



Copley Place Expansion Project
CAC Meeting #16
Wednesday, October 12, 2011
Location: Copley Place – 4th Floor Office Level

CAC Attendees:

David Berarducci, Resident of the South End
John Connolly, Back Bay Association
Dan d'Heilly, St. Botolph Neighborhood Association (SBNA)
Nikki Fortes, Tent City Corporation
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)
Judith Wright, Pilot Block Neighborhood Association

Ex-Officio Attendees:

David Blaisdell, Office of Massachusetts State Representative Marty Walz
Elizabeth Corcoran-Hunt, Office of Massachusetts State Representative Byron Rushing

City of Boston Attendees:

Heather Campisano, BRA
David Carlson, BRA
David Grissino, BRA
Mary Knasas, BRA
Cecilia Nardi, BRA
Lauren Shurtleff, BRA

State of Massachusetts Attendees:

Robin Blatt, 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
Rob Halter, Elkus-Manfredi Architects
Jack Hobbs, R.F. Walsh Collaborative Partners
Bill Kenney, Simon Property Group

Members of the Public:

Kevin Ahearn, Otis & Ahearn
Cathy Angelini
Kathy Bianchi, Residences at Copley Place
Ann Hershfang, WalkBoston
Janet Hunkel, Southwest Corridor Park Parkland Management Advisory Board (PMAC)
Sheila Pelosi, Tent City Resident Alliance

Deirdre Rosenbery, Resident of Back Bay
Emanuela Saporito, Harvard University
Jackie Yessian, NABB

Meeting Summary

On Wednesday, October 12th, 2011, the sixteenth working session of the Copley Place Expansion Project Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC) was called to order at approximately 8:10 a.m. at Copley Place by Judith Wright, Pilot Block Neighborhood Association and CAC Chair.

Ted Pietras, SEBA, then provided the group with an overview of the Subcommittee meeting held on October 4th, reflected in the notes below.

Copley Place Retail Expansion & Residential Addition CAC Subcommittee Meeting 10/4/11

Topic: Stuart Street Pedestrian / Vehicular Corridor and the Huntington & Exeter/ Stuart & Dartmouth Intersections

Attendees:

CAC members: David Berarducci; John Connolly; Elizabeth Corcoran-Hunt (on behalf of Representative Byron Rushing); Anthony Gordon; Ted Pietras

City of Boston attendees: Vineet Gupta, BTB; Mary Knasas, BRA; Lauren Shurtleff, BRA

MassDOT attendees: Robin Blatt; Martin Polera; Bill Tuttle

Simon Property Group attendees: Donna Camiolo, R.F. Walsh Collaborative Partners; Rob Halter, Elkus-Manfredi Architects; Bill Kenney, Simon Property Group

Public attendees: Ann Hershfang, WalkBoston; Ken Kruckemeyer

After lively discussions we agreed on:

CAC Goals:

- Make Stuart Street feel more like a "City street" by narrowing it to be less of a highway/boulevard.
- Slow traffic in various ways and eliminate the vehicle weaving from the off-ramp and Huntington.
- Improve the pedestrian access at the north sidewalk along the Westin.
- Create pedestrian access along the Southside of Stuart Street.
- Three options for maintaining the pedestrian corridor controlling traffic and traffic/pedestrian conflicts along Stuart St. were presented and discussed at the session and will be further reviewed by representatives from the Mass DOT and City BTB also present at the session.
- At the end of the session a fourth option was suggested by the MassDOT representative that included expanding the Copley building to span over the existing exit ramp, closing it in and have a new south sidewalk that would parallel the expanded building, ending at the fire access lane whereby a stop sign or light would control traffic and allow pedestrians to cross the ramp and walk on a new sidewalk along the Copley building ending at the Winter Garden / Dartmouth and Stuart corner.

- Further review is needed on how far of a site line is needed coming out of Exit 22 at various speeds to see where a stop sign / light can safely be installed.
- The existing fire engine access needs to be maintained to Copley Place over the exit 22 ramp at Stuart.

Meeting Summary: There was lively discussion of 3 options by subcommittee chair Ted Pietras on how to achieve a pedestrian sidewalk along the south side of Stuart St and to establish either stop signs or a traffic light to get across exit 22 as it merges on to Stuart St along the to-be-built new Copley Place expansion. A Fourth option was added and discussed at the end of the meeting. The meeting went 1-1/2 hours and working plans are to be explored by the architects and engineers who were present. Both Howard/Stein-Hudson Assoc and the architect, Elkus-Manfredi, will be working on these options over the next week to have more definitive drawings and details for us to consider.

Addendum to meeting as a follow up are these e-mails:

We compiled the notes from each scheme along with the outlined goals and sent them to HSH for analysis. Kristi is actually coordinating the scope on the traffic and will be able to provide more information related to the timing. I thought it was a good discussion and our team is working hard to help resolve this area, it will be interesting to see what the study shows. As for option 4 it's probably too early to make any commitments without further analysis from the client but we will look at the possibilities.

Rob Halter AIA LEED AP
Senior Associate
ELKUS MANFREDI ARCHITECTS

As a follow up to Rob's email, we are currently working with Howard Stein Hudson on the 3 options, they have provided us with a completion date of next Friday October 14th. We have a follow up with call with them tomorrow and will get a better understanding of what we will have for Weds. We will follow up with you after the call.

Simon has asked that we investigate the possibility of option 4. We are currently working on that and will have a report for next Weds.

Donna Camiolo
principal and chief financial officer
RFWalsh collaborative partners
330 Congress Street, 6th Floor

Next, in response to the CAC's Subcommittee notes/letter above, Jack Hobbs, R.F. Walsh Project Management, stated that the project team is prepared to address the ramp alternatives at an additional CAC meeting to be held next Wednesday, October 19th. He added that the proponent is committed to finding the right solution. In addition, at next week's meeting, the proponent's landscape architect, Copley Wolff Design Group, will present the updated design elements for the Southwest Corridor Park and the public realm.

