



Copley Place Expansion Project
CAC Meeting #13
Wednesday, July 20, 2011
Location: Copley Place – 4th Floor Office Level

CAC Attendees:

David Berarducci, Resident of the South End
John Connolly, Back Bay Association
Nikki Fortes, Tent City Corporation
Dan d'Heilly, St. Botolph Neighborhood Association (SBNA)
Anthony Gordon, Ellis South End Neighborhood Association
Zeina Grinnell, Neighborhood Association of the Back Bay (NABB)
Eugene Kelly, Resident of the Back Bay
Meg Mainzer-Cohen, Back Bay Association
Ted Pietras, South End Business Alliance (SEBA)
Mark L. Schmid, Trinity Church
Judith Wright, Pilot Block Neighborhood Association

Ex-Officio Attendees:

Massachusetts State Representative Byron Rushing
Massachusetts State Representative Marty Walz
David Blaisdell, Office of Representative Marty Walz
Angela Brooks, Office of Massachusetts State Senator Sonia Chang-Diaz
Elizabeth Corcoran-Hunt, Office of Representative Byron Rushing
David Nagle, Office of Boston City Councilor William Linehan

City of Boston Attendees:

Heather Campisano, BRA
David Carlson, BRA
John Fitzgerald, BRA
Andrew Grace, BRA
David Grissino, BRA
Vineet Gupta, Boston Transportation Department (BTD)
Mary Knasas, BRA
Lauren Shurtleff, BRA
Commissioner Thomas Tinlin, BTD

State of Massachusetts Attendees:

Robin Blatt, MassDOT
Peter O'Connor, MassDOT
Martin Polera, MassDOT
Bill Tuttle, MassDOT

Simon Property Group Attendees:

Donna Camiolo, R.F. Walsh Collaborative Partners
Kristi Dowd, R.F. Walsh Collaborative Partners
James Greene, Rubin and Rudman, LLP

Elizabeth Grob, Epsilon Associates
Rob Halter, Elkus-Manfredi Architects
Jack Hobbs, R.F. Walsh Collaborative Partners
Jane Howard, Howard/Stein-Hudson Associates
Bill Kenny, Simon Property Group

Members of the Public:

Kevin Ahearn, Otis & Ahearn
Getty Ayano, Tent City Resident
George Cramer, Cramer's Hair Salon
Ken Ham, Bay Village Neighborhood Association
Ann Hershfang, WalkBoston
Deborah Hubert, Tent City Corporation
Sheila Pelosi, Tent City Resident Alliance
Jackie Yessian, NABB

Meeting Summary

On Wednesday, July 20th, 2011, the thirteenth working session of the Copley Place Expansion Project Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC) was called to order at approximately 8:00 a.m. at Copley Place by Judith Wright, Pilot Block Neighborhood Association and CAC Chair. She introduced Nikki Fortes, representing Tent City Corporation, and Zeina Grinnell, representing the Neighborhood Association of the Back Bay, as the newest members of the CAC, replacing Ro Whittington and Jolinda Taylor, respectively, who were no longer able to serve on the CAC.

Mary Knasas, BRA Senior Planner, introduced Jack Hobbs, of R.F. Walsh Collaborative Partners, who indicated that today's meeting would provide the CAC with a preview of the Draft Project Impact Report (DPIR) in advance of its filing, with a specific focus on the changes made to the project since the filing of the Project Notification Form (PNF) and the resultant Scoping Determination, issued by the BRA in October of 2008.

Jack then introduced Rob Halter, of Elkus-Manfredi Architects, who began with an overview of the changes made to the design and programming of the project:

- Previously, Neiman Marcus had controlled most of the ground floor space adjacent to the Winter Garden. The new design allows for a new café space, as well as a smaller retail space, to be introduced. Additionally, a new restaurant/café space along Dartmouth Street has been added, that opens up towards the Southwest Corridor Park entrance. These changes will make for a more transparent design, which should result in a stronger street level presence for the project.
- Residential access from the parking garage has been relocated, allowing for a more direct route from the garage to the residential elevators. In addition, in response to Building Code updates, some new egress points have been introduced for the residential tower.
- The height of the Winter Garden has been increased to 40' throughout. The interior design of the Winter Garden is not yet designed, and the proponent is committed to working with the BRA and the CAC to ensure that the resulting design is open and welcoming.
- The area previously devoted to a restaurant for the Neiman Marcus is now occupied by mechanical equipment. From the exterior, this area now contains louvers that allow for

the venting of this equipment. This is largely necessitated by the updates to the Building Code requiring additional residential egresses.

