



EAST PROVIDENCE WATERFRONT DISTRICT COMMISSION

Waterfront Commission Meeting Minutes August 15, 2019

Attendees: William Fazioli, Chair
Steven Hardcastle
Rick Lawson
Paul Moura
Jennifer Griffith
David Sluter
Domenic Pontarelli

Absent: Luis Torrado
Tim Conley
Peter Willey

Ex-officio: Mayor DaSilva
Diane Feather, Acting Planning Director

Staff: Pamela M. Sherrill, AICP, Executive Director
Craig Seymour, RKG Associates, TIF application peer review

1. **CHAIRMAN'S OPENING REMARKS** The chair called the meeting to order at 6:38 PM and confirmed quorum.
2. **OLD BUSINESS**
 - A. **VOTE:** On a motion by Mr. Pontarelli, seconded by Mr. Lawson, July 18, 2019 meeting minutes were voted unanimously.
3. **NEW BUSINESS**
 - A. **VOTE:** Award of \$116,000 in-lieu funding as an affordable housing subsidy to PLK Ventures for two affordable housing units at 59 Purchase Street.

Ms. Sherrill indicated that she has been working with Kent Lorenz, PKL Ventures, and the acting Planning Director to review potential sites for two units of off-site affordable housing required by February conditions of approval for construction of 22 market rate units at 30 Veterans Memorial Parkway. Mr. Lorenz respectfully requested a continuance to September 19, 2019 as he is not ready to make the in-lieu payment to the Waterfront Commission but did provide a project update. He anticipates submitting the building permit application by September 15, 2019 at which point payment of the \$116,000 in-lieu fee will be made to the Waterfront Commission Affordable Housing Fund. Closing for the two-family dwelling at 59 Purchase Street is scheduled September 20, 2019. In accordance with conditions of approval, RIDOT has approved a landscaped "adopt a spot" where pavement will be removed along Veterans Memorial Parkway. Two-bedroom affordable units at 95 Purchase Street are larger than proposed market rate micro units at 30 Veterans Memorial Parkway and financials were presented at the February hearing.

On a motion by Mr. Hardcastle and seconded by Mr. Pontarelli, the commission voted 7-0 to continue the vote to the sooner of the September 18, 2019 meeting or closing for the proposed off-site affordable housing at 95 Purchase Street.

- B. Vote:** Kettle Point TIF – (first) Annual Assessment Report and Amendment of the Special Assessment Roll for the 2019-2020 Assessment Cycle.

Eva Kamau, MuniCap project manager, indicated that the Kettle Point TIF has been very successful to date with TIF tax revenue exceeding obligations. Established reserve funds will continue to grow.

The chair indicated that the Kettle Point TIF is self-supporting and that the city general fund is receiving 30% of the increase in tax revenue over the 2009 base year as well as continued base year property tax and tangibles tax. He indicated that the city has also benefited from increased public access to the waterfront, an influx of new residents, and a favorable TIF experience that can be applied to other waterfront development. MuniCap will investigate if the city may accelerate bond repayment.

On a motion by Mr. Moura, seconded by Mr. Hardcastle, commissioners voted 7-0 to approve the Annual Assessment Report and Amendment of the Special Assessment Roll for the 2019-2020 Assessment Cycle.

- C. Workshop:** Chevron presentation of application for \$9,370,000 Tax Increment Financing for infrastructure and public amenities for the UNOCAL parcels totaling 8 acres located along the Providence River adjacent to Bold Point Park and the Wilkes Barre Pier.

Monte McKillip, consultant for Chevron, presented the proposed vision plan for mixed use (hotel, restaurants, and residential) and outlined \$27 million of public improvements, of which \$9.37 million would be TIF funded with the balance financed by a future developer. The site, with its exceptional waterfront location, requires significant incentive to construct within the 100-year flood zone. As indicated by representatives of Chevron's project team, without tax increment financing the site would likely remain undeveloped or could possibly be developed solely for residential use which would not fulfill Waterfront Commission goals of mixed use, public access, high quality design, increased tax revenue, and job creation, among others. The Chevron team indicated that a TIF ordinance could serve as a catalyst for RIDOT construction of the I-195 westbound off-ramp to Waterfront Drive, another critical requirement for high level site development. TIF bonds could not be sold without approval of the Waterfront Commission of any proposed development.

If the property is sold to a developer, the TIF agreement would run with the property. Mr. McKillip indicated that there could be some benefits to marketing both the Gulf and UNOCAL sites together but that a larger TIF district encompassing the South Quay might not yield benefits as each site has separate infrastructure requirements. A proforma has not been conducted but a market study has been completed. The project team concurred with a commissioner's statement that the per square foot cost could be prohibitive without TIF incentive. A future developer would determine the order of

development in response to market demand. Remediation of the Gulf and UNOCAL sites will remain Chevron's responsibility. The Gulf site remedy is nearing completion with final capping to be conducted by the developer. Chevron is finishing the investigative phase at UNOCAL and anticipates completion of remediation by the developer with financial assurance that Chevron, as the responsible party, will provide funding.

Ms. Sherrill indicated that she was skeptical of the need for various TIF-funded public improvements prior to an afternoon working session with the Chevron team but she now recognizes the importance of raising the bar for high quality development that will continue to support the City of East Providence's reputation as a statewide leader in redevelopment of challenging waterfront sites. She concurred that without TIF it is likely that this site would not be developed to high standards. Craig Seymour, Commission TIF consultant, concurred that TIF is required to achieve the city's goals, to attract a successful developer, and to demonstrate political partnership for a successful project. The fiscal impact analysis is conservative and will be a positive generator of tax revenue to fund municipal service costs associated with the development.

The chair indicated that the application must be certified complete before advertising a Waterfront Commission hearing. The Commission's responsibility at the hearing is to determine if proposed public improvements are in accordance with commission goals and to vote on an advisory opinion to City Council.

4. Staff Report

Prior to the staff report Councilman Rodericks asked for Waterfront Commission support for a request to Sen. Whitehouse for funding to remove the derelict structure of the India Point railroad bridge. This will be placed on the September 19, 2019 agenda. Ms. Sherrill indicated that she is working with the Planning Department on a request for funding for removal of marine debris and barge but that removal of the derelict bridge is not included.

Ms. Sherrill reported that transfer to the city of the 2.9-acre parcel at Kettle Point with 600-foot pier has been held up after several puddles of oil were observed. The Planning Department is working with the City Solicitor to determine next steps since as a voluntary conveyance, the city would be responsible for any future remediation. She reported that Colonial Mills is in operation but that all trees have been cleared and more extensive areas than were indicated on the plan had been paved. She has requested a robust planting plan prepared by a registered landscape architect, due September 15. The Watchemoket Square RFP, due August 20, will focus on urban design, placemaking, signage and a prioritization of recommended improvements. The next meeting is September 19 and the October meeting will be moved to Thursday, October 24, to avoid conflicts with the planning conference.

- 5. VOTE:** A motion was made by Mr. Moura, seconded by Mr. Lawson, and voted unanimously to adjourn the meeting. Meeting adjourned at 8:25 PM.

Respectfully submitted,
PAMELA M. SHERRILL, AICP, *Executive Director*