

Memorandum

Department of Planning and Development Planning Division



To: Chair Cloutier and members of the
Community Development Committee

From: Bill Needelman, Senior Planner

cc: Alex Jaegerman, Planning Division Director
Lee Urban, Planning and development Department Director

Date: June 22, 2007

Re: Continuation of review of Maine State Pier redevelopment proposals

Introduction

This memo is in support of the June 27, 2007 CDC meeting continuing the review of redevelopment proposals for the Maine State Pier.

Review Table

At the May 30 CDC meeting, the Planning Staff provided a review criteria summary table for the elements of the Maine State Pier proposal concerning “framework and function.” With the revised Ocean Properties proposal dated June 6, 2007, the table has been updated to reflect the new material. In keeping with the previous practice of tracking the review according to date of material submission, new comments have been provided in blue text (the May comments were provided in red, and the original April comments in black.) While the multiple colors may be visually distracting, the document provides a chronological record of the process and allows the members of the CDC and public to skim for comments reflecting proposal material as it has evolved through the course of the review. At the conclusion of the CDC’s review, the summary table will be revised and simplified (outdated information removed and text converted to a single color) to reflect the forthcoming CDC recommendation for presentation to the full City Council.

Staff Questions and New Material

After receiving the June 6 update from Ocean Properties, Staff provided a series of clarifying questions to the Ocean Properties team about the new proposal. These questions regard parking and the design of the building and are summarized under the appropriate criteria in the review summary table. The full text of the questions is attached to this memo.

As of the writing of this memo, the Ocean Property team supplied additional information responding to these questions as well as other questions raised at the June 13 meeting. Staff has not had time to review or incorporate this material into the summary table.

Additional material from the Olympia Companies is also anticipated for inclusion with the CDC packet but has not been provided as of the writing of this memo.

Architectural Review

At the April 25 CDC meeting, Planning staff provided a preliminary review table of the two proposals according to the criteria established in the Eastern Waterfront Design Guidelines. It had been our intent to supply an updated version of the architectural review at the June 13 meeting; but given the recent change to the Ocean Properties proposal, a detailed architectural review from both projects has not yet been possible.

In general, the Olympia Companies proposal appears to be designed according to the applicable guidelines for buildings, open space, parking and treatment of the water's edge. Additional detail on the revised vehicle queuing area is needed. Should environmental permitting at the State level require redesign of the proposal in the future, impacts to the architectural design would need to be addressed.

The revised Ocean Properties proposal is still under evaluation and additional material has just been received as of the writing of this memo. As with the previous Ocean Properties design, an area of concern with the proposal is the placement of the buildings along Commercial Street incorporating both a substantial setback from the street and vehicular circulation between the sidewalk and the building.

With the final design of proposals in hand, equivalent detailed architectural review of both projects will be provided for the full City Council at upcoming workshops.

Attachments:

- Questions provided to the Ocean Properties based on the June 6 material
- Criteria Review Table

Questions from Planning Staff to the Ocean Properties based on the June 6 material:

Two Parking Questions:

1. The location, circulation and appearance of the 99-car structure on the pier is difficult to understand from the material shown. Given that the proposed roof elevation is only +/- 25 feet from the existing pier deck and that volume is proposed to hold one level of storage/fireboat/tug support at the ground level, two levels of parking and a green roof, the applicants should clarify how this all comes together.
2. The Ocean Properties proposal describes a parking demand of the project being in the 718-833 space range, depending on the submission and method of calculation. The latest proposal shows 417 spaces on-site (318 in the underground deck and 99 in a structure on the pier - see above). What accommodation, if any, is proposed for the balance of parking demand as presented? Is the difference between the stated demand and the on-site supply to be accommodated off site?

A note of clarification to the Ocean Property team regarding parking: The Ocean Property material frequently refers to a "50% parking requirement." While it is true that the EWPZ performance standards discount the amount of parking required for waterfront parking by 50%, this is only applicable to projects under 50,000 square feet. The proposal team should note that for any project greater than 50,000 square feet, the site plan standards supercede the zoning formula and the Planning Board establishes the parking requirement based on a parking analysis (such as the Ocean Properties provides in their material stating a demand of 718 spaces as the AM low, and a 785 pm high - May 23 submission, page 2.)

Unless stipulated and agreed to by the Council as part of a conditional rezoning agreement, the 50% reduction established in the EWPZ 14-304(h) is superceded by Site Plan standard 14-526 (a)(2) b.

Additional Material:

1. Building elevations for all structures and clarification of building heights. The Commercial Street facade is of particular interest and the applicants should know that the Planning Staff will continue to note that (a) the building set back from Commercial Street and (b) the location of vehicular circulation between the buildings and Commercial Street are contrary to the criteria established in the Eastern Waterfront Guidelines.
2. 8-story office buildings are typically taller than the 75 feet stated at the meeting - please clarify.