



November 26, 2017

Dear Fellow East Siders:

I hope Thanksgiving provided you with an opportunity to enjoy good food with family and friends. This week's letter discusses an upcoming meeting concerning a boat ramp off River Road, developing a school facilities plan and pending vacancies on the Providence School Board.

The City applied for a grant from the Department of Environmental Management to build a small boat ramp on River Road near the base of Irving Avenue. The grant would cover at least 75% of the total anticipated cost of \$100,000. The project is designed to provide access for recreational uses, alleviate erosion from storm water runoff and support infiltration and storm water management. The Planning Department has scheduled a public meeting to describe the project and receive public comment. It will take place **this Wednesday, November 29 at 4:30 p.m. at 444 Westminster Street in the first floor conference room.**

Last month, the Mayor's office held meetings to solicit public input concerning the ways in which our school facilities affect the education our children receive. I have attended these meetings, which have to my observation proceeded at a very high level (stating broad educational goals, such as collaboration) on the one hand, and at a very specific level (structural integrity, plumbing facilities, etc.) on the other, but relatively little about how educational goals can be reflected in design principles. The Mayor has scheduled a third meeting to place on **Thursday, December 7 at Providence Career and Technical Academy, 41 Fricker Street, at 5:30-7:30 p.m.** I am hopeful this meeting will provide an opportunity to present school design principles as a way to "connect the dots" between educational goals and the type of buildings the City will propose to construct. At this phase or the next one, I also help we will gain a better understanding of how to link these principles to the priorities of the Providence Public Schools, based on the condition of the buildings, the anticipated enrollment of students, and the anticipated of local and State funds.

School facilities are but one of many important issues currently before the Providence School Board. The teachers' union contract expired in August, and while teachers so far have been agreeable to work without a resolution, contracts usually provide an important opportunity to advance the education opportunities for our children. In the next few years, resources will become a challenge, as charter school enrollment increases, the State funding formula reaches a plateau, and federal aid faces downward pressure from the Trump administration and House and Senate Republican leadership. In the schools themselves, recent incidents have raised concerns about policies protecting student safety. With that in mind, the School Board will have important work to do over the next few years. We are currently in the application cycle for four of nine School Board vacancies, and you can apply by filling out a form available by [clicking here](#). Please send me an email if you wish to discuss this further.

Sincerely,