



# EAST PROVIDENCE WATERFRONT SPECIAL DEVELOPMENT DISTRICT COMMISSION

## Design Review Committee (DRC) Meeting

Minutes of January 27, 2009

**Attendees:** John Gregory, Chairman  
Jeanne Boyle, Executive Director  
John Pesce  
Stephen Coutu  
Luis Torrado

**Consultants:** Glen Fontecchio, Fontecchio & Associates  
Sara Bradford, Bradford Associates

**Staff:** Roberta Groch, AICP- Planner

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Chairman Gregory called the meeting to order at 6:36PM.

### **A. Approval of Meeting Minutes**

The meeting minutes of November 24, 2008 were approved, with changes, by a unanimous vote.

### **B. Proposed Development- “Village on the Waterfront”**

Ms. Christine Engustian, legal counsel for the project developers Village on the Waterfront LLC, gave a presentation on the proposed project on Veteran’s Memorial Parkway (VMP), located in the Veteran’s Memorial Parkway Sub-District. The land is owned by Chevron USA and was formerly used as an industrial operation by Gulf Oil. The site is comprised of three parcels between VMP and the Providence River, approximately where the Parkway meets Lyon Avenue. The *East Providence Special Waterfront Development District Plan* calls for medium- to high-density residential development and lower- density commercial and retail uses in this Sub-District.

The project will have approximately six hundred residential units and 40,000 square feet of commercial space built over five phases; each phase will include residential units. Phase I will have 137 residential units, 40,000 square feet of commercial/retail space and a restaurant; all of the commercial development will occur in this phase. Public waterfront activities may include: a fishing pier with mooring dock; a park; a possible spur to the East Bay Bike Path; a dinghy dock and a mooring field; and a possible kayak rental shop. The entire project is will be completed in 2018.

Ms. Engustian introduced Ms. Diane Dooley of DiMella Schaffer, the project architect, to describe the project in more detail. The layout of the project will take advantage of the waterfront views for both the residential and commercial structures, as well as to provide view corridors from VMP to the water at Lyon and Burgess Avenues. Residential buildings will step down from three- or four- stories at the Parkway side to one- to two-stories by the water: townhouses by the water would be two stories, to preserve the views from VMP to the water. The developer will seek a deviation for the heights of Buildings 5 and 6, which exceed the VMP height limit. Mr. Fontecchio expressed his concern that there are townhouses located within the view corridors from Burgess Ave. and from Lyon Ave. Ms. Dooley answered that the site slopes

significantly from VMP down to the townhouses: the view from VMP is unobstructed. The VMP side of the buildings closest to the Parkway will have a traditional gable and pitched roofs, while the buildings that face the waterfront have a more contemporary aesthetic. The buildings will have a mix of materials; different buildings will have different expressions. The townhouses will have green roofs to keep water on site.

The primary access point to the development will be from a new roundabout on VMP. There will be a gateway that opens into a plaza ringed by commercial units, a restaurant, and a health club with three levels of condominiums above; there will be one level of parking below. The commercial uses will be for the public as well as for the residents of the development. The plaza will be planted with trees to soften the hardscape and provide shade. An elevator has been relocated from a building interior and will take pedestrians down to the waterfront level in order to meet Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) accessibility requirements.

Approximately seventy-eight percent of the project's total parking will be located below grade. There will be 181 parking spaces provided at grade in Phase I: eighty-one for residences and one hundred for commercial uses and an equal number of spaces below grade. Approximately seventy-eight percent of the total parking for the project will be below grade. Parking for residents will be on the first level of the residential buildings. There will also be some parking sited along the roadways adjacent to residences; front doors will face onto WD. Parallel parking will be available along WD for access to the East Bay Bike Path extension and also near the retail plaza.

Townhouse garages were originally located on the terrace level: these have been removed and a parking garage has been placed under the townhouses with a single access point off of WD. All townhouses have two single-loaded parking spaces and entry from a front porch on the waterfront side. Garage doors are located on the inside of the site in order to keep the doors off of WD. The parallel parking spaces along WD have also been relocated to the back alley.

Mr. Audie Osgood, an engineer from DiPrete Engineers, discussed infrastructure, access and traffic issues. A roundabout is proposed at VMP and Lyons Avenue, although there are no details about it yet. An additional access point will be from the Waterfront Drive (WD) extension/Warren Avenue Connector to the site. A land swap with RIDOT will allow for shifting of Waterfront Drive inland and improved public access to the waterfront: Phase I will include public access through the stairways and ramps to the waterfront. The interior streets in the development will be open to the public for waterfront and bike path access. Waterfront Drive has been pushed back into the site to accommodate the fifty-foot Coastal Resources Management Council (CRMC) waterfront buffer, which will also contain the Bike Path extension. The net result of this is the relocation of five townhouses that were originally within this fifty-foot zone.

Peak traffic generation expected for Phase I buildout in 2012 is eighty-six trips in the morning and two hundred trips in the afternoon: these numbers are for the entrance to the site on VMP and assume no WD availability. The intersection of Lyon Ave. and VMP currently operates at Level of Service "F" (or "failing"); the proposed roundabout at this location will slow traffic on VMP down to 15-20 miles per hour and will create gaps for cars to enter the traffic stream.

Stormwater management will be through a system of rain gardens that will be for water quality

only: there will be no on-site detention. A portion of the site near the River has been designated by CRMC as a habitat protection zone, which will have no development on or near it.

Mr. Peter Kasbohm from Chevron Environmental Management Company discussed remediation efforts at the site. There have been a number of releases on the site, as well as contamination behind the retaining walls, which will be removed. Chevron and Village on the Waterfront LLC are working with RIDEM to address these issues.

Mr. Michael Hennessey, one of the project developers, stated that the ten percent affordable housing units will be located throughout the development. The starting price for residential units will be approximately \$175,000-200,000 with an average of approximately \$350,000. The developer has discussed Tax Increment Financing (TIF) assistance from the City, without which the project would not be feasible. He stated that an economic feasibility study for the project is underway as part of the TIF application and will also be submitted to the Commission.

The developer anticipates a full application and submission to the Waterfront Commission at the end of February. Ms. Boyle suggested that the developer's traffic consultants meet with the Commission's consultants for a traffic/transportation scoping session before the final submission. A meeting with the Fire Chief will also be scheduled.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:22PM.

Respectfully submitted,

JEANNE M. BOYLE  
*Executive Director*

JMB/RG