

Waterfront Special Development District Commission

Minutes of Monday, June 19, 2006 Public Hearing

Present were members: Chairman Patrick Rogers, Jay Gregory, Dr. Isadore Ramos, John Lynch, Luis Torrado, John Pesce, Laura McNamara, Jacob Harpootian, Lori Capaldi; counsel: Attorney Robin Main; and staff: Jeanne Boyle and Heidi Green.

The meeting began at 6:35 p.m.

1. Chairman's Opening Remarks

Chairman Rogers acknowledged that the terms of Laura McNamara and Dr. Ramos are about to expire. He recognized their dedicated service during their terms and thanked them on behalf of the Commission for all of their time and efforts.

2. Approval of Minutes

A. Minutes of May 15, 2006

Motion to approve was made by Dr. Isadore Ramos and seconded by Mr. Gregory. Unanimous vote to approve with no changes.

3. New Business

Director Boyle informed the Commissioners that a landowner was going to file an application for a junk dealer permit. She indicated that she will review the application and place it on the agenda for next month. Director Boyle noted to the Commission that junk dealers are not permitted in the Waterfront.

4. Continued Business

A. Design Consultants Glen Fontecchio and Samuel Shamoan-Phillipsdale Design Review Draft Regulations

Mr. Shamoan stated that they met with Director Boyle and Ms. Green and as a result made some revisions to the guidelines dated June 8, 2006. Mr. Shamoan described the format of the guidelines including the cross references of the guidelines to the ordinance and accompanying sketches. Mr. Fontecchio provided an overview of the guidelines reflecting pedestrian orientation, suggested elements (rather than dictating style) and emphasis of New England styles. The three main criteria used to create the guidelines include the following elements:

- Protection of the existing positive elements of the current neighborhood;
- Avoidance of architectural mistakes made in the 1960's and 1970's; and
- Guidelines from the Waterfront Zoning Ordinance and Waterfront Plan.

The Commissioners made several suggestions about refining the guidelines. Attorney Main indicated that the Commissioners and consultants should remain mindful that the ordinance was created through a public process and it is important that the design guidelines and ordinance be consistent.

Chairman Rogers indicated that the next steps should be to refine the guidelines to incorporate the recommendations made by the Commissioners. Director Boyle suggested that the guidelines be revised to be ready for a vote at next month's meeting. Chairman Rogers requested that the design guidelines be distributed one week prior to the meeting so that Commissioners would have adequate time to review same prior to adopting them at the next meeting.

B. RFP Results for the DIMS Study

Ms. Green reviewed the firms, their qualifications and proposed lump sum fees to conduct the DIMS Study pursuant to the RFP. Ms. Green suggested that the Waterfront Commission hire Fuss & O'Neill based upon their qualifications, local Rhode Island stormwater and finance experience and least expensive lump sum amount. Motion made by Ms. McNamara and seconded by Mr. Lynch to retain Fuss & O'Neill to conduct the DIMS study.

Roll Call Vote:

Ms. McNamara:	Aye
Mr. Pesce:	Aye
Mr. Torrado:	Aye
Dr. Ramos:	Aye
Mr. Harpootian:	Aye
Mr. Gregory:	Aye
Mr. Lynch:	Aye
Chairman Rogers	Aye

5. Reports of Commission's Subcommittees

A. Design Review Committee

Mr. Gregory informed the Commissioners that the Introductory Workshop for the East Pointe development was conducted on June 7, 2006. The Workshop was well attended. Mr. Gregory provided an overview of the proposed East Pointe development as presented by the Geonova consultants. Mr. Gregory indicated that Mary Voce, one of the principals of Geonova indicated that they wanted to provide 5% affordable housing rather than the 10% as required by the regulations. Dr. Ramos disagreed with allowing the developer to provide only 5% affordable housing. He believes that affordable housing is necessary on the waterfront. Mr. Lynch added that the Commission expressed their displeasure at the provision of 5% affordable units during the meeting.

Director Boyle indicated that the proposed East Pointe development is still at pre-application and the DRC and staff are going to review the proposal to evaluate the completeness of the

submission. Director Boyle further indicated that it is critical to obtain feed back from RIDOT and P & W Railroad to ascertain their positions pertaining to the East Pointe development.

B. Hearing Panel

No reports.

6. Miscellaneous Other Business

None.

7. Staff Report

A. General Counsel's Report

Attorney Main indicated that all Commissioners should have submitted their conflict of interest forms to the Ethics Commission. If the forms are not submitted in a timely manner, there may be fines issued.

B. Executive Director's Report

Director Boyle indicated that Ms. Green attended a meeting at CRMC concerning the Kettle Point development. Gilbane is moving forward with their plans for Kettle Point and have submitted a request to CRMC for preliminary determination for the proposed development.

Director Boyle also informed the Commission about the status of the Picerne and Chevron development. They are proposing multi family units as well as office and retail uses. They will be scheduling a joint DEM and CRMC meeting concerning the brownfield status. They are also initiating plans to extend Waterfront Drive along the railroad ROW with DOT and P & W Railroad. Picerne and Chevron have also retained an architect who is interested in clarification of the design guidelines and is the same architect used for the Tockwotten project.

Director Boyle stated that the Essex River Ventures development team is scheduled to conduct an informational meeting on June 20, 2006. There was an invitation distributed to the Commissioners.

Mr. Harpootian expressed his concern about appointees being confirmed. He reminded the Commission that they will be losing Dr. Ramos and Ms. McNamara and it will be necessary to obtain replacements to review all of the proposals that will be submitted. Chairman Rogers stated that he and Director Boyle should forward a letter to the Senate about needing more staff to review a number of significant projects. They may also have to reinforce staff levels to adequately service the developers.

8. Communications

Director Boyle indicated that she will be attending a meeting next Monday with Grover Fugate at CRMC to review the Urban Coastal Greenway policy and accompanying map. Additionally, Director Boyle informed the Commissioners that City Council most likely will be petitioning CRMC to change the water types of the Seekonk and Providence rivers so that they are consistent with the Waterfront Plan. Currently, the waters are classified as heavy marine, which is inconsistent with the Waterfront Plan which calls for mixed use development along the waterfront. If the City council endorses the change of water types, they will forward a letter to CRMC requesting same.

9. Adjournment

Motion to adjourn made by Mr. Gregory and seconded by Dr. Ramos. The meeting adjourned at 8:05 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Jeanne M. Boyle
Interim Executive Director

JMB/hjg