

I-195 REDEVELOPMENT DISTRICT

MEETING OF COMMISSION

PUBLIC SESSION

NOVEMBER 5, 2011

The I-195 Redevelopment District (the "District") Commission met on Saturday, November 5, 2011, in Public Session, beginning at 9:30 a.m., at the offices of the Rhode Island Economic Development Corporation ("EDC"), located at 315 Iron Horse Way, Suite 101, Providence, Rhode Island, pursuant to notice of the meeting to all Commissioners, and public notice of the meeting, a copy of which is attached hereto, as required by applicable Rhode Island law.

The following Commissioners were present and participated throughout the meeting: Chairperson Colin Kane, Ms. Barbara Hunger, Ms. Diana Johnson, Mr. John Kelly, Mr. Mark Ryan, Mr. Michael Van Leesten, Mr. Keith Stokes (ex officio) and Mr. Thom Deller, designee of Mr. James Bennett (ex officio).

Commissioners absent were: Barrett Bready, M.D. and Mr. James Bennett (ex officio).

Also present was: David M. Gilden.

1. CALL TO ORDER AND OPENING REMARKS

The Chairperson called the meeting to order at 9:32 a.m. He presented the Agenda and noted that the next meeting of the Commission is on November 14, 2011. Chairperson Kane urged the Commissioners to observe during the bus and walking tour of the I-195 surplus land how the property creates links to other areas of the City and how it interacts with abutting properties. He noted in particular linkages with downtown, the hospitals and the universities. He also asked members of the Commission to consider maintenance issues, and how to make the lots appealing from a retail land sale perspective.

2. BUS TOUR OF I-195 REDEVELOPMENT DISTRICT LAND PARCELS

The Commissioners and public attendees next boarded a bus provided by RIPTA for a tour of the I-195 surplus lands. The first stop was to view Parcels 6 and 8 on the East side of the river. As at all other stops, members of the Commission and the public exited the bus and Chairperson Kane provided commentary and answered questions. Chairperson Kane commented on maintenance issues, landscaping, abutters and linkages with other parts of Providence. Members of the Commission had several questions during each of the stops, and there was general discussion on a variety of

issues. One issue that arose at the first stop, and was later discussed at other stops, concerned the placement of parks throughout the surplus lands. The first issue concerned the placement and size of the former Washington Park, which is designated as P1 on the plan developed by the Rhode Island Department of Transportation (“DOT”), and whether the park would work effectively in its present planned location. The next stop was at Parcel 9 abutting the bike path, which links the East Bay, and which abuts the new Route I-195. It was noted that the Washington Park parcel (P1) may be a better development parcel than the present Parcel 9.

The next stop was at Parcel 1A, along South Water Street. The Commissioners also viewed Parcels 2, 3 and 5 which will be situated between South Main Street and the to-be-reconfigured South Water Street. It was noted that another park, designed as P2, runs along the riverfront and South Water Street. A discussion ensued regarding the creation of two additional streets between South Main Street and South Water Street, one of which is a continuation of the existing Transit Street and the other a new street over utility lines.

The next stop was at Parcels 22 and 25 on the West side of the river. Chairperson Kane noted the intended realignment of Dyer Street, and noted the existence of a berm that is a conduit for National Grid’s utility line affecting the two parcels. He also noted the park designated as P4, which is bounded by Dyer Street and the Providence River. Chairperson Kane also noted the parking challenges created by the development of the parcels on the West side. He also discussed the users of the abutting parcels, including Brown University, Lifespan, Care New England and NABsys.

The Commissioners next walked to Parcels 27 and 28. Michael Lewis, Director of DOT, discussed the intended continuation of Clifford Street through these parcels, and noted the impact on the abutting the building owned by The Hudson Companies, which would lose its parking lot to the extension of Clifford Street. Mr. Lewis explained the need to consider a land swap to give The Hudson Companies land that is part of the I-195 surplus lands located on the other side of The Hudson Companies’ building in exchange for the existing parking lot to enable the extension of Clifford Street. The Commissioners next visited Parcels 30 and 35 and discussed issues regarding maintenance, as well as the lack of parks in this area of the I-195 surplus lands. It was noted that these parcels are the closest to South Providence, but do not provide any linkage through the use of parks. Mr. Stokes noted that a park in this vicinity would create a linkage to the community in South Providence.

Finally, the Commissioners boarded the bus and were taken past the present Victory Plating facility and the Coro Complex. Chairperson Kane noted that significant development was likely to occur on the Victory Plating parcel that would have an impact on the I-195 surplus lands.

The bus and walking tour portion of the meeting was then concluded back at the EDC offices and the meeting was reconvened.

3. **PRESENTATION BY RHODE ISLAND DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION REGARDING THE DISPOSITION PROCESS, CONSTRUCTION OF ROADS, BRIDGES, AND PARKS, AND MAINTENANCE OBLIGATIONS**

Chairperson Kane reviewed the remaining agenda items and noted that the discussion relating to the Rhode Island Code of Ethics, the Open Meetings Act and Access to Public Records would be deferred to the next meeting of the Commission due to time constraints.

Chairperson Kane reintroduced Michael Lewis, Director of DOT. Mr. Lewis explained that DOT's presentation would provide historical background on the I-195 relocation project, a project status report, and the work that still needs to be completed. He noted DOT's willingness to help the District, along with other State entities and agencies, to expedite the process of redeveloping the I-195 surplus land. Mr. Lewis explained that the State does not have its own capital program for highway transportation and, as a result, it relies 100% on federal government funding. Therefore, all highway projects must adhere to the National Environmental Policy Act and other federally mandated standards for public participation, disclosure, documentation and mitigation of impacts. Mr. Lewis noted that the Commissioners were provided a copy of the Federal Highway Administration's record of decision relating to the I-195 relocation project (see **Exhibit B** attached hereto). He additionally noted that the DOT must adhere to federal rules regarding the valuation and disposition of the land.

Mr. Lewis next introduced David Freeman, from the McGuire Group, who provided a PowerPoint presentation to the Commission (see **Exhibit A** attached hereto). Mr. Freeman explained that the objectives of the I-195 relocation included implementation of the "Old Harbor Plan" and maximizing State opportunities for intermodal links, parks and recreation and downtown economic revitalization and redevelopment. The objectives also included creating structurally sound roadways and bridges, safer driving geometrics and minimization of congestion and disruption during construction. Mr. Lewis noted that the budget for the entire project was \$680 million, 80% of which came from the federal government, and most of the balance of which came from the State's issuance of bonds. Mr. Freeman presented slides that depicted the subject area from the 1950s through the present. He explained that the outstanding construction contracts include contracts 14 and 15, which are expected to be completed by Spring 2012, and contracts 16 and 12, which are expected to be completed by Spring 2013. Mr. Lewis next commented on circulation of traffic in the streets and areas of the I-195 surplus land.

Mr. Lewis reported that an additional \$40 million in funding is necessary to reach the \$680 million total budget for the project, which is expected to be received from the sale of the surplus land. However, Mr. Gilden explained to the Commissioners that that does not mean that the land will be valued at \$40 million. He stated that the District is obligated to pay only the fair market value for the land notwithstanding the fact that DOT needs \$40 million to reach its \$680 million budget. Mr. Lewis agreed, stating that in the

event that the surplus parcels are valued at less than \$40 million, DOT would need to either identify alternative funding sources or make changes in the project.

Mr. Freeman next presented slides showing the cross-sections through ground of what the parcels of land look like pre-demolition, after DOT work, and then post-construction. He noted that 8 foot concrete sidewalks are planned with granite curbing and 4 foot tree-wells. Mr. Lewis explained that the sidewalks were designed based on the City of Providence as DOT's "client", due to the fact that the streets and sidewalks will be owned and maintained by the City of Providence, and the need to be mindful of Americans with Disabilities Act compliance and long term maintenance needs. Further, at the City's direction, highway-type lighting is planned for the streets, which National Grid would maintain. It was also noted that the top soil will need to be tested to determine contaminants in order to meet brownfields requirements and that the tree-wells within the sidewalks provide drainage in order to help meet storm water standards.

Mr. Lewis explained that the plan is to have all identified utilities installed in the streets, including electrical, sewer and storm drains. Mr. Freeman reported that the storm drains are planned based on an 80% impervious surface area, to which Chairperson Kane noted that this assumption may give the Commission a great deal of flexibility for development. Mr. Freeman stated that utility easements will be needed on parcels 25 and 22 in order to incorporate utilities and drains and he noted that DOT previously worked with Brown University on this issue as well. With respect to removal of contaminated soil, it was noted that costs per acre for removal can range between \$200,000 and \$1,000,000 per acre, depending on the soil testing results and the depth of the removal. Chairperson Kane explained that extensive excavation is necessary in order to install the utilities, which includes up to 48 inch storm drains, and to then install foundations and footings.

Mr. Freeman then described the rendering of the park designs. It was noted that the DOT project included the establishment of the parks with the expectation that the City would maintain them; however, since the creation of the District, the City has indicated that it will not maintain the parks. Mr. Kelly and Chairperson Kane commented that the placement of the parks should be an issue that the Commission should consider carefully. Mr. Lewis noted that a hiatus on the parks would not pose a problem. Mr. Lewis stated that federal requirements are for "public space", but not necessarily parks. The Commissioners agreed that they need to gain an understanding of the parks plans and alternative options and that this item should be considered at the next Commission meeting. Chairperson Kane noted that many of the questions of the Commission require resources, such as a civil and environmental engineer, to help them resolve these issues.

Mr. Lewis next presented a slide depicting the pedestrian bridge connecting the parcels along South Water Street to the West side of the River. Mr. Lewis reported that DOT and RIPTA have applied for \$10 million in federal grants for projects, including the cost of the pedestrian bridge, and that the bridge would be maintained and operated by the City of Providence.

4. DISCUSSION OF OPERATING LOGISTICS

Chairperson Kane noted that at the next meeting the Commission would consider the land swap with The Hudson Companies (discussed during the morning tour). He also reported that the Rhode Island Economic Development Corporation has been generous in its support of the Commission and that it will be providing support in accounting of expenses and bookkeeping for the District. It was noted that EDC is also currently providing communications support. Chairperson Kane stated that the expenses of the District will be paid from bond proceeds and other appropriated funds.

Chairperson Kane reiterated the need to hire a civil and environmental engineer for the Commission and the Commissioners also discussed the need to develop criteria for hiring an Executive Director and the engagement of permanent legal counsel for the District. Mr. Ryan expressed the desire to create a draft budget to present to the legislature to ensure the necessary funding for the District even prior to its receipt of the bond proceeds. Chairperson Kane noted the need to have a workshop or extended meeting to determine what the District and Commission is working toward. He emphasized the need to align the work of the District with the City of Providence, which will be a partner in this process. He also stated that the Commission needs to consider locations for parking structures, whether such structures be within the District parcels of land or adjoining them.

There being no further business in Public Session, the meeting was adjourned at 3:45 p.m.

David M. Gilden, Secretary