



**Task Force Working Meeting #4**  
**Thursday, April 3, 2008**  
**Location: Boston College High School,**  
**150 Morrissey Boulevard, Dorchester, MA**

**Task Force Attendees:**

Patrick Connolly, Boston Teacher's Union  
Bill Cotter, Columbia-Savin Hill Civic Association (CSHCA)  
Annissa Essaibi-George, McCormack Civic Association  
Matt Gordy, CSHCA  
Sherina Hendrix, Dorchester Bay Economic Development Corporation (DBEDC)  
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  
Joe Sammons, Geiger-Gibson Community Health Center  
Esther Santos, HPCTF  
Phil Strazzula, Phillips Family Hospitality  
Don Walsh, CSHCA/DBEDC, Chair

**Ex-Officio Attendees:**

Mike Christopher, Office of Representative Martin Walsh  
Justin Holmes, Office of City Council President Maureen Feeney  
Jane Lindsay, JFK Presidential Library & Museum  
Brian Maher, Boston College High School  
Patricia McCormack, Commonwealth Museum & State Archives

**City of Boston Attendees:**

Casey Flynn, Mayor's Office of Neighborhood Services  
Pamela McKinney, Byrne McKinney Associates  
Tad Read, BRA  
Carole Schlessinger, Crosby, Schlessinger & Smallridge  
Lauren Shurtleff, BRA

**Members of the Public:**

Linda Ballard, Blessed Mother Theresa of Calcutta Parish  
Russell Bartasch, Sheet Metal Workers Local 17  
Mark Boyle, MBTA  
Joseph Corcoran, Corcoran Jennison Companies  
Catherine Davis, St. Christopher's Church/Resident of Harbor Point  
Greg Dicoivitsky, Transit Realty Associates  
Mark Fortune, Sprinkler Fitters UA Local 550  
Jim Gribaudo, Corcoran Jennison Companies  
Valerie Harms, Resident of Harbor Point  
Paul Lynch, Ironworkers Local 7  
Otile McManus, Corcoran Jennison Companies  
Seth Riseman, Utile, Inc.  
Peter Rogers, Corcoran Jennison Companies

Pete Stidman, Dorchester Reporter  
Gary Walker, Local 103 IBEW

### **Meeting Summary**

On Thursday, April 3, 2008, the fourth 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 began the meeting with a round of introductions, and welcomed Phil Strazzula, Phillips Family Hospitality, to the Task Force. Phil is replacing Joe Sammartino, Phillips Family Hospitality, on the Task Force.

Tad Read, BRA Senior Planner, continued with a review of the agenda, noting that Pamela McKinney, of Byrne McKinney Associates, was present tonight to give the Task Force an independent overview of the market conditions on Columbia Point. He noted that Pam is a subconsultant to the BRA's lead consultant, Crosby, Schlessinger & Smallridge.

Before turning the meeting over to Pam, however, Tad indicated that he would be giving a PowerPoint presentation on the JFK/UMass Station air rights site. He also introduced Mark Boyle, the MBTA's Director of Real Estate, and Greg Dicovitsky, of Transit Realty Associates, which advises the MBTA on real estate matters. Tad then passed around a handout showing a map of the limits of the air rights site. The map is included in the PowerPoint presentation, which is available on the BRA's Columbia Point Master Plan website. Tad's presentation focused on the importance of the air rights site to the wider Master Plan study area, the MBTA's rationale for offering the site for lease, information on the site's orientation and prevailing conditions, the requirements set by the MBTA for the site's development, and an analysis of the site's existing zoning. At the end of Tad's presentation, Mark clarified that the MBTA has no immediate plans to build an additional commuter rail track, but indicated that any development on the site may not preclude this possibility in the future.

The following questions or comments were raised in response to Tad's presentation:

- Joe Sammons, Geiger-Gibson Community Health Center, asked if the existing zoning prevents any structure on the site from rising beyond 45' above grade. Tad acknowledged this restriction. Chair Walsh added that the Task Force has the ability to make recommendations on the existing zoning as part of the Master Plan process.
- In response to a question from John Lowe, McCormack Civic Association, Tad replied that on average, a building story is 10 to 11 feet high.
- Chair Walsh asked if there are any other examples of sites where development has occurred on air rights over the T or other forms of rapid transit. Mark cited the Red Line's North Quincy Station as an example.
- Paul Nutting, CSHCA, asked if the commuter rail right-of-way extends north along Old Colony Avenue, as well as south into the Synergy property. Greg responded that this is a question that will have to be resolved before anything is built.
- In response to a question from Mark Rooney, South Boston Neighborhood House, Mark Boyle replied that the JFK/UMass Station functions as a diversion facility in emergency situations. He added that because of the station's geographical location, this condition will continue in perpetuity.
- Chair Walsh asked if the site's developer will be required to clean up the space underneath the Interstate 93 viaduct. Mark acknowledged that this is a very important issue, adding that the MBTA currently has an agreement with MHD to use the area as an access point to

the T Station. He added that the MBTA would also like to see the area made ADA accessible. In response to a follow-up question from Chair Walsh, Mark indicated that the salt pile owned by MHD will likely remain where it is.

- Matt Gordy, CSHCA, asked about the existing zoning on Sydney Street. Tad responded that this will be covered at the next Task Force meeting.
- In response to a question from Joe Sammons, Tad replied that it is difficult to say how the air rights site will overlap with the Master Plan, but noted that each development project will likely be required to make some off-site improvements to the public realm as part of the mitigation requirements. Chair Walsh added that the Task Force can recommend some of these trade-offs.

Next, Chair Walsh turned the meeting over to Pamela McKinney, of Byrne McKinney Associates (BRA Consultants). Pam introduced herself, noting that her role will be to help the Task Force understand the marketplace on Columbia Point, which will in turn allow them to anticipate what the development market might do. She added that she will serve the function of “standing in the developer’s shoes” for them. Pam then began her discussion of the real estate market, referring to a memorandum she prepared, available on the project website.

In the ensuing discussion, the following questions or comments were raised:

- In response to a question from Joe Sammons, Pam indicated that private development above the air rights site is more likely to stimulate public improvements for the neighborhood than if the public sector were to act alone, largely due to the fact that the public sector has far less accessible capital than the private sector.
- John Lowe asked what type of project would suit the air rights site best. Pam responded that a mixed-use program will likely work best, and added that parking will probably not play a factor at this site, due to its accessibility to transit and lack of terra firma.
- Paul Nutting asked if the extended vacancy of the former Channel 56 building is a sign of a general lack of demand on Columbia Point. Pam indicated that this was most likely due to the fact that the facility’s age, condition, and limited parking mean that it will take more time to lease.
- In response to a question from Mark Rooney, Pam replied that with retail you typically have users in hand prior to moving forward with construction, whereas this is not the case with office space, thus making it more difficult to obtain financing.
- Don Walsh asked if Columbia Point possessed the potential to function as an offshoot of Cambridge’s life science industry. Pam responded that she will come back to the Task Force after looking into this, but noted that the life science industry tends to be very particular about where it tends to go. She added that this could change if UMass Boston were to develop a connection to the industry.
- In response to a question from Bill Cotter, CSHCA, Pam indicated that it is tough to distinguish which site is more crucial to the overall development of Columbia Point, seeing as that they are all fairly interdependent. She added that the air rights site is very important as a connection between Columbia Point and Savin Hill, but noted that the site’s challenges mean it will be more complicated to complete than the others.
- Joe Sammons asked if it is difficult for developers to create mixed-use development that serves mixed income households. Pam acknowledged that this can be hard to do, especially when the real estate market is in a downturn, but noted that developers are still required to supply a certain amount of affordable housing with every project.

- In response to a comment from Chair Walsh, Pam noted that the attributes of Columbia Point transcend its specific geography, meaning that this location will benefit tremendously from improved connections. Once Columbia Point's connections are improved, more demand will emerge.
- Justin Holmes, Office of City Council President Maureen Feeney, asked if national developers will be interested in Columbia Point. Pam stated that in general the market is more of a national environment than ever before. Many national companies are also interested in transit-oriented development, and the opportunity to build on or near the waterfront makes Columbia Point very unique. In response to a follow-up question from Justin, Pam responded that national developers are not very accustomed to providing community mitigations.
- Chair Walsh commented that the Task Force will have to grapple more with the relationship between density and development, and determine how much is appropriate for Columbia Point and how much is too much.

At the conclusion of the question and comment period, Lauren Shurtleff, BRA Planner, led a discussion regarding the scheduling of the next Task Force meeting and the first two community meetings. It was determined that the next Task Force meeting will be held on April 24<sup>th</sup> (see details below). The first community meetings will be held as follows:

- Thursday, May 15<sup>th</sup>, 6:30 p.m. – 9 p.m. at the Harbor Point Community Building, 270 Mt. Vernon Street, Dorchester.
- Saturday, June 14<sup>th</sup>, 9 a.m. – 12 p.m. at Boston College High School, 150 Morrissey Boulevard, Dorchester.

The BRA will place newspaper advertisements, and will also design a flyer for Task Force members to distribute announcing the meetings.

Finally, Chair Walsh encouraged