The following questions and comments were raised by the CAC:

- In response to a question from Zeina Grinnell, NABB, Ted Pietras replied that the Subcommittee had a detailed discussion about the ideas that had been presented at the Site Walk held on Friday, September 30th. All four of the options presented for the ramp condition would result in public access along the south side of Stuart Street.
- Eugene Kelly, Resident of the Back Bay, commented that the group has made great progress in the past few months.

The proponent then provided the CAC with a Response Letter to the September 9th Subcommittee comments on the public realm, which were discussed at the previous CAC meeting, held on September 28th. This Response Letter was requested at the last meeting, when it was suggested that the proponent respond to the CAC's Subcommittee comments as they would in an Article 80 filing. Judith Wright suggested that the group take ten minutes to look over the Response Letter, which is available online at the BRA's project website.

The following questions and comments were raised by the CAC:

- David Berarducci, Resident of the South End, asked if the Public Art Advisory Group has been formed yet, and if so, who will be participating. Jack Hobbs replied that the proponent is in the midst of assembling a group now, and that it will likely have representatives from the art history and architecture fields, as well as a representative from the CAC.
- In response to a question from Zeina Grinnell, Jack replied that the public art budget for the project will be approximately \$250,000. There was some concern among the CAC that this may not be enough money, to which Jack responded that he had had some preliminary conversations with experts in the field that had suggested that this seemed like a reasonable amount of money to spend on public art for a project of this size.
- Dan d'Heilly, SBNA, asked if the BRA would be involved as well. Jack replied that the BRA would be involved, and also added that someone from the Public Art Commission would be invited to participate as well.
- Eugene Kelly made a few comments about the visual impact of the building from Copley Square. Jack Hobbs responded that the proponent had included the most impacted views in the Draft Project Impact Report (DPIR), and noted that these were typically taken from sidewalk locations.
- Zeina Grinnell commented that the proposed tower is a very tall building, and that as such, because it will be a new element in the skyline, it is sometimes hard to visualize what the building will look like. She added that there are some very good benefits associated with the project, but noted that the CAC wants to be careful to make sure that they are covering everything. Zeina also stated that she would like to talk more about the glass and its reflectivity. Jack replied that they will discuss the view aesthetics in greater detail at next week's CAC meeting, noting that they can show the CAC examples of other glass curvilinear buildings to help them imagine what the tower will look like.
- Judith Wright noted that the issue of the Southwest Corridor Park's management into the future still needs to be discussed.
- Zeina Grinnell added that the Southwest Corridor Park's programming may require a separate entity, and added that this may also be the case for the Winter Garden.
- In response to a follow-up question from Zeina Grinnell, Jack replied that the Winter Garden can only be open for 20 hours a day due to maintenance and cleaning needs. The programming for this space will likely be handled by Simon Property Group, as it is certainly in their interest to have this space become as active as possible and visited frequently.

- David Berarducci noted that he is concerned that the programming of the Winter Garden could become exclusive, which should be avoided. The space should always feel welcoming and open to the public.
- Zeina Grinnell added that if it is closed for four hours a day, it will not function as a truly public space. She added that she realizes that it will be a challenge, but that the proponent must strive for this. Bill Kenney, Simon Property Group, stated that he realizes that the space will have to be programmed better than they have programmed the other spaces within Copley Place up until now. He added that he is looking to start a dialogue with a Friends group sooner rather than later, so that the Friends group could serve an advisory role.
- Dan d'Heilly stated that the sprinklers in the Southwest Corridor Park are already a large problem, and that it will be difficult for the proponent to only address the issues of the park from Dartmouth Street to Harcourt Streets, since the network is five miles long. Jack Hobbs replied that the proponent cannot replace the entire water system, but that he feels they will be able to isolate the system sufficiently to maintain the stretch of the park that they have committed to covering.
- Judith Wright stated that she would like to see more of the affordable housing accommodated on-site, using the Mandarin Oriental as an example (all of its affordable units were built on-site).
- Meg Mainzer-Cohen noted that the Mandarin is viewed as a bit of a mistake – in that it would have resulted in a better outcome if a Community Development Corporation had built the units elsewhere in the neighborhood instead.
- Jack Hobbs replied that there are people in the community who want to build the affordable housing – and the proponent is committed to building it nearby in either the South End or Back Bay.
- In response to a question from Judith Wright, Rob Halter, Elkus-Manfredi Architects, responded that the comments from the Boston Civic Design Commission thus far have generally been about the building's entries, as well as its impact on the Southwest Corridor Park. The scale the entryway in relation to the South End neighborhood in that location is very important, since it will function in many regards as the front door of the South End.
- Zeina Grinnell asked about the projected wind conditions for the center of the intersection of Stuart and Dartmouth Streets, and stressed that the proponent do something beyond simply adding landscape elements. Jack Hobbs responded that they are committed to placing some type of architectural screening device in that location.
- Meg Mainzer-Cohen noted that the improvements made to the intersection will make the walk across it shorter for pedestrians.

Next, the CAC discussed the preparation of their comment letter on the Draft Project Impact Report (DPIR) and Planned Development Area (PDA). It was agreed that a subcommittee would be formed to draft the letter, and then distribute it via email to the rest of the group. The CAC also agreed that they would like to meet twice more in advance of the DPIR and PDA comment period deadline, set for October 31, 2011. Meetings were scheduled for Wednesday, October 19th, and Wednesday, October 26th.

In addition, subsequent to the CAC meeting, it was confirmed that the project would be presented to BCDC on Tuesday, October 18th.

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 9:30 a.m.