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STATE OF RHODE ISLAND AND PROVIDENCE PLANTATIONS

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PROCEEDINGS AT HEARING IN RE:
CITY OF PROVIDENCE
COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC WORKS
* * * * *

Committee on Public Works
Public Hearing
Providence City Hall
Providence, Rhode Island
April 9, 1996
6:00 P.M.

BEFORE:

COUNCILMAN ROBERT M. CLARKIN, CHAIRMAN

ALSO PRESENT:

JOHN D'AMICO, ASST. CITY SOLICITOR
BARBARA POIRIER, SECOND DEPUTY CITY CLERK

ORIGINAL

ALLIED COURT REPORTERS
115 PHENIX AVENUE
CRANSTON, RHODE ISLAND 02920
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E X H I B I T S

(PETITIONER'S)

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1 (HEARING COMMENCED AT 6:00 P.M.)

2 REP. CLARKIN: This a public hearing on
3 abandonments. Rep. John Lombardi.

4 REP. LOMBARDI: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.
5 I'm John Lombardi and I'm the councilperson for the
6 area where Gilbert Street is located. Where do I
7 begin? There's a whole bunch of people who want to
8 speak on this. Many of the members of the West
9 Broadway Neighborhood Association -- which is a very
10 active neighborhood association in my area, and I
11 must say they have single-handedly accomplished what
12 I think -- and they should serve as the prompter for,
13 I think, the entire city with some of the things
14 they're trying to do.

15 This petition this evening is just one step
16 further in improving not only the neighborhood but
17 the quality of life. Mr. Chairman, I support this
18 project. I support it wholeheartedly. I know
19 Mr. Harris and the people that generally live in that
20 area, and I think what they want to do will, I think,
21 be a benefit not only to the neighborhood but the
22 city as a whole.

23 I encourage you and your committee to please
24 support this in their endeavor -- and it's not the

1 entire street. Just a small portion of what -- I'm
2 sure they'll get into the merits and exactly what
3 they want to do. With that, I have to go chair
4 another meeting.

5 REP. CLARKIN: As you know, we're just
6 going -- we're not going to vote. The transcript of
7 this goes before the full committee.

8 REP. LOMBARDI: I understand, and I just
9 want to go on the record as supporting this project
10 wholeheartedly and whatever consideration you can
11 give it would be appreciated.

12 REP. CLARKIN: I love your sweater.

13 REP. LOMBARDI: Councilman, you can have it
14 after the meeting; how is that?

15 REP. CLARKIN: The second person who would
16 like to speak on behalf of this is Dawn Kerr.

17 MS. KERR: My name is Dawn Kerr. I live at
18 44 Harrison Street. The back of my property abuts a
19 part of Gilbert Street. Closing that portion of
20 Gilbert Street would really cut down on a lot of
21 traffic, a lot of irresponsible drivers coming
22 through that area, and would generally make the
23 neighborhood in general a safer place without these
24 cars coming through to avoid Westminster Street.

1 That's why I'm here to support the abandonment of
2 that portion of Gilbert Street.

3 REP. CLARKIN: Thank you very much. And
4 Hanna Rodriguez-Farrar.

5 MS. RODRIGUEZ-FARRAR: My name is
6 Hanna Rodriguez-Farrar, F-A-R-R-A-R. I live on
7 Gilbert Street, the portion that would be cut off,
8 and I have three basic reasons for wanting to cut off
9 the street. First is public safety. The second is
10 to decrease the amount of drive-through vehicular
11 traffic through that area as a cut-through street
12 from Bridgham Street and Westminster Street towards
13 the Dexter playground and, finally, I think that we
14 can make that area of Bridgham Street look better.
15 So we're looking towards better landscaping of it for
16 the rest of the city as well. That's all.

17 REP. CLARKIN: Fine. Thank you very much.
18 Erik Farrar.

19 MR. FARRAR: My name is Erik Farrar. I
20 live at 1 Gilbert Street also on the section of
21 Gilbert Street under the petition. I think the major
22 issue, which a lot of people have touched on, is I
23 think there is currently a light at the corner of
24 Bridgham and Hammond. It's a busy intersection and

1 Gilbert Street is a -- I'm sorry. That's not true.
2 Westminster and Bridgham is where the light is.

3 Gilbert is an obvious easy cut-through to that.
4 It's a small street with no sidewalks. Children play
5 there on a consistent basis and I, myself, had to
6 take refuge on my front porch from speedings cars on
7 occasion. It presents a real problem when people are
8 moving through there in any sort of volume at high
9 speed. So I just wanted to flush that out.

10 The other issues, my wife and the others who
11 have spoken here have touched on so I won't get into
12 that.

13 REP. CLARKIN: Thank you very much.

14 Paul Betz.

15 MR. BETZ: Paul Betz, and I live on 98
16 Harrison street. I came out here just to show
17 support for the closing of that end for basically the
18 same reasons, and that was primarily for safety
19 concern and cutting down traffic that whips through
20 that very narrow street and, in addition, as an
21 aesthetic improvement to the neighborhood, and as an
22 overall idea for improving our community.

23 REP. CLARKIN: Thank you very much.

24 Kari Lang.

1 MS. LANG: Kari Lang, from 32 Willow
2 Street. I'm executive director of the West Broadway
3 Neighborhood Association. I just want to say I
4 support the project.

5 REP. CLARKIN: Thank you. John Harris.

6 MR. HARRIS: John Harris. I live at 20
7 Hammond Street. I filed the petition to have Gilbert
8 Street closed. My property abuts Gilbert Street with
9 the section we propose to close down on the side, and
10 we've experienced several problems over the last five
11 years with this area. I think they've touched on
12 most of it. Speeding cars, it's a real safety
13 issue. I've almost been run down there myself.

14 A lot of crime comes through there, and houses
15 have been broken into, and I've witnessed robbers
16 leaving the scene from a house robbery and running
17 right down that Gilbert Street section out into
18 Bridgham where there's heavy traffic and
19 disappearing.

20 So we think it will be a great success for our
21 endeavors to have it closed down. Thanks.

22 REP. CLARKIN: Thank you. Justin Kerr.

23 MR. KERR: I'm Justin Kerr, and I live at
24 44 Harrison Street. I just came here to say I

1 support the petition to abandon that section of
2 Gilbert Street.

3 REP. CLARKIN: Fine. Thank you very much.
4 John P. Traverse (sic) or something close to that.

5 MR. TAVANIAN: That's John Tavanian,
6 7 Gilbert Street. It's T-A-V-A-N-I-A-N. I'm one of
7 two houses on Gilbert Street. I'm on the west side
8 of Hammond, which is the portion of Gilbert we do not
9 want abandoned. I'm here to support my neighbors,
10 and to make sure it's clear that their side of
11 Gilbert Street is abandoned and my side of Gilbert
12 Street is maintained as a city street, and I'm in
13 full support of their petition. Thank you.

14 REP. CLARKIN: Fine. Thank you very much.
15 Are there any opponents of this? Does anyone oppose
16 this that hasn't signed up? No? All right. Let me
17 say one fast thing here. There's no action taken on
18 this, and having a councilman come from the ward is a
19 big factor in its favor, but we still have to look at
20 what the police department says and what the fire
21 department says. This is information we have to go
22 with when the committee meets as a whole. Thank you
23 very much for coming.

24 Did you want to say something?

1 MR. GOOD: Chris Good, G-O-O-D, 94 Harrison
2 Street, which is one street over from Hammond. I am
3 here representing the West Broadway Neighborhood
4 Association as president of the board. We've done a
5 lot of activities in the neighborhood to try to
6 promote a real neighborhood feel.

7 The little alleyway is a part of that and would
8 make the neighborhood great, but this particular
9 piece of Gilbert Street is a real problem as far as
10 traffic goes. It doesn't technically lead -- it's
11 not a thoroughfare to anywhere. I think closing off
12 the end of it, abandoning it, would be a terrific
13 idea.

14 We have a lot of cars speeding through a very
15 quiet residential neighborhood. They're not people
16 who live here, so it brings a real throughway that
17 leads to a maze of alleys that really doesn't help
18 the neighborhood, and we support the petition to
19 abandon it.

20 I'd like to say we'd like to make sure the
21 street edge on Bridgham Street is made whole, that
22 it's not just simply some jersey barriers put in
23 front of the end of the road, but that it's made to
24 look like there's a sidewalk continuing on Bridgham

1 Street, etc.

2 REP. CLARKIN: Thank you very much. No one
3 else? Okay. Thank you. That's the end of Gilbert
4 Street. This is now a petition to abandon a portion
5 of Bay Street. Is there anyone in favor? Does
6 anyone want to sign up or speak on behalf of Bay
7 Street or in support of it? Does anyone oppose it?
8 Bay Street is done.

9 We have to wait until 6:20 for the next street.
10 We have it down here as that time, so we can't act on
11 it until then.

12 (BRIEF RECESS)

13 REP. CLARKIN: Next is the petition to
14 abandon the unnamed gangway between Commodore Street
15 and Touro Street. Anthony DeQuattro.

16 MR. DEQUATTRO: My name is
17 Anthony DeQuattro. I live at 46 Touro Street. I'm
18 here to request the gangway between Touro Street and
19 Commodore Street be abandoned for several reasons.
20 First of all, the City doesn't take care of it. When
21 it snows the big plows are unable to get through the
22 street to plow it, so we have to shovel it anyway.
23 Second of all, it's used as a shortcut by people who
24 don't even live in the neighborhood, and because of

1 this we're unable to fence off a yard.

2 The houses are exposed from all angles to people
3 who walk in and out. It's been an area or a street
4 where people have been using it for what I -- I'm
5 assuming is drug transactions. This is where cars
6 come and park at night. I can hear under my bedroom
7 window doors slamming and closing, and people walking
8 in and out, and we're afraid that's happening.

9 Also it's -- because it's used as a shortcut, a
10 lot of people -- litter is all over the place. We
11 have a neighbor who complains he can't send his
12 daughter out to play because stray dogs come in and
13 out of that gangway. And even myself, when I was
14 working in my yard, have been attacked by a dog.

15 So because of these reasons for safety, for
16 privacy, for a clean neighborhood, we certainly would
17 like to see the street abandoned so that fences can
18 be put up, so that everyone's yard can be clearly
19 distinctive, who owns what, and where people can go.

20 I mean, I have people who live next door to me
21 who use my yard as an area to back in and out of so
22 they can park in their yard. That's not very safe or
23 private as far as I'm concerned.

24 So I hope you consider the fact that it would be

1 a good idea to abandon the road.

2 REP. CLARKIN: Thank you very much.
3 Francisco Follino (phonetic). I'm sure I probably
4 killed that, but if you just give your full name.

5 MR. POLLINO: This is my father,
6 Francis Pollino. I'm Vincent Pollino. We live at 56
7 Touro Street, and we're in favor of them abandoning
8 half of the street. What he says is true. There's a
9 lot of kids there and they're up to no good. And we
10 would like to abandon half of the street and -- for
11 the same reasons that he specified.

12 REP. CLARKIN: Thank you very much. Are
13 there any opponents? Anyone opposed to the closing
14 of this gangway? Hearing none, we'll go onto the
15 next matter.

16 MR. DEQUATTRO: Are there any written
17 opponents to it?

18 REP. CLARKIN: Offhand I don't have any
19 written opponents.

20 MR. DEQUATTRO: Has anyone looked at any?

21 REP. CLARKIN: We have to wait until 6:30,
22 because it's on the docket for 6:30 for the next one
23 and we can't do anything until then.

24 (BRIEF RECESS)

1 REP. CLARKIN: It is 6:30 and we'll go on
2 with the petition to extend Lancashire Street from
3 Glasgow Street to Cornwall. Does anyone want to
4 sign up in favor or opposed to it? We will call the
5 opponents first. We're calling opponents first.
6 Nancy O'Donnell, if you can just give your name and
7 address.

8 MS. O'DONNELL: Nancy O'Donnell, 300
9 Cornwall Street, Providence. I'm here tonight to say
10 that I'm in favor of Lancashire going through,
11 because I think it would be a good safety factor for
12 the neighborhood. Right now it's very dark up
13 there. There's a problem with people coming during
14 the day dumping things, and if the City goes through
15 with the street they'll pave it, put up streetlights,
16 and I think it will enhance the neighborhood. That's
17 it.

18 REP. CLARKIN: Fine. Thank you very much.

19 MS. O'DONNELL: You're welcome.

20 REP. CLARKIN: William Schwartz, would you
21 give us your name and address, just in case I haven't
22 read it right.

23 MR. SCHWARTZ: My name is William Schwartz.
24 I am a resident of 110 Lancashire Street and have

1 been a resident for 22 years. I put the petition in
2 to have Lancashire Street extended for the fact it's
3 become a dumping ground in the past for trash. I did
4 bring some photos if you'd like to see them.

5 REP. CLARKIN: We'll put them in as an
6 exhibit, if you don't mind.

7 (PETITIONER'S EXHIBIT NUMBER 1 MARKED)

8 MR. SCHWARTZ: Sure. My other concerns are
9 Ms. O'Donnell had stated that it is a dark area since
10 it is a dead-end street and it is cluttered, and we
11 have been plagued with some crime in the recent --
12 several years ago our own house had been burglarized,
13 and we're adjacent to the lot for the School for the
14 Deaf. And there was just -- there was a murder down
15 there.

16 It's not uncommon to wake up in the morning to
17 find that there was a car burnt in the lot down by
18 the School for the Deaf. And the simple matter is
19 there's no visibility. Everything is all enclosed.
20 So I feel that putting the street through would open
21 the area up, give them more visibility to the area,
22 and cut down on some of the crime.

23 We also have a problem with drainage on that
24 street. When they did put the road in initially they

1 never put any type of sewage drains or storm drains.
2 We have a considerable amount of rain and runoff that
3 erodes the area. You can see by the photographs it's
4 just sloping. I had actually made a little pathway
5 or a drain to have the street drained away so it
6 doesn't erode into my land.

7 We typically have problems with snow removal,
8 and the plows can only come down -- especially when
9 you have a bad winter like this, and they did quite
10 well, but it's one of the last houses -- or the last
11 street to get plowed because we're a dead-end, and we
12 understand that.

13 We figure putting the street through would
14 actually get our services put through a lot easier.
15 That's about all I have to say.

16 REP. CLARKIN: Fine. Thank you very much.
17 Maryann Schwartz.

18 MS. SCHWARTZ: Maryann Schwartz. I live at
19 110 Lancashire Street in Providence. I'd also like
20 to say I'm the house next to the hole and there's
21 skunks there, rats, mice. I've had mice come in my
22 house. I had to have an exterminator come in to take
23 care of the mice because of this.

24 Also, my house got robbed due to the fact it's

1 so dark there. I had to have a burglar alarm system
2 put in. People come in as far as the hole and they
3 dump. I'm not -- I can't watch it 24 hours a day.
4 What's happening is my land is sloping this way
5 (indicating), so we put rocks. They move the rocks
6 and dump anyway, and then put the rocks back.

7 For us, we feel that it would be better for the
8 road to go through for a lot of reasons. The fact
9 it's very dark, to snow removal, and it would clean
10 up the area a little bit. We all take care of our
11 property over there, but that hole does nothing for
12 it at all. Thank you.

13 REP. CLARKIN: Thank you very much. And
14 the opponents to closing this street is
15 Darlene Ferria-Terzian maybe?

16 MS. FERRIA-TERZIAN: My name is
17 Darlene Ferria-Terzian, F-E-R-R-I-A, T-E-R-Z-I-A-N.
18 I live at 128 Lancashire Street. My home is the last
19 home to the dead-end. I, for one, I like the
20 privacy. I have small children and to the left of my
21 home, which is the other house on Lancashire on the
22 dead-end, has small children and a day-care center.

23 I, for one, am home with a small one 24 hours --
24 practically 24 hours a day. I never see any

1 dumping. I have seen animals, skunks, possums,
2 rabbits. They've never been a problem yet far.

3 Last year they had State's persons doing
4 property assessments. They asked me if I could hold
5 my dog, so I did, and I asked them what they were
6 doing here. They said a property assessment for the
7 State. And I asked the gentleman, do you plan on
8 opening this road and do you plan on building here,
9 which is where my dog is at the time. They said no.
10 We can't build here, that this is wetland. I
11 questioned that.

12 I have no idea if this is true or not, but I
13 find it peaceful, quiet, and privacy. I have -- I
14 haven't had any problems regardless to the snow plows
15 coming. There is access to my home and to
16 Lancashire. I've never had any problems with any
17 other public works so far yet, so I don't want the
18 street to be opened.

19 There is very few places in Providence where you
20 can have peace and serenity on a dead-end street, and
21 I haven't had any problems or any trouble. I'd like
22 to keep it the way it is for the sake of our children
23 that play on the streets. I find it very hard to
24 find such peace and serenity, and I'd like it as it

1 is.

2 I see opening it has no way to build there, and
3 I think it's going to chase away the bunny rabbits,
4 and the cute little things, and that's a plus of
5 being there. Therefore, I am against it.

6 REP. CLARKIN: Fine. Thank you very much.

7 MS. FERRIA-TERZIAN: Thank you.

8 REP. CLARKIN: And the next speaker is --

9 MR. TERZIAN: It's Sarkis, S-A-R-K-I-S, and
10 the last name is Terzian, T-E-R-Z-I-A-N. I'm also at
11 128 Lancashire Street, and one of the reasons why I
12 purchased that home was because it was a dead-end.
13 And this was about five years ago. From my
14 understanding from the prior people that owned the
15 home before us, they owned it for, I believe, 16 or
16 17 years. And all they said was good things about
17 how quiet and how nice the house was and the
18 neighborhood was.

19 And so far there was a couple of incidents
20 across in the field, which is a huge open field of
21 the deaf school, the School for the Deaf, and there
22 was some problems in there. Other than that, I see
23 no reason why it should be opened up except a big
24 expense to the State, City, whatever. That's all I

1 have to say.

2 REP. CLARKIN: Fine. Thank you very much.
3 Is there anyone else who wants to speak on behalf or
4 opposed to this? No? Fine. That's it. This
5 hearing is over. Thank you very much. There is no
6 action done on this, in case you missed it. There's
7 no action done on this. The transcript of this
8 hearing is heard by the full committee. They'll need
9 the transcript.

10 It'll probably be a couple of weeks before we
11 have a meeting on it, and then it's voted on. We
12 also have to check with the police department and the
13 fire department, and other people in the City. Thank
14 you very much.

15 (HEARING CONCLUDED AT 6:34 P.M.)

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C-E-R-T-I-F-I-C-A-T-E

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I, JULIA A. PULEO, RPR, Notary Public, do
hereby certify that the foregoing transcript is true,
complete and accurate, taken at the time of the
above-entitled matter.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this
11th day of April, 1996.

Julia A. Puleo, RPR / Notary Public

JULIA A. PULEO, RPR/NOTARY PUBLIC

My Commission expires January 26, 1998.

IN RE: COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC WORKS

Date: APRIL 9, 1996