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November 9, 2018

Councilman Samuel D. Zurier
55 Dorrance Street, Suite 400
Providence, RI 02903

Dear Councilman Zurier:

I have received your correspondence and disagree with your assertions that I have in any way failed to keep my word to you or otherwise neglected to invest in the downtown neighborhood. While you are fixated on one aspect of our conversation, you fail to recognize the city's failure to address my many concerns about the business climate in greater Kennedy Plaza, which have been clearly laid out to you.

As you may not be aware, at your suggestion, I did travel to New York City with Cliff Wood to meet with Dan Biederman of the Bryant Park Corporation. We had an informative conversation about the park. With great pride, you told me how your daughter works for the Bryant Park Corporation, and how you could envision that concept working here in Providence, so I took that conversation very seriously. Dan and I discussed at length how such a public-private partnership could work in Providence, but the last I checked, Bryant Park is not a bus hub, and the City of Providence has not made progress on reducing the number of bus berths as promised or increasing visible police presence to deter crime within the plaza and the surrounding business area. I do not feel that I let you down in any way. On the contrary, I cannot move forward in creating a partnership without the support of the city. It is unfair that when you and other City Council members passed a smoking ban ordinance, the city administration let us all down by not enforcing it and is now trying to revoke without evidence that public health and neighborhood cleanliness will not be immediately negatively impacted.

I also strongly disagree with your claim that I have not invested substantially in the downtown neighborhood since this ordinance was passed in June of last year. In the last few years alone, I have invested more than \$125 million downtown through the purchase and extensive renovations of 100 Westminster Street, the development of a new Hilton Homewood Suites Hotel on Exchange Street, the ongoing renovation of 30 Kennedy Plaza into a luxury boutique hotel, and the renovation of the historic Case-Mead building at 76 Dorrance Street into loft apartments. I challenge you or anyone to find an individual who has invested more in Providence through economic development and service to the city.

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Councilman Zurier

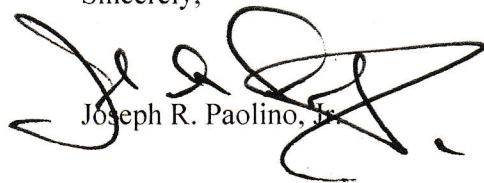
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Councilman Zurier, I only became Chair of the Downtown Improvement District for one reason. I believe that the city is not doing their job, and my past experience as a Mayor allows me to instinctively understand this city and what our administration has to do. What I did not expect was for the city to not do their job, and it greatly disappoints me as a citizen, a taxpayer, and former Mayor. As Chair of the Providence Downtown Improvement District and a board member of The Providence Foundation, I have made my concerns about the deteriorating state of Kennedy Plaza very clear to you. I recognize that my voice may be easy for you to disregard since I have taken it upon myself to voice these concerns repeatedly. However, I would encourage you to reach out to RIPTA CEO Scott Avedisian to discuss the comments he made at our most recent board meeting concerning security in Kennedy Plaza. As a former Mayor, he has articulated his concerns about conditions in and around the current bus hub, and I would recommend you seek his guidance in your efforts to transform this space.

As a Councilman, you have advocated admirably for your constituents and I appreciate your passion for this city. In this instance, your passion is misdirected. There is no one who wants to see Kennedy Plaza transformed into a vibrant social space that is clean, welcoming, and safe more than I do. I am not the one who has failed to honor my commitments to the city and its residents. I will never give up on the city I was born in, live in, and have had the honor of serving as Mayor. The blame for the breakdown of our agreement lays squarely on the city for not adequately addressing the safety and social concerns of the downtown area and not enforcing ordinances that were designed to encourage social programming of a vital community asset.

I look forward to continuing my work with the city to address these important issues, and I hope that City Hall will recognize that it's time to partner together in making Providence America's best city.

Sincerely,



Joseph R. Paolino, Jr.