



Presentation of Joel Cohen, Promet Marine, to the Narragansett Bay Propeller Club

October 15, 2007

Greetings Propeller Club:

I'll make this very short—the City wants to convert Allens Avenue to a mixed use of residence, condos, hotels, restaurants, offices and retail shops. This is nothing more than the truncated version of Mayor Cianci's Three Cities Plan, a cloud that has hung over the waterfront since 1999.

Go to Olneyville to get an idea of what they have in mind. The future is not pretty! It's a mix of cheesy retail, restaurants, vacant apartments and an anchor tenant, Shaw Markets, which is already empty and selling off its fixtures. For this, the City wants to change zoning on Allens Avenue and destroy thriving dynamic businesses that have run successfully, some for over 100 years; businesses that employ directly and indirectly thousands of people at good wages, like Sprague Energy, Narragansett Improvement, Philips Services, Walco Electric, Promet Marine. The City would endanger the entire marine economy that uses the services of Providence Steamboat, The Northeast Pilots, the delivery of home and commercial heating oil. They would weaken the delicate working interrelationship that exists between National Grid, St. Lawrence Cement—the coal carriers, scrap exporters, bulk fuel carriers, the US Coast Guard, the fishing industry in the Northeast from the Middle Atlantic States all the way to Maine.

Did you know that Promet Marine Services is the last surviving commercial shipyard in the Ocean State?



The industries on Allens Avenue, including Motiva, are all part of this interrelated web. Along with Provport we are the most valuable industrial zone left in the State because we are water dependent. We have access to a 40 ft. Federal channel that makes Providence the only commercial port in the State of Rhode Island. And as you all know it cost the taxpayers in excess of 65 million dollars.

Can we allow the City to waste this investment? Can we allow the City to destroy businesses that service not just the City, but the State and the New England region as well, business that, if the cloud were lifted, can continue to grow? Or do we acquiesce to the vision of Olneyville that appears to our City Planners as the answer to a bigger tax base? You can't see any industry at all in their pretty pictures for the future of Allens Avenue.

Propeller Club—we need your help. Read our handout. Be a friend of the Providence Working Waterfront Alliance. Contact anyone whom you think can help us. It is survival time.