



April 2, 2017

Dear Fellow East Siders:

As we await the return of the baseball tonight, this week's letter discusses the City Council's involvement in the recall election scheduled for the Third Ward and an upcoming community meeting to discuss the suboxone office and a possible infrastructure bond.

This past Friday (March 31), Council President Luis Aponte, Councilman Kevin Jackson and four others submitted a petition to call special City Council meetings on April 3 and 4 to "conduct an inquiry into the . . . determination into the recall of Kevin Jackson by the Board of Canvassers." With regard to these upcoming special meetings, Council Members Jennings, Narducci, Salvatore, Yurdin and I issued the following statement:

State law provides a right to appeal the Providence Board of Canvassers' decision to the Rhode Island Board of Elections, and from there to the courts. As a legislative body, the City Council does not have the authority or responsibility to intervene in these ongoing legal proceedings. For that reason, we choose not to attend these meetings.

On April 24, 2017 at the Hope High School Cafeteria from 6:30 to 8:30, I will hold a community meeting to discuss the proposed suboxone office at Lloyd and Thayer and the infrastructure bond. **The speaking portion will begin at 7:00 p.m.**

To discuss the suboxone office, I have invited representatives from the Bureau of Inspection and Standards, the City Solicitor's Office and the Health Department. They will answer your questions, address your concerns and clarify some mistaken information that is currently circulating. For example, there is confusion about the legal difference between a "nonconforming use" (such as a gasoline station that is located in an area that later becomes a residential zone) and a "permitted use" (such as a property owner who gains a formal variance to operate a gasoline station in a residential zone.) It is the City Solicitor's opinion that the former, "nonconforming uses" are subject to abandonment after one year under the Zoning Code, while the latter, "permitted uses" are not. I have introduced a proposed ordinance to change the language of the Zoning Code to eliminate this distinction going forward, but legislation cannot change the application of existing law. The Solicitor believes a court would interpret the current code as stated in his opinion, so this is a legal matter and not a political matter. Also, some people have suggested that the legal permission may change if the owners change the current use of the building as a medical office (that writes prescriptions) to that of a clinic (that dispenses medication). The Bureau of Inspection and Standards is aware of this distinction, but they owner has told them the office will not dispense medicine, and the Bureau intends to watch them closely on this and other points to ensure they do not operate in excess of the variance's authority. On that note, I also will invite the project owner and/or his attorney to attend to answer your questions, though I cannot require them to come.

I also will invite representatives from the Department of Public Works to discuss the infrastructure bond. Please mark your calendars.

Sincerely,