



EAST PROVIDENCE WATERFRONT DISTRICT COMMISSION

Waterfront Commission Meeting Minutes Thursday, July 15, 2021 – 6:30 PM

A remote/virtual meeting was held in accordance with Governor Gina Raimondo's EXECUTIVE ORDER 20-46, JUNE 12, 2020, FORTY-SECOND SUPPLEMENTAL EMERGENCY DECLARATION - PUBLIC MEETINGS AND PUBLIC RECORDS REQUESTS, EXTENDED BY EXECUTIVE ORDER 21-72, JUNE 24, 2021, EXTENSION OF EXECUTIVE ORDERS.

Commissioners present via video and audio:

William Fazioli, Chair
David Sluter
David O'Connell
Daniel Borges
Tim Conley
Steve Hardcastle
Peter Willey

Manny Barrows
Dominic Pontarelli
Rick Lawson
Jennifer Griffith
Mike Walker
Daniel Borges
Voting Members Absent:
Luis Torrado, DRC Chair

Staff present via video and audio:

Chris Martin, Executive Director
Amy Goins, UTR Legal Counsel

Glen Fontecchio, Architect

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- 1. CHAIRMAN'S OPENING REMARKS** The Chair called the meeting to order at 6:35 PM. The Executive Director then conducted a roll call to confirm quorum of voting members.

The Chair mentioned that there was a discrepancy on the public notice to abutters that showed the date of the hearing correctly as July 15th, but had the incorrect day of the week as Wednesday, not Thursday. The Chair confirmed that there were no issues brought up by members of the public or abutters. Based on advice from the Waterfront Commission counsel and the applicant's counsel, the meeting will move forward as planned.

2. OLD BUSINESS

- A. VOTE:** The motion by Mr. Hardcastle to approve the minutes of June 17, 2021 was seconded by Mr. Lawson and passed by a unanimous voice vote.

3. NEW BUSINESS

- A. VOTE:** On a motion by Mr. Pontarelli, seconded by Mr. Lawson and approved unanimously by voice vote, the Commission voted to appoint Commissioner Manny Barrows to the Hearing Panel, effective July 1, 2021 and to appoint Commissioner Rick Lawson to the Hearing Panel, effective July 15, 2021.

B. WATERFRONT COMMISSION PUBLIC HEARING

VOTE: To consider adoption of the Design Review Committee and Hearing Panel advisory opinions for East Point—a development in the Phillipsdale sub-district on three parcels totaling 27.11 acres including 392 units. The development will provide a mix of residential dwelling types, including single family, duplex, townhome and apartment units.

Project: East Point

Applicant: Noble Development, LLC

Owner: W. Mark Russo, Esq., Special Master
Address: 300 & 0 Bourne Ave
Map/ Block/ Lot: Map 203, Block 1, Lot 4 & Map 303/ Block 13/ Lots 4 & 5
Zoning/ Acreage: Phillipsdale Sub-District

The applicant, Richard Baccari, presented an overview of the proposed development, which will have 392 units (112 Condos for sale and the remainder would be apartments) over three parcels and 27+ acres on the Seekonk River and Omega Pond at the former Ocean State Steel site. The applicant has agreed in principal to have 10% affordable housing on site. The applicant has been accommodating to the peer and staff review over the course of the application review process.

The applicant Engineer, Lyn Small provided testimony on details of the civil engineering site plans. The site is over 27 acres, consisting of two development parcels separated by the P&W railroad: the Pond Side and Coastal Side. Access would be from Bourne and Roger Williams Aves. The main roadway would come from the existing curb cut off of Roger Williams Ave and would extend towards the railway and extend to the coastal feature on the west side of the Coastal Side. The Pond Side will consist of multi-family townhouse buildings and apartment buildings. There will be 144 units on the Pond Side. There will be a public coastal greenway path along Omega Pond and there will be public parking areas. One revision made based on staff and peer comments is to add the kayak launch on the Pond Side and enhanced the public walking paths to promote circulation. The railway will have a pedestrian crossing over the railroad tracks at the same grade of the crossing. There are 248 units on the Coastal Side, consisting of a mix of apartments, single family, duplex units, 3, 4, 8 & 12 unit buildings and a few triplex units. The main roadway will be 30' wide and lead to a public parking area and the publicly-accessible coastal greenway, which follows along the waterfront of the parcel. There are three ELURs on the site, two on the River Parcel and one small one on the Pond Parcel. The utilities for the project will be sufficient from National Grid on both parcels and there will be water and sewer provided for the project and there is a potential to bring in gas. CRMC will be in charge of permitting the entire project, instead of DEM and CRMC.

