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City residents voice approval for India Park ordinance

By: Simon van Zuylen-Wood

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On Monday night, the Providence City Council Ordinance Committee held a public hearing about a proposed ordinance that may block the development of high-rise condominiums near India Point Park. Of the roughly 50 people who attended the meeting, nearly all voiced approval for the proposal.

The property in question is the Shooters parcel, named after a former nightclub in that location. The Rhode Island Department of Transportation can sell the property to the highest bidder. The ordinance, if passed, would make the land public.

Representatives from groups in favor of the ordinance, including Friends of India Point and the Fox Point Neighborhood Association, seemed to assume that the highest bidder would build a high-rise condominium.

The ordinance, proposed by Ward 1 Councilman Seth Yurdin, seeks to make the Shooters parcel public land, placing it under city control. Yurdin told The Herald his "council colleagues are concerned with the park and will support this."

The public hearing featured comments by members of the audience, which included State Senator Rhoda Perry P'91, who represents District 3, and Providence Director of Planning and Development Thomas Deller.

Most speakers expressed support for Yurdin's proposed ordinance. They spoke about what high-rises would mean to Providence's landscape. India Point Park is one of the only public spaces with access to and a view of Narragansett Bay in Providence. Citizens at the hearing expressed concern that a high-rise would block the view of the bay and diminish the park's beauty.

David Riley, a co-chair of Friends of India Point Park, suggested that the Shooters parcel was unsafe for development, as it lies beyond Providence's defined hurricane barrier.

Yurdin told The Herald that the ordinance would probably be passed in the City Council Ordinance Committee, but may face legal action from the DOT. A lawyer for the DOT said at the hearing that if the land were made public, it would be owned by the state - not the city - and the DOT could sue Providence for control of the land.

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