

MEMORANDUM

DECEMBER 19, 2013

TO: BOSTON REDEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY AND
PETER MEADE, DIRECTOR

FROM: HEATHER CAMPISANO, DEPUTY DIRECTOR FOR DEVELOPMENT
REVIEW
DANA WHITESIDE, DEPUTY DIRECTOR FOR COMMUNITY
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
MICHAEL CANNIZZO, SENIOR ARCHITECT/URBAN DESIGNER
RAUL DUVERGE, PROJECT ASSISTANT

SUBJECT: 917 BENNINGTON STREET, EAST BOSTON

SUMMARY: This Memorandum requests that the Boston Redevelopment Authority (“BRA”) authorize the Director to: (1) issue a Certification of Approval for the proposed development located at 917 Bennington Street in East Boston (the “Proposed Project”), in accordance with Article 80E, Small Project Review of the Boston Zoning Code (the “Code”); and (2) enter into an Affordable Rental Housing Agreement and Restriction in connection with the Proposed Project, and take any other action and execute any other agreements and documents that the Director deems appropriate and necessary in connection with the Proposed Project.

PROJECT SITE

The Proposed Project is located at 917 Bennington Street (the “Project Site”), in the Orient Heights section of East Boston. The Project Site is currently occupied by the former Kirby Rapino Funeral Home and consists of approximately 16,153 square feet of land with direct vehicular and pedestrian access from Bennington Street (the “Project Site”). The uses in the immediate area are primarily commercial buildings with residential buildings located both east and west of the Project Site.

The Project Site is adjacent to a MBTA bus service stop and approximately 0.3 miles away from Blue Line subway service (Orient Heights Station), providing direct access to Downtown and the Greater Boston area.

PROPOSED PROJECT

Pat Buonopane (the “Developer”) proposes to demolish the existing funeral home on the site and construct a new five (5) story, 49,775 square feet residential building with forty five (45) residential rental units and a roof deck. Overall, the top of the structure will be 59 feet high from the Bremen Street elevation. A total of thirty three (33) parking spaces will be provided on site.

As currently proposed, the forty five (45) residential units will be broken down into nineteen (19) two bedroom units, twelve (12) one bedroom units, and fourteen (14) studios.

The Proposed Project will include approximately thirty three (33) vehicle parking spaces, representing a 0.73 to 1 parking unit ratio. All parking spaces will be at grade and covered by the residential building itself. In addition to the parking spaces, the Developer will also provide bicycle storage space for residents.

The Developer anticipates beginning construction of the Proposed Project by fall 2014. The estimated total construction cost for the Proposed Project is \$10,000,000.

DEVELOPMENT TEAM

The development team consists of:

Proponent: Pat Buonopane

Architect: Roche- Christopher LLC
William Christopher

Legal Counsel: McDermott, Quilty & Miller, LLP
Stephen V. Miller

PUBLIC PROCESS

On Thursday, October 31, 2013, the Developer filed an Application for Small Project Review with the BRA. The BRA sponsored a public meeting on Tuesday, November 19, 2013 at 6:30 p.m., at the East Boston YMCA, located on 215 Bremen Street in East Boston. The public comment period concluded on Monday, December 2, 2013.

The public meeting was advertised in the *East Boston Times* on November 13, 2013. The Developer conducted additional community outreach with local elected officials, direct abutters, and the neighborhood council. On September 16, 2013, the Developer met with the Orient Heights Neighborhood Council to solicit feedback on the Proposed Project.

The Developer has agreed to go before the Orient Neighborhood Council again prior to their Zoning Board of Appeals date.

AFFORDABLE HOUSING

The Inclusionary Development Program requires that the number of on-site affordable units shall not be less than 15% of the total number of market rate units. Seven (7) units within the Proposed Project will be created as affordable housing (the “Affordable Units”). The Proposed Project is subject to the Inclusionary Development Policy, dated September 27, 2007 (“IDP”), which requires that affordable units be made affordable to households earning less than or equal to 70% of the Area Median Income (“AMI”).

Seven (7) of the units in the Proposed Project will be affordable to households earning up to 70% of the AMI based upon United States Department of Housing and Urban Development (“HUD”) guidelines.

The sizes, location and rents for the Affordable Units are as follows:

Number of Bedrooms	Approximate Square Footage	Location of Affordable Unit	Percent of Median Income	Approximate Rent
2 BR	903 SF	1 st floor	70%	\$1365
2 BR	846 SF	4 th floor	70%	\$1365
2 BR	846 SF	3 rd floor	70%	\$1365
1 BR	641 SF	1 st floor	70%	\$1194
1 BR	802 SF	3 rd floor	70%	\$1194
Studio	451 SF	2 nd floor	70%	\$1024
Studio	462 SF	3 rd floor	70%	\$1024

Rental prices and income limits will be adjusted according to HUD at the time of the initial rental of the Affordable Units.

The Affordable Rental Housing Agreement and Restriction (“ARHA”) must be executed along with, or prior to, the issuance of the Certification of Approval for the Proposed Project. The Proponent must also submit an Affirmative Marketing Plan (the “Plan”) to the Boston Fair Housing Commission and the BRA. Preference will be given to applicants who meet the following criteria, weighted in the order below:

- (1) Boston resident; and
- (2) Household size (a minimum of one (1) person per bedroom).

The Affordable Units will not be marketed prior to the submission and approval of the Plan. A deed restriction will be placed on the Affordable Units to maintain affordability for a total period of fifty (50) years (this includes thirty (30) years with a BRA option to extend for an additional period of twenty (20) years). The household income of any subsequent renter of the Affordable Units during this fifty (50) year period must fall within the applicable income limit for each Affordable Unit.

PUBLIC BENEFIT

The Proposed Project will provide much needed residential rental housing in a manner complimentary to the surrounding neighborhood. The new construction proposed for the site will create seven (7) new affordable residential units. In addition, with the construction of the new building, the Developer will also provide sidewalk and streetscape improvements along Bennington Street.

ZONING

The Project Site is located within the East Boston Neighborhood District and the Neighborhood Shopping Sub District. The Proposed Project will require zoning relief for the following: F.A.R., building height, off-street parking, front yard, rear yard, and roof structure restrictions.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Proposed Project complies with the requirements set forth in Section 80E of the Code for Small Project Review. Therefore, Staff recommends that the Director be authorized to: (1) issue a Certification of Approval for the Proposed Project at 917 Bennington Street in East Boston (the "Proposed Project"); and (2) enter into an Affordable Rental Housing Agreement and Restriction, and take any other action and execute any other agreements and documents that the Director deems appropriate and necessary in connection with the Proposed Project.

Appropriate votes follow:

VOTED: That the Director be, and hereby is, authorized to issue a Certification of Approval, approving the development at 917 Bennington Street in East Boston (the "Proposed Project") by Pat Buonopane (the "Developer") in accordance with the requirements of Small Project Review, Article 80E, of the Boston Zoning Code, subject to continuing design review by the Boston Redevelopment Authority; and

FURTHER

VOTED: That the Director be, and hereby is, authorized to execute an Affordable Rental Housing Agreement and Restriction for the creation of seven (7) on-site Affordable Units and execute any other agreements and documents that the Director deems appropriate and necessary in connection with the Proposed Project.