

CAPITAL CENTER COMMISSION

Meeting Minutes of Wednesday, October 8, 2014

A meeting of the Capital Center Commission (CCC) was held on Wednesday, October 8, 2014 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, Seth Handy, Martha Werenfels, Michael McCormick and Luis Torrado

Members Absent: Duncan Johnson, Guy Abelson, John Sinnott, Greg Benik, Barry Fain, Sam Bradner, William Kite, Councilman John Igliazzi, 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 Meeting Minutes of September 10, 2014

Mr. Handy made a motion, seconded by Ms. Werenfels, to approve the meeting minutes. All voted in favor.

3. Parcel 9: GTECH Building

Request for approval to conduct exterior building alterations, install new signage and landscaping for The Capital Grille.

Peter Niemitz, Rodney Cattoor from Darden, Megan Gardner, and Bob Clinton from VHB appeared to discuss the project. Plans were presented. Mr. Niemitz explained that Capital Grille is taking over the former Ruth's Chris space. He stated that the main entrance into the restaurant will be relocated, and a new 10'x15' entrance vestibule and stainless steel canopy (which will extend to Memorial Boulevard) will be constructed. Mr. Niemitz explained that a concrete wall adjacent to the existing entrance will be modified to create a wider entry. This area will allow for a planter, bench, and valet waiting area. He stated that the existing terrace off the main dining room is underutilized. Mr. Niemitz stated that while the aluminum visor above the terrace will remain, they intend to install all new furnishings, umbrellas, and planters on the terrace. The terrace will have 60 seats for outdoor dining and 20 seats for the outdoor lounge area. He went on to say that the plan also includes the creation of a curb cut for a drop-off/valet area in front of the restaurant. Two existing in-ground sidewalk planters will have to be removed. He noted that they would install new sidewalk pavers in front of the restaurant. Mr. Niemitz added that there will be LED lighting, new illuminated signage, and two signature lions at the sidewalk entrance. Mr. Niemitz stated that the engineers required a structural element for the canopy, so steel columns, wrapped by stainless steel tubes and installed 6' apart, have been added to the structure. A brief discussion followed.

Ms. Gardner presented the landscape plan. She explained that there is an opportunity to add plantings to the site, including a 110' linear planting bed. She specified evergreen, deciduous, perennial, and ornamental plantings, 4' to 5' in height, and compact. She added that the new terrace planters will be planted. Ms. Gardner stated that she is also working with the City Parks Department on a planting plan for Waterplace Park, directly adjacent to the project. She added that she will be meeting with Doug Still, the City Forester, to discuss the pruning and thinning of the trees on the site. The trees will be illuminated by low voltage lights. In response to a question by Ms. Werenfels regarding the new gates for the terrace, Mr. Niemitz replied that they will be 42" to match the height of the railings.

Mr. Clinton spoke about the proposed drop-off area. He met with RIDOT and determined that the project does not require a physical alteration permit, but he will be working with the City's Department of Public Works. In response to questions regarding the reduction in width of the sidewalk and number of cars that can stack at the drop-off, Mr. Clinton explained that there will be 7' to 8' of

sidewalk remaining after the curb cut, and stacking for 3 to 4 cars. The new walkway pavers will be carried out onto the sidewalk.

Chairman Sherman noted that there has been change to the canopy design since the last submittal. Mr. Gates stated that the addition of the columns to the canopy is a change to the DRC approval, noting his disappointment that the Committee was not informed about the change. He added that the addition of the columns makes the canopy prosaic and dull. He added that if they are unable to find a structural solution to the cantilever, there are other design solutions. A lengthy discussion followed. Chairman Sherman announced that the DRC will need to review any revisions, adding that the next DRC meeting is scheduled for October 21st. Mr. McCormick expressed concern with the sidewalk reduction and recommended fewer than more valet spaces. Mr. Gates recommended that the drop-off area not interfere with the adjacent loading dock. He suggested stacking for 2 to 3 cars. He also recommended a bollard for the valet parking sign and 3" thick granite sidewalk pavers. Mr. Torrado commended the design, and suggested looking at alternatives for the canopy design. He also suggested the addition of benches. Mr. Gates made a motion, seconded by Ms. Werenfels, to approve the project in concept with the exception of the canopy design and sidewalk/drop-off layout. The applicant should return to the DRC on October 21st with revisions.

4. Adjournment

With no further business, the meeting adjourned at 1:00 PM.

Barry Fain
Secretary/Treasurer