

MEMORANDUM

JANUARY 17, 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
DAVID CARLSON, SENIOR ARCHITECT
LANCE CAMPBELL, SENIOR PROJECT MANAGER

SUBJECT: HERB CHAMBERS DORCHESTER: A HERB CHAMBERS CERTIFIED
PRE-OWNED BMW AUTOMOBILE DEALERSHIP AT 75 MORRISSEY
BOULEVARD, DORCHESTER

SUMMARY: This Memorandum request that the Boston Redevelopment Authority (“BRA”) take the following actions: (1) authorize the Director to issue a Certification of Approval for the Herb Chambers Certified Pre-Owned BMW Automobile Dealership Project at 75 Morrissey Boulevard, proposed by The Herb Chambers Companies (“Developer”) in Dorchester, which consists of the total renovation of the existing building and parking lot and related site improvements (“Proposed Project”), in accordance with Article 80E, Small Project Review of the Boston Zoning Code (the “Code”); and (2) recommend approval to the Zoning Board of Appeal on Petition BZC-32449 for zoning relief necessary to construct the Proposed Project.

PROJECT SITE

The Proposed Project is to be located at the former WHDH Channel 56 television studio located at 75 Morrissey Boulevard in the Dorchester neighborhood of Boston (“Project Site”). The Project Site comprises 94,269 square feet (approximately two (2) acres) of land and lies between the Boston Globe newspaper plant to the south and a Shaw’s Supermarket to the north. The Project Site is bounded by two major regional thoroughfares, William T. Morrissey Boulevard (hereinafter “Morrissey Boulevard”) to the east and U.S. Interstate 93 to the west.

DEVELOPMENT TEAM

The development team consists of James Xaros, of the Herb Chambers Companies (the "Developer"); Mark F. Regent, AIA, of Regent Associates, Inc. as the project architect; Paul W. Losordo, Esq, as project legal counsel; Kevin J. Joyce, Esq., of Doherty Law Offices LLP as project permitting counsel; Clara Batchelor of CB/A landscape Architects as landscape architect and Jane Howard of Howard/Stein-Hudson Associates, Inc as traffic engineer.

PROPOSED PROJECT

The Developer plans to renovate the existing building into a state of the art Certified Pre-Owned BMW automobile dealership. The Proposed Project is to include an automobile showroom with 15 service bays and a basement for storage. The outdoor parking lot on the Project Site will be reconfigured to include parking for 104 vehicles on display for sale and for customers and employees to park their personal vehicles. In addition to repairing the existing wrought iron fencing around the perimeter of the Project Site and installing new parking lot lights and signage, the landscape plan for the Proposed Project is deliberately thoughtful and creatively proposes to improve the green space and visual attractiveness of the currently underutilized lawn and tree areas on the Project Site. The proposed new landscaped environment for the Project Site will improve the aesthetics of the area for travelers on Morrissey Boulevard and for those who frequent the commercial properties located near the Project Site, including the Boston Globe, Shaw's Supermarket and Sovereign Bank.

The Proposed Project includes the installation of new showroom windows, thereby replacing the solid masonry facade of the existing building. The footprint of the existing one-story building will not change. However, the Proposed Project proposes to resurface the exterior of the entire building, including its tower, which will greatly enhance both the outward appearance of the new showroom and improve the quality of the interior environment. Specifically, the renovations to the interior of the building will increase the amount of natural light available to the building's occupants. The existing television antennae that served the former WHDH Channel 56 will be removed from the roof of the building.

The Developer plans to begin the renovations of the Proposed Project in March 2013 with an estimated November 2013 completion date and a total development cost of approximately \$5.8 million. The Proposed Project will create eighty (80) temporary construction jobs and forty (40) permanent full-time positions for sales, service and administrative personnel.

ZONING

The Project Site is located within a Community Commercial Subdistrict (“CC”) in the Dorchester Neighborhood District in Dorchester. The Proposed Project will require zoning variances for the following: (1) GPOD: Green Protection Overlay District, (2) Use Regulations: Indoor Sale of Automobiles (Auto Dealership), (3) Use Regulations: Accessory Auto Repair Garage, (4) Use Regulations: Outdoor Sale of Automobiles, (5) Sign Regulations: Freestanding Signs: Proposed Signage exceeds District Height and Area regulations, and (6) Off-Street Parking: Off-Street Loading Insufficient. Enforcement as evidenced by the rejection letter issued by ISD attached as Exhibit A.

PUBLIC PROCESS

On November 16, 2012, the Developer filed a Small Project Review application with the BRA for the Proposed Project, pursuant to Article 80E of the Code. On December 6, 2012, the BRA hosted a community meeting at the Cristo Rey Boston High School, located at 100 Savin Hill Avenue in Dorchester. This meeting was advertised in the *Dorchester Reporter*.

RECOMMENDATION

The Proposed Project complies with the requirements set forth in Section 80E of the Boston Zoning Code (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, in accordance with Article 80E, Small Project Review of the Code to construct the Proposed Project and (2) recommend approval to the Board of Appeal on Petition BZC-32449 for zoning relief necessary in the Community Commercial Sub district to construct the Proposed Project.

Appropriate votes follow:

VOTED: That the Director be, and hereby is, authorized to issue a Certification of Approval for the Herb Chambers Pre-Owned BMW Automobile Dealership at 75 Morrissey Boulevard, proposed by The Herb Chambers Companies in Dorchester, which consist of the total renovation of the existing building and parking lot and related site improvements in accordance with Article 80E, Small Project Review of the Boston Zoning Code (the “Code”) and

FURTHER

VOTED: In reference to Petition BZC-32449, for the Herb Chambers Certified Pre-Owned BMW Dealership project in Dorchester, for zoning relief necessary in a ("CC") Subdistrict, the BRA recommends APPROVAL WITH PROVISO: submit project plans to the BRA for design review approval.