



Downtown Waterfront Municipal Harbor Planning Advisory Committee Meeting

Wednesday, November 5, 2014
Atlantic Wharf, 290 Congress Street

Attendees

Advisory Committee: Tom Wooters, Bob Venuti, Susanne Lavoie, Greg Vasil, Bud Ris, Lois Siegelman, Joanne Hayes-Rines, Vivien Li,

City of Boston: Richard McGuinness, BRA; Chris Busch, BRA; Lauren Shurtleff, BRA

Consultant Team: Matthew Littell, Utile; Meera Deean, Utile; Tom Skinner, Durand & Anastas; Steve Mague, Durand & Anastas

Government Representatives: Valerie Gingrich, CZM; Ronald Killian, MassDOT

Members of the Public: M Willock, Will Adams, Bill Zielinski, David Isaak, Thomas Nally, BJ Moriarty, Dorothy Keville, Julie Marau, Wes Stimpson, Al Raine, Michael Burkin, Gianne Conrad, G. Korodi, Kelley Perkins-High, Judith Sugarman, M Barron, Linda Cravens, Sy Mintz, Karen Marcotti, Heidi Wolf, Rita Advani, Jessica Seney, Desmond McAuley, Brian Rossilier, Lindiwe Bennett, Jingwei Zhang, Eric Kraus, R Cravens, Gary Murad, Valerie Burns, Rick Moore, Rachel Bonentti, Mria Peters, Marie Holland, Victor Brogna, Tom Walsh, Gene Kennedy

Meeting Summary

Chris Busch, BRA, opened the meeting and noted that the session would focus on the Hook Site and analyze much of the information presented by the Hook Team at the October 22nd meeting.

Matthew Littell, Utile, began the discussion by providing some background on the planning process, noting the Municipal Harbor Plan is general in scope with more specific review of actual proposals through the state and city project review processes after submission of the MHP. The prior planning efforts that relate to the Hook property were also discussed, including the Crossroads Initiative, the Fort Point Channel Watersheet Activation Plan, the Artery Edges Study, the Greenway Guidelines, and the Downtown Waterfront Public Realm Plan. The site was also referenced as a unique opportunity to create a gateway between the Greenway and South Boston Waterfront and releasing the bottleneck at the area created by the lack of Harborwalk connection and convergence of bridges and public ways. He noted that the site and redevelopment can assist in alleviating many of these conditions and improve connections and transitions, referencing some of the Harborwalk and Harborwalk connections presented by the Hook Team at the last meeting. The ground floor design provided by the Hook Team was referenced which provides Facilities of Public Accommodation on most all of the first floor. The Harborwalk connection under the Moakley Bridge was discussed as an important waterside connection to provide continuous Harborwalk access, as were options for spanning over the Moakley Bridge and Atlantic Avenue intersection, and related impacts of a span on view corridors, safety and sidewalk areas. Several examples of over-water walkways were presented.

Joanne Hayes-Rines, MHPAC Member, inquired as to whether the Harborwalk connector would inhibit vessel traffic. Mathew responded that the walkway would be clear of the navigation channel. Bruce

Berman, MHPAC Member, asked which components of the walkway would be floating. Richard McGuinness, BRA, noted that has not been determined. Bud Ris, MHPAC Member, asked if an elevated walkway that would connect through the Hook site had been considered. Matthew noted that a full design study was not conducted, only a crossing of the bridge and intersection.

Matthew then continued with an analysis of shadow associated with the proposal for the redevelopment of the Hook property. First the baseline massing and related shadow were presented; under the Chapter 91 height standards the maximum building height for the site is 55-feet. He noted that for purposes of determining net new shadow, shadow cast by the baseline scenario and existing buildings are not part of the new shadow calculation. The shadow analysis represented shadow based upon the highest occupied floor and maximum building height of the project proposal, and included anticipated seasonal shadows and the MHP standard date of October 23rd.

Tom Skinner, Durand & Anastas, then discussed the proposed substitutions related to the proposal. He specified four substitute provisions that would have to be offset based upon the redevelopment proposal, including a minor reduction in the Water Dependent Use Zone, additional height and lot coverage, and Facilities of Private Tenancy over Commonwealth Tidelands. Tom reviewed the spatial parameters of the site and the Chapter 91 dimensional standards, and discussed the Harborwalk connector as part of an appropriate component to an offsetting package for the property. He noted that most of the net new shadow associated with the height substitution is on the watersheet, sidewalks and docks at Rowes Wharf, and indicated that offsets would be focused on ground level public access benefits on or adjacent to the site, which would be drawn from comments from the Advisory Committee and the Public Realm and Watersheet Activation Plan. Regarding open space, he mentioned that the proposal would cover two-thirds of the project site, in excess of the 50% open space required, which could potentially be offset with space on the Harborwalk connector, and or an area-wide strategy could be employed to offset the overall building footprint coverage. The Facilities of Private Tenancy substitution was then discussed and the need to offset with provisions that would promote public use and access to the area including the Harborwalk connector and active Facilities of Public Accommodation on the first floor that work with the Hook's water dependent uses. Tom also noted the option of on or off-site special public destination facilities (SPDF) to serve to activate the waterfront year-round.

Bruce Berman, noted that prior to the fire at the Hook property he had taken hundreds of students through their facility to observe the lobster tanks and operations at the facility, and asked if that type of activity would qualify as a SPDF. Tom responded that it could be considered. Vivien Li, MHPAC Member, stated that there are some significant substitutions proposed and there appears to be some double counting with respect to the offsets. Tom noted that that observation was correct and that some offsetting measures could relate to more than one of the substitutions. Tom then provided an overview of what is proposed as a framework of offsets for the substitutions including the Harborwalk connector, active ground floor FPA supporting water dependent uses, potential on or off-site SPDF's and additional public realm recommendations that fully activate the site.

Susanne Lavoie, MHPAC Member, asked about offsetting benefits that would be specific to the area residents, as most of the existing benefits are related to visitors and tourists. Rich McGuinness, responded that all of the offsets are open to discussion and residential needs will be part of the area-wide discussion of offsets. Linda Jonash, MHPAC Member, referenced that portion of Northern Avenue off of the bridge and the need for public amenities and landscaping to transform the area into

something that is celebrated, as well as possibilities for waterside barges or structures on the watersheet on the Channel side of the property to better activate the area and make it more of a destination. Tom Wooters, MHPAC Member, referenced the Harborwalk connector and questioned its utility and ease of use. Bud Ris, MHPAC Member, inquired about the raising of the Northern Avenue Bridge and how that would impact the landside area elevations. Rich McGuinness noted that only the center span of the bridge would be elevated to 8-feet, with the approach spans on either side ramping up, so no grade change would be necessary on the landside portions of Northern Avenue.

Sy Mintz, Broad Street Resident, expressed an interest in bridging over the Moakley Bridge and Northern Avenue as an alternative to improve connections to the Harborwalk. Tom Palmer, inquired as to whether the height and shadow allowed under a Chapter 91 compliant scenario were less than what the Greenway Guidelines had proposed. Matthew Littell affirmed that that was the case. Tom also asked about shadow on the Moakley Courthouse during the winter solstice. Matthew noted that due to the sun's low orientation in the sky at that time of year much of the buildings behind the Hook site would be creating most all of the shadow.

Bob Venuti, MHPAC Member, asked for a clarification on the width of Harborwalk on the southern side of the site. Tom Skinner stated that the city typically requires a Harborwalk width of 12-feet, however, due to the odd orientation of the site on the southern side the water dependent use zone ranges from 15 to 17 feet in width. Bob expressed an interest in a water taxi dock on the channel side of the site.

Vivien Li, referenced the presentation slide which included all the heights of the buildings surrounding the Hook site, and questioned the dimension of building setback from the water's edge, pointing out the Federal Reserve Building and One International Place have greater height but are located a substantial distance from the water. Tom Skinner clarified that those buildings are beyond Chapter 91 jurisdiction and do not need to comply with the waterway's dimensional standards. Bud Ris noted that having the area building heights represented was important to understand the urban context that surrounds the property. Tom Skinner stated that a massing analysis would also have to be completed as part of the MHP and a review of existing building heights along the waterfront and Fort Point Channel could also be provided to better represent the height dimension along the waterfront.

Bruce Berman, pointed out the Atlantic Wharf property and the connection between the BSA Space and the docks off of Atlantic Wharf with the architectural boat tours of the harbor, and related the arrangement to the Hook site and opportunities for lobster boats and other vessel traffic to frequent Hook Lobster.

Bud Ris, asked for an update on the planning process. Rich McGuinness stated that the BRA will continue to analyze the proposed developments and substitution provision for each of the parcels. At the November 19th meeting Secretary Bartlett from the state's Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs will be present to discuss the state's role in the planning process and answer question from the Committee and public, and at the same meeting alternative scenarios for the Harbor Garage site will be presented. He noted beyond that meeting there will be an area-wide discussion and review of all the substitute provisions and their impacts as well as offsets and a mitigation strategy. Regarding schedule he stated that the Committee will be meeting through the spring and the drafting of the MHP will start in December. Bud asked if the draft MHP would proposed substitutions and building heights for the Committee's response. Rich responded that would be the case. Tom Palmer asked about the phasing of the drafting of the MHP. Rich noted that at first just the background and planning

context would be written and the substitution, offsets and amplification sections would be drafted after those issues have been discussed and tested with the Committee.

Victor Brogna, North End Resident, asked when the watersheet would be discussed as part of the process. Rich McGuinness responded that the Public Realm and Watersheet Activation Plan developed as part of the process is the primary reference document on the watersheet and the MHP will focus on implementing aspects of the plan to activate the waterfront. Bruce Berman asked if comments and suggestions could still be made on the plan, and Rich responded that comments could still be incorporated into the document.

Vivien Li, noted that the property owner presentations made to date have been primarily done in isolation without discussion of certain offsets, such as the Chart House parking lot, which most all of the proponents may be looking for as an offset, and additional offsets need to be considered. She also noted that today's presentation on the Hook site referenced double counting of offsets, and the Hook proponents would have to provide Harborwalk and FPA's on the ground floor even with a compliant development, and there are significant substitutions proposed and offsets that will be required. She mentioned that all of the property owners are presenting the maximum for their properties, and the BRA, the Committee and the state does, or does not have to buy into every single proposed substitution for each property and proposed offsets, and there is a redundancy with the offsets the property owners are looking at so additional mitigation options need to be reviewed. She also asked that there be less time dedicated to presentations moving forward and more time allowed for discussion among the Committee members.

Joanne Hayes-Rines, asked for more specifics on details of the proposal and for the Harbor Garage site to allow the Committee to get a better idea of how the project may look and provide more substantive responses.

Meeting adjourned at approximately 4:45 PM.