

TO: BOSTON REDEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY AND
PETER MEADE, DIRECTOR

FROM: JAMES M. TIERNEY, CHIEF OF STAFF
HEATHER CAMPISANO, DEPUTY DIRECTOR FOR DEVELOPMENT
REVIEW

SUBJECT: MEZZO DESIGN LOFTS
F.K.A. LITTLE NECK LOFTS AND CITY LOFTS OF CHARLESTOWN
48-52 BRIGHTON STREET, CHARLESTOWN

SUMMARY: This Memorandum requests that the Boston Redevelopment Authority authorize the Director to execute and deliver the First Amendment to the Affordable Rental Housing Agreement and Restriction and any and all other agreements and documents that the Director deems appropriate and necessary in connection with the Mezzo Design Lofts project in Charlestown.

PROJECT SITE

The development parcel consists of 1.88 acres and is located on the northwestern end of Boston’s Charlestown neighborhood at the Boston-Somerville line, adjacent to East Somerville, and is bounded by Brighton Street, the elevated portion of I-93, the Sullivan Square Orange Line tracks and a Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority (“MBTA”) Subway Station to the east, Caldwell Street to the west, Perkins Street to the south, and Maffa Way to the north (the “Project Site”). The surrounding area is comprised of a relatively dense residential neighborhood of two- and three-story, multi-family dwellings on narrow lots.

PROJECT HISTORY

On January 10, 2002, the Boston Redevelopment Authority (“BRA”) approved Cathartes Private Investments (the “Developer”) to redevelop the Project Site into a 146-unit, 195,653 square foot residential condominium development with 225 parking spaces, 210 of which were to be located in a one-story below-grade parking garage and 15 of which were to be surface spaces for guest parking. The five-story structure was to range in height from 44 feet to 68 feet and provide eight (8) studios, fifty (50) one-bedroom, sixty-nine (69) two-bedroom, and nineteen (19) three-bedroom residential units (the

“Previously Approved Project”). On January 24, 2002, a Preliminary Adequacy Determination waiving further review was issued for the Previously Approved Project. Due to issues related to construction methodology and financial feasibility, the Developer did not complete construction of the Previously Approved Project.

On February 18, 2005, the Developer filed a Notice of Project Change (“February 18, 2005 NPC”) for the City Lofts of Charlestown project, which includes a proposal for the construction of a new 160,000 square foot four-story building, ranging in height from 50 feet to 56 feet, to include 146 residential condominiums, including thirty-three (33) studios, sixty-four (64) one-bedroom, forty-five (45) two-bedroom, and four (4) three-bedroom residential units. The new proposal represented a reduction of 35,398 square feet of gross floor area and a decrease in parking of 35 spaces. The parking for the revised project was located in a new, five-story, above grade parking garage for 190 vehicles (the “Project”). The garage fronts on Brighton Street and serves as a buffer to the abutting Interstate 93.

The Project began construction in July 2006. Due to current market conditions, the Developer was unsuccessful in marketing the units as condominiums. On October 30, 2007, the Developer filed a second Notice of Project Change (“second NPC”), requesting that the condominium units be converted to rental units within the Project. The February 18, 2005 NPC, as amended by the Second NPC are collectively referred to as the “NPC”.

The Project was completed in 2008.

AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Fifteen (15) of the one-hundred forty-six (146) rental units were created as affordable housing. The fifteen (15) affordable rental units are affordable to households earning up to 70% of area median income (the “Affordable Rental Units”) based upon US Department of Housing and Urban Development (“HUD”) guidelines as adopted by the BRA.

The location, size, and price of the Affordable Rental Units, as approved, are as follows:

Unit #	Bedrooms	Square Footage	Location	% of AMI
124	Studio	670	1 st Floor	70%
213	Studio	685	2 nd Floor	70%
115	Studio	710	1 st Floor	70%
217	One	725	2 nd Floor	70%
312	One	700	3 rd Floor	70%

335	One	740	3 rd Floor	70%
121	Two	830	1 st Floor	70%
129	Two	845	1 st Floor	70%
203	Two	850	2 nd Floor	70%
231	Two	860	2 nd Floor	70%
307	Two	850	3 rd Floor	70%
421	Two	850	4 th Floor	70%
219	Two	1245	2 nd Floor	70%
314	Two	1215	3 rd Floor	70%
101	Three	1337	1 st Floor	70%

The property management company has requested that the BRA allow the substitution of Unit #119 in place of Unit #421. Unit #119 is a two-bedroom, 1,200 Square foot, handicapped accessible unit located on the first floor of the Project. The family living in Unit #119, income-certified and approved by BRA staff on October 8, 2008, has a child who requires the use of a wheelchair. The family has been the sole occupant of Unit #119 since the Project was completed in 2008. The request to formally swap Unit #119 in place of Unit #421 will prevent unnecessary hardship for the family.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Staff recommends that the Authority authorize the Director to execute and deliver the First Amendment to the Affordable Rental Housing Agreement and Restriction and any and all other agreements and documents that the Director deems appropriate and necessary.

An appropriate vote follows:

VOTED: That the Director be, and hereby is, authorized to execute and deliver the First Amendment to the Affordable Rental Housing Agreement and Restriction and any and all other agreements and documents that the Director deems appropriate and necessary in connection with the substitution of Unit #119 in place of Unit #421 as an affordable unit in the Mezzo Design Lofts project in Charlestown.