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Development fuels employment and housing - by Dominic Leonardo

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Dominic Leonardo
East Providence Waterfront
Commission

In the face of adversity in 2020, development in the East Providence Waterfront District continued to make considerable advances. Fueled by residential, commercial, and industrial projects, economic activity within the district contributed to the city's employment opportunities and housing base. Additionally, key developments yielded public access to recreation areas previously inaccessible for decades.

The year began with the approval of the final phase of apartment units at Kettle Point in February, 2020. Upon completion, the total number of units at Kettle Point will amount to 228 Class A apartments. The last stage of townhomes approved in 2020 will bring the number of condominiums to 64. The market for these residences has been robust with sale prices reaching record levels.

The final phase of Kettle Point resulted in the donation of a 3-acre parcel to the city including a 600-foot pier. This exceedingly popular attraction is directly off the East Bay Bike Path and part of the scenic Urban Coastal Greenway.

Another notable residential development in the district includes the Phase 1 completion of Bold Point Residences. This phase consists of 22 high-end units located at the site of a former auto dealership on Veterans Memorial Pkwy. This site is within walking distance to the bike path and the burgeoning Watchemoket Cultural District. Based on the success of Phase 1, the developer submitted plans for 12 additional units on an adjacent site in November 2020.

Approved in October 2020, Ivy Place is a mixed-use development that will include 13 new affordable housing units and ground level retail space. Households earning up to 80% of the area median income (AMI) will be eligible to buy the nine townhomes on Ivy St. and households earning up to 100% AMI will be eligible to buy the four live/work units on Taunton Ave. Funding for these units is provided in part by the Waterfront Commission's Affordable Housing In-Lieu Trust Fund.

The Waterfront's Affordable Housing Trust Fund will also provide \$200,000 to support the rehabilitation of two apartment buildings on Sutton Ave. into 36 affordable apartments.

Kearsarge Solar LLC applied for a 2,807-kilowatt solar array system on Dexter Rd. in January of 2020, received approval in February, and had the site generating power to RIPTA by the end of December 2020. The former brownfield site is now a source of clean renewable energy and its carbon sequestration will be equivalent to 3,232 acres of forest per year.

Phillipsdale Landing's new tenants brought the industrial site up to a 75% occupancy rate. Plans for development of the abutting East Point parcel are expected in 2021.

Manufacturers Aspen Aerogels and Eaton continued operations throughout the pandemic. Aspen's continued growth has led to plans for a modest expansion in 2021.

Looking forward, RIDOT is rebuilding Henderson Bridge to include dedicated bike and pedestrian infrastructure. The new configuration with direct access to Waterfront Dr. will create parcels for development opportunities. Another site poised for development is the former Getty Terminal, further revitalizing formerly industrial properties that have since been blighted.

Dominic Leonardo is the planner for the East Providence Waterfront Commission, Riverside, R.I.

New England Real Estate Journal - 17 Accord Park Drive #207, Norwell MA 02061 - (781) 878-4540