



## EAST PROVIDENCE WATERFRONT DISTRICT COMMISSION

### Waterfront Commission Meeting Minutes Thursday, June 3, 2021 – 6:30 PM

**A remote/virtual meeting was held in accordance with Governor Gina Raimondo's EXECUTIVE ORDER 20-46, JUNE 12, 2020, FORTY-SECOND SUPPLEMENTAL EMERGENCY DECLARATION - PUBLIC MEETINGS AND PUBLIC RECORDS REQUESTS, EXTENDED BY EXECUTIVE ORDER 21-59, MAY 27, 2021, EXTENSION OF EXECUTIVE ORDERS.**

*Commissioners present via video and audio:*

William Fazioli, Chair  
Tim Conley, Vice Chair  
Peter Willey  
Jennifer Griffith

*Voting Members Absent:*

David Sluter  
Luis Torrado  
Paul Moura, Secretary  
Steve Hardcastle, Treasurer

*Staff present via video and audio:*

Chris Martin, Executive Director  
Amy Goins, Legal Counsel

Hanna Wells, Waterfront Intern

**1. CHAIRMAN'S OPENING REMARKS** The Chair called the meeting to order at 6:59 PM and gave an overview of remote meeting protocol. The Chair also noted that he, along with Executive Director Chris Martin and Waterfront Commission Legal Counsel Amy Goins gave a presentation to the East Providence City Council on Tuesday June 1<sup>st</sup> on how the Commission is governed, how it operates and updates on current projects.

**2. OLD BUSINESS**

**A. VOTE:** The motion by Mr. Pontarelli to approve the minutes of May 20, 2021 was seconded by Ms. Griffith and passed by a unanimous voice vote.

**3. NEW BUSINESS**

**A. PUBLIC HEARING**

**B. VOTE:** To consider adoption of the Hearing Panel advisory opinion for Fish Head Farms, Inc. for a conditional use of "Aquaculture, Indoor" for operations related to the manufacturing, bottling, storage and distribution of the applicant's organic beneficial bacteria and soil conditioner, made from a proprietary process using tilapia.

**Applicant:** Fish Head Farms, Inc.

**Owner:** Bourne Holdings, LLC

**Address:** 310 Bourne Ave, Building 14, Unit 1

**Map/ Block/ Lot:** Map 203, Block 1, Lot 3

**Zoning/ Acreage:** Phillipsdale Sub-District

All of the present members of the full Commission were in attendance at the Hearing Panel that was held just prior to this hearing. David Benharris, applicant and CEO of Fish Head Farms, explained that Fish Head Farms produces a beneficial bacteria that is used to promote plant growth and stimulation, not a fertilizer—which implies it contains nitrogen and phosphorus, which their product does not contain. Their product, Fish Sh!t, is created by harvesting the manure of 3,000 fish in a closed-loop indoor aquaculture system through a trade secret/ proprietary process. All the water used in the system either stays in the system or is bottled with their product, so there is no discharge into public sewer system. The fish are kept in the building in one of three individual 1,000

gallon tanks, equipped with spill guards and ensuring fish don't escape. The applicant is planning to install an aquaculture system on site in order to manufacture and bottle the product. Once the aquaculture system is up and running, they would move their shipping and handling department onsite and then their headquarters and offices. Their current shipping/ packaging and office is in Rumford, RI and their farm is located in Rehoboth, MA. If approved, this would move their entire operation to East Providence. The applicant is planning an HVAC system that would control any odor created from this production and keep it from escaping internally and externally. The applicant is also planning a spill mitigation system to ensure water stays on site. The applicant stated that an assent is needed from CRMC that requires the applicant to have health records on the fish being used in their production process. The applicant ensures that the terms of their lease will hold them accountable for any odors that escape and will be the best enforcement mechanism in place to hold the applicant accountable for controlling odors and being a good neighbor to other tenants and nearby residents. The applicant ensured that they are OMRI Certified and there is nothing toxic or hazardous in their product, should any spill or accident happen on site.

There was no public comment.

On a motion by Mr. Lawson, seconded by Mr. Pontarelli, the Waterfront Commission voted 7-0 to adopt the Hearing Panel's advisory opinion to grant indoor aquaculture as a conditional use requested by Fish Head Farms, Inc. for Building 14, Unit 1 at Phillipsdale Landing with the following recommended conditions of approval:

1. The applicant submit a site plan showing how domestic water service will be brought to or already exists in Building 14 at Phillipsdale Landing.
2. Applicant provides the HVAC and odor mitigation plan for review by the executive director once it is finalized.
3. Applicant provides spill mitigation plan for review by the executive director once it is finalized.

Present and voting Hearing Panel Members:

Mr. Willey – Aye

Mr. Conley – Aye

Ms. Griffith – Aye

Mr. Lawson – Aye

Mr. Pontarelli – Aye

Mr. O'Connell – Aye

Chairman Fazioli – Aye

#### **C. VOTE: To Close the Public Hearing**

#### **4. VOTE: ADJOURNMENT**

A motion was made by Mr. Lawson, seconded by Mr. Pontarelli to adjourn. On voice vote the Waterfront Commission voted unanimously to adjourn at 7:13 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

CHRIS MARTIN, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR