



**Downtown Waterfront Municipal Harbor Planning  
Advisory Committee Meeting**  
Wednesday, November 20, 2013  
Atlantic Wharf, 290 Congress Street

**Attendees**

**Advisory Group:**

Bob Venuti, Janeen Hansen, Bud Ris, Phil Griffiths, Lorraine Downey, Greg Vasil, Vivien Li, Rick Dimino, Susanne Lavoie, Meredith Rosenberg, Lois Siegelman, Bruce Berman

**City of Boston:**

Richard McGuinness, BRA; Lauren Shurtleff, BRA; Chris Busch, BRA

**Consultant Team:**

Tom Skinner, Durand & Anastas; Matthew Littell, Utile; Meera Deean, Utile

**Government Representatives:**

Valerie Gingrich, CZM; Ronald Killian, MassDOT

**Members of the Public:**

Rick Moore, Karen Marcarelli, Will Adams, Chris Fincham, Jim Cravens, Steve Mitchell, Kelly McQuillan, Al Raine, Danielle Pillion, Hugh Hawthorne, Stephanie Horn, Leo Villaneauva, Bob Paone, Kathy DiTrapano, Scott Fuller, Jesse LaFreniere, Alex Blake, Para Jayasinghe, Steven Brown, Ann Lagasse, Jay Spence, Rob Caridad, Jim Duffey, Sy Mintz, M. Willock, Tom Wooters, Bill Zielinski, Mort and Myra Zisk, Pam McDermott, M. Holland, Richard Davis, Yanni Tsipis

**Meeting Summary**

Chris Busch, BRA, opened the meeting and provided a summary of the recent RFP issued by A Better City in concert with the Convention Center, Massport, the City of Boston and the Massachusetts Department of Transportation for a new transportation plan for the South Boston Waterfront, and traffic mitigation measures being implemented by the Boston Transportation Department to improve congestion within the Innovation District. He further noted that today's meeting would continue the review of properties within the planning area with presentations on the Northern Avenue Bridge and the William's Coast Guard Building.

Scott Fuller of the General Services Administration presented on the background and existing conditions of the John Foster Williams Coast Guard Building. He reviewed the basic structural and land use controls associated with the property and the history of the building which initially served as a warehouse, as well as current uses which include space for 10 Federal agencies including the U.S. Coast Guard Headquarters for the region. He also discussed the public realm around the building referencing the GSA's license with Rowes Wharf to allow for floating docks adjacent to the building, the Harborwalk and the public lobby and canteen within the building. Recent projects and upgrades were also reviewed including façade and window restoration, installation of a photovoltaic array on the roof and proposed upgrades to the seawall along the Fort Point Channel.

Bruce Berman, MHPAC member, asked what percentage of the building is utilized by the Coast Guard. Scott Fuller replied that approximately 50% of the facility is used by the Coast Guard. Bruce Berman also referenced the building and surrounding area as an importation connection and inquired as to how the committee could assist in improving conditions in and around the building independent of new development. Scott Fuller noted that he could check in with the GSA regarding future enhancements.

Vivien Li, MHPAC member, inquired about an area on the waterside of the building which was once open to the public but is now closed to public access. Scott Fuller noted he would look into the matter and assumed the closure is likely related to site security. Vivien Li also asked about the tide gauge on the property as well as parking on the south side of the building and the need to improve the appearance and condition of the area at the approach to the Northern Avenue Bridge. Scott Fuller noted that the tide gauge is owned and maintained by NOAA and much of the parking area is on city property.

Bud Ris inquired as to whether the photovoltaic array is linked into the grid. Scott Fuller responded that it is one of the only arrays that is linked to the grid.

Lorraine Downey, MHPAC Member, noted that there should be better signage at the property to indicate there is a public lobby and cafeteria in the building. Questions were also raised regarding climate change and adaptability of the building. Jesse LaFrenier, GSA, stated that the GSA has been looking closely at sustainability and climate change resilience for all its assets and noted that there are studies underway to develop guidance and solutions.

Para Jayasinghe, Chief City Engineer with the Boston Public Works Department provided a presentation on the Northern Avenue Bridge and plans for its restoration. He began the discussion noting that the design and rehabilitation of the bridge will require significant funding in the range of \$50 million, which is beyond the City's budgetary capacity. He noted that federal assistance is necessary for the project and accordingly the bridge rehabilitation must be in accordance with federal standards and requirements. He stated that the bridge is qualified as structurally deficient and reviewed the bridge's history and current function as an important pedestrian and bicycle connection and noted the bridge continues to swing open for vessel passage per the U.S. Coast Guard. Recent improvements include a lighting program, the painting of jersey barriers and the Garden Club of America's Harbor Gardens plantings.

Regarding future restoration he noted that the three bridge barrels would have to be designed to carry vehicular traffic, with sidewalks for pedestrian and bicycles along the northern and southern sides of the bridge; the restoration will also fix the bridge in place and elevate the structure to the height of the Moakely Bridge to better allow for vessel passage. With reference to state and local historic commissions he noted that the steel superstructure will be retained and the bridge tender's house and fender system will be restored. On the subject of process he indicated that there will be two years of design development followed by the restoration project.

Lorraine Downey, MHPAC Member, inquired on the preservation of one of the barrels for pedestrian and bicycle passage. Mr. Jayasinghe noted that the federal government will require that all three barrels must be designed to carry vehicular traffic, but in practice one of the barrels could be designated for peds and bikes if only two lanes are needed carry traffic.

Bud Ris, MHPAC Member, asked if the new South Boston Transportation Plan would include all modal options for the bridge. Rick Dimino, MHPAC Member, noted that the plan will incorporate the future bridge design and all transit needs.

Yanni Tsipis inquired as to what could be done to assist with the bridge restoration. Para Jayasinghe responded that long term maintenance of the bridge will be a challenge and assistance from area property owners and businesses would be helpful. He also noted that the City will need support through the federal process and the U.S. Coast Guard review processes.

Lorraine Downey asked if the restored bridge would be the same length and height. Mr. Jayasinghe noted that the whole bridge would be elevated. A comment was also made regarding integrating the stairway access from the GSA property and the need to improve the pedestrian experience in the area. A question was then asked regarding how long the process will take. Para Jayasinghe stated that the bridge is now a federally eligible bridge, which it was not before, and a needs assessment needs to be completed as part of the federal requirements. Vivien Li inquired as to how long the bridge could continue to function in its current state and the window for the restoration project. Para Jayasinghe noted that the Public Works Department does not have an option to close the bridge as the Coast Guard requires it be operational and the full design build program is approximately five years.

Meeting adjourned at approximately 5:00 p.m.