



Christian Science Plaza Revitalization Project
CAC Working Meeting #18
Tuesday, August 3, 2010
Location: Christian Science Publishing House Building

CAC Attendees:

Tom Aucella, Belvedere Condo Association
Kelly Brilliant, Fenway Alliance
Vanessa Calderon-Rosado, Inquilinos Boricuas en Acción (IBA)
Mark Cataudella, Boston Symphony Orchestra (BSO)
Christian Coffin, Hilton Hotel Boston Back Bay
Sybil CooperKing, Neighborhood Association of the Back Bay (NABB)
Ryan Higginson, Resident of the South End
Meg Mainzer-Cohen, Back Bay Association
Donald Margotta, Church Park Apartments
Joanne McKenna, Fenway Community Development Corporation (Fenway CDC)
Craig Nicholson, American Planning Association (APA) – Massachusetts Chapter
Lee Steele, St. Botolph Neighborhood Association (SBNA)
George Thrush, Boston Society of Architects (BSA)
Robert Wright, Symphony United Neighbors (SUN)

CAC Members Not in Attendance:

Bill Richardson, Fenway Civic Association (FCA)

Ex-Officio Attendees:

Massachusetts State Representative Byron Rushing

City of Boston Attendees:

Heather Campisano, BRA
Randi Lathrop, BRA
Inés Palmarin, BRA
Lauren Shurtleff, BRA

Church Team Attendees:

Barbara Burley, The First Church of Christ, Scientist
Harley Gates, The First Church of Christ, Scientist
Bob Herlinger, The First Church of Christ, Scientist
Debbi Lawrence, The First Church of Christ, Scientist
Mahmood Malihi, Leggat McCall Properties
Bob Ryan, ML Strategies
Kayle Williams, The First Church of Christ, Scientist

Members of the Public:

Wes Bockley, Church Member
Nancy Brown, NABB
Maura Byrke, NABB
Don Carlson, NABB

David Collela, The Colonnade Hotel
Manuel Delgado, Fenway CDC
Dharmena Downey, Fenway CDC
Jeff Dugan, Summer Shack

Craig Elliott, Church Member
Mary Ellen Gardner, Resident of East Fenway
Daniel Guljs, Resident of St. Botolph
Jane Hartman, Resident of East Fenway
Jim Hartman, Resident of East Fenway
Mark Keiser, Resident of Boston
Sarah Kelly, Boston Preservation Alliance
Romin Koebel, Fenway CDC
Elliott Laffer, NABB
Cecile Lemley, Resident of Belvedere Condominiums
Stephanie Mason, Church Member

MK Merelice, Tech Center at Tent City
Molly Mosier, NABB
Caren Peters, Resident of Belvedere Condominiums
Adam Ragusea, WBUR
Dave Regal, Resident of St. Botolph
Nancy Restuccia, SBNA
Paul Rivenberg, Resident of East Fenway
Stephen Shapiro, Resident of Belvedere Condominiums
Barbara Simons, SUN
Gary Wolf, DOCOMOMO

Meeting Summary

On Tuesday, August 3, 2010, the eighteenth working session of the Christian Science Plaza Revitalization Project Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC) was called to order at approximately 6:15 p.m. in the Christian Science Publishing House Building by Inés Palmarin, BRA Senior Planner.

Inés welcomed the CAC and the members of the public in attendance, and provided an overview of the process thus far, noting that the CAC has been meeting for the past year and a half. The Church Team has reviewed several scenarios with the CAC in this time, which has included looking at possible real estate development on Belvidere and Dalton Streets and on Huntington Avenue, as well as public realm improvements, including the rebuilding of the Reflecting Pool, with the goal of activating the plaza. The CAC acts as a forum and represents the community for reviewing these options and developing a consensus on a preferred plan. The CAC has been involved in the development of guidelines and recommendations for a variety of options on the site. The Church Team has prepared a Draft Plan Document, which they will provide an overview of tonight. **All comments on the Draft Plan Document are due to the BRA by Friday, September 3, 2010.**

Next, Inés offered CAC Co-Chair George Thrush, BSA, an opportunity to speak on behalf of the CAC. George discussed the CAC's progress with the Church Team and noted that this evening would be an opportunity for the CAC to hear comments from the wider public on the Draft Plan.

Inés then turned the meeting over to the Church Team, led by Barbara Burley and Bob Herlinger. Barbara welcomed the public to the meeting and thanked the CAC for their time and effort thus far. Bob and Barbara then gave an overview of the Draft Plan Document via a PowerPoint presentation, available on the BRA's project website (<http://www.tinyurl.com/ChristianScienceCAC>).

Public questions and comments in response to the Church's presentation are summarized below:

- Sarah Kelly, Boston Preservation Alliance (BPA), stated that the BPA appreciates the approach the Church Team has taken, and on balance agrees with the Plan. Going further, specific recommendations from the BPA include a closer review of the sustainable elements of the Plan, a more careful look at the design relationship between the Sunday School

Building and the proposed building on Huntington Avenue, and very careful attention to the Reflecting Pool, including the possibility of not building the proposed crossing.

- Don Carlson, NABB, stated that he respects what the Church is trying to do in terms of activating its underutilized real estate, but commented that he believes they are overreaching with the tallest building proposed at the Belvidere and Dalton Streets site. Don added that this building would extend the tall spine and possibly set an unfavorable precedent. Moreover, he stated his opinion that 950,000 square feet is too much density for the site.
- Wes Bockely, Church Member and Resident of Newton, stated that he appreciates the Church's plans to make its public space softer and more available to the public on a year-round basis, since it is currently underutilized.
- Caren Peters, Resident of Belvedere Condominiums, stated that the buildings seem quite high, and expressed her opinion that lower options should be reviewed.
- A member of the public suggested that the Church Team explore café use as a way of activating the Plaza.
- Craig Elliott, an architect and Church Member, stated that he was impressed with the integrity of the Plaza and how it has been maintained. He explained that he has attended many CAC meetings and respects the amount of analysis behind the Church's plans, and also spoke favorably about how a new building next to the Sunday School Building on Huntington Avenue could work well on the Plaza.
- In response to a follow-up question from Caren Peters, Barbara Burley responded that the Church has a long history at this site and intends to continue this legacy, adding that as the process moves forward, there will be ways in which to assure this.
- Dave Regal, Resident of St. Botolph, asked about future plans for the Midtown Hotel site. Barbara Burley replied that the Midtown Hotel currently has a long-term lease with the Church that expires in 2016. At some point in the future, the Church will review this site for redevelopment opportunities.
- In response to a question from Stephen Shapiro, Resident of Belvedere Condominiums, Barbara Burley replied that the Church's financial projections include the assumption that the Midtown Hotel will be built to its as-of-right height of 115' at some point in the future.

At the conclusion of the meeting, Inés reminded everyone that all comments on the Draft Plan Document are due by **Friday, September 3, 2010** to:

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Lauren.Shurtleff.BRA@cityofboston.gov

The meeting was then adjourned at 7:15 p.m.