

**CITY OF EAST PROVIDENCE
PLANNING BOARD
MINUTES**

Date: June 29, 2021

Time: 7:00 PM

Place: City Hall, Council Chambers and also via Zoom

Present: Eric Crook, Alan D'Aiello, Christopher Grant, Burton Batty (Vice-Chair), Octavio Cunha, Michael Robinson (Chair), Michelle Rockwell, Michael Marcello (City Solicitor), William Fazioli (Planning Director), Patrick Hanner (Staff)

1. CALL TO ORDER

Meeting was called to order at 7:00 PM

2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The pledge of Allegiance was cited.

3. APPROVAL OF PLANING BOARD MINUTES

None submitted

4. NEW BUSINESS

A. Public Hearing.

Recommendation to the City Council to amend the Generalized Land Use Map of the Comprehensive Plan to change from Open Space to Metacomet, a new sub-district of the Waterfront Special Development District under Article IX of the City Zoning Code for property owned by the Petitioner Metacomet Property LLC. Street Address: 500 Veteran's Memorial Parkway. Location: Map 107, block 15, lot 1.

Mr. Marcello would like entered into the record that he received an email communication from Attorney William Harsch who represents a group called Keep Metacomet Green. Mr. Harsch has objected going forward with the meeting based upon what he believes is to be a lack of adequate notice or compliance notice under the RI Laws. Mr. Marcello disagrees that the meeting has not been properly noticed. It has and we have complied with all the requirements per the statue. He is confident that board has complied with all the notification requirements per the statue.

Based on the recommendation from Mr. Marcello, Mr. Robinson is comfortable proceeding with the meeting tonight.

Attorney Zachary Darrow presented on behalf of the applicant. Mr. Mathew Mirva from Bohler Engineering discussed in detail the new version of the plan consisting of 57+/- acres of public open space: 9+/- acres will be gifted to the city, redevelop 48+/- acres into a public 9-hole golf course, create 2.2+/- miles of new walking trails and a scenic overlook and establish a substantial residential buffer. This will leave 60.9 acres of future development. The entire property would be rezoned to the Metacomet sub district, a new zoning sub district in the Waterfront District, along with a corresponding amendment to the city's comprehensive plan. A comparison was shown between the plan presented on 6/23/20 and 6/28/21.

Ashley Sweet, a conservationist and planning expert was sworn in. She presented slides reviewing the timeline of zone change and comprehensive plan amendment analysis. Ms. Sweet explained in great detail the specific requirements for the newly created subdistrict.

On a motion by Mr. Grant, seconded by Mr. Crook, the board voted 7-0 to accept Ashley Sweet as an expert in Planning.

Mr. Darrow presented details on the proposed additional conditions based on meetings and discussions with planning department staff.

Mr. Hanner presented the staff's memo. A rezone and comprehensive plan request requires notice to be sent to all the abutters within 200 feet and an ad in the East Providence Post. The planning department sent certified mail to all the abutters within 200 feet and an ad was placed in the East Providence Post. We are confident all public notification requirements have been met. The Waterfront District Commission has a higher standard for conditional uses. On page 4 of staff's memo are the Waterfront District Commission design guidelines. The design guidelines encourage a flexible and creative design, and to encourage a mix of uses.

Mr. Fazioli asked Mr. Darrow to address the use of a Hotel, Flex Tech over 20,000, Fast food and Drive-Thru's. Mr. Darrow addressed and clarified the uses. These uses would all be conditional. The Planning department is giving a positive recommendation on both zone change and comprehensive plan amendment.

Mr. Darrow provided specific details to Mr. Crook on the proposed additional conditions listed.

Mr. Fazioli and Mr. Hanner addressed questions from various members of the Planning Board.

Mr. Marcello clarified to the Planning Board members that they can only make an advisory recommendation. Any changes would need to be approved by the City Council. He went over in detail the board's role in tonight's meeting.

The floor was opened to the public. All participants were sworn in. Various members of the community spoke both on behalf of and against the proposed plan.

Mr. Marcello wants clarified a change of zone can only be approved by the City Council. The Waterfront Commission has no authority to change a zone.

The floor was opened to the public. All participants were sworn in. Various members of the community spoke both on behalf of and against the proposed plan.

On a motion by Dr. D'Aiello, seconded by Mr. Crook, the board voted 7-0 to continue the meeting until 10:35 PM.

Mr. Fazioli discussed the differences between the Zoning board, Planning board and the Waterfront District Commission.

Mr. Harsch spoke on the concerns of zone change and the Waterfront District Commission.

Mr. Darrow gave closing remarks on the proposed plan. He stated the plan was not last minute, changes were made real time after receiving comments from planning staff.

On a motion by Mr. Cunha, seconded by Mr. Grant, the board voted 7-0 to accept all documents into tonight's record.

Mr. Grant read through the required findings listed on pages 5, 6, and 7 of staff's memo. Based upon these findings, Mr. Grant made a motion to provide a favorable advisory opinion on the petition to amend the comprehensive plan, generalized land use map from open space to a new sub-district of the East Providence Waterfront Special District to be designated as the Metacomet sub-district, seconded by Mr. Cunha, on a roll call vote, the board voted 5-2 to accept the motion.

On a motion by Mr., Grant, seconded by Mr. Cunha, on a roll call vote 5-2, the board voted to provide a favorable recommendation to the city council to amend the city's official zoning map from open space to a new sub-district with the Waterfront District to be designated as the Metacomet sub-district.

5 ANNOUNCEMENTS

The next Planning Board is scheduled for July 12, 2021

6. ADJOURNMENT

On a motion by Dr. D'Aiello, seconded by Mr. Cunha, the board voted to adjourn the meeting at 10:40 PM.

CC: Mayor Roberto DaSilva
City Council
Director of Public Works
City Engineer
City Solicitor
Fire Chief
Zoning Officer