



**Fairmount Indigo Planning Initiative
Upham's Corner Working Advisory Group Meeting #4
Wednesday, December 5, 2012
Location: The Salvation Army Kroc Community Center,
Dorchester**

WAG Attendees: Lisa Alberghini, Courtney Curran, David Davenport, Max McCarthy, Paul Meehan, Joan Tighe, Daryl Wright (by proxy of Sherina Hendrix), Andrea Kaiser (by proxy of Bird Street Community Center youth)

WAG Members Not in Attendance: Aldelina Alves, Judy Beckler, Alex DoSouto, Andrew Forster, Christopher Jones, Andrea Kaiser, Yaz Mohammad, George Papdopoulos, Daryl Wright, Dahria Williams-Fernandes

City of Boston Attendees: Jeremy Rosenberger, BRA; Zach Wassmouth, PWD; Joe Cosgrove, MBTA; Kate Balug, Mayor's Office of New Urban Mechanics

Consulting Team Attendees: Steve Cecil, The Cecil Group; Josh Fiala, The Cecil Group;

Members of the Public: Adilson Barbosa, Bird Street Community Center; Nancy Conrad, Upham's Corner Improvement Association; Jeanne DuBois, Dorchester Bay EDC; Oryanna Ferguson, Bird Street Community Center; Adam Gibbons, Dorchester Bay EDC; Chadeya Hollis, Bird Street Community Center; Stephen Huie, Harvard Community Innovation Lab; Nene Igietseme, MIT; Marshall James, MBHP; Eileen Kenner, Dorchester Bay EDC; Alexander Kapuz, Harvard; Jeremy Levine, Harvard; Naeem Miles, Bird Street Community Center

Meeting Summary

On Wednesday, December 5, 2012, The Upham's Corner Working Advisory Group (WAG) of the Fairmount Indigo Planning Initiative had its fourth meeting at The Salvation Army Kroc Center in Dorchester. Jeremy Rosenberger, BRA, welcomed the group at approximately 6:40pm. He noted that Ines Palmarin, BRA was out sick. Present WAG Members introduced themselves and Max MacCarthy, co-chair of the WAG, noted that because Chris Jones, the other co-chair, had just had a baby he would not be present either. Sherina Hendrix introduced herself as a representative of WAG member Daryl Wright, and four youth from the Bird Street Community Center introduced themselves as representing Andrea Kaiser. A representative of the Department of Public Work, Zach Wassmouth, and Joe Cosgrove of the MBTA also joined the meeting.

After going over the agenda for the meeting, Max reintroduced the issue of absenteeism from WAG meetings. The group discussed the importance of the commitment, the difficulty of the time commitment for small businesses, making sure to follow up with people who were absent, and getting commitments from representatives – not necessarily individual people. WAG members decided the process for removal would start immediately for WAG members who had already missed two meetings, including this one, with a letter and a phone call. The person can still attend meetings; they just will not be on the official committee.

Jeremy Rosenberger added that there would still need to be a process of Mayoral review and WAG members should feel free to suggest people for the committee. He added that there are enough residents and property owners represented on the WAG, but not as many businesses.

Next there was an Upham's Corner Infrastructure Improvements Update from Zach Wassmouth of the Public Works Department. The PWD is planning infrastructure development on Hancock Street and Dudley Street focusing on the traffic signal, sidewalk, and pedestrian way-finding. For the Columbia Road renovation, the Public Works Departments will have a public meeting on Tuesday, December 11th at the Cape Verdean center. The scope of the meeting will be to introduce project, assess the existing assets, and get some community feedback about the challenges and how they can be resolved. They plan to have 25% design (the conceptual design) done by next summer so construction can start using information gather from the community meeting, and their design consultants.

After being asked about the overall purpose of the construction (by Paul Meegan) Zach Wassmouth added that the purpose of the construction is to improve public safety and traffic flow. It is also to create a design that acknowledges Upham's Corner as an "urban village" as well as a major pass through for commuters. Someone offered that the Project for Public Space would want to get involved to incorporate ideas for "humanizing the space" as the design process is going. Zach Wassmouth said they should definitely come to the community meeting on December 11th or reach out via the contact information on the flyer. Jeremy Rosenberger noted that the Dudley street design was a separate process

The Cecil Group then gave an update on the Corridor-wide advisory group (CAG). After going over the next steps for Corridor-wide group in general – to synthesize findings from the Community forum held in November; and, in January, select two other stations to start their own WAGs, WAG members were invited to give feedback on the CAG Community Forum. Members and attendees agreed that the forum went well. There were about 250-275 people there; having child care was key; it generated 40 pages of single spaced bullet point feedback; it used interactive mapping exercises for engagement. Paul Meehan added that it felt too general and that what people came up with was not concrete enough to act on.

Someone brought up needing to capture the momentum about raising transit revenue from the state. Transportation for Massachusetts is developing a campaign around revenue issues for transit in the state including the Fairmount line fares and service Joe Costgrove from the MBTA offered that on January 7th the Governor's administration will release their financing plan for the MBTA and there will be a large debate at the state house which could influence the fare and service discussion. Further, the MBTA has been having visioning sessions across the state to get community input at service and fares. Max MacCarthy said that at the next community meeting it should be stated explicitly that people will need to advocate/organize action about revenue streams for the MBTA to address this issue.

