

## CAPITAL CENTER COMMISSION

### Meeting Minutes of Wednesday, November 13, 2013

A meeting of the Capital Center Commission (CCC) was held on Wednesday, November 13, 2013 in the 1<sup>st</sup> Floor Conference Room of the Joseph A. Doorley, Jr. Municipal Building, 444 Westminster Street, Providence, RI 02903.

#### 1. Roll Call

Members Present: Deming Sherman, Wilfrid Gates, Duncan Johnson, Barry Fain, Seth Handy, Martha Werenfels, Michael McCormick, and John Sinnott

Members Absent: Guy Abelson, Greg Benik, William Kite, Luis Torrado, Councilman John Iglizzi, and Chairman of the Committee on Urban Redevelopment, Renewal & Planning

Staff Present: Christopher Ise and Robert Azar

Call to Order: The meeting was called to order at 12:13 PM, Chairman Sherman presiding.

Chairman Sherman announced that Commissioner Christopher Thomas had resigned, and a motion was made by Mr. Handy, seconded by Mr. Gates to send a resolution. Chairman Sherman stated that the position would be filled by the Providence Foundation. All voted in favor.

Mr. Gates suggested a letter from the Commission to former member Melvin Bilezerian thanking him for his service.

#### 2. Minutes

Approval of CCC Special Meeting Minutes of October 17, 2013. The minutes were not available at this time.

#### 3. Election of Secretary/Treasurer

With the resignation of Mr. Thomas, the Commission needed to elect a new Secretary/Treasurer. Mr. Gates made a motion, seconded by Ms. Werenfels, to elect Mr. Sinnott as Secretary/Treasurer. All voted in favor.

#### 4. Ratification of Previous Votes

Ratification of votes taken at the October 17, 2013 CCC Special Meeting

##### 4.1 Approval of Commission Special Meeting Minutes of August 28, 2013

A motion to ratify the approval of the meeting minutes of 8/28/13 was made by Mr. Handy, seconded by Mr. Fain. All voted in favor.

##### 4.2 FY 2014 Budget

A motion to ratify the acceptance of the CCC's FY2014 Budget was made by Mr. Fain, seconded by Ms. Werenfels. All voted in favor.

##### 4.3 Designation of Auditor

A motion to ratify the approval of the auditor contract was made by Mr. Handy, seconded by Mr. Johnson. All voted in favor.

#### 5. State House Parking Issues

Chairman Sherman updated the Commission. He explained that he has a meeting scheduled with the Governor on Monday, November 18<sup>th</sup> where he will discuss the development of the Francis Street lots. He added that he already had a meeting with Speaker Fox and gave all the information to him. Chairman Sherman stated he made a presentation on this issue to the Providence Foundation. He added that the Foundation would send letters of support to the State recognizing that the area is under the jurisdiction of the CCC. Other letters included support from the Audubon Society, Grow Smart RI and the Providence Preservation Society. He explained that is hard to

unwind what has been done at the State house but wants to work on Parcel 15. He noted that the State should have a parking plan for future growth and consider building a parking garage behind the Department of Administration Building. He mentioned that there are political obstacles. In response to a question by Ms. Werenfels, Chairman Sherman replied that Ted Sanderson from the Rhode Island Historic Preservation Commission (RIHPC) has taken a neutral position on the matter. Mr. Fain inquired as to what happened at the DRC meeting. Mr. Gates explained the DRC tried to avoid the politics and legality of the situation and made suggestions on how to improve the proposed plans. He noted that the DRC recommended creating tree islands in the parking lot and to plant trees to modify views of the lot and to provide shade. He added that the DRC felt it was better to improve the plans, avoiding the CCC's role in the matter. Mr. McCormick commented that the project is more about the reconfiguration of the lot. Mr. Gates remarked that they are also addressing the existing drainage problem. Mr. Handy suggested that the Commission send a letter to the State citing a violation of the regulations.

Ted Turcotte, representing Capital Properties, stated that the RIHPC should weigh in on the issue.

Mr. Gates gave a brief update on a recent meeting regarding the train station. He mentioned a new rail project that will bring new high speed rail to the region. He recommended rethinking the Capital Center Plan north of the State House.

Chairman Sherman stated that VHB has completed the 90% design plans for the plaza behind the station. The State and VHB will return for final approval.

Sam Coren, an interested party, commented that there is a trend in the City to break zoning laws, particularly for surface parking, which represents a regression in better transit and walkable City. He referred to the Capital Center plan and was pleased to see the Commission succeed in reversing this trend.

## **6. Adjournment**

The meeting adjourned at 12:51 PM.

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John Sinnott  
Secretary/Treasurer