Rob also reviewed the project's shadow impacts, and explained that while there would be no new shadow impacts to the Southwest Corridor Park, there would be brief shadows sweeping over Copley Square from October to December.

In terms of wind impacts, Rob explained that the conditions along the Southwest Corridor Park and outside of Tent City would remain for the most part unchanged. Conditions would improve along Stuart Street by the Westin Hotel. Increases to the existing wind levels occur within a range of 10 to 20% and occur where one would expect them to – at the corner of Dartmouth and Stuart Streets. Rob noted that a number of mitigation measures could be incorporated into the project, including wind drag elements or wind screens that could be installed by the entrance to the building.

The following questions were raised by the CAC in response to Rob's presentation:

- Anthony Gordon, Ellis South End Neighborhood Association, noted that the pedestrian connection along Stuart Street is still an issue and suggested that a pedestrian bridge be installed.
- In response to concerns about the appearance of louvers where there was previously going to be a restaurant space for Neiman Marcus, Rob indicated that this area is approximately 80' high, and thus will not be noticeable to most pedestrians. Moreover, he also committed looking at other options of treating the building façade below the louvers, so that their visual impact would be minimized. Additionally, he offered to explore other louver designs, as the ones shown at present are merely meant to serve as an example.
- In response to a question from Judith Wright, Rob replied that the overall expansion of the Neiman Marcus has been reduced by approximately 14,000-SF – their program now expands the existing store by approximately 40,000-SF, as opposed to approximately 54,000-SF before.
- In response to a question from Zeina Grinnell, Rob indicated that the Winter Garden is roughly 13,000-SF.
- Meg Mainzer-Cohen, Back Bay Association, stated that Anthony's point about the pedestrian connection along Stuart Street should be fully explored by the proponent with the BRA and BTG in order to determine whether or not it is feasible. Jack Hobbs agreed with Meg and indicated that they would look into it.
- Massachusetts State Representative Marty Walz added that the north side of Stuart Street should be reviewed as well.
- Eugene Kelly, Resident of the Back Bay, pointed out that the north side of Stuart Street is generally used as a service area for the Westin Hotel, and that as such, it is unlikely to see any significant improvement, because this use will always remain.
- Nikki Fortes expressed concern about the impact of the project in terms of noise and visual impacts to Southwest Corridor Park, particularly as it relates to the proposed café space. Rob replied that the café space would likely be used as a day use only, and would close in the evening.
- In response to a question from Representative Walz, Rob replied that the height of the building is 569' without mechanicals – and 625' if you include the highest point of the mechanicals. The shadow studies were done using the latter height, which accounts for the entire building volume.

- In response to questions from Mark Schmid, Trinity Church, Rob replied that no new shadow caused by the project lingers in one place for longer than one hour. He added that in most cases, the new shadow is rarely in one spot for more than 15 to 20 minutes.
- In response to a comment from Eugene Kelly, Rob affirmed that the shadow impacts generally occur during seasons where the weather in Boston is not as good as other times of the year.
- David Berarducci, Resident of the South End, advised using an architectural piece to baffle the wind rather than an organic one.

Next, Rob turned the presentation over to Jane Howard, of Howard/Stein-Hudson Associates, the transportation and traffic consultants working on the project. Jane explained that there have been recent improvements made to the traffic operations in the area due to signalization improvements. Commissioner Tinlin added that this is the result of a pedestrian and vehicle analysis throughout the City made in order to optimize pedestrian movements over the last four years. He further added that BTD can provide the CAC with a list of intersections that have seen improvement.

Jane continued her presentation, noting that the improvements made to the intersections of Stuart and Dartmouth Streets and Exeter Street and Huntington Avenue as shown in the PNF remain the same. All designs are at this point still in the preliminary phase, and the proponent plans to continue working with BTD as the project progresses.

Also as outlined in the PNF, the project does not include any new parking, and there will be no significant impacts to transit service as a result of the project. Transportation Demand Management (TDM) measures will be explored as well.

The following questions were raised by the CAC in response to Jane's presentation:

- In response to a question from Zeina Grinnell, Jane responded that valet trips can be added into the traffic analysis.
- Dan d'Heilly, SBNA, asked if the owners of the new condo units will be allowed to apply for Resident parking stickers, and therefore park on the adjacent streets. Jane replied that this remains to be determined. Commissioner Tinlin noted that it is possible to exempt the residential development from the Resident Sticker program, and that this has been done before.
- In a follow-up question, Dan d'Heilly asked if the affordable housing condo owners will be given parking spaces, which is also to be determined.
- Ted Pietras raised the issue of the pedestrian treatments at the exit ramp for Exit 22 from the Turnpike, and asked if the CAC could have a copy of the study on the possible pedestrian enhancements near Turnpike exit ramps from 1995-6. Mary Knasas replied that this will be discussed at a future meeting, and in the meantime, she will see if the study is available.

Elizabeth Grob of Epsilon Associates then gave a brief presentation on noise and daylight impacts. Sound levels will remain within the City requirements for daytime and nighttime as a result of the project. The daylight analysis showed similar results to other projects in the area, but more importantly, the daylight impacts are expected to be the same for the project as they would be if this project were built as-of-right, owing to the fact that the tower portion of the building will occupy a relatively small portion of the entire site.

The following question was raised by the CAC in response to Elizabeth's presentation:

- Mark Schmid asked about the impacts to Copley Square. Elizabeth replied that once you move further from a project, daylight is not impacted, and therefore Copley Square is too far away to see daylight impacts from this project.

Before closing the presentation, Jack Hobbs spoke about the proponent's commitment to complying with the Mayors Executive Order on Affordable Housing. At this time, they are looking to do some of the required units on-site, and some of them off-site. If they cannot find a suitable off-site location, they will opt to contribute to the affordable housing fund in lieu of building all of the affordable units on-site.

Jack also noted that the project team is still looking into the potential for public art associated with the project.

The following comment was raised by the CAC in response to Jack's closing:

- Massachusetts State Representative Byron Rushing expressed his preference for locating the off-site affordable units within a close proximity to the project.
- David Berarducci suggested that the proponent look at improvements to the Southwest Corridor Park. Jack explained that Simon Properties does not control the site.

Next, Heather Campisano, BRA Deputy Director for Development Review, noted that the proponent has indicated that they expect to file their DPIR in mid-August. Following that filing, the comment period will begin. Owing to the size of this project, it is likely that the comment period will be expanded to 75 days, which would mean that it would close sometime in early October. Accordingly, a BRA-sponsored public meeting on the project will be held some time in the month of September.

Lauren Shurtleff, BRA Planner, also alerted the CAC of an upcoming hearing before the Boston Zoning Commission, scheduled for August 10th at 9:00 a.m. at Boston City Hall. BRA staff will be presenting a map and text amendment to the Boston Zoning Code, which would amend Article 41, the Huntington Avenue/Prudential Center District, by expanding the areas where Planned Development Areas (PDAs) are allowed. This means that the Copley Place site would become eligible for a PDA.

Lauren also noted that the project will require further review by the Boston Civic Design Commission and reiterated that the CAC will be alerted once this process commences.

The following questions were raised by the CAC:

- Representative Walz expressed her dissatisfaction regarding the scheduling of the hearing before the Zoning Commission. She asked that the CAC take a vote on whether to advise the BRA and Zoning Commission not to proceed with this action, which was in turn voted down.
- Dan d'Heilly asked if the proponent can provide the CAC with a likely budget range for the public art associated with the project, so that the CAC can understand what to expect. He also suggested that a contest could be held to find an artist or a piece of art for the space. Jack Hobbs agreed that this was a good idea, and stated that the proponent will return to

the CAC with some ideas about where public art could be placed at a future CAC working session.

Future topics to be discussed by the CAC will include the public realm and pedestrian environment, public art, and a discussion of the zoning that the proponent will pursue for the site.

Questions and comments raised by the public included:

- Jackie Yessian, NABB, asked that the CAC ask the BRA and Zoning Commission to not change the site's zoning. She further stated that it is her opinion that this project go before the Zoning Board of Appeals for a variance when it is needed.
- In response to a question from Sheila Pelosi, Tent City Resident Alliance, it was affirmed that the DPIR will include solutions for ADA accessibility around the site.
- Ann Hershfang, WalkBoston, stated that she would like to see some attention paid to the treatment of Harcourt Street. Additionally, she requested a clarification on the use of the Dartmouth Street Garage.

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 10:35 a.m.