



Mayor of Providence

David N. Cicilline

May 27, 2008

The Honorable Peter S. Mancini, President  
Providence City Council  
25 Dorrance Street  
Providence, Rhode Island 02903

Dear Council President Mancini:

Attached to this correspondence please find the Resolution of the City Council rescinding the transfer of the "American Tourister Site" to the Providence Redevelopment Agency (PRA). I am exercising veto authority, as established by the Providence Home Rule Charter, in disapproval of the Resolution.

Since the introduction of this Resolution on April 17, 2008, I have voiced my concern on the matter with you and members of the City Council. The PRA is empowered by state law to acquire property for the purpose of eliminating blighted and substandard areas through redevelopment. The process for redevelopment, and the expertise required therein, is rightly placed under the authority and direction of the PRA. The PRA is equipped with the knowledge and experience necessary to integrate all of the factors required for the planning, acquisition, rehabilitation and improvement associated with the redevelopment of a major land area such as the "American Tourister Site."

In March of 2000, the City Council, through Ordinance 2000-6, approved and adopted the Wanskuck Redevelopment Project, which detailed the plan for the acquisition and redevelopment of the "American Tourister Site." Subsequently, the PRA and the Department of Planning and Development proceeded with a series of activities including property appraisals, foreclosure and acquisition, environmental assessments, remediation, and, in June of 2002, advertised the request for proposals for developers. Following the RFP advertisement, the PRA continued further procedures for property acquisition and environmental testing, and in April of 2004 the PRA selected the Teamsters and Providence School Department as developers of a proposed high school, athletic complex, and office space.

Letter to Council President Mancini

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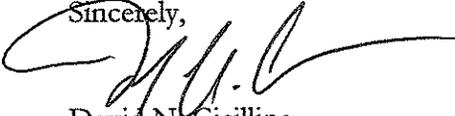
Page 2 of 2

Due to time constraints requiring the opening of a school more expeditiously than would have been possible at the "American Tourister Site," the Teamsters and School Department rescinded their proposal, and the PRA re-appraised the parcel and held meetings to review the remaining RFP responses. From April 2006 to present, the PRA, Department of Planning and Development, and the designated developers, Angeli and Costantino, conducted negotiations for the purchase of the "American Tourister Site." While illness of the PRA legal counsel, and disparate positions between the PRA and the designated developer over land value have delayed the sale, negotiations between the parties remained ongoing when the resolution to rescind the transfer was introduced by the City Council.

Rescinding the transfer of the "American Tourister Site" to the PRA sets a dangerous and unsound precedent with regard to our City's redevelopment policy. Given all of the factors associated with the redevelopment process, removing the agency best suited to evaluate and guide that process is contrary to the best interest of the public. Considering the size of the American Tourister parcel, and its potential impact on the character and quality of life in the Wanskuck neighborhood, as well as the economic effect on the city as a whole, removing the PRA from the process could seriously undermine the redevelopment project and preclude the City from achieving the best use of this valuable land. Moreover, removing the PRA from the equation while the agency is conducting good faith negotiations with a designated developer conveys a harmful message to prospective developers and creates an element of unpredictability that will have serious negative consequences on future redevelopment projects in Providence.

I strongly urge you and the members of the City Council to carefully consider the detrimental effect of this Resolution, not only for the future of the "American Tourister Site," but for the future of our City's redevelopment efforts as a whole.

Sincerely,



David N. Cicilline

Mayor