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Hearing December 11 2012
Haverhill

Economic Development and Planning
Phone: 978-374-2330 Fax: 978-374-2315
wpillsbury@cityofhaverhill.com

November 15, 2012

TO: City Council President Robert Scatamaccia and members of the Haverhill City Council

FROM: William Pillsbury, Jr. Economic Development and Planning Director

SUBJECT: Zoning –Merrimack Street Gateway Renaissance Overlay District

At this time the city wishes to propose the attached zoning overlay ordinance for the Merrimack Street waterfront. This ordinance which is limited to the southerly side of Merrimack street from Bridge Street to the post office seeks to create an overlay district which will allow mixed use commercial /residential projects which incorporate designs which integrate the Merrimack river into the project and turn the focus of the street back to the river. The ordinance, modeled after the previously approved 40R district, establishes design standards for mixed use projects and an expedited process for approval of projects which comply with the design standards. We strongly believe that this zoning will serve as a catalyst for significant new private investment in this area of downtown Haverhill

The planning board has held a hearing and their recommendation will be filed with the city council. I respectfully request that the city council schedule its public hearing on this important matter for Tuesday December 11, 2012.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

IN CITY COUNCIL: November 27 2012

VOTED: that COUNCIL HEARING BE HELD DECEMBER 11 2013

Attest:

City Clerk

105
also: Zoning ordinance
MSGROD



JAMES J. FIORENTINI
MAYOR

CITY OF HAVERHILL
MASSACHUSETTS

CITY HALL, ROOM 100
FOUR SUMMER STREET
HAVERHILL, MA 01830
PHONE 978-374-2300
FAX 978-373-7544
MAYOR@CITYOFHAVERHILL.COM
WWW.CI.HAVERHILL.MA.US

November 21, 2012

City Council President Robert Scatamacchia
And Members of the Haverhill City Council

RE: Overlay Zoning District – Merrimack St.

Dear Mr. President and members of the City Council:

Attached to these materials is a very detailed and lengthy proposed new zoning ordinance which would establish an "Overlay Zoning District" on Merrimack Street. This is the product of months of work of our outside zoning consultants, our City Solicitor, our Planning Director Bill Pillsbury, our Downtown Task Force and the Zoning Subcommittee of the Downtown Task Force. In this new ordinance, we incorporate many of the best practices that have been successfully used in other cities to revitalize their downtown waterfront districts. The ordinance has been reviewed by the Planning Board and was unanimously favorably accepted. The minutes of this meeting will be submitted to the Council before the December 11th meeting.

The new ordinance applies only to the waterfront side of Merrimack Street. It is not a rezoning, it is an "Overlay District." An Overlay District means that the underlying zoning, which is commercial, still applies but an investor who wished to develop residential or mixed-use housing could instead use this overlay district zoning.

Mr. Pillsbury and I will both be before the City Council at your December 11th meeting to go over this in much more detail. I wanted to give the Council a short outline of it beforehand.

Basically, this ordinance encourages residential and mixed-use developments along the waterside of Merrimack Street. The ordinance establishes what are called "Priority Development Projects."

Priority Development Projects, as defined in the ordinance, are mixed-use developments which connect to a boardwalk which we hope will someday run along Merrimack Street behind the existing buildings. Projects that are largely market rate, connect to the boardwalk and allow public access to the river are termed "Priority Development Projects."

Priority Development Projects are given expedited permitting, reduced parking requirements, and increased density. For Priority Development Projects we will strongly consider offering "TIF's" (Tax Increment Financing Agreements) and "DIF's" (District Improvement Financing Agreements.) Our goal is to offer whatever incentives we can to encourage development of Merrimack Street if that development allows the public to connect to the water.

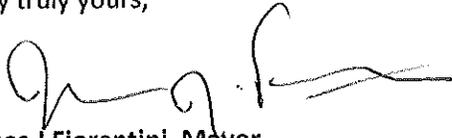
I'm going to ask Bill Pillsbury, by copy of this letter, to meet with each Councilor individually to go over this prior to the meeting and answer any questions you might have.

This comes before you for a public hearing on December 11th. We are very much hoping it can be approved at the public hearing.

If there are changes or amendments that councilors would like to see considered, I would appreciate hearing them before the public hearing so that we can have them typed up and ready for your consideration at the hearing.

This is a very comprehensive ordinance which we believe opens new opportunities for our City. I look forward to speaking with you about.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'James J. Fiorentini', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

James J Fiorentini, Mayor

JJF/lk
Encl.