



EAST PROVIDENCE WATERFRONT DISTRICT COMMISSION

Waterfront Commission Meeting Minutes Thursday, February 25, 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 21-20, FEBRUARY 3, 2021, ONE HUNDRED AND SIXTEENTH SUPPLEMENTAL EMERGENCY DECLARATION – EXTENSION OF EXECUTIVE ORDERS.

Commissioners present via video and audio:

- William Fazioli, Chair
- Steve Hardcastle, Treasurer
- Domenic Pontarelli
- David O’Connell
- Tim Conley, Vice Chair
- Peter Willey
- Rick Lawson
- Jennifer Griffith
- Mayor Robert DaSilva
- Mike Walker, Commerce RI
- Daniel Borges, DPW

Voting Members Absent:

- Paul Moura, Secretary
- David Sluter
- Luis Torrado

Staff present via video and audio:

- Chris Martin, Executive Director
- Amy Goins, Legal Counsel
- Dominic Leonardo, Waterfront Intern

- 1. CHAIRMAN’S OPENING REMARKS** The Chair called the meeting to order at 6:37 PM and gave an overview of remote meeting protocol.
- 2. OLD BUSINESS**
 - A. VOTE:** The motion by Mr. Hardcastle to approve the minutes of December 17, 2020 was seconded by Mr. Lawson and passed by a unanimous voice vote.
- 3. NEW BUSINESS**
 - A.** The Chair gave an overview on HousingWorks RI’s Affordable Housing report from February 2020 for East Providence. Highlights include: East Providence is a relatively affordable community with a median single family home price at \$245,000—where the state’s average is \$305,000; 60% of homes in East Providence are owner-occupied; Long-term Affordable Housing (80% AMI) in East Providence is at 9.83% of the state mandated 10%; We anticipate that East Providence will meet or exceed the required 10% in 2021 with new affordable housing projects throughout the city coming online; It is anticipated that we will fall back below the 10% requirement soon after that due to more market-rate housing coming on the market through new developments that don’t yet include plans for affordable housing. The City and Waterfront Commission are working on policy initiatives to help maintain the affordable housing in the City.

The Commission asked if there is a plan in place to fund the initiatives that would help to maintain the stock of affordable housing in the City. The Chair responded that the Waterfront Commission’s In-Lieu of Affordable Housing fees and the current Rhode Island Statewide Bond Issue to issue bonds for \$65M to assist with new housing construction, renovation and property acquisition for affordable housing projects. The Commission asked if there are other communities in RI that use incentives to build affordable housing. Amy Goins, Legal Counsel answered that there are two types of incentives RI communities use: Inclusionary zoning—where the developer is required to set aside a portion of the development as deed restricted LMI housing and in turn, receives a density bonus. The second type of

tool used is a comprehensive permit allowed under the State Low and Moderate Income Housing Act, which is not applicable to the Waterfront District.

- B. VOTE:** East Providence Waterfront District Draft Zoning Amendment to Section 19-485. Previously approved by the Waterfront Commission in December 2019, this amendment has been redrafted per the Waterfront Commission counsel’s recommendation to comply with RIGL 45-24-46.1 (“Inclusionary Zoning Statute”). If the proposed amendment is approved by the Waterfront Commission, the Planning Board will then provide an advisory recommendation on the amendment to the City Council, which would review and vote on the amendment at a public hearing.

Mr. Martin and Ms. Goins provided background on the drafted zoning amendment and the need to update these in order to comply with RIGL 45-24-46.1, which was created in 2014 and made the current inclusionary zoning ordinance for the Waterfront District non-compliant with the RI State law. In order to comply with RIGL, the proposed ordinance was revised to (1) provide that in-lieu fees must be spent on affordable housing serving families earning no more than 80% of AMI; (2) provide that developers, not the Commission, shall determine whether to pay fees in lieu of development; and (3) provide that in-lieu fees shall be determined by Rhode Island Housing. Ms. Goins confirmed that this change takes the decision for in-lieu fees out of the hands of the Commission and makes it the choice of the developer.

On a motion by Mr. Lawson and a second by Mr. Hardcastle, the Commission voted 8-0 to approve the proposed amendment to the Inclusionary Zoning Ordinance.

Present and Voting:

William Fazioli, Chair—Aye	Rick Lawson—Aye
Tim Conley, Vice Chair—Aye	Jennifer Griffith—Aye
Steve Hardcastle, Treasurer—Aye	Peter Willey—Aye
Domenic Pontarelli—Aye	David O’Connell—Aye

- C. VOTE:** FY21 Q1 & Q2 Financial Reports

On a motion by Mr. Pontarelli and a second by Mr. Hardcastle, the Commission voted unanimously to approve the FY21 Q1 & Q2 financial reports.

4. STAFF REPORT.

Mr. Martin presented the updated 2020 Waterfront Commission Annual Report to the Commission. Mr. Martin also updated the Commission on the sale of the Getty properties at Dexter Road and Massasoit to local developer Jon Savage. He has been working at a staff level to advise the developer on allowable uses and design guidelines.

The next meeting is scheduled for March 18th, 2021.

5. VOTE: ADJOURNMENT

A motion was made by Mr. Hardcastle, seconded by Mr. Lawson to adjourn. On voice vote the Waterfront Commission voted unanimously to adjourn at 7:27 PM.

Respectfully submitted,
CHRIS MARTIN, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR