



For Immediate Release

Date: March 5, 2012

From: Community Development Department

Re: Riverfront Development Proposals – Boca Rescinds Sail Project Proposal

The Boca Hotel Group has informed the City of Covington that it is rescinding The Sail Project Proposal for the Madison Overlook on the Ohio Riverfront that the group had submitted in early February, according to the City's Department of Community Development.

The group has decided to rescind The Sail Project, which was proposed as a mixed use hotel, apartment and restaurant concept and instead incorporate the apartment component of The Sail Project in the Group's other proposal for the riverfront, The Kentucky Queen Project," said Jackson Kinney, the City's Director of Community Development. "Boca has indicated they will be giving us a revised proposal for The Kentucky Queen Project as soon as they can," Kinney added.

The Sail Project was one of two proposals the City received in response to an RFP the City issued in late November, 2011, where it sought interest in either land-based or water-based private development, or a combination of land and water based proposals for projects along the Ohio River near the end of Madison Avenue and the riverfront in that area. Boca also submitted at that time another proposal for a project in the area of the earthen levee west of Madison Place off Rivercenter Boulevard, which they called The Kentucky Queen Project.

In addition to the proposals from Boca Hotel Group, the City had also received a proposal from Corporex Realty & Investment, LLC and Jeff Ruby Culinary Entertainment. That proposal would involve a two phase development, with Phase I entailing the relocation, refurbishment and reopening of The Waterfront Restaurant at a location on the river off the Madison Overlook, and moored to the Overlook at the northern end of Madison Avenue. The proposal indicated a possible opening date for The Waterfront Restaurant for early to mid-Summer 2012. The Waterfront Restaurant has been closed since early in 2011 when the barge broke loose from its mooring near the Clay Wade Bailey Bridge at the end of Bakewell Street. The barge is currently moored at the Bakewell Street location.

The Corporex/Ruby Phase II Project is proposed to be implemented at a future point based on the availability of funding, with project activities to include riverfront landscaping and improvements, a floating boardwalk, marina and wharf, and a water-based restaurant and/or other attraction in a second mooring east of The Waterfront Restaurant.

The Kentucky Queen Project is to entail a hotel, conference center, night club, and dinner playhouse. According to Boca, The Kentucky Queen project would involve a historically themed hotel, conference, and entertainment center inspired by the area's past of famous riverboats. The proposed land based development would feature a large river facing and live music oriented nightclub and New Orleans influenced restaurant.

Boca is proposing The Kentucky Queen project be built generally on top of and on the south side of the earthen levee west of Madison Place and north of Rivercenter Boulevard, with a lower level parking garage. The proposal also involves a 600 seat dinner theater on the south side of Rivercenter Boulevard, which would fall in the current IRS property. At the present time the City has no adopted Redevelopment Plan relating to the IRS property, although in 2011 the City did submit a Letter of Intent to work with the General Services Administration/IRS in planning for the possible relocation of the IRS facility in this general area. No timetable has been agreed to between the City and GSA/IRS on this planning work and potential redevelopment project

The original Sail Project included a proposal for 136 apartments that would have been part of that mixed-use development. Kinney indicates it is unclear how many apartments will now be part of the revised proposal for The Kentucky Queen Project. "Obviously we are looking forward to receiving Boca's revised proposal," Kinney stated.

According to Kinney, Boca informed him that they rescinded the proposal for The Sail Project, given concerns relating to possible physical limitations of the Overlook site and the potentially higher development costs associated with such limitations. The limitations relate to the fact the Overlook would need to be accessed through the opening in the flood wall, which essentially corresponds to the width of the street in that location, and how that could create difficulties with ingress/egress for the different uses that would have been part of The Sail Project. "Boca loved the Overlook location, but after further analysis of the site, they felt it would present too many challenges, given the density of uses they had envisioned for that site, and the physical makeup of the location," Kinney stated.

Kinney indicated the City will continue with the review process, concentrating at this point on the proposal by Corporex Realty & Investment and Jeff Ruby Culinary Entertainment, until the revised Boca proposal is received, when the review of that proposal will also continue.

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