



Task Force Working Meeting #11
Thursday, November 6, 2008
Location: Boston College High School,
150 Morrissey Boulevard
Dorchester, MA

Task Force Attendees:

Fr. George Carrigg, St. Christopher's Church
Patrick Connolly, Boston Teachers Union
Bill Cotter, Columbia-Savin Hill Civic Association (CSHCA)
Matt Gordy, CSHCA
John Lowe, McCormack Civic Association
Victoria Maguire, Graduate of UMass Boston
Paul Nutting, CSHCA
Orlando Perilla, Harbor Point Community Task Force (HPCTF)
Mark Rooney, South Boston Neighborhood House
Phil Strazzula, Phillips Family Hospitality
Don Walsh, CSHCA/Dorchester Bay Economic Development Corporation (DBEDC), Chair

Ex-Officio Attendees:

Mike Christopher, Office of Representative Martin Walsh
Justin Holmes, Office of Council President Maureen Feeney
Jane Lindsay, John F. Kennedy Library and Presidential Museum
Patricia McCormack, State Archives and Commonwealth Museum

City of Boston Attendees:

Jim Fitzgerald, BRA
Becky Owens, Vanasse Hangen Brustlin, Inc.
Tad Read, BRA
Leo Roy, Vanasse Hangen Brustlin, Inc.
Carole Schlessinger, Crosby, Schlessinger & Smallridge
Lauren Shurtleff, BRA
Skip Smallridge, Crosby, Schlessinger & Smallridge
Lauren Smyth, Mayor's Office of Neighborhood Services

Members of the Public:

Frank Baker, Resident of Dorchester
Mark Boyle, MBTA
John Curacelli, UMass Boston
Greg Dicoivitsky, Transit Realty Associates
David Greaney, Synergy
Gail Hobin, UMass Boston
Tim Love, Utile, Inc.
John Lynch, Resident of Dorchester
Paul Lynch, Ironworkers Local 7
James McNeil, Local 26
Catherine O'Neill, Corcoran Jennison Companies
Seth Riseman, Utile, Inc.
Peter Rogers, Corcoran Jennison Companies

Pete Stidman, Dorchester Reporter
Jim Sullivan, Resident of West Roxbury/Local Architect
Michael Vaughan, Nauset Strategies, Inc.

Meeting Summary

On Thursday, November 6th, 2008, the eleventh meeting of the Columbia Point Master Plan Task Force was called to order at approximately 5:10 p.m. in the Loyola Function Room at Boston College High School by Don Walsh, CSHCA/DBEDC and Chair of the Task Force.

Don welcomed the Task Force and then turned the meeting over to Tad Read, BRA Senior Planner. Tad stated that tonight's meeting would have two parts, the first being a presentation by Synergy and the other being a presentation on the sustainability opportunities on Columbia Point as part of the Master Plan. The next Task Force meeting will offer the Task Force an opportunity to see the Synergy plan folded into the Master Plan alternatives.

Tad then introduced Dave Greaney, Synergy. Dave stated that he had purchased the property, which includes the Shaw's Supermarket, in July of 2007. Since the Master Plan process began shortly thereafter, he put his development plans on hold and has been attending most of the Task Force meetings. The BRA recently asked Synergy to share their preliminary plans for the site, but Dave noted that they do not plan to file for a permit to develop anytime in the near future. Next, Dave introduced Tim Love and Seth Riseman, both of Utile, Inc., consultants to Synergy.

Tim and Seth gave a PowerPoint presentation, which can be found on the BRA's Columbia Point Master Plan website. Tim noted that the site owned by Synergy does not have any waterfront, unlike many of the other parcels on Columbia Point, and is separated from the rest of both Columbia Point and greater Dorchester by Interstate 93. Seth added that the site is the only site adjacent to the JFK/UMass MBTA Station on Columbia Point.

Tim explained that one of the main themes of their preliminary plan, consistent with the Master Plan, is to remove the frontage road along the west side of Morrissey Boulevard, allowing Morrissey to become an address street. In effect, the frontage road would be relocated to the inside of the Synergy parcel, creating a retail main street that would connect to Old Colony Avenue on the north and to a new street on the Globe site to the south. The mix of uses at the site will be critical, and will include retail, office, and residential space in order to create an active around-the-clock environment. Parking garages will likely be built adjacent to the elevated highway and will be phased so as to meet demand. Tim added that while the site will be a prime example of transit-oriented development, it will also serve as a walkable destination for the existing local neighborhood. All of the buildings along the main street will feature ground floor retail.

Tim described the public benefits anticipated, which include pedestrian and vehicular connections, a city block structure with cross streets, small-scale plazas and parks, sustainable strategies, the opportunity to "green" Morrissey Boulevard, and the introduction of a new neighborhood and main street.

In conclusion, Dave added that the key principle guiding the plan is to attain a mix of uses and bring in new jobs and homes that will be connected to the existing Dorchester neighborhood. He envisions a mix of low-income and workforce housing on the site, not all market-rate condominiums.

Questions and comments raised in response to Synergy's presentation are summarized below:

- In response to a question from Paul Nutting, CSHCA, Dave replied that the Harbor Point Liquors would be relocated as part of the site's redevelopment.
- In response to a question from Don Walsh, Tim reviewed the following program elements:
 - Total site development would be approximately 1.5 million GSF, plus another 400,000-SF for the parking garages.
 - 1,700 parking spaces
 - 700 residential units
 - 500,000-SF office space
 - 180,000-SF retail
 - The tallest building on the site would be 18 stories.
- In response to a follow-up question from Don Walsh, Dave responded that sections showing the site from Sydney Street had yet to be developed, but will be presented to the Task Force at a future meeting.
- Patricia McCormack, State Archives and Commonwealth Museum, asked about the layout of the new main street. Dave responded that the street will include one travel lane in each direction, with one lane of on-street parking on each side. Tim added that the street will be pedestrian-oriented, and noted that the back street adjacent to Interstate 93 will serve to move pass-through traffic.
- Don Walsh commented that it is good to see that the development will include both jobs and residences in close proximity to the MBTA station.
- In response to a question from John Lowe, McCormack Civic Association, Dave indicated that he is not sure if the residential units will be rental or owner-occupied yet, but reiterated that they will be affordable for a mix of income levels.
- In a follow-up comment, John Lowe stated that it is important that the site have enough parking so that Sydney Street does not become overrun with cars.
- Matt Gordy, CSHCA, expressed support for height around the MBTA station, and noted that Interstate 93 already blocks the neighborhood's view east today.
- Paul Nutting asked if there are multiple opportunities to connect the site to Sydney Street. Dave replied that they will look into it.

The following questions and comments were raised by members of the public:

- Frank Baker, Resident of Dorchester, stated that he likes the idea of allowing tall buildings by the MBTA Station, but is concerned about the precedent it might set for other parcels on Morrissey Boulevard. Tad indicated that the BRA is not proposing similar heights further down Morrissey Boulevard, and noted that the next Task Force meeting will put this into a larger context.
- In response to a follow-up question from Frank Baker, Dave replied that the site's redevelopment will not involve the creation of any parking for commuters. He added that all of the parking within the site will be controlled in some manner.

Next, Tad announced that the BRA had hired a sustainability consultant to address sustainability in the Master Plan as a result of several requests at the community meeting held in June. He introduced Leo Roy and Becky Owens, Vanasse Hangen Brustlin, Inc., who then gave a PowerPoint presentation, available on the project website.

Leo noted that the City of Boston is considered a leader on green buildings because of Article 37 in the Boston Zoning Code, which requires all public and private development over 50,000-SF to be LEED-certifiable (LEED = Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design). Despite its many merits, Article 37 fails to apply to buildings under 50,000-SF and also leaves out several components that are key to sustainability, which he detailed in his slide presentation

The opportunities for sustainability on Columbia Point are numerous, owing to the large number of parcels within a quarter- to half-mile of the MBTA station that are ripe for redevelopment, the presence of several educational institutions, the area's access to the waterfront, and the large amount of open space.

A survey of existing and planned sustainability practices was given to twelve businesses/institutions on Columbia Point, with seven responses received to date. Based on the responses, it appears that there are many opportunities for increasing the sustainability of the existing stakeholders on Columbia Point.

The following measures have been identified as candidate recommendations for the Columbia Point Master Plan:

ENERGY

1. Increase energy efficiency for new buildings and retrofit existing.
2. Explore a district heating and cooling system.
3. Incorporate renewable distributed generation projects.
4. Demonstrate smart grid technology.

TRANSPORTATION

5. Encourage a Transportation Management Association.
6. Improve connections to the MBTA station.

STORMWATER & SITE PLANNING

7. Require rainwater harvesting and reuse.
8. Require rooftop use for green roofs, roof gardens and solar panel installations.

GREEN BUILDING

9. Require solar hot water systems for residential units.
10. Require performance benchmarking.

SOCIAL EQUITY

11. Promote educational partnerships and green jobs training.
12. Encourage local employment and inclusion of locally-owned businesses.
13. Support local food sourcing, such as community gardens.

The following questions were raised by Task Force members in response to the presentation:

- Victoria Maguire, Graduate of UMass Boston, commented that all of the suggestions were helpful, especially with regard to the opportunities for combined heating and cooling.
- Bill Cotter, CSHCA, stated that it seems like Columbia Point would be a very good place for wind energy. Leo responded that this is definitely a possibility, providing that the Federal Aviation Administration's flight paths into Logan International Airport remain unobstructed.
- Orlando Perilla, HPCTF, indicated that Harbor Point is in the midst of a sustainability feasibility study now and has installed a meteorological (Met) tower to determine what opportunities may exist.
- Don Walsh stated that the Task Force has the ability to recommend sustainable performance standards in the Master Plan, and suggested that they should explore requiring developers to go beyond compliance on Columbia Point.
- John Lowe asked about which of the suggestions mentioned is considered to have the highest efficiencies. Leo responded that smart grid technology is exceptional, and noted that the options for rooftops are also very promising as well.
- Matt Gordy noted that the ability to take advantage of rainwater harvesting is also a good opportunity. Leo agreed, noting that each stakeholder surveyed on Columbia Point is using potable water for lawn watering, which could be served with rainwater instead.
- Phil Strazzula, Phillips Family Hospitality, acknowledged that each of these options comes with a cost, but they still remain excellent opportunities. Leo noted that it is important to take a long view towards sustainability and outlined the cost increases typically associated with LEED-certifiability:
 - Silver adds between 1 and 2%
 - Gold adds between 4 and 8%
 - Platinum adds 10 to 12% and beyond
- Victoria Maguire recommended that the Task Force consider LEED for Neighborhood Development criteria when developing their suggestions for the Master Plan. Leo added that Corcoran Jennison's Bayside redevelopment plans include LEED-ND, with each building on the site also having to independently achieve LEED-certifiability for New Construction.

The following comment was raised by a member of the public:

- Jim Sullivan, a local resident and architect, emphasized the importance of making a strong commitment to LEED.

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 7:10 p.m.

Subsequent to the meeting, it was determined that the next Task Force meeting will be held on Thursday, December 4th and will include a presentation of the 3D models of each buildout scenario, as well as an updated review of traffic impacts.