



**EAST PROVIDENCE WATERFRONT SPECIAL
DEVELOPMENT DISTRICT COMMISSION**
PLANNER'S REPORT

Date: May 27, 2021
To: Hearing Panel
RE: Recommendation to the Waterfront Commission for aquaculture indoor as a conditional use

Applicant: Fish Head Farms, Inc.
Owner: Bourne Holdings LLC – Phillipsdale Landing
Location: 310 Bourne Ave, Building 14, Unit 1
Assessors: Map 302, Block 1, Parcel 3
Zoning: Phillipsdale Sub-district
Proposed use: Aquaculture

The proposed organic fertilizer maker would be located within the Phillipsdale Landing complex in a 7,400 square foot unit in Building 14. Building 14 is the three-story brick building located in the rear of the development. Other units in Building 14 are currently vacant.

Fish Head Farms creates organic soil conditioner, commercially known as Fish Sh!t ("the product"), derived from feeding tilapia a proprietary mix of feed that when digested lends itself nicely to bacteria and microorganism production/growth under proper conditions. The product is the first of its kind ecosystem in a bottle. By introducing a wide variety of beneficial bacteria and microorganisms in to the rhizosphere, the product creates an optimal symbiotic relationship between plant and soil.

Fish Head Farms is currently headquartered in Rumford, RI where they bottle and ship the product and the farm is currently in Seekonk, MA. If approved, this would move all of their operations under one roof in East Providence.

As indicated in the information received from the applicant:

The space in Building 14 will be used initially for our aquaculture farm. The Farm should take up approximately 4,000 sq ft of space for manufacturing, bottling and storage of supplies (food, bottles, caps, etc.). After the farm is running to specification, we will move our labeling and shipping function to the Phillipsdale site which should take up approximately 2,000 sq ft of space for labeling operations, shipping supplies, finished product storage, and physical shipping of product from Phillipsdale Landing to our customers. After all operations for the farm, labeling, and shipping are running correctly, we plan to build some nonstructural internal walls to move our office into the facility, taking up the remaining space so our entire operation is all in one location. We do not plan to have a retail component to their operation at Phillipsdale. All traffic will be from employees or delivery and receiving.

The tanks used in the operation are 500 gallons each, on a closed loop system and there will be spill mitigation in place. It has been confirmed that the floor can handle this load. Fish used in the operation live up to three years. There will be approximately 3,000 fish on site. When they are no longer productive, we will bring them off site and compost them.

The hours of operation are 8am – 6pm, Monday thru Friday. We currently employ nine full time employees. We will have up to twelve parking spots dedicated to our business.

Federal/State Licensing:

Upon approval of the conditional use permit, Fish Head Farms will obtain an ascent from the Rhode Island Coastal Resource Management Council to comply with all regulations.

Sec. 19-479 of Article IX of the East Providence Zoning Ordinance, addresses conditional use provisions:

(e) Conditional use provisions shall be limited to those which ensure the convenience and welfare of the public and do not substantially or permanently injure the value of neighboring property.

The applicant's testimony will demonstrate that the conditional use of indoor aquaculture will meet these requirements.

(g) In reviewing any application for a deviation or conditional use provision on any site, the commission may consider, among other factors, the following:

(1) Protection of adjoining properties and other parcels in the waterfront district from any detrimental use on the site.

The use is compatible with uses otherwise allowed by right in the Phillipsdale sub-district because it is similar to other light industrial and manufacturing uses allowed.

(2) Convenience and safety of vehicular and pedestrian movement within the site in relation to adjacent streets, properties, improvements and in conformance with the express design intent.

Fish Head Farms traffic movements on Bourne Avenue and within the complex of buildings at Phillipsdale Landing will not adversely affect the convenience or safety of vehicular and pedestrian movement within the site.

(3) Adequacy of the methods of disposal for sewage, refuse and other wastes, and methods of drainage of surface water.

Water used in the process will be either in a closed loop system or bottled with the product. The existing building and its mechanicals can provide sufficient power and water for this process. The system will have an HVAC plan that will provide proper air flow as well as odor remediation.

(4) Provisions of off-street loading and unloading of vehicles incidental to the servicing of the buildings and related uses on the site.

The applicant has a truck space and a shared loading dock. The shared loading dock will be sufficient for the applicant's needs and will not unduly burden other tenants who share the use of the loading dock.

(5) Adequacy of all other municipal facilities and services to meet the needs of the site.

Municipal facilities and services appear adequate to meet the needs of the site. Fire prevention upgrades and water line improvements by the property owner throughout the Phillipsdale Landing complex at 310 Bourne Ave help assure that municipal services are adequate.

(6) Achievement of overall design objectives of the development plan.

The proposed use is consistent with the 2003 East Providence Waterfront Special Development District Plan. Specifically it is similar to the continuation of light manufacturing uses identified in Chapter 6, Proposed Land Uses, for this property.

As executive director I recommend that the Hearing Panel vote to send a positive recommendation to the Waterfront Commission to grant indoor aquaculture as a conditional use requested by Fish Head Farms, Inc. for Bldg 14, Unit 1 at Phillipsale Landing.



Chris Martin, Executive Director

cc: Waterfront Commission
Applicant: Fish Head Farms, Inc, David Benharris

Fish Head Farms Phillipsdale Landing Operational Information

1. Describe in a more detail what the proposed use is (i.e. will you just be expanding operations? will you be doing anything new? do you also package on site? what's the manufacturing process? will you also be moving your office there? If so, how much space will be dedicated to it? What's the square footage by use breakdown?
 - a. The space (approximately 7,400 square feet) will be used initially for our aquaculture farm. The Farm should take up approximately 4,000 sq ft of space for manufacturing, bottling and storage of supplies (food, bottles, caps, etc.). After the farm is running to specification, we will move our labeling and shipping function to the Phillipsdale site which should take up approximately 2,000 sq ft of space for labeling operations, shipping supplies, finished product storage, and physical shipping of product from Phillipsdale Landing to our customers. After all operations for the farm, labeling, and shipping are running correctly, we plan to build some nonstructural internal walls to move our office into the facility, taking up the remaining space so our entire operation is all in one location.
2. Which building/ unit in Phillipsdale?
 - a. Building 14 First Floor
3. Hours of operation
 - a. 8 am to 6 pm M – F
4. Parking requirements/ Parking spots available
 - a. 6 to start and then up to 12 when fully built out/Spots available and to be confirmed with Landlord.
5. Number of employees
 - a. Currently Fish Head Farms has 9 Full time employees – 1 in manufacturing, 1 in labeling and shipping, 1 Director of Operations, 2 Sales representatives, 4 operating partners.
6. Potential noise
 - a. Normal and customary
7. Potential air quality emissions/ smells
 - a. Minimal
8. What type (if any) of traffic will be generated? What types of trucks will be used for deliveries? What is the predicted delivery schedule?
 - a. Fish Head Farms does not run any retail operations. All traffic will be from employees or shipping companies (UPS, USPS, 3rd Party shipping, etc.) Delivery and receiving are all done during normal business hours M-F.
9. Other permits required for aquaculture and status of those.
 - a. We are hoping to get city approval based on initiation of application today as well as being placed on the Town Meeting agenda on May 20th and subsequent meetings that are needed post May 20th. Once city approval is granted, we will need to get an RI Coastal Resources Management Council Assent. We are working with the RI state authorities in parallel with the East Providence authorities to ensure proper licensure and permitting.

- 1) At our meeting last week, we discussed possible smells. You stated in your document they'd be minimal. Can you please expand on that? Can you state your plan for air scrubbers/ charcoal filters? What else will you be doing to keep the smells minimal, given your operations?
 - a) Our air circulators will be fitted with activated carbon filters to remove any odors both internally and externally.
- 2) Related, we also discussed the disposal of dead fish. Can you describe in more detail how you plan to dispose of them? Where will they go (into a closed container? open dumpster?)? how often will they be picked up? you mentioned them being ground and used as fertilizer--will the grinding happen on site?
 - a) Any fish that die that need to be replaced or disposed of will be placed in a contained barrel and taken offsite for permanent disposal.
- 3) Can you address the source of your fish?
 - a) We will be using fish (tilapia) from our existing fish farm in Rehoboth MA.
- 4) You say you'll need an assent from CRMC. What is that for?
 - a) This is what has been communicated to us by CRMC via email, we have a scheduled meeting with them on Tuesday April 27th to get further clarity into any necessary state approvals.
- 5) What will your water source be? Where will your water be discharged? Is this something that will need to be coordinated with the Narraganset Bay Commission?
 - a) Incoming water will be municipal water . Water that is used in the aquaculture system will be completely contained in the system. We use a Recirculating Aquaculture System. All water in the system is used for fish rearing or product manufacturing, so there will be no aquaculture water discharged into sewerage systems. As a redundant safety measure, spill trays will be used.
- 6) RE: Parking. According to our Performance Standards ([Sec 19-482, 8, E](#)), your proposed use will require .8 spots per employee. So, at your current staff level, you'll require 7 spaces (.8 x 9 = 7.2), so there is no variance required for parking if this works out. Can you get anything in writing from Preston confirming the number of dedicated spots you'll have? See the attached example from a submission from another tenant in Phillipsdale.
 - a) I spoke to Preston today. He is working out parking for us but we will have up to 12 spots dedicated to our business over the course of our lease (3 years) and that is written in the current lease draft that we are working on between the parties.

1. Indoor humidity - I'm assuming these tanks are heated and that will keep humidity levels high in the building. I'm not sure of the layout and HVAC, but this could be an impact to everything in the building - we will have an HVAC plan, which is currently being finalized, that will provide proper air flow as well as smell remediation.
2. Noise - you mentioned recirculating pumps. How loud is this operation? Does it run 24/7? The pumps are small pumps which make minimal noise that will not be heard or noticeable outside of our leased space.
3. Odor - what is put in place for odor control? Is the odor more likely to come from the tanks themselves or from the waste removal and bottling operation? How exactly do they go from waste water to bottled fertilizer? They don't need to get into too much detail if it's considered proprietary but we would need some visibility into this process (is it manual or automated, are there any chemical additives, are there any auxiliary waste products like filters, etc) Even with charcoal air filters, will that be enough mitigation if this is an indoor operation that shares air circulation with other business? We will not divulge any part of process as it is a trade secret. The issue is smell remediation, per above the plan is being finalized with a master HVAC technician.
4. Are any chemicals used to treat the water or fish? No
5. How large are these tanks? What is in place for spill mitigation? Assuming the floor can handle a load like this? Tanks are 500 gallons each, the system is a closed loop system, there will be spill mitigation in place. We have confirmed the floor can handle the load as it is a first floor concrete floor that once housed huge industrial machines for Washburn Wire.
6. What is the average life span of the fish? Are they grown to full adulthood and sold for food in addition to the fertilizer operation? What is the average number of fish expected to be on site? The fish live for up to 3 years. There will be approximately 3,000 fish on site. When they are no longer productive, we will bring them off site and compost them.
7. How much water is used? And how much power? Can the existing infrastructure handle this type of operation? Yes the existing building and its mechanicals can provide sufficient power and water.
8. What happens to fish when they die? How often do the fish have to be replaced? How long does disposal take (sealed in an airtight container immediately and shipped offsite within 24 hours or something like that?). See answer to question 6 above
9. Is there any waste water from this operation? If so, it should not be disposed of in the sewer system or discharged at all? No waste water, all water is either in the closed loop system or bottled.
10. Is there any chance of fish escape into the river? I thought you said this was completely self contained, but I figured I'd ask. This is impossible. The fish are self-contained, the space we will reside in is secured with doors to the outside, and the river is 100s of yards away with asphalt and other buildings between our space and the river.

Waterfront District Application for a Permit

(File with the Waterfront Commission, c/o Executive Director) City Hall 145 Taunton Ave, East Providence, RI 02914

(Type and Print Clearly) 1. Applicant(s)

Name Fish Head Farms, IncAddress 414 Taunton Avenue East Providence, RI 029162. Owner(s) Name (list names of all holders of any equity interest in the applicant) Tom Leonard, Dave Barr, Joe Blanchard, Tom Fox, David Benharris, Justin Franks, Carl HafeleAddress See attached listing.3. Land Surveyor's Name N/A

Address _____

4. Assessor's Map/Block/Parcel Number(s) 203-1-3 PID 15865. Street Address of Property 310 Bourne Avenue6a. Waterfront Zoning Sub-District Phillipsdale6b. Conditional Uses or Deviations Proposed Aquaculture Farm7. Any Covenants, Conditions, Restrictions on the land? Environmental Land Usage Restriction
Bk 3911, Page 138

8. Title Report and Tax Certification Required (Attach to this form)

Applicant's Signature BBDate April 19, 2021

Witness _____

Owner Certification: "(I or we) do hereby certify that (I am or we are) the only owner(s) of record of the property under this application, and said property being described in deed(s) recorded in the East Providence Land Records at Book 3571, Page 235 request as this as (my or our) record plat for this property. (I or we) further certify that (I or we) submit to the jurisdiction of the East Providence Waterfront Special Development District and agree to pay all fees associated with submitting this application."Bourne Holdings LLCOwner Signature By: Preston Halperin, Manager Date 4/23/2021Witness Beth Halperin

Fish Head Farms Partner List and Information

Dave Barr
24 George St
Warwick RI 02888

Justin Franks
23 Bridle Court
Hope, RI 02831

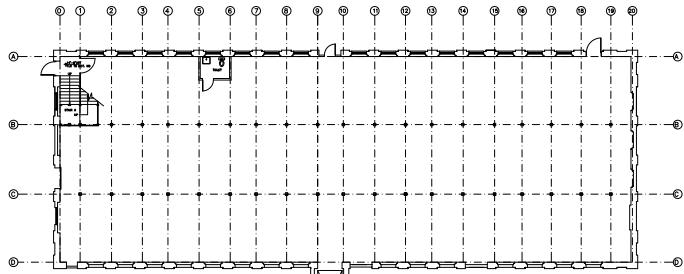
Carl Hafele
15204 Crystal Springs Way,
Louisville, KY 40245

Tom Fox
36 Ashby Street
Johnston, RI 02919

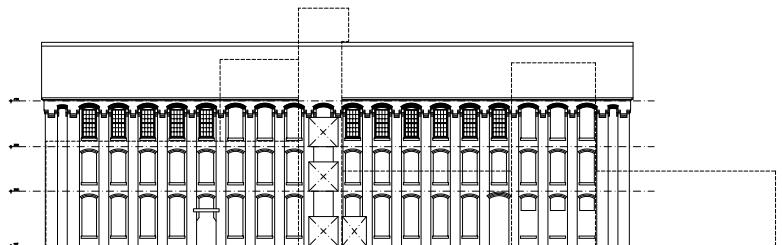
Joe Blanchard
15 Sunset Dr
Seekonk, MA 02771

Tom Leonard
36 Hiller Drive
Seekonk, MA 02771

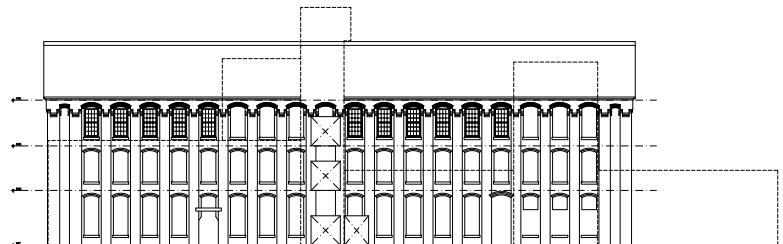
David Benharris
324 Spring Street
Wrentham, MA 02093



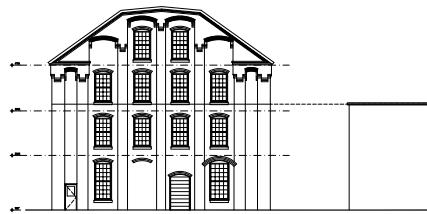
1 EXISTING FIRST FLOOR PLAN - BLDG 14
SCALE: 1/16" = 1' - 0"



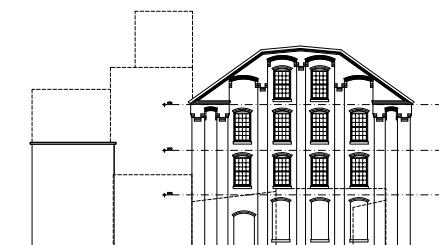
1 WEST ELEVATION - BLDG 14
SCALE: 1/16" = 1' - 0"



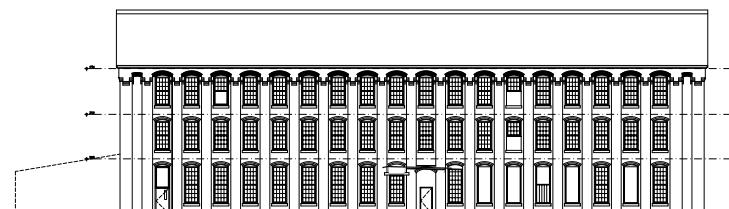
1 WEST ELEVATION - BLDG 14
SCALE: 1/16" = 1' - 0"



