



November 9, 2014

Dear Fellow East Siders:

In this week's letter I will discuss a meeting tomorrow night concerning 460 Rochambeau Avenue, and share some observations concerning the election's impact on the future of our City.

Tomorrow night (**Monday, November 10**) at **6:30 p.m. at Central Congregational Church (296 Angell St.)** the Blackstone Neighborhood Group will meet to discuss the status of a proposed development project at 460 Rochambeau Avenue (at the corner of Blackstone Boulevard). Following a meeting two weeks ago, some residents met with the property owner to review possible adjustments to the development plan in order to address neighborhood concerns. Unfortunately, the parties were not able to reach any agreement. As a result, the neighborhood group will meet to discuss next steps. If you wish to get more involved, you can review an [online petition](#) and sign if you agree with their goals. Also, the group has organized an online forum you can join by sending an email to blackstone.neighborhood.org@gmail.com. Facebook users can stay informed by joining a [Facebook Group](#).

I am grateful the chance to serve another term on the City Council, and I look forward to working with Mayor-elect Jorge Elorza and Governor-elect Gina Raimondo. Because I anticipate a friendly transition from Mayor Taveras to Mayor Elorza, I am hopeful that the current Council and administration can make good use of the next six weeks. For example, the City Council gave initial passage last week to a revised zoning ordinance that implements a planned "working waterfront" that Mayor-elect Elorza supported, but his opponent Buddy Cianci opposed. At this point, the City Council can move forward to final passage, as the election has settled this issue. Another possible area of progress is the stalled teachers' contract. After reaching a tentative agreement with Mayor Taveras, the Providence Teachers Union membership did not approve the agreement, while the Union's leadership endorsed Buddy Cianci for mayor. It is my hope that the union will now put politics aside, work harder to inform membership of the reasons leadership supported the tentative agreement, and hold a second vote to approve it. If they can approve it, I will support the prompt scheduling of hearings by the City Council to conduct its review, the final step of the process required under the City Charter.

The transition period also will provide an opportunity for our Mayor-elect and Governor-elect to discuss shared policy goals. For example, it appears that both are interested in the development of the I-195 land, which Treasurer Raimondo identified during her campaign as a possible site for an "Innovation Institute." The goal of the project is to revitalize the State's economy, which will benefit Providence as well; however, if that site is selected, it will be necessary to develop a plan to protect the City's tax base and support the City services that will be provided to the new property owner. While many models could succeed, it is my hope we will not see another proposal as unfair to the City as the Providence Place Mall, in which the developer received a 30-year exemption from City property taxes, far out of proportion to the concessions made by the State government. Since that time, the Mall has brought extensive State revenues in the form of sales tax and payroll taxes, but no corresponding revenues to the City, while we have had to support the Mall with City services. This time, we need a project that is as good for the City as it is for the State.

Sincerely,