The Commission asked about the traffic impact of the project. The applicant mentioned that the Traffic Impact Study was conducted by Beta Group and reviewed by the Waterfront Commission's peer reviewer, Gordon Archibald. Mr. Martin summarized that there was found to be no major traffic impacts predicted because of the project being all residential with no commercial component. There have been conversations with RIPTA about added bus service in the area as well. The Commission requested Ms. Small address the revisions made to the plan in response to comments given by Staff Architect, Glen Fontecchio on the change in configuration for buildings 12 & 13 on the River Parcel. Ms. Small showed that the buildings have been rotated 90 degrees to give a stronger presence along the street and to bring the parking lot inward and not along the street. The plan set will be updated with the engineering needed for the new configuration. The Commission asked about the timing of building the road from Roger Williams into the River Side. The applicant stated that he estimates within the first six months it should be complete, depending on the timing of the completion of the railroad crossing.

Public comment was given by Mr. DiMaio, owner of the abutting parcel where the former Almacs Distribution Facility is located. He mentioned that he was there to understand more about the project, but had no comment at this time.

On a motion by Mr. Barrows, seconded by Mr. Hardcastle and approved unanimously, the Commission voted to close the Waterfront Commission public hearing.

On a motion from Mr. Pontarelli seconded by Mr. Hardcastle, the Waterfront Commission voted 10-0 to approve the development at East Point based on the findings in the applicant's application and architectural plan set dated June 21, 2021, applicant's testimony, the Executive Director's July 14, 2021 memo, the July 13, 2021 DRC and July 12, 2021 Hearing Panel memos, comments from City staff and consultants, public testimony and the finding that the project is in conformance with the reviewing criteria set forth in section 19-477 of the East Providence Zoning Ordinance and the purposes of Article IX, "Waterfront Special Development Districts" regulations of the East Providence Zoning Ordinance, subject to the following conditions:

1. All Hearing Panel and Design Review Committee conditions will be met.
2. The Waterfront Commission Executive Director & Legal Counsel shall review and approve the Operations and Management and Land Trust agreements, and the deed restrictions for the affordable housing units.
3. Total Application Fee is \$122,500. The applicant will provide the Waterfront Commission with the required 10% fee (\$12,250) due prior to Notice of Decision.
4. The applicant will provide the Waterfront Commission with the required 50% fee (\$61,250) due at building permit.
5. The applicant will provide the Waterfront Commission with the required 15% fee (\$18,375) due at Certificate of Occupancy.
6. The applicant will obtain final Providence and Worcester (P&W) approval for the proposed rail crossing and submit for City Engineering and staff review.
7. All public improvements and utilities shall be verified as designed to the satisfaction of the Department of Public Works, Engineering, Fire Department and the Waterfront Commission.
8. The applicant receives approval of sewer utility plans from the East Providence Department of Public Works and the Narragansett Bay Commission.
9. The applicant receives the proper subdivision needed for creating any public roads within the development.
10. The proposal's design, engineering and traffic pattern complies with all applicable federal, State and local regulatory requirements.

Present and voting Waterfront Commission Members on the Executive Director's draft resolutions and Hearing Panel and Design Review Committee recommended conditions, which were entered into the record:

Mr. Hardcastle
Mr. Sluter – Aye
Mr. O'Connell – Aye
Mr. Barrows – Aye
Mr. Pontarelli – Aye
Not present: Mr. Torrado

Ms. Griffith – Aye
Mr. Willey – Aye
Mr. Conley – Aye
Mr. Lawson
Chairman Fazioli – Aye

4. STAFF REPORT

Mr. Martin mentioned that in-person meetings will begin again with the next meeting in August. This is because the requested extension of the Executive Order requiring remote participation was denied by Governor McKee.

Mr. Martin updated the Commission with a progress report on The Residences at Bold Point Harbor. The first phase of 22 units is near completion and close to 100% leased. The second phase is now underway and will add twelve new units to the project. This is a welcome addition to the city's limited and aging housing supply. The additional housing units will also contribute to replenishing the city's declining population and labor force. The location of the units is in the newly designated East Providence Art District by the State of Rhode Island. The new designation exempts writers, composers, and artists residing within the art district from state personal income tax derived from their art. The city specifically identified this area as having challenges with development and wanted to create an incentive for the creative community to live, create and sell their artwork in East Providence.

Mr. Martin also noted that a buyer has started the process to purchase multiple properties on Valley Street. He anticipates a development proposal in late 2021/ early 2022.

5. VOTE: ADJOURNMENT

A motion was made by Mr. Pontarelli, seconded by Mr. Lawson to adjourn. On voice vote the Design Review Committee voted unanimously to adjourn at 7:14 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

CHRIS MARTIN, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR