

Waterfront Special Development District Commission

Minutes of Monday, July 17, 2006 Public Hearing

Present were members: Chairman Patrick Rogers, Jay Gregory, John Lynch, Luis Torrado, John Pesce, Laura McNamara, Jacob Harpootian, Bruce Chick; ex-officio member: Lori Capaldi; counsel: Attorney Robin Main; and staff: Jeanne Boyle and Heidi Green.

The meeting began at 6:40 p.m.

1. Chairman's Opening Remarks

Chairman Rogers welcomed Mr. Chick to the Commission. Chairman Rogers also informed the Commission of the press conference during which Senator Chafee presented the City of East Providence with a \$2 million grant for a portion of Waterfront Drive. He also indicated that the Waterfront has been receiving a substantial amount of media coverage. There was an editorial in the *Providence Journal* concerning Geonova and their proposal for affordable housing. Additionally, there was an article in the *Providence Business News* regarding the Geonova development.

2. Approval of Minutes

A. Minutes of June 19, 2006

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

3. New Business

Director Boyle invited the Commissioners to the groundbreaking for Waterfront Drive on July 25, 2006 at 10:00 a.m. She indicated that the road is necessary for waterfront redevelopment to take place. She said that the construction has been estimated to take one year and Cardi was awarded the contract from RIDOT.

4. Continued Business

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

Mr. Shamoan provided an overview of the design guidelines for the Phillipsdale subdistrict including the format, sketches, zoning references and definitions. There were several questions posed by the Commissioners, including a discussion concerning historically and architecturally significant structures, vinyl siding and demolition procedures.

There was a Motion made by Ms. McNamara and seconded by Mr. Harpootian to approve the draft guidelines (in concept) so that they may benefit the DRC as well as developers while the necessary changes can be made by next meeting.

Roll Call Vote:

Ms. McNamara:	Aye
Mr. Pesce:	Aye
Mr. Torrado:	Aye
Mr. Chick:	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 meeting for the East Pointe development with the architectural and traffic consultants was conducted on June 27, 2006. He indicated that generally the plans require more detail, such as for the retention ponds, maintenance specifications; pedestrian and vehicular flow and consistency with the Phillipsdale development including access and circulation. Additionally, plans were required for: signage and landscaping; private and public space delineation; bike path and pedestrian plan; riverwalk details; public amenities; road width and affordable housing.

Director Boyle indicated that the proposed East Pointe development is still at the pre-application and the DRC and staff are going to review the proposal to evaluate the completeness of the submission. Pursuant to Mr. Gregory's request, staff will provide a draft copy of the letter to Geonova outlining the items necessary to deem the application complete and the DRC members will make additions and revisions.

B. Hearing Panel

No reports.

6. Miscellaneous Other Business

Chairman Rogers pointed out that since Dr. Ramos has departed, there is a vacancy on the Hearing Panel, including for the chair of that panel.

7. Staff Report

A. General Counsel's Report

Attorney Main indicated that she was requested to examine the affordable housing issue in relation to the Commission's authority to grant developers the ability to provide less than the 10% required by the regulations. Attorney Main indicated that her analysis entailed examining the regulations pertaining to the waterfront, the City of East Providence's Comprehensive Plan and applicable State law.

Attorney Main indicated that according to the Waterfront regulations, and other local and state law, new residential development that entails five or more units requires that 10% of the units be affordable. She stated that there is the option to make an in lieu payment. However, this process is more complicated and the fees must be used for either the construction or promotion of affordable units.

Mr. Harpootian asked if the Commission could reject the in lieu option when presented by a developer. Attorney Main indicated that the developer must make a request and present a case as to why the units cannot be constructed on site. Director Boyle stated that the City of East Providence is required to maintain its threshold of 10% affordable units. However, there is no current administrative mechanism to construct the affordable units once an in lieu payment has been accepted. There needs to be a mechanism to make the in lieu payment viable.

Chairman Rogers stated that the payments in lieu should be further explored and discussed at future meetings. Director Boyle agreed that she would provide a draft policy for affordable housing next meeting to provide the framework for the in lieu payments for affordable housing.

B. Executive Director's Report

Director Boyle indicated that Geonova, Essex River Ventures and Picerne have been proceeding with their respective developments. The completeness of Geonova's submission is being evaluated. However, Geonova is setting up meetings with CRMC, P&W and RIDOT to get their comments regarding the proposed development plans in terms of access, design and drainage. Staff and DRC will work on drafting their comments regarding the completeness of the submission of Geonova which will be submitted with the architectural and traffic consultants as well as the Public Works Department.

8. Communications

There was no discussion regarding communications.

9. Adjournment

Motion to adjourn made by Mr. Harpootian and seconded by Mr. Lynch. The meeting adjourned at 8:05 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Jeanne M. Boyle
Interim Executive Director

JMB/hjg