



Stephanie Rawlings-Blake
Mayor

PLANNING COMMISSION

Wilbur E. "Bill" Cunningham, Chairman

STAFF REPORT



Thomas J. Stosur
Director

October 29, 2015

REQUESTS: City Council Bill #15-0564/ Waterfront Management District – Extension of District

RECOMMENDATION: Approval

STAFF: Anthony Cataldo

PETITIONER: Administration (Baltimore Development Corporation)

OWNER: Multiple Property Owners

SITE/GENERAL AREA

Site Conditions: The properties proposed to be added into the waterfront management district vary in terms of size, use, and occupancy. They are sites that are generally used for (or anticipated to be redevelopment into) commercial and mixed use projects.

General Area: The sites to be included within the district fall within both the Harbor East and Fells Point neighborhoods of Baltimore. The Inner Harbor East area is bounded approximately by Eastern Avenue to the north, Caroline Street to the east, Aliceanna and Fleet Street to the south, and President Street to the west. The Fells Point extension area is generally bound by Lancaster Street to the north, the alley between Caroline and Bond Streets to the east, Thames Street to the south, and Caroline Street to the west.

CONFORMITY TO PLANS

The proposed development plan is consistent with the goals and objectives of the Baltimore City Comprehensive Master Plan, specifically: LIVE Goal 1: Build Human and Social Capital by Strengthening Neighborhoods; Objective 3: Maintain and Create Safe, Clean, & Healthy Neighborhoods; PLAY Goal 3: Increase the Health of Baltimore's Natural Resources and Open Spaces for Recreation and to Improve Water Quality.

HISTORY

- There are no current histories for the sites as they pertain to the Waterfront Management District. Some of the properties were part of the Inner Harbor East Urban Renewal Plan, but this urban renewal plan expired on November, 19, 2011.

ANALYSIS

Waterfront Partnership was created ten years ago as a result of a GBC report citing a lack of attention by the city to the Inner Harbor. Following the issuance of the Report, Mayor O'Malley put together a blue ribbon panel and asked them to recommend how the Harbor could be better managed. The Panel recommended a BID be created for the Harbor, similar to the Downtown Partnership of Baltimore. Property owners agreed and first organized the non-profit Waterfront Partnership, and worked over the next 2 years to put the Waterfront Management Authority {WMA} into place. The WMA became operational in July 2007 and since that time has successfully gone through two sunset/renewal processes, without a single business citing a complaint or concern to City Council.

CCB # 15-0564 seeks to accomplish two objectives. First, an incremental expansion. Several months ago WMA was approached independently by Harbor East Management Group and WorkShop Development, asking that it expand to the north to include the WorkShop properties including the former Della Notte site, Bagby Building and Park Hyatt Hotel; and to the east for Harbor East Management to include the former H & S distribution center. WMA also wanted to include both sides of Caroline Street and so it is adding the East side of the Street down to turn the corner on Thames which will also now result in both sides of Thames to Bond Street included in the District. The expansion blocks are adjacent to the existing District and are considered appropriate expansion areas as the Harbor East area continues to be developed and grow.

The second objective is to make some modest changes to the Board member requirements. Currently the Waterfront Management District Ordinance is very prescriptive about Board composition. It's understandable that Council or community members wanted to make sure a newly formed organization, as WMA was ten years ago, is fully representative of the community it serves. However, the current experience has found that some of the groups that are required to be placed on the board are no longer in existence; and that since the Waterfront Partnership has been in business for ten years and is respected by the community, it would like to modify the very prescriptive requirement of "must have one retailer, one hotelier, one restaurateur, one resident"; to more general language of having a board that is "representative of the District." This change was recommended by the Governance Task Force and approved by our Board of Directors. The Board of Directors who would approve the appointees includes representatives of the Mayor's Office, several city agencies, and City Council.

Notifications:

Two information packets and letters were sent to all impacted owners in spring 2015, inviting them to contact the Waterfront Partnership with any questions. In total, the Partnership received three calls, mostly requesting information. Impacted owners were also invited to an informational session in early September 2015, to which seven people attended, four from the same property. Every attendee was supportive, and attended to ask some questions and voice

their support for having services expand to include their properties. A direct mailing was also sent to each property owner with information about the City Council Bill and the Planning Commission's official notice which included the date and time of this meeting.



Thomas J. Stosur
Director