



Copley Place Expansion Project
CAC Working Meeting #8
Tuesday, October 22, 2008
Location: Copley Place – 4th Floor Office Level

CAC Attendees:

David Berarducci, Resident of the South End
Meg Mainzer-Cohen, Back Bay Association
Morgan Pierson, St. Botolph Neighborhood Association
Ted Pietras, South End Business Alliance
Mark L. Schmid, Trinity Church
Ro Whittington, Tent City Corporation
Judith Wright, Pilot Block Neighborhood Association

Ex-Officio Attendees:

Massachusetts State Representative Byron Rushing
Elizabeth Corcoran-Hunt, Office of Representative Rushing
Karin Mathiesen, Office of Councilor Michael Ross
David Nagle, Office of Councilor William Linehan
Laura Sargent, Office of Representative Marty Walz

City of Boston Attendees:

Tabitha Bennett, Mayor's Office of Neighborhood Services

Heather Campisano, BRA
David Carlson, BRA
John Fitzgerald, BRA
Mary Knasas, BRA
Lauren Shurtleff, BRA

Simon Property Group Attendees:

Rob Adams, Halvorson Design
Donna Camiolo, R.F. Walsh Project Management
Kristi Dowd, R.F. Walsh Project Management
James Greene, Rubin and Rudman, LLP
Rob Halter, Elkus-Manfredi Architects
Jack Hobbs, R.F. Walsh Project Management
Bill Kenney, Simon Property Group
Carolyn Manoukian, R.F. Walsh Project Management
Dave Newman, The Strategy Group
Aimee Savard, Elkus-Manfredi Architects
Susan Tracy, The Strategy Group

Members of the Public:

George Cramer, Cramer's Hair Salon
Peter Flynn
Ann Hershfang, WalkBoston
Lynne Kortenhaus, Kortenhaus Communications, Inc.
Shirley Kressel, Resident of Back Bay

Sheila Pelosi, Resident of Tent City
Justin Rice, Boston Globe
Dan Salermo, Back Bay Sun
Jackie Yessian, Neighborhood Association of the Back Bay

Meeting Summary

On Wednesday, October 22, 2008, the eighth 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.

Judith turned the meeting over to Jack Hobbs, R.F. Walsh Project Management, who stated that the proponent has been working on further development of the public realm aspects of the project, based on some of the feedback received from the CAC thus far.

Rob Halter, Elkus-Manfredi Architects, then gave a PowerPoint presentation highlighting the public realm elements around the building. The urban design goals of the project are to open up the building, make it more welcoming both inside and out, and greatly improve the existing pedestrian environment. In order to achieve this, the sidewalk width along Dartmouth Street will be expanded by replacing the existing planters with new ones that will be located closer to the street and include seating. Canopies will be incorporated into the façade in order to punctuate entry points and give the building's street wall a sense of scale. The exit from Back Bay Station onto Dartmouth Street will also be replaced.

Overall, the building's façade will be much more transparent than what currently exists. On the Southwest Corridor side of the project, the dark glazing will be removed in order to open the space up to more light. Along Stuart Street, the building will feature a glass façade and the interior spaces will project outwards, with the Winter Garden becoming visible.

The interior of the Winter Garden will be softened and textured, resulting in a more park-like atmosphere that is less corporate. Rob Halter then introduced Rob Adams, Halvorson Design, who gave a more detailed explanation of public realm's design.

Rob Adams explained that annuals and perennials will be planted along Stuart Street, along with street trees. While a small egress is required at this location, it will be designed to discourage pedestrians from traveling along Stuart Street. He explained that because the trees along Dartmouth Street sit above the decking over the Massachusetts Turnpike, they will be smaller and placed in raised planters with wrapped seating. Granite accents will be used throughout the scheme, and the other materials used will be kept simple in order to allow for interaction between the Winter Garden and the sidewalk

The following questions and comments were raised by the CAC in response to the public realm presentation:

- In response to a question from Massachusetts State Representative Byron Rushing, Rob Adams indicated that since the building's entrance will be much closer to Dartmouth Street than it is now, a few more steps will be necessary.
- David Berarducci, Resident of the South End, commented that the introduction of more seating is a good idea, but noted that the area immediately surrounding the building's entry/exit seems a bit narrow, and might benefit from a larger entry/exit platform. Rob

Halter responded that the project team will look into other options for this area, and stated that the building's entry is 35' from the street corner, so there is room available.

- Meg Mainzer-Cohen, Back Bay Association, stated the Stuart Street side of the building is very attractive, and added that the handrails used throughout the public realm should be particularly special.
- In response to a follow-up question from Meg Mainzer-Cohen, Rob Halter replied that a combination of polished and honed granite will be used at the residential entrance to the building.
- In response to a question from David Berarducci, Rob Adams answered that the sidewalk along Dartmouth Street will likely be made of brick with granite accents, since the majority of Dartmouth Street's sidewalk is made of brick.
- Morgan Pierson, St. Botolph Neighborhood Association, asked if the opportunity exists for making improvements to the Southwest Corridor. In response, Rob Halter indicated that the decking under the Southwest Corridor is owned by the State. The proponent does have control over the entryway, and any improvements to this area will also help the adjacent open space. Jack Hobbs added that the goal of this interior space is to connect the community retail to the rest of the mall. Rob Halter also noted that the community retailers will be provided with new storefronts, which will also help.
- David Berarducci noted that the project would benefit from bringing the organic elements found within the Winter Garden to the exterior of the building.
- In response to a question from Meg Mainzer-Cohen, Rob Halter indicated that new signage will be created for the community retail spaces.
- In response to a follow-up question from David Berarducci regarding the potential for improvements to the Southwest Corridor, Jack Hobbs indicated that the proponent will look into it. Representative Rushing added that it would be helpful even if the proponent were to make suggestions to the MBTA, DCR, and the Southwest Corridor advisory group regarding potential improvements. Donna Camiolo, R.F. Walsh Project Management, added that if the State is willing to cooperate, the proponent would be willing to discuss further improvements to this area.
- In response to a question from David Berarducci, Rob Halter replied that the project team is still working on determining the right mix of plantings for the Winter Garden, noting that the intent is to go beyond what was shown in today's presentation.
- Mark Schmid, Trinity Church, asked that a complete site plan showing the Southwest Corridor and the entry at Stuart and Dartmouth Streets be included in future presentations.
- In a follow-up question, Mark Schmid asked about expanding the size of the project's public realm. Rob Halter responded that because the retail component of the project requires a certain amount of square footage for Neiman Marcus, there is not any more room for expanding the public realm.
- Ted Pietras, South End Business Alliance, asked if the proponent had looked into incorporating a water element in the project's design. Rob Halter answered that they will look into including a smaller-scale fountain, but cautioned that water elements are often very loud and because of this, tend to be eliminated over time.
- Ro Whittington, Tent City Corporation, stated that if brick pavers are used in the sidewalk treatments around the project, they should be heated, since they can become treacherous during the winter.
- In response to a question from Judith Wright, Rob Halter replied that the amount of seating will be doubled as part of the new project, and added that it is the project team's goal to make the seating more inviting.

Questions and comments from the public included:

- Ann Hershfang, WalkBoston, stated that brick sidewalks typically do not work well in terms of ADA accessibility. She also commented that the new entry at the Southwest Corridor looks out of character with the rest of the design. Rob Halter explained that there is a desire to use similar materials used in the remainder of the project.

At the end of the meeting, Judi Wright announced that she had met with the BRA to discuss the agenda items for the upcoming CAC working sessions.

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 9:45 a.m.

Subsequent to the meeting, it was determined that the next CAC working session will be held on Wednesday, November 19th, and will focus on the economics of urban retail, the Southwest Corridor entrance design and community retail, and a discussion of the public art associated with the project.