



Newport Planning Board
Newport City Hall
43 Broadway
Newport RI 02840

October 2, 2020

To the Planning Board:

In anticipation of the Planning Board's upcoming Oct. 5 meeting, when the board will formally accept the final draft North End Urban Plan and thus begin the public review process, we are sending this joint letter from the Newport Health Equity Zone's Housing Working Group and Greening Urban Spaces Working Group to alert you to our concerns about that process. The North End Urban Plan has the potential to reshape existing neighborhoods for generations to come and therefore it is critical that North End residents have full and meaningful participation to ensure the visioning presented in the plan represents their interests, matches their desires, and achieves their goals.

We recognize and appreciate the massive amount of work that has gone into this draft plan. However, one key element is absent from the final draft plan, despite its indispensable importance: any examination of or recommendation to consider a Community Benefits Agreement (CBA) as a tool for equitable development. North End residents have made clear that they expect a CBA – with the community at the center of any negotiation – to be a feature of any planning, zoning, or development propositions.

Equity in the Public-Input Process

Because of the barriers to North End residents' participation thus far, we call on the Planning Board to create a robust public-input schedule. Given the length and complexity of the final draft North End Urban Plan, and the additional new design guidelines in the unfamiliar format of "Character-Based Code," each step of this public-comment period should be designed with intentional outreach to and intensive support for North End residents. This outreach schedule ideally would both provide answers to residents' questions about the contents of the plan and gather feedback from residents on the plan.

As you know, NBBJ was hired with the expectation of a comprehensive community-engagement strategy with particular attention to the North End neighborhood. However, we were disappointed that the opportunities for genuine and thorough public input by North End residents were cut off and insufficient. While recognizing the challenges presented by the COVID pandemic, we do not believe that the single survey distributed online replaces wide exposure to the range of ideas in it (some expressed in hard-to-read maps/graphics) or reflects substantive feedback from the North End itself. Indeed, because the survey did not ask, there is no way to know how many respondents were residents of the actual North End residential neighborhood within the Study Area boundary. Meanwhile, the technological barriers to residents participating in that survey were clear: poor cellphone service in the North End, many residents limited to cellphone access (with limited data plans), and extremely limited outreach to and support for residents. These technological constraints continue to limit public access via Zoom or other online platforms to City Council and other public meetings.

Missing: Community Benefits for the North End Residential Community

It is important to recall that this planning effort resulted from the proposed redevelopment of the former Newport Grand property, and that the North End Urban Plan was undertaken to put the Newport Grand

redevelopment in the context of the city's long-sought "Innovation Hub" primarily on the land to be released by the Pell Bridge ramp-realignment project – the "Urban Village Innovation District" with a technology-driven business sector and associated housing, retail, and other amenities for the new professionals who would come to work there. The proposed Innovation District also sees new uses in the existing commercial and industrial corridors along JT Connell Highway and in the Halsey Street area, such as advanced manufacturing, skilled crafts, warehousing, new retail, and an improved landscape.

This denser and more profitable real-estate development will generate greater tax revenue for the City of Newport. It also will threaten the nearby North End residential neighborhoods with displacement through potential gentrification, without any commitment to economic access to this new development through targeted job opportunities or a mix of attainable housing. Residents have proactively identified a more equitable model of distributing economic benefits, specifically through a Community Benefits Agreement (CBA) linked to new development, forging a range of such commitments up front. Both the City Council and the Planning Board have indicated their general support for such an agreement. However, the final draft North End Urban Plan is silent on the specific implementation of a CBA as a tool for more equitable development, listing other possible methods to deliver community benefits (see pages 12 and 106). While the consultants included possible "public and community amenities" to be rank-ordered in their survey and reported on that survey's outcome, it did not make any recommendations to adopt the use of a CBA with negotiating power vested in the North End residential community. Also, as noted above, the survey was not broken down by respondents' neighborhoods, so there is no way of ascertaining what were priorities for North End residents.

Thus we believe that it is crucial to highlight an outstanding gap in the plan as well as what we regard as the basic requirements for a credible and participatory CBA, with:

1. a formal process for community participation when the CBA terms are being negotiated by the city, with community representatives selected to ensure those most vulnerable to displacement are at the table,
2. a CBA needs to be negotiated at a lower sized threshold than just the very largest and rarest developments (e.g. reduce CBA threshold to 10,000 SF and larger), and
3. a way to make sure a guaranteed portion of increased property taxes in new Innovation District developments is set aside in a separate dedicated account to capture a percentage of the increased property tax revenue with those funds to be used to prevent displacement of existing residents, address the negative effects of gentrification, and create improvements and/or amenities to benefit the North End residential community.

Please see the attached email exchange one of our working partners, Church Community Housing Corporation, had with NBBJ, who expressed support for the above measures to be advanced with the council and Planning Board.

We ask the Planning Board to give its fullest attention to the public-review process for the final draft North End Urban Plan and to the CBA as a keystone of equitable development in the North End.

