

## **South Huntington Corridor Study Public Meeting**

**Hennigan School**

**December 12, 2012: 6:30 to 8:30 PM**

### **Meeting Notes**

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**-Richard Rouse: Coming from Brookline, there is no welcome into Boston at S. Huntington. Would like to see beautiful entry to the city at Route 9. Not much has happened on S. Huntington in last 50 years.**

**What happened to the Impact Advisory Group for 105 South Huntington?**

**Shen: Conversation with community begun. They are aware study has begun. That Art. 80 process will continue; taking this study and discussion into account.**

**Mercurio: A reason to stick to this 3 month schedule. Monthly meetings.**

**-Kevin Moloney: Member of 105a and 161 Advisory Groups. A number of community members called for an IPOD. Art. 80 processes came instead. When there was opposition to size, massing, affordable units and bedroom counts, the bra approved; board of appeal granted variances.**

**-Non-business oriented members of the IAG are opposed to 10 story building at that site. What can you give us to assure that the input will mean something; that there will be effect on the proposals on 105a?**

**Shen: acknowledges Councilor Ross and Rep. Sanchez. Director and I are committed that the set of -- guidelines to come out of this process will be part of the review process. If there are suggestions that will make this a better project, will take this into account. It would help if comments are focused on the larger area.**

**-Brook House: I moved to boston because I wanted to live in the city. Every project feels like a suburban, could-be-anywhere project. I moved here because of the history of boston. I have no trouble with the 10 story height; issue is that park is block...not height.**

**-Councilor Ross:**

**Hope this process is not a tool to re-litigate. We should be here because we want to plan a stretch of roadway that is important to all of us. We have a difficult enough stretch to begin with. VA is outside scope of our regulation. Suggest rounding corner at South Huntington to Parker Hill Ave:**

**-Intersection is a mess**

**-Gateway to city**

**-Includes additional development parcels at Parker Hill Ave.**

**-Gateway to NE Baptist Hospital.**

**Thanks group for participation.**

**-Comment: make sure rental properties are developed in a way that is truly inclusionary. Average of 25% affordable units; 60% AMI affordability level. Make an eye toward racial justice. There should be a break-out session on racial equity. We should be respectful of lower income people. Revitalizing without displacement. A useful tool would be Neighborhood Council TOD guidelines. It would be great to have more locally-owned businesses in the area.**

**Alison Pultinas: Lives in Mission Hill. Would like to extend the scope to Brookline border, under the bridge. People walking through gas station is problem to wait for 39 Bus. No benches; no cover. Gas station has 4 curb cuts. Transit issues are critical for that corner. Rush hour issue with parked cars for bus. We shouldn't have cars parked there during rush hour.**

**-A commuter who takes the 39 every day. Bus is difficult to get on and ride right now.**

**Mercurio: we've engaged the MBTA. Jim Fitzgerald: MBTA will be doing improvements on the 39 route as part of the Key Routes Program. Looking for comments to build on what they are doing.**

**Jack Fay: Three to four months seems like a logical time for this process to run. Maybe it will go to four month. Preserve historic character. Affordability is important. 25% affordability. Transportation: danger for cyclists. MBTA, including weekend E line service. Concern is density. Need to look at density in terms of affordability. Lot size. And height. At new hotel: 3 to 4 to 10 stories. Back of the hill is 10 or 12, but set back into hill.**

**Allen Smith, Arborway Committee: the suspension of the weekend hurts transportation at the present time. But we're talking about the future. We should imagine an extension of the E line to Hyde Square.**

**-President of Mission Hill Main Streets: The IAG was mix. There were those who supported the project. The BRA got letters of support. 105 is landmark building. It's been a massive urban decay. Unlit, unsafe. As soon as there is development, the protest begins. Everyone who got in car is not being impacted. Half people here would not have protested 30 years ago. Will create 200 jobs; 400 extra people for businesses. Think about what the area has been like. Area needs a landmark building; a gateway to Boston. When you don't put money into an area, you see decay. Applauds Tony and his family for being here 20 years.**

Barbara H, 246 S. Huntington: Appreciates team doing this project. At least we're having this meeting. Being a resident since before these projects: parking. S. Huntington does not have any restricted parking. Not a problem. The side streets don't have restrictions. This encourages people from out of the area, park and take train/bus. Appreciates VA garage. Approved building didn't have enough parking, and charged too much for parking. Snow removal isn't addressed on S. Huntington. Dangerous. We're struggling to keep up with parking. Hopefully out of state plates and commuters from out of Boston won't continue to take parking. Building on vacant land is less of a problem than taking down an existing building. On the side streets there needs to be a way to deal with parking, commuters and MBTA/bus.

J. Lannity: was opposed. Many people said: I am not against development and not against bringing more housing and density. I am opposed to these two projects. Not bringing more high-end housing with token units. It sends a reverberation throughout the neighborhood that makes an inclusive neighborhood into an exclusive one. Hard time believing that bringing high-end housing will make more affordable housing. This didn't work in the South End. I am not against building; I am against building elite housing.

Rich Giordano, Back of the Hill CDC: hoping that the BRA would set personal and behavior guidelines to not criticize other people in the room. I would expect better. Problem: we are allowing development piecemeal and not following existing guidelines. We've already negated every guideline we've had. How do we establish reasonable guidelines for everything that will follow? We need to know that guidelines that we will come up with will be respected.

-Resident, Back of the Hill: concern that this meeting is supposed to be about S. Huntington. Agree on need for gateway coming from Brookline. Agree on MBTA issues. There is no plowing on S. Huntington. There are trash issues. A lot of people here are from JP. They wouldn't be here otherwise if it weren't for little wanderers process; shouldn't impact Mission Hill side. Heath Street to Huntington Ave is like a little family. Affordability. A lot of people that are here gentrified JP. You can't put all the affordability in one little area. Concentrated in one area now. Existing 15% affordability BRA requirement is enough.

-Green issues. We need to not be afraid of density that is appropriate for the neighborhood. We should take advantage of opportunities to put density in transit oriented appropriate place. Focus on setbacks on driveways. Hope that we plan in a way that makes sense for being in the city and on transit. Comfortable about having a conversation about having more density for affordability. Comfortable for 4 or more stories north.

**-Speaking on the odd side of South Huntington: materials used should respect the adjacent buildings. Height should respect adjacent buildings. Very concerned about the shadow on S. Huntington. Right now the traffic is horrible during the day; that will only increase.**

**Concerned about increased density. Problems with MBTA busses. Right now it is very dangerous. We don't need any more vehicles on the street. That's all.**

**-Project at 105 is one of the best things to happen. Have been involved in Main Streets, one of the best things to happen to Boston. Anything you do, somebody won't like. My problem is I want to be safe. You have to feel it. You can never make everyone happen. You should listen to the people. Business owners in Mission Hill are suffering because of the bad economy. Let the man do what he wants to do and work with him. A good district is good small businesses.**

**-Dunn from the N. American Indian Center of Boston: we are at 105 S. Huntington. We used 105a for pow wows and ceremonies, but we are excited about having something new in the neighborhood. Hotel helped along s. Huntington. We worked really well with these folks. The issue we have aside from that is transportation and safety. While there are issues they have always been willing – and I believe they will continue to be willing – to work out these issues. I love the idea of a new entryway; new welcoming. We have issues coming out of our driveway.**

**-Owner of Envision Hotel: Thank you, it would be a welcome to have something built on that lot. There will be traffic, but we've dealt with it.**

**-425 S. Huntington resident: it's a transition zone, and it should stay that way. It's a transition from medical area to mission hill to JP. The important part is the two neighborhoods working together to keep that a transition zone. There are different areas within that area. Setbacks are important. Graciousness is important. Views to J-way is important. Bricks and materials are important.**

**Less pessimistic than Ross on the VA. I'd like to think we can influence them and we should. We should invite them into the process. They used to come to meetings. They used to listen to the community a lot more, especially with the 500 car garage and especially with transit. I feel strongly the mbta is going to cut back service to brigham cir. 7 days/week especially with transit oriented development being built. I would also like to ask somebody from MASCO to come to these meetings.**

**-JP resident: I stand with neighbors that have opposed the development at 161. Oppose on the grounds of lack of affordability. Encourage bra and city to follow the guidelines that the neighborhood has developed.**

Transparency around these developments has been really egregious. The bra needs to be more transparent. I support the 25% standards for affordability.

-The trolley service is on weekends is back. They constantly go through the red lights. They let people off at stops when the lights are green. I'm for these projects; my idea of affordable housing is move somewhere you can afford to live.

-JP resident: this is a wonderful opportunity that we have. Look at area from brookline entrance to brigham circle. This area looks much different from anywhere else in the city. This division between Mission Hill and JP is really unfortunate.

-Mission Hill resident: we contacted the T and they said it was test case on the weekend. Next time can we label development sites on the maps. The notes should indicate the project could last up to 6 months.

-I would appreciate some clarity on the end results of this process. What is it we're trying to do here? We need to make sure guidelines won't be overlooked.

-Mercurio: not a master plan. We're trying to develop guidelines, that will form framework for future development reviews. We don't see it as a large book or plan. More developed and detailed version of the maps you see on the wall. Also, what are the opportunity sites we should be focusing on.

JP resident: do you see this only being used for article 80 reviews, for larger projects.

-Mercurio: this is only for projects that are 20,000 square feet or great. This is not a full rezoning of the neighborhood. Rezoning may be a recommendation to come out of this project.

Shen: two imperatives: to be quick and do it in a 3 to 6 month timeframe. Rezoning takes much longer and would make the community lose leverage. Guidelines would help us create the better project that everybody wants to see. I have made the recommendation to the director to hold off on zoning. If zoning is changed, projects could go through the process as of right with minimal community involvement.

Community Member: if we develop guidelines and you enforce them, I would be happy. I want your approvals in the article 80 process to adhere.

Fisher Ave resident, Back of the Hill CDC: this meeting is coming much too late. The problem is that these projects have been approved piecemeal. The impact of these projects collectively is huge. One of the problems is traffic. When you have that many new residents, that is huge. Upper income residents won't be taking the T, they will be driving. On affordability: are there really that many people? There are going to be students; they're going to crowd them in. You need to look at all of these projects together and what the impact is.

-Resident: concerned about the impact on transit. On a personal, I don't want to see an ugly building. The approved project looks suburban. I don't want them to look suburban.

-Goddard House: should be adaptive reuse, rather than another demo. Affordable units should be deeded affordable in perpetuity.

-Any project which has a website, should be a requirement so people have input when they don't have the option to be at meetings. For project reviews: you should set up a website and the developer should pay for it.

Shen: the director and I have been talking about ways in which we can expand the way people can participate in meetings. Next year: testing live feeds of public meetings. For now, write us a letter and send us an e-mail. I encourage people to tell us what they think. The people who participate in the process are more likely to have a sophisticated opinion on the process.

We welcome your feedback.

Mission Hill resident: I support this project because it will help all of us.

Peter Gori, Perkins Street: suggest on the zoning piece. There may be some opportunities for infill retail.

-These are not just businesses, this is where people live. These businesspeople chose to work somewhere where they would have to work with the people. This is a really critical process. Suggest thinking of a mixed-use South Huntington, which makes for a very dynamic neighborhood.

-In Brookline it would be helpful to think about along river street too.

**-Alison P: On route 9 in brookline: potential plans for bike and pedestrian activated light.**

**Also views of J-way is important. Something we should talk about with new development is access and views to the j-way. Access is very difficult now.**

**We should acknowledge assets: it is very walkable and accessible to E and D lines. With T, we face cutbacks instead of increased service. Possibly the congestion is going to be the only way to control the development.**

**-Zoning at 161: height and FAR limits were exceed. BRA staff did not listen to community and tweaked it just a little bit. I'm looking for commitment to live by guidelines that are developed.**

**Shen: I am here. Director asked me to personally be involved in this process. The board and director have authority that I don't have. We're here to make guidelines with your input. We're here now, we're interested in developing a set of guidelines that I can recommend to board, director and mayor that I think will work.**