

CAPITAL CENTER COMMISSION

Meeting Minutes of Wednesday, December 10, 2014

A meeting of the Capital Center Commission (CCC) was held on Wednesday, December 10, 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, Guy Abelson, Greg Benik, Sam Bradner, Seth Handy, Martha Werenfels, Michael McCormick, William Kite and Luis Torrado

Members Absent: Duncan Johnson, Wilfrid Gates, John Sinnott, Barry Fain, 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 12:07 PM, Chairman Sherman presiding.

2. Meeting Minutes

2.1 Approval of Commission Meeting Minutes of October 8, 2014: Ms. Werenfels made a motion, seconded by Mr. Abelson, to approve the meeting minutes. All voted in favor.

2.2 Acceptance of DRC Meeting Minutes of August 19, 2014: Mr. Ise announced that the minutes were not available.

3. Acceptance of 2015 CCC Meeting Schedule

On a motion made by Mr. Bradner, seconded by Ms. Werenfels, the 2015 meeting schedule was accepted. All voted in favor.

4. Parcel 6: Building B

Request for approval to construct a new apartment building (Building B). Buildings A and B of the Capitol Cove Project were previously approved by the Commission in 2003. Building A was completed in 2008.

Chairman Sherman explained the DRC has reviewed the project, and that the developer has responded to the Committee's comments. He added that the DRC endorses the project and recommends approval. Rob Stolzman, Kevin Chase, Peter Mahoney and David DeQuattro, from RGB, appeared to discuss the project. There was a PowerPoint presentation. Mr. Stolzman began by stating that Building A is built and leased by Johnson and Wales, and that the applicant is presenting the proposal to construct Building B. He added that both buildings were approved by the Commission in 2003, noting the modifications to Building A that were approved in 2008. Mr. Stolzman stated that Building B is to be consistent with Building A. Mr. DeQuattro explained that the original plan was based on a condominium layout; however this layout is based on 169 apartments and 169 parking spaces. He explained that the original building design has been brought up to date, and built around a cul-de-sac. Mr. Stolzman noted that the new design is within the setback, height and massing, as previously approved. Mr. DeQuattro presented material samples.

Michael Faria, landscape architect, presented the landscaping plans. He noted that they have incorporated the DRC's comments into the revised plans, relating to the Riverwalk extension from Building A to Smith Street, railings, lighting and the concept of creating a gateway. In response to a question by Mr. Benik, Mr. Stolzman replied that the developer will be maintaining the riverwalk and vegetative landscape. Mr. Faria noted that they would be screening the transformers and railroad tracks. He explained the gateway design off Smith Street, which includes columns and vegetation. Ms. Werenfels clarified that fencing and railings aren't required along the ramp walls. Mr. Faria confirmed that they are not needed. The railings that are proposed are to be an aluminum system. A brief discussion ensued regarding the conceptual transit hub on the adjacent site. Mr. Stolzman explained that they are in contact with the State and that it is an ongoing discussion. He added that this project would not preclude their plans.

Mr. Chase stated that construction would begin late spring, and would take eighteen months. Mr. Stolzman addressed Mr. Benik's concerns regarding the approval process for this project. In response to a question by Mr. Handy, the team replied that they would not be rebuilding the canal walls. Mr. McCormick made a motion, seconded by Mr. Abelson, to approve the project as submitted. All voted in favor.

5. Parcel 9: GTECH Building

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

Chairman Sherman began by stating that the project has gone through several DRC reviews, adding that the applicant has addressed the Committee's issues. Peter Niemitz, designer, presented the project plans. Mr. Niemitz explained that Capital Grille is relocating from Union Station. He stated that the main entrance into the restaurant will be relocated, and a new 10'x15' entrance vestibule on a granite podium would be constructed. The vestibule will have a canopy with signage. In addition there will be new paving, new signage on the Memorial Boulevard and Francis Street elevations, and the outdoor dining terrace will be revamped. He noted that at the walkway to the restaurant entrance, there will be the Capital Grille's signature bronze lions (two) mounted on absolute black granites plinths with two low-key brass plaques. The sign on Memorial Boulevard will be textured frosted glass, illuminated to a warm glow. In response to a question by Mr. Torrado about the previous canopy design, Mr. Niemitz explained that the landlord had concerns with penetrating the curtain wall, adding that the addition of freestanding columns was not well received. He added that there were challenges to the design and the cost was too high so they went back to a modest canopy. The restaurant is slated to open by Summer 2015. Mr. Bradner made a motion, seconded Ms. Werenfels, to approve the plans as submitted. All voted in favor.

6. District Maintenance Issues

Chairman Sherman addressed a letter by Mr. Paul Salesi, a Waterplace resident, who expressed concern regarding the lack of maintenance at Waterplace Park. He noted that he would communicate with the City's DPW.

Chairman Sherman also distributed a letter by Mr. Mike Mitchell, the State's legal counsel, regarding the proposed construction of the parking lot on Parcel 15. He added that the State has agreed to present to the DRC their project plans on an advisory level.

7. Adjournment

With no further business, the meeting adjourned at 1:15 PM.

Barry Fain
Secretary/Treasurer