



## EAST PROVIDENCE WATERFRONT SPECIAL DEVELOPMENT DISTRICT COMMISSION

### Design Review Committee Public Hearing Minutes- October 20, 2015

*DRC Members:* Luis Torrado, DRC Chairman  
John Pesce  
Steve Coutu, Director of Public Works

*Staff:* Roberta Groch, AICP- Planner

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Chairman Torrado called the hearing to order at 6:07PM.

#### **1. Public hearing- 310 Bourne Ave.**

Address: 310 Bourne Ave. Building 70 (AKA “Phillipsdale landing”)

Owner and Applicant: Bourne Holdings LLC

Assessor’s Map 203, Block 1, Parcel 3.0

Zoning – Phillipsdale Waterfront Sub-District

Mr. Dylan Conley, legal counsel for the project, gave a short history of the application to allow the operation of Mattress Express in a 70,000 sf building located at 310 Bourne Ave (“the property”). He introduced Mr. Preston Halperin, one of the owners of the property. Mr. Torrado asked Mr. Conley to tell the DRC about their request for a zoning determination for the business known as Express Mattress Recyclers LLC (“the business”), located in a building at the property. Mr. Conley said that the mattress use was developed at the State level to deal with illegal mattress dumping. There were already thousands of mattresses on-site when the property was purchased: it is a continued use. There are currently between seven and ten tractor-trailer trucks per day at the business: this may increase. The business will draw only from Rhode Island.

Mr. Torrado opened the hearing to comments from the public.

Mr. Terrance Tierney, legal counsel for the properties’ neighbors, stated that the April 9, 2015 zoning decision from the City Zoning Officer denied this use, but the business has been operating illegally since then. The existing truck traffic is already disturbing nearby residents. He urged the DRC to deny the request.

Mr. Mark Russo, Special Master for the adjacent East Pointe property (aka “Ocean State Steel”), said that the owners of the property were good neighbors but that the DRC and Hearing Panel should give careful thought to the request. He stated that the use felt more like recycling. He stated that the business will have its foot in the door under light manufacturing and then it will recycling or a transfer station-type use.

All of the members of the public who spoke stated that they do not want to see the proposed use in operation at the property and urged the Panel to deny the request. No one spoke in favor of the proposed use. Several neighbors said they were disappointed that the City has allowed Mattress Express to

operate since the summer without permission. They asked that the City stop the business from operating.

The following is a summary of statements that were made during the hearing, by topic, by the DRC, the Applicant and his counsel, and by members of the public:

- The mattresses are “bug-bombed” in transit to the business and are ready to be re-purposed.
- The neighbors cannot take much more, having dealt with New Bay, Ocean State Steel, and pond View, which is still operating.
- Good businesses will be scared away by this business.
- Traffic is increasing on Roger Williams Ave.
- The City does not enforce its own rules and cannot be trusted.
- Why reward that is already running?
- Mattresses are toxic and contain VOCs that result is “off-gassing”: this can cause health problems.
- 310 Bourne Ave. is right next to Ross Commons apartment complex.
- The City zoning officer should shut the business down.
- How long is the business’s lease for?
  - There are four more years remaining on the lease.
- City has not been protecting the health and welfare of its residents for the past seventeen years.
- Amount of traffic in the neighborhood causes frustration, lowers property values, and ruins quality of life.
- There is increased traffic from all of the uses at Phillipsdale Landing.

Mr. Coutu stated that the DRC usually reviews the design aspect of development projects: it does not make sense for this request to appear before the DRC. Mr. Pesce said that the DRC has no jurisdiction over this request.

VOTE: A motion was made to take no action on the matter: the motion was seconded and unanimously passed without discussion.

## **2. Adjournment**

VOTE: A motion was made to adjourn the public hearing at 7:08PM: the motion was seconded and unanimously passed without discussion.

Respectfully submitted,

ROBERTA GROCH, AICP  
*Interim Executive Director*

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