More feedback on the community forum was given. People were excited to see new faces there with great energy and engagement. People offered that while every breakout group got to every topic and themes emerged, report backs felt rushed and more time needed to be allocated to that part for next time. Max MacCarthy noted that it is important to say what is

being done with the information. It was agreed that the virtual tour was loved and very important to have, however it took too long and needed to be better planned for.

The Cecil Group shared synthesis of community forum ideas so far. They are prioritizing the different ideas using the frequency with which they appear in the data. This will help generate shared corridor issues and priorities which will frame the vision and strategy and help pick next two stations. They showed the word clouds that were generated from the Community Forum; represented what the Community Forum was supposed to be about: synthesizing a vision for the line and each station; all had the words pride and community. The Cecil Group confirmed that the Corridor wide plan will link but not stifle the identities of each station as culturally rich, main streets; and that Newmarket and Readville serving as bookmarks to the line is great.

The Cecil Group gave general ideas that will need to be refined in the Upham's Corner community forum: 1) the station will evolve along with plans that are already happening in the community, 2) the station should serve as a front door to the community and it should be a door that residents will use more than they do now, and 3) planning should focus on and foster pride, culture, diversity, identity. The Cecil Group also offered development areas with Upham's Corner specific ideas for action highlighted within each: 1) Economic development – reinforce the center, 2) Place/land use – reinforce the cultural and commercial core, 3) Housing – infill housing at vacant lots, 4) Transportation – connect station to center, and 4) Quality of life – emphasize cultural diversity and corridor pride.

Many attendees then offered thoughts about the varying definitions of Upham's Corner (BRA's definition, whether including the Kroc Center in included; using the ½ mile radius, etc.). The WAG confirmed that it wants to use the community forum to start figuring out questions like this.

After a time check, WAG moved on to discussing the proposed Upham's Corner community forum. The WAG confirmed February 2, 2013 from 10-1pm (9am was too early for people at the November forum) at the Kroc Center in Dorchester as the date, time, and place. After some push back from Max MacCarthy about the late start, the WAG decided to "front load" activities so business owners could be engaged early and leave to run their businesses without missing too much. It was also suggested to include them in delivering parts of the virtual tour. Also it was suggested that the presentation be limited to less than an hour.

As the proposed agenda was discussed, The Cecil Group took notes and said they would use the feedback to refine the agenda and will report back at the next WAG meeting on January 23, 2013. Brainstormed ideas included doing some engagement pieces during breakfast/as people walk in. For example, people could mark where they live or work on a large map (or where do they walk or shop?) or they could do a word cloud in the beginning of the forum. It was suggested that the WAG reach out to MAPC about using their technology to get instant feedback/engagement from people. A walking tour was suggested but did not receive a lot of support. People confirmed that a virtual tour was a great idea. When the virtual map was shown, people noted that the station was not on the map, and that the neighborhood associations were used as the organizational structure.

The point of the interactive mapping exercises would be to get people to be concrete about the neighborhood; to show where is good to live and to note where people don't feel safe; to

document popular walking routes, fun parks, etc; and to start to form a picture of the neighborhood while getting people to listen to each other.

The next WAG Meeting was settled for the 4th Wednesday of January – January 23rd at 6:30pm; Max MacCarthy will start reaching out to missing people to start removal process or catch them up.

The final agenda item was on youth outreach. Members of the WAG involved with DSNI and UC Main Streets have been working with a class at the Harvard Kennedy School and New Urban Mechanics about tech related solutions to problems in the neighborhoods. The Harvard team gave a presentation on what they developed: a short horizon, low budget (under \$2000) way to engage people in the planning initiative using a youth-led question campaign. The campaign would feature chalk questions on the street, billboards, or business window, that people could text a response to Meet Textizen through Code for America, and see immediate results via a text back, or on a public billboard such as the Strand. This process would engage the neighborhood in a conversation, and sustain engagement in between meetings. It would involve businesses and youth (from YouthForce, GOTCHA, Bird Street, etc), and people who normally would not be engaged in the planning process. Youth would design questions and update the analysis.

Member of the WAG were very excited about the possibilities for this tool. They see it as a way to maintain credibility and legitimacy as well as create a feedback loop for what was happening in the neighborhood throughout the process.

The meeting wrapped up with next steps for the WAG and CAG. For the CAG, they need to continue to synthesize the ideas that came from the community forum; as well as to start Growth Strategy interviews and the Branding and Identity focus group meetings. They also need to craft a CAG vision statement. It was confirmed that the next CAG meeting would be at 12pm on Wednesday, December 12th, 2012. Next steps for the WAG included planning for the Upham's Corner community forum; starting the Economic development plan (using market conditions); and reaching back to other WAG members to solidify the group for work in new year.

The meeting concluded at approximately 8:30pm.