Sincerely yours,

The Greening Urban Spaces Working Group, Newport Health Equity Zone
The Housing Working Group, Newport Health Equity Zone
Residents of the North End (signatures enclosed)

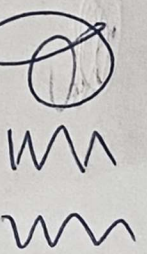
North End Resident Signature Page
for 10/2/2020 Letter from GUS and HWG to Newport Planning Board

Name	Signature	Street Name
1. Winona Crow	Winona Crow	31 St
2. Linda Bisy	Linda Bisy	211 Park Holm
3. Dawn M. Aguiar	Linda Bisy	210 Park Holm
4. Angelique E Frankli	Linda Bisy	237 Parkholm
5. Trinity E Alexander	Trinity E. Alexander	8 Chapel Terr
6. Andrius Vektoras Matea	A. V. M	239 Parkholm
7. Robert Wollitt	Robert Wollitt	216 Parkholm
8. Gerry Starks	Gerry Starks	P.O. Box 3442 Newport + Midd
9. Nicole Butthway	Nicole Butthway	239 Parkholm
10. YVETTE HARRIS-EVANS	Yvette Harris-Evans	240 Park Holm
11. Yvonne	Yvonne	18 Jade Way
12. Michelle Layfield	Michelle Layfield	10 Jade Way.
13. Tina Smith	Tina Smith	189 Park Holm
14. Cindy Kenner	Cindy Kenner	182 Parkholm
15. Diane Estrella	Diane Estrella	183 Park Holm
16. Melissa Fratelli	M. Fratelli	79 Hillside Ave.
17. Marlene Waite	M. Waite	68 Park Home
18. Mariah Rosario	M. Rosario	60 Chapel St.
19. Joseana Cooper	Josanna Cooper	32 Essexway Rd

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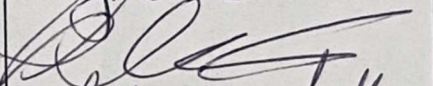
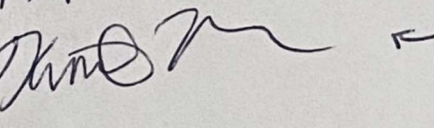

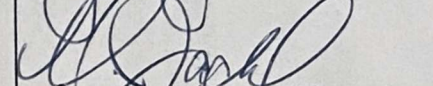
Name	Signature	Street Name
20. <i>Al Amador</i>	<i>[Signature]</i>	66 Chapel Terrace
21. Jessica Matta	<i>[Signature]</i>	208 Hillside Ave Newport RI
22. ANGELA ORTIZ	<i>[Signature]</i>	197 HILLSIDE AVE
23. Meghan Lupane	<i>[Signature]</i>	4-1 Sgt Weidemann St
24. Joe M ^c Carthy	<i>[Signature]</i>	4-2 Sgt. Weidemann St
25. Carmen Scott	<i>[Signature]</i>	10 Veterans Circle
26. Andrew Scott	<i>[Signature]</i>	10 Veterans Circle
27. M. Bailey	<i>[Signature]</i>	3 Sgt. Lewis
28. M. Pritchett	<i>[Signature]</i>	32 PARK HOLLOW
29. Elizabeth Lapane	<i>[Signature]</i>	4-1 Sgt Weidemann St
30. <i>[Signature]</i>	<i>[Signature]</i>	41 Sunset Sunset
31. Ezra Monteiro	<i>[Signature]</i>	203 Hillside Avenue.
32. Angela McCalla	<i>[Signature]</i>	203 Hillside Ave.
33. Allyson McCalla	<i>[Signature]</i>	203 Hillside Ave.

North End Resident Signature Page
for 10/2/2020 Letter from GUS and HWG to Newport Planning Board



Name	Signature	Street Name
1. Adriana Vandereinder 2. Pauline Chapman Ryanne Maloney	 	7 Kennedy Rd Newport 11 Kennedy Rd ^{RF 02840}
3. Jonine Evans		SADELA
4. PETER MAISNEY		Parkholm
5. Julie		Park Holm
6. Kiera Gray		West Broadway
7. Richard Mills		Park Holm
8. Jasmine Valdes		Hillside
9. Lanier Chapman		11 Kennedy Road
10. Kaseem Cooper		31 Park Holm
11. Roxanne Cooper		31 Park Holm
12. Duane Crook		99 Hillside Ave
13. Hayward Johnson		19 Bayview
14. → Debbie Gibbs		3 Park Holm
15. C. Perez		120 PH
16. Vanessa Soares		30 Eisenhower Rd
17. Sheer Vazg		Park Holm

North End Resident Signature Page
for 10/2/2020 Letter from GUS and HWG to Newport Planning Board

Name	Signature	Street Name
18. Lyrette Brown	Lyrette Brown	28 Adeway St.
19. PHILLIP CROOK		99 HILLSIDE
20. Lillian Griffin	Lillian Griffin	14 Park Holm
21. Shirell Stroop	Shirell Stroop	3 BUCK
22. 	Kimberly Berube	26 B Ludlow Rd
23. Dawn Aguiar	Dm Aguiar	237 Park Holm.
24. Trinity Alexander	J Alexander	232 PARK HOLM.
25. Jennifer Jackson		38 Dudley Ave
26. MITCHELL JACKSON		38 DUDLEY AVE NPT, RI
27. Charlene Greene	Charlene Greene	118 GIRARD AVE.
28. Timothy Greene	Barbara Biagoli	118 Girard Ave.
29. BARBARA BIOSIRE	Barbara Biagoli	31 Butler St

From: Lola Herrera-Ximenez <lolahexi@gmail.com>

Sent: Sunday, October 04, 2020 8:37 AM

To: Rebecca Polan <rpolan@cchcnewport.org>; Eric Pina <ecomerma@yahoo.com>

Cc: HEZ-HWG@googlegroups.com

Subject: Re: CALL TO ACTION for North End residents!! Please forward - we need your signature on an important letter by THIS SUNDAY 10/4!!!

I_Eric Comerma Pina living on 59 Bedlow St_ sign-on to the letter to the Newport Planning Board from the Newport Health Equity Zone Green and Urban Space and Housing Working Groups dated 10/02/2020 addressing North-End public input and equity concerns.

On Sun, Oct 4, 2020 at 2:34 PM Lola Herrera-Ximenez <lolahexi@gmail.com> wrote:

I_Lola Herrera-Ximenez living on 59 Bedlow St_ sign-on to the letter to the Newport Planning Board from the Newport Health Equity Zone Green and Urban Space and Housing Working Groups dated 10/02/2020 addressing North-End public input and equity concerns.

From: Alan Mountjoy <amountjoy@nbbj.com>
Sent: Monday, August 10, 2020 11:44 AM
To: Christian Belden <cbelden@cchcnewport.org>
Cc: Chris Herlich <CHerlich@nbbj.com>; John Harlow <johnharlow7@gmail.com>; Angela McCalla <amccalla2019@gmail.com>; Rebecca Polan <rpolan@cchcnewport.org>; Sean Saunders <ssaunders@cchcnewport.org>; swolf@growsmartri.com; ccoes@smartgrowthamerica.org
Subject: Re: Introduction

Hi Christian,

Thanks for your email. As you know, we were engaged to help the City develop the look and feel for the North End. Part of our engagement necessarily addressed issues of equity and opportunity and we recorded as much as we could to assist the City in their separate zoning effort. We would concur with the need for the zoning to consider mechanisms to advance the community benefits that you have outlined. The City is currently in the process of reviewing the working group recommendations on the base and float zones.

We encourage you to continue to advance your CBA recommendations to the Planning Board and Council as they move through the zoning approvals process.

Alan

Sent from my iPad

On Aug 5, 2020, at 11:46 AM, Christian Belden <cbelden@cchcnewport.org> wrote:

External Email:

Hello Alan, Chris and John,

Church Community Housing is the lead agency for the Housing Working Group of the Newport Health Equity Zone (HEZ). As you may know, the Health Equity Zone is a resident driven initiative focused on issues affecting the North End of Newport. HEZ boundaries include the areas of your master plan.

The members of the Housing Working Group have become intensely interested in the proposed Carpiionato development, your master plan, and the proposed zoning regulations. After training/educational sessions on

Zoning and Community Benefits Agreements (CBA) provided by the Newport City Planner and GrowSmartRI respectively, the residents have identified 3 areas lacking in the zoning and planning initiatives.

1. The CBA required for developments utilizing the Float Zone needs to incorporate a formal process for community participation when the CBA terms are being negotiated by the City. Furthermore, the community representatives should be selected to ensure those most vulnerable to displacement are represented.
2. The Base Zone should be revised to require a CBA where appropriate. The criteria currently proposed to trigger Land Development review may be appropriate for triggering a CBA too: developments of 10,000 sf or more, etc..? The same community participation process should be included here.
3. The City should create a separate dedicated account to capture a percentage of the increased property tax revenue generated by the more intense development allowed by the new zoning and supported by the master plan. These funds would be used to prevent displacement of existing residents, address the negative effects of gentrification and create improvements and/or amenities to benefit the North End Community.

Essentially, the North-End Community understands that what is proposed is a significant change to its neighborhood; that the changes will allow denser, more valuable developments for developers and that these developments will generate greater tax revenue for the City. The North-End Community is demanding a more equitable distribution of these benefits. I believe adoption of the plan and proposed zoning will be strongly opposed if the items above are not incorporated.

Sincerely,

Christian Belden, Executive Director

Church Community Housing Corporation

50 Washington Square, Newport, RI 02840

Phone: 401 846 5114 x115 Fax: 401 849 7930