



November 5, 2012

Dear Fellow East Siders:

I hope you (and your loved ones) survived Hurricane Sandy without too much trouble.

Tomorrow is Election Day, and I encourage you to exercise your right to vote. If you are unsure of which polling station you should attend, please click on this link from the Secretary of State's website [Polling Station Locator](#). Please consider voting to approve Question #18, to reform the redistricting process. This year, Rhode Island has instituted a requirement for voters to produce identification. Also, polling stations this year will close one hour earlier, at 8:00 p.m.

The Education Committee will meet on **Wednesday night (November 7) at 5:45 p.m. on the third floor of City Hall** to discuss in-district charter schools. The Superintendent and Chief of Staff will present for the School Department, which has encouraged schools to apply for this "conversion." The School Board will review the applications when complete and decide whether to endorse them. According to the regulations, an application must receive the endorsement of either the School Board, the State's Commissioner or both in order to be considered. As discussed in previous weeks, the Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Elementary School has applied to "convert" to "in-district" charter status, which could bring benefits to the school, but also raises important issues. Providence has 22 elementary schools, but only two of them are located on the East Side, as indicated in this [School Map](#). If King is no longer specifically available to the neighborhood, then the next closest schools will be Veazie and Kizirian. (The Windmill Street School appears on the Map, but has since been closed.) Based on the 2010 Census, the East Side contains 1/5 of the City's population, but it currently houses only two elementary schools and that number could be reduced to one. (To be fair, the East Side contains a lower proportion of school-aged children among its population, but it still is under-served in terms of schools located in the neighborhood.) If the Rhode Island Department of Education (RIDE) grants a "waiver" to the King School application, that community may have a special neighborhood school that could benefit both the school and the surrounding neighborhood. Also on Wednesday night, the Education Committee will review a resolution I introduced last month identifying King's neighborhood identity as critical to the school's and the community's future (read the resolution here: [King Resolution](#)).

Last Thursday, the City Council received from the administration a proposed tax treaty for the 257 Thayer Street project. You can review a copy of the proposed agreement by clicking here: [Proposed Agreement](#). The City Council referred the proposal to the Ways and Means Committee, on which I sit. The Ways and Means Committee will not be meeting this coming week, but I expect it to meet the following week. I have begun to investigate the data on which the proposed agreement is based, and will continue my preparations this coming week. The Gilbane Development Company is preparing its submission to the City Planning Commission (CPC) as part of the "preliminary design" phase of the review. The City Council enacted a resolution urging the CPC to conduct a robust review. (To read the resolution, click here: [Thayer Street Resolution](#).) In the meantime, the Planning Department expects to hire another staff member in the next two weeks, at which time it plans to move forward with the Thayer Street planning study that committed to conducting as part of the same resolution the City Council enacted in September.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads 'Samuel D. Zurier'.