



The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

Executive Office of Environmental Affairs

100 Cambridge Street, Suite 900

Boston, MA 02114-2524

RB
01/13/07
FILE COPY
W/C

MITT ROMNEY
GOVERNOR

KERRY HEALEY
LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR

ROBERT W. GOLLEDGE, JR.
SECRETARY

Tel. (617) 626-1000
Fax. (617) 626-1181
<http://www.mass.gov/envir>

January 3, 2007

CERTIFICATE OF THE SECRETARY OF ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS ON THE NOTICE OF PROJECT CHANGE

| | |
|-------------------------|--|
| PROJECT NAME | : Court Square Urban Renewal Plan Amendment #9 |
| PROJECT MUNICIPALITY | : Springfield |
| PROJECT WATERSHED | : Connecticut |
| EOEA NUMBER | : 12528 |
| PROJECT PROPONENT | : Springfield Redevelopment Authority |
| DATE NOTICED IN MONITOR | : December 6, 2006 |

Pursuant to the Massachusetts Environmental Policy Act (G.L. c. 30, ss. 61-62H) and Section 11.10 of the MEPA regulations (301 CMR 11.00), I have reviewed the Notice of Project Change (NPC) submitted for this project and hereby determine that it **does not require** the preparation of an Environmental Impact Report (EIR).

The project was previously the subject of review under MEPA in 2001, when the proponent submitted an Environmental Notification Form (ENF) that described urban renewal activities related to major renovations and expansion of the MassMutual Center (formerly known as the Springfield Civic Center) and the rehabilitation and redevelopment of the Court Square block, (bounded by Main Street, State Street, and Elm Street) into a 145-room hotel (by a private developer) and adjacent restaurants. On June 22, 2001, the Secretary of Environmental Affairs issued a Certificate on the ENF stating that the project did not require the submission of an EIR.

According to the NPC, subsequent to the issuance of the ENF Certificate, the Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) approved Amendment #8 for the Court Square Urban Renewal Plan (CSURP) on March 28, 2002, allowing the plan to be implemented. The renovations and expansion of the MassMutual Center were completed in October, 2005. However, the rehabilitation and redevelopment of the Court Square block did not proceed primarily because of unfavorable hotel market conditions. The City of Springfield subsequently acquired title to the hotel site for non-payment of property taxes.

The changes to the project described in the NPC involve property acquisition and disposition only. Nevertheless, the Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) has deemed these changes to be major in accordance with 760 CMR 12.03, and as a result, the proponent has submitted this NPC for review. Amendment #9 relates solely to the administrative acquisition and disposition process for the Court Square Hotel building and the implementation of streetscape improvements along the Main Street corridor. The proponent, the Springfield Redevelopment Authority, proposes to acquire four properties in order to create two disposition parcels for which the proponent, for which rehabilitation work will be pursued in the future. No changes to the urban renewal area boundaries, business and residential relocations, spot clearances, zone changes, and/or street discontinuances are proposed as part of this NPC.

In the only comments received on the NPC, the Pioneer Valley Planning Commission (PVPC) raised its concerns regarding the location of a Pioneer Valley Transit Authority (PVTA) bus stop. I strongly encourage the City of Springfield, the Springfield Redevelopment Authority, the PVPC, and the PVTA to work cooperatively to resolve this issue, and to maximize access for transit vehicles and transit use in the project area. I remind the proponent that the Certificate on the Environmental Notification Form (ENF) issued on June 22, 2001, strongly recommended that all traffic mitigation measures be implemented prior to commencement of operations at the MassMutual Center. No further review of the project under MEPA is required as a result of the proposed project change.

January 3, 2007
Date



Robert W. Golledge, Jr.

Comments received:

12/27/06 Pioneer Valley Planning Commission

RWG/RB/rb