

CAPITAL CENTER COMMISSION

Meeting Minutes of Thursday, December 19, 2013

A meeting of the Capital Center Commission (CCC) was held on Thursday, December 19, 2013 in the 1st 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, William Kite and Luis Torrado

Members Absent: Martha Werenfels, Michael McCormick, John Sinnott, Guy Abelson, Greg Benik, Councilman John Iglizzi, and Chairman of the Committee on Urban Redevelopment, Renewal & Planning

Staff Present: Christopher Ise

Call to Order: The meeting was called to order at 12:10 PM, Chairman Sherman presiding.

2. Approval of Special Meeting Minutes of October 17, 2013 and Regular Meeting Minutes of November 13, 2013

Mr. Fain made a motion, seconded by Mr. Handy, to approve both sets of meeting minutes. All voted in favor

3. Acceptance of 2014 CCC Meeting Schedule

Mr. Handy made a motion, seconded by Mr. Gates, to accept the 2014 CCC Meeting Schedule. All voted in favor.

4. Providence Station Plaza

Presentation of the 90% design project plans for the plaza and the area surrounding the train station

Steve Devine, from RIDOT Intermodal Planning, and Steve Derdarian, from VHB, appeared to discuss the project. Chairman Sherman asked Mr. Gates for the DRC's recommendation. Mr. Gates explained that DRC met on Tuesday and voted to forward the project to the Commission for approval with the recommendation that the compass rose be centered on axis with the train station, and the lighting is compatible with the standard lighting in the district. Chairman Gates asked Mr. Derdarian to explain the design rationale for a transitional landscape in the traditional context of the District, adding that they are not designing in a vacuum. Mr. Devine stated that it was a good meeting on Tuesday, adding that they had hoped to advertise by the end of the year but were held up by Amtrak. He stated that they finally have an agreement with Amtrak in place and are working with the City on a maintenance agreement. Mr. Derdarian presented plan and boards, and gave an overview on the design. He noted that the Station is a special building and needs to be respected. He mentioned that they took into account Amtrak's Station Hardening Project when designing the new plaza, adding that there will be a different style of bollard along the west edge. He pointed out the proposed event space in Station Park and the Amtrak parking area. Mr. Derdarian explained that view corridor is to remain unobstructed, with new trees placed accordingly. They have also selected plants that tolerate all kinds of conditions.

Ken Orenstein, representing Charlie Myers, commented about the work being conducted in the garage as part of the project, adding that they are trying to upgrade conditions in the garage. He added that they will clean up the interior once the plaza is completed. Mr. Johnson remarked that the garage is dank, to which Mr. Orenstein replied that it is a result of water penetrating into the garage from the plaza failure. Mr. Derdarian spoke about low-maintenance plaza furniture, expanded bike parking facilities to accommodate approximately 120 bikes, and directional signage. A signage system will be established. He explained that the size of the compass rose has been reduced from 70' to 64' in order to keep on axis and centered in the plaza. In response to a question by Mr. Fain,

Mr. Derdiarian stated that bronze features will be installed in the new granite walls to deter skateboarders. Mr. Luis liked the relocation of the circle and commended the architect.

Chairman Sherman explained that Ex-Officio members don't always show up and that the by-laws will need to be amended. He declared the presence of a quorum. Chairman Sherman suggested that a motion be made to approve the 90% design plans with the conditions recommended by the DRC. Mr. Handy made the motion, seconded by Mr. Johnson. All voted in favor. Chairman Sherman thanked Mr. Devine and Mr. Derdiarian.

Chairman Sherman gave an update regarding the parking lot issue at the State House. He explained that he and Mr. Gates met with the Governor Chafee, Richard Licht and Jonathan Stevens to discuss two issues, the State House parking lot and Parcel 15. Chairman Sherman disagreed with the Governor's and thought that the parking lot could have been improved without the expansion. Regarding the Francis Street lots, Mr. Gates and Chairman Sherman recommended a vision for the area and urged the Governor to think about the use of the area other than surface parking. Chairman Sherman was not sure what the conclusion was. He noted that Speaker Fox had been more sympathetic. In response to a question by Mr. Fain, Chairman Sherman explained that the State's legal opinion is that they don't need to abide by the CCC Regulations. He read a letter of support from the Providence Foundation. Mr. Gates referred to the Capital Center agreement signed by all parties, suggesting that that angle be pursued.

5. Adjournment

With no further business, the meeting adjourned at 12:55 PM.

John Sinnott
Secretary/Treasurer