



Mayor of Providence

Jorge O. Elorza

November 30th, 2018

The Honorable Members of the Providence City Council
Providence City Hall
25 Dorrance Street
Providence, RI 02903

Regarding: ORDINANCE-2018-77, AN ORDINANCE IN AMENDMENT OF CHAPTER 27 OF THE CODE OF ORDINANCES OF THE CITY OF PROVIDENCE, ENTITLED: "THE CITY OF PROVIDENCE ZONING ORDINANCE", APPROVED NOVEMBER 24, 2014, AS AMENDED, FOR A TEXT CHANGE AND CHANGE IN ZONING MAP, FOR THE PROPERTY LOCATED ON ASSESSOR'S PLAT 20, LOT 397 (250 DYER STREET)

Honorable Members of the City Council,

Investment in our Capital City is critical to our long term success. As Mayor, I have made economic growth and opportunity a top priority. When I took office there was minimal development activity in our downtown and even less in our neighborhoods. Today, we have approximately 70 projects either completed, under construction, or in the pipeline. With more investment and development than we've seen in over a decade, Providence is a city on the rise!

As a growing and vibrant city, we see increasing interest from people who want to invest in our future. We consider every proposal on its merits and always keep the best long-term interests of the city in mind. With respect to the Hope Point Tower, I have listened to residents and to a myriad of stakeholders' views. I deeply appreciate everyone's input and the fact that people care so much about our city.

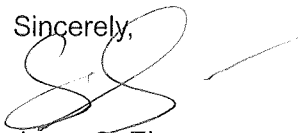
With all of this in mind, I made it clear to the developer and to the public that the design of the building was my top priority. I want to be sure that the building, both from a skyline and from a streetscape perspective, worked for the city. I requested that the City, either through the DDRC or the Planning Department, have final approval over the design of the project, rather than merely advisory input. If this building is going to reshape our skyline, then the city should be able to approve what it looks like.

Residents of Providence have also asked that a "public benefit" be an essential component of this project. The proposed zoning change is an extraordinary step and it significantly increases the value of the parcel. Given that the project is adjacent to the I-195 park land and the new pedestrian bridge, the City has asked for maintenance support of the bridge. All I-195 land developments provide funding to support the I-195 park land and the City is seeking complementary funds for the bridge -- a major piece of infrastructure connecting the Innovation and Design District. In fact, public benefit requirements are common features of such development projects in cities throughout the nation.

Last, we want to encourage development and disincentivize land-banking. As such, we asked that the developer start and complete this project within a reasonable timetable.

While the developer was amenable to giving some assurances on the timeline and open to some level of public benefit contribution, we were not able to reach agreement on the first and most important point. Given that this project would reshape our skyline and dramatically impact our streetscape, I made it clear both privately and publicly, that the design of the building was my top priority. The developer has been unwilling to provide assurances that the city's design recommendations would not be disregarded. As such, I have decided to veto this zoning change.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jorge O. Elorza', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Jorge O. Elorza
Mayor