

FVNCA Meeting Minutes 12/13/01

JOINT MEETING: FVNCA and Willard Beach Neighborhood Association

Guests: John Cacoulidis, Tex Haeuser, member of the press

1. **Meeting called to order at Jewett Auditorium, SMTC, at 7:05.** The auditorium was filled to capacity.
2. **Introductory Remarks.** Aileen announced that the purpose of the meeting was to give John Cacoulidis an opportunity to present his proposal for developing land he owns adjacent to Bug Light Park. The meeting was neither a public hearing nor a press conference for Mr. Cacoulidis, but rather a chance for discussion between Mr. Cacoulidis and residents of the neighborhoods that would be most directly affected by development of the 22 acre parcel.
2. **Aileen introduced Tex Haeuser, Chair, South Portland Planning Department**
Tex presented a short history of the land under discussion, and noted the following:
 - Under current zoning laws, new buildings in SP are restricted to a height of 65 feet and a convention center is not a permitted use for the property.
 - After a recent traffic study, the city decided not to widen Broadway.
 - Ferry Village and Willard Beach are both pursuing individual neighborhood plans. Currently, FV is nearly finished with theirs and preparing to it to the Planning Board; Willard Beach has just begun the research phase.
3. **Highlights of Mr. Cacoulidis' Proposal/Presentation**
 - The twin towers would be 635' high.
 - The first floor of the structure would be 25' high.
 - The convention center would be 55' high, floor to ceiling and would offer 380,000 sf of convention space.
 - There would be a plastic surgery hospital in one tower; a general medical center in the other.
 - There would be a total of 2600 hotel rooms in the two towers.
 - Construction would involve 2500 workers around the clock.
 - The \$900 million project would be 100% funded by private money; no TIF would be requested.
 - An aerial cable car would transport guests back and forth to Portland so there would be minimal increase in automobile traffic on Broadway and across the bridge.
 - The purpose of the development would be to create a "monument to Maine."
4. **Questions**

The questions raised by the residents covered a wide range of concerns about the impact of such a massive complex on the neighborhoods, the jetport, greater Portland, and the state of Maine. Four people spoke in favor of the plan; the

overwhelming majority expressed the view that the project, as presented, was neither suitable nor feasible for Spring Point or Maine.

5. Adjournment

The Q & A concluded at 9:00. Aileen thanked Mr. Cacoulidis for coming to the meeting and urged him to continue the dialog with residents as he refines his designs so that their sentiments will be represented in the final plan for developing the property.

The FVNCA portion of the meeting was adjourned at 9:10 p.m.