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CERTIFICATE OF THE SECRETARY OF ENERGY AND ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS
ON THE
ENVIRONMENTAL NOTIFICATION FORM

PROJECT NAME : Stanley Woolen Mill/Blackstone River and Canal State
Park Shared Parking
PROJECT MUNICIPALITY : Uxbridge
PROJECT WATERSHED : Blackstone
EEA NUMBER : 14451
PROJECT PROPONENTS : LTI Uxbridge Stanley Limited Partnership
DATE NOTICED IN MONITOR : July 8, 2009

Pursuant to the Massachusetts Environmental Policy Act (MEPA) (G. L. c. 30, ss. 61-62I) and Section 11.06 of the MEPA regulations (301 CMR 11.00), I hereby determine that this project **does not require** the preparation of an Environmental Impact Report (EIR).

Project Description

As proposed, the Project involves the conversion of public parkland to other purposes that constitutes a disposition of land under the provisions of Article 97 of the Amendments to the Constitution of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. Specifically, the Proponent seeks to use approximately 3.75 acres of land that is part of the Blackstone River and Canal Heritage State Park owned by the Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) for commercial parking purposes, in conjunction with the redevelopment of the historic Stanley Woolen Mill located on Mendon Street in Uxbridge.

Chapter 243 of the Acts of 2006 authorizes the Department of Capital Asset Management and Maintenance (DCAMM), on behalf of DCR, to convey to the Proponent rights in 3.75 acres of land in Blackstone River & Canal Heritage State Park subject to specific conditions. As described in the legislation, the 3.75 acres will be used to construct parking lots to accommodate the commercial redevelopment of the former Stanley Woolen Mill building located immediately adjacent to the Heritage State Park. The additional parking will facilitate the redevelopment project and is expected to enhance public access to the Heritage State Park. As provided in Chapter 243, the Proponent must grant to DCR rights in approximately 4.09 acres of the Proponent's land, also to be used as shared parking; construct and maintain the shared parking areas; construct and maintain a bridge over the Blackstone Canal to allow vehicular access to the parking spaces; and provide access rights for the benefit of the Heritage State Park, including access to restrooms and a possible connection for the planned Blackstone River Bikeway.

Jurisdiction and Permitting

The project is subject to review pursuant to Section 11.03(1)(b)(3) of the MEPA regulations because it involves a Land Transfer from a State Agency and entails the conversion of land held for natural resources purposes in accordance with Article 97 of the Amendments to the Constitution of the Commonwealth to any purpose not in accordance with Article 97. Construction of the parking areas will require an Order of Conditions from Uxbridge Conservation Commission, which was issued on April 13, 2009, and was not appealed.

MEPA jurisdiction is limited when a Project is undertaken by a Person and involves a Land Transfer but does not involve Financial Assistance. MEPA jurisdiction for this project is limited to those aspects of the Project within the area subject to the Land Transfer that are likely, directly or indirectly, to cause Damage to the Environment. Therefore, MEPA jurisdiction extends to the land owned by DCR that will be converted to parking lots and not to the redevelopment of the historic mill complex itself.

Review of the ENF

In its comments, DCR states that it has been in communication with the Proponent for several years regarding this project, and that it assisted in drafting the legislation that authorizes the transfer as well as the conditions for doing so. DCR fully supports redevelopment of the Stanley Woolen Mill complex and appreciates the Proponent's current plans to undertake the building's rehabilitation and re-use in a manner that will respect and restore its historic significance. DCR anticipates that the redevelopment project will result in a benefit to the park system, and this is the primary reason that DCR has been prepared to proceed with the disposition.

In the ENF, it is stated that the project will "not diminish recreation land because the proposed parking will be located on the site of the historic mill's former dye pits." While it is true that most of the new parking areas will cover the former dye pits, the proposed overflow

parking area is proposed to be located on land currently open for recreational use. DCR has expressed its concern to the Proponent in the past regarding the need for 274 additional parking space to be located both on the site of the mill complex and on land owned by DCR. DCR's goal has been to minimize the amount of parking while providing enough to serve both the Proponent's and its own needs. While I recognize that the total number of spaces proposed is largely dictated by local zoning, I encourage the Proponent to re-assess its parking needs, in particular, the overflow parking lot that would be located on land currently used for recreational purposes, and to seek zoning relief from the Town of Uxbridge if necessary.

The ENF states that the project will comply with the DEP Stormwater Management Policy. In its comments, DCR expresses its concern regarding how stormwater will be managed on the site. I note that that the Project has a valid Order of Conditions that was not appealed. Furthermore, the Department of Environmental Protection (MassDEP) indicated that it had no comments on the project. Nevertheless, the Proponent should work cooperatively with DCR to ensure stormwater is adequately managed on the site via the stormwater operation and maintenance plan required under MassDEP's Stormwater Management Policy. Conditions to ensure appropriate ongoing stormwater management could potentially be included in lease documents between DCR and the Proponent.

Chapter 243 of the Acts of 2006 require the Proponent to "ensure all plans, final design and construction of parking and other improvements facilitate connection of the Blackstone bicycle trail by or through the commonwealth's and grantee's property." The Blackstone River Bikeway has been the subject of review under MEPA as EEA #13642. As planning and design for that project proceeds, the Proponent should work cooperatively with the Massachusetts Highway Department (MassHighway), the Proponent of the bikeway project, to facilitate a bicycle trail connection within the Stanley Woolen Mill site.

In order to document the Project's conformance to the requirements of Chapter 243 of the Acts of 2006 and the EEA Article 97 Land Disposition Policy, an appraisal of the relative values of the rights to be exchanged must be prepared. Many of the conditions the Proponent is required to meet will be undertaken after the disposition has occurred. This fact must be considered by the Division of Capital Asset Management and Maintenance (DCAMM) and DCR and will require the disposition process and any executed documents to be clear and enforceable to ensure that the anticipated benefits of the Project are ultimately realized by the Commonwealth as well as the Proponent and its successors.

Finally, I commend the Proponent for its vision in undertaking the redevelopment of this important example of America's early industrial history and look forward to the synergy that will be created between this Project and the Blackstone River and Canal Heritage State Park.

Conclusion

Based on review of the information presented in the ENF, I find that no further MEPA review is required.

August 7, 2009

Date



Ian A. Bowles

Comments received:

- 7/28/09 Department of Environmental Protection Central Regional Office
- 7/29/09 Department of Conservation and Recreation