2 NORTH ELEVATION - BLDG 14
SCALE: 1/16" = 1' - 0"



3 SOUTH ELEVATION - BLDG 14
SCALE: 1/16" = 1' - 0"



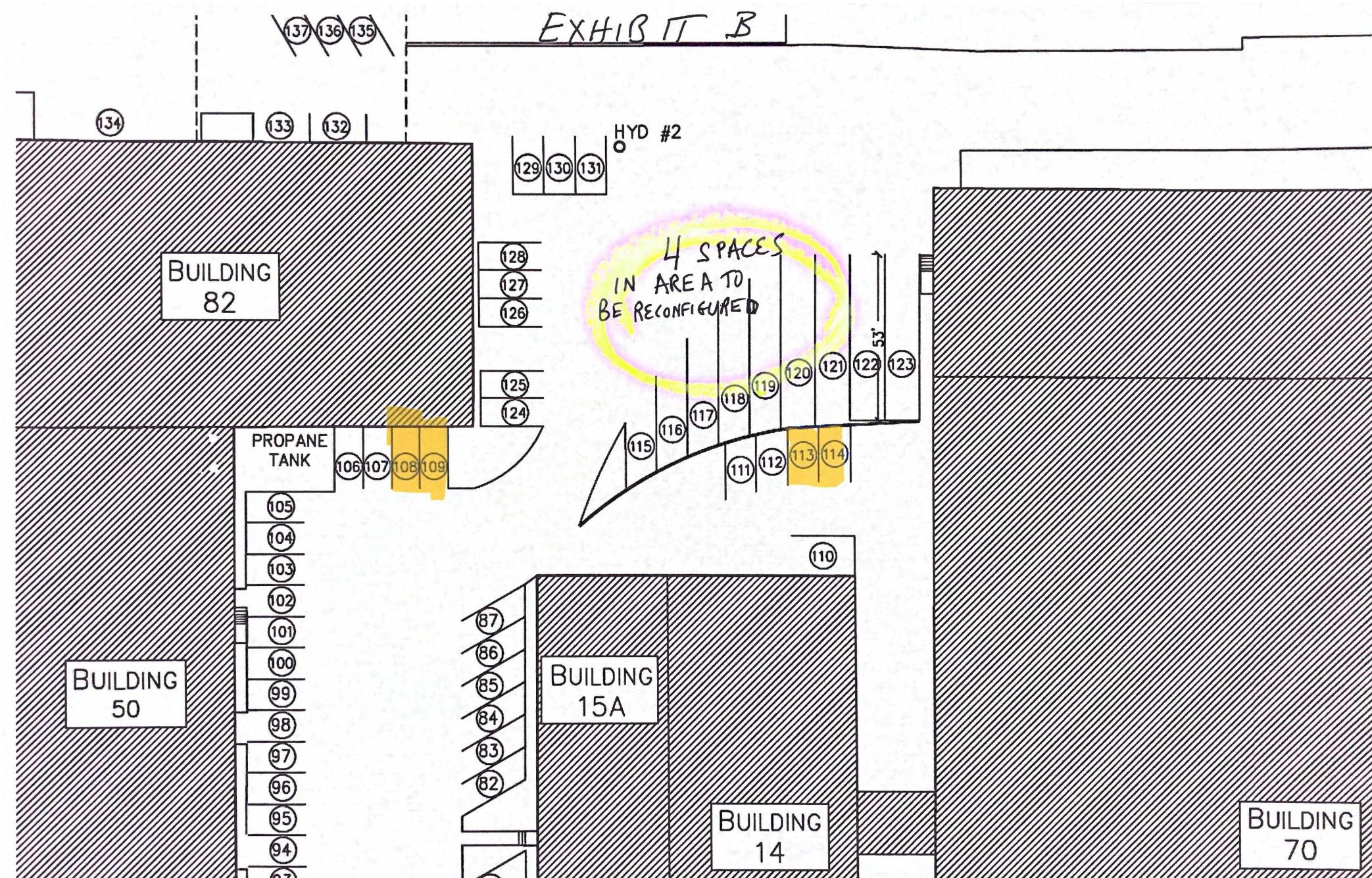
4 EAST ELEVATION - BLDG 14
SCALE: 1/16" = 1' - 0"

PHILLIPSDALE LANDING
310 Bourne Avenue
East Providence, Rhode Island

Description:	EXISTING DRAWINGS BUILDING 14 - FLOOR PLANS & ELEVATIONS		
Scale:	$1/16" = 1' - 0"$		
Date:	June 18th, 2014		

BLDG
14

EXHIBIT B



*

SPACES 108, 109, 113, 114

4 spaces in "Area to be Reconfigured"