

WATERFRONT DEVELOPMENT SPECIAL DISTRICT COMMISSION
INTRODUCTORY WORKSHOP OF THE DESIGN REVIEW COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF AUGUST 30, 2006

Present were members: Chairman Jay Gregory, John Pesce, Luis Torrado, Jeanne Boyle, Steve Coutu and staff: Heidi Green

The meeting began at 6:33 p.m.

1. Approval of June 7, 2006 minutes

Motion to approve was made by Ms. Boyle and seconded by Mr. Pesce. Unanimous vote to approve with no changes.

2. Approval of June 27, 2006 minutes

Mr. Pesce inquired if pursuant to the meeting minutes, the Design Review Committee was bound to Mr. Fontecchio's recommendation to build a boardwalk over the riprap at the East Pointe site. Chairman Gregory indicated that it was just a suggestion and the DRC was not bound to it.

Motion to approve was made by Mr. Pesce and seconded by Mr. Coutu. Unanimous vote to approve with no changes.

3. Presentation – Phillipsdale Landing by Essex River Ventures

Mr. John Fenton introduced himself as one of the principles of Essex River Ventures. He indicated that they acquired the site in November of 2005. He indicated that there has been a prolonged analysis of the site. He stated that the historic buildings were built in two phases beginning in the late 1800's. The first enterprise to occupy the site was a paper manufacturing mill that failed. Subsequently, the property was foreclosed upon. The next use of the property was wire manufacturing.

Mr. Fenton indicated that Essex River Ventures intends to maintain the historically significant buildings and incorporate a mix of uses such as residential, offices and retail. He indicated that there will be 240 residential units contained within 7 buildings, two of which will be new buildings. Mr. Fenton stated that they will retain some of the existing tenants. The new commercial uses may include a gym, beauty salon and restaurant.

Martha Werenfels moderated the slide presentation. She showed other historic preservation projects that her firm has designed, including Westfield Lofts, Pearl Street Lofts and the Peerless development. Ms. Werenfels indicated that the Phillipsdale Landing site consists of two generations of industrial uses with a third generation of

noncontributing structures. Ms. Werenfels stated that they have applied for historic tax credits and as such, the design of the structures falls within the Department of the Interior standards. She stated that there was going to be concealed parking within the building with the saw tooth roof. They are going to retain the steel columns and beams of the existing building. She stated that Buildings #1, #2 and #4 would consist of commercial uses. Building #67 which is 500' long will have two floor residential units with parking in the lower level. Ms. Werenfels then went through the plans for each of the existing buildings:

- Building #69 will be demolished.
- Building #9 will consist of 6 residential units.
- Building #14 will be restored.
- Building #15 will consist of multi story townhouses. Section 15A will be restored and Section 15B will be demolished.
- Building #22 the loading dock will be retained and used as a porch and the bridge will also be kept.
- Building #67 will consist of townhouses above first floor parking.
- Building #68 will have residential units.
- Building #75 the windows will be restored and the ivy will be removed.
- Building #76 the windows will be restored and the ivy will be removed.

Ms. Werenfels explained that the proposed new buildings will be sited to frame and preserve historic buildings # 14 and #15. The new buildings will be L shaped with an industrial look and have a consistent scale with the existing buildings. Ms. Werenfels indicated that they had met with the Historic Commission yesterday and they are supportive of the design. The new buildings have a contemporary design to be differentiated from the existing buildings. However, the brick and glass materials will be used to marry the contemporary design of the new buildings with the existing historic buildings. Ms. Werenfels stated that parking will be below grade for approximately 100 units. Additionally, there will be public parking to accommodate the public access. Ms. Werenfels indicated that there may be a restaurant on the first floor of new building #1.

Mr. Gus Raposa presented on behalf of Vanasse, Hangen & Brustlin, Inc. (VHB) the engineering components of the Phillipsdale development. Mr. Raposa indicated that they had been retained for the civil aspects of the project such as stormwater management, utilities and traffic. He indicated that the site will contain less impervious surfaces once it has been redeveloped. Mr. Raposa stated that the current sewer system is a combined stormwater and sewer system that gets pumped to the Narragansett Bay Commission. Once the site is redeveloped, they will have to separate the sewer and storm water systems. As each of the buildings is redeveloped, they will separate the systems. Mr. Raposa stated that the parking lots will contain rain gardens. The main means of stormwater treatment will consist of vortechinics with filters and infiltration within rain gardens. Additionally there will be a basin near Building #2.

Mr. Jon Staubach of VHB indicated that they have met with the fire department regarding access and fire protection. Mr. Staubach indicated that the new water system will loop around the site and originate from Bourne Avenue. Mr. Clinton of VHB is the traffic engineer. He stated that he completed a preliminary traffic study. However, he is in the process of incorporating the anticipated traffic generation that will result from the GeoNova development. He described the traffic improvements to Bourne Avenue and Roger Williams Avenue. He stated that the traffic improvements will be dependent upon the phasing of the development. He indicated that it will be necessary to widen Bourne Avenue to incorporate a right turn Lane onto Roger Williams Avenue based on the studies the combined traffic counts for the Phillipsdale Landing and East Pointe developments. The second traffic improvement would be to install a traffic signal at the intersection of Bourne Avenue and Roger Williams Avenue. However, the traffic signal could not be installed until the traffic counts warranted it. Mr. Clinton stated that he is still working on the revised traffic study to incorporate the East Pointe development.

The landscape architect from Gates, Leighton & Associates, Inc. indicated that the landscaping will take into account the historic and environmental characteristics of the site. He stated that there will be a gateway designed to tie in the architecture and landscaping of the site. He indicated that the residential areas would be designed to maintain privacy while keeping the site open and walkable. He described the rain gardens as having naturalistic characteristics. He stated that the landscaping would take into consideration the guidelines provided by the Waterfront Commission, DEM and CRMC.

Chairman Gregory stated that the floor was now open to the Design Review Committee and then the public to ask questions. Mr. Pesce asked what rain gardens are. Mr. Staubach indicated that they are shallow basins with plantings to allow infiltration. He stated that they are designed to be as shallow as possible to maintain their character. The rain gardens fill up with approximately 16-18" of water. Director Boyle inquired about the detention basin. Mr. Staubach indicated that it is a lined basin located at the lowest elevation of the site designed to collect water from the impervious surfaces. The basin's purpose is to collect the first 1" of runoff from impervious surfaces and be detained in the basin for up to 36 hours. Director Boyle asked the depth of the detention basin. Mr. Staubach answered that it was approximately 4-5'.

Mr. Fenton was asked about the soil contamination. He answered that the area adjacent to the waterfront would be capped. He indicated that the previous metal manufacturing process produced slag rock and the soil contained bonded lead. The content does exceed applicable standards; however, it is inert because it is bonded. The groundwater has been tested and the lead has not contaminated it. Mr. Fenton indicated that the entire site contains Environmental Land Use Restrictions. As such, if there is going to be any excavation, there are reporting requirements. It is not the site where you would want to grow vegetables for consumption.

Mr. Coutu asked about the phasing of the separation of the combined sewer line, specifically whether the old piping could be used as a storm drain. Mr. Raposa responded that there will be a separate sewer line going to the pump station. He further stated that the storm water will be treated with vortechinics containing filters. CRMC requires that there be a maintenance contract signed requiring that the filters be replaced every six months. Mr. Coutu stated that he was under the impression that CRMC was not a supporter of vortechinics. Mr. Raposa indicated that the technology of the vortechinics has evolved and is becoming more accepted. Director Boyle asked if the filters removed nutrients. Mr. Staubach indicated that metals would be removed from roof runoff.

Mr. Fenton explained that the phasing would begin with the demolition of insignificant buildings and additions. Then they would begin work on either Building #9 or Buildings #14 and 15. They would also prepare the site for the new buildings; however, the buildings themselves would not be constructed until later, perhaps at the end of 2007 depending on the real estate market. The new buildings would most likely be constructed in the second or third phase. The next building to be renovated would be #67. Mr. Fenton indicated that he was negotiating with a fitness center that would be targeting a 3,000 person membership.

Mr. Coutu inquired if the roadways, utilities and stormwater features would be privately owned and maintained. Mr. Raposa answered that they would be. Mr. Coutu asked if the buildings would be sprinklered. Ms. Werenfels responded that they would be. Mr. Coutu indicated that CDM had performed an analysis of the City's water and sewer systems. He indicated that the Phillipsdale area had a weak water system because they were on the outskirts of the water distribution system. He pointed out that the sprinklers and peak flow times would significantly tax the existing system. Mr. Coutu stated that upgrading the pipe network would cost approximately \$5-10 million. He stated that there will be a new line once Waterfront Drive is constructed. He commented that he likes VHB's plans to loop the line internally from Bourne Avenue. However, he would also like to see it looped with the neighboring development. He's hoping for as many water line connections as possible.

Mr. Torrado commended the architect on a fantastic job. He stated that it is nice when developers use local resources. He asked if Ms. Werenfels could explain the circulation pattern around the site. Ms. Werenfels explained the vehicular and pedestrian circulation using one of her slides. Mr. Torrado asked if the architect could further consider the use of corrugated metal building materials. Mr. Pesce stated that he believes this development will be a tremendous asset for the community.

Chairman Gregory asked about the use of the fifth story of new buildings #1 and #2. Ms. Werenfels stated that they would be residential uses. The fifth floor is set back to give the appearance of only being a four story building. Chairman Gregory asked about the road widths of the interior roads. Mr. Staubach replied that that would conform to the City's standards and would be 24' wide. He indicated that there would be no on street parking on the site. Chairman Gregory asked Mr. Fenton who would be responsible for

creating the turn lane on Bourne Avenue. Mr. Fenton responded that they were working with GeoNova to work out those details. Chairman Gregory commented that he believed that the intersection of Roger Williams Avenue and North Broadway would require more than a signal timing adjustment. Chairman Rogers asked Mr. Fenton when he expected to submit the application for Phillipsdale Landing. Mr. Fenton responded in approximately 2-3 weeks. Chairman Gregory stated that Phillipsdale Landing is an exciting development and the presentation was phenomenal. He believes it will be a great asset for East Providence.

Mr. Raposa commented that the sewer and water plans may not be as detailed because they will be phased in with the development as it occurs. Director Boyle indicated that there will be specific phasing requirements. Director Boyle asked what the size and price range of the units would be. Mr. Fenton stated that there was a performer. It has been revised a few times and continues to evolve. However, he indicated that there were be three specific styles of residential units. There would be high end waterfront units, approximately 100 loft style units and 45 townhouses in Building #67. There would be different price levels. The waterfront units would be the most expensive. The units in the rehabilitated buildings would cost approximately \$200,000-\$300,000. The lofts in Building #22 would be affordable and of high quality. Director Boyle reminded Mr. Fenton of the 10% affordable housing requirement. Mr. Fenton acknowledged same. Director Boyle asked if the fiscal analysis had been completed. Mr. Fenton stated that it was almost done.

Motion to conclude the meeting made by Mr. Torrado and seconded by Mr. Pesce.

The meeting adjourned at 8:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Jeanne M. Boyle
Executive Director

JMB/hjg