available for the next meeting: Ms. Boyle replied that an outline for the Scope of Work could be ready by then.

### **4. Continued Business**

There was no continued business.

### **5. Reports of Commission's Subcommittees**

Neither the Design Review Committee nor the Hearing Panel had anything to report out to the Commission.

### **6. Miscellaneous Other Business**

None.

### **7. Staff Report**

#### **A. General Counsel's Report**

Counsel had nothing to report.

#### **B. Director's Report**

Ms. Boyle stated that the revised GeoNova plans have been submitted and need to be reviewed by the Design Review Committee: a meeting of the DRC will be set up for the following week. The meeting will also include another application and possibly revised Phillipsdale Landing

plans. Once a completeness certificate is given to the GeoNoza project, the 45- day clock starts ticking: within that time, the Commission must hold one public hearing, one design workshop, one Hearing Panel Meeting, and one Commission meeting.

The Kettle Point developers would like to make a conceptual presentation to the Commission at the December meeting. The Chevron-Picrnie project is also gaining speed. The draft Veteran's Memorial District design guidelines have been given to the Chevron development team for comment, as they are the only parcel in that district. The draft guidelines will be submitted to the Commission for the December meeting.

**8. Communications**

**A. Website- Monthly history report of visitors**

In October 2006, 376 people visited the website.

**B. Letter dated 10/27/06 to Attorney Martin P. Sleprow from Jeanne Boyle Re: 51/115 Dexter Road**

Letter forwarded to Commission for informational purposes.

**9. Next meeting: Monday, December 18, 2006**

**10. Adjournment**

A motion to adjourn was made at 8:37PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Jeanne M. Boyle  
Interim Executive Director

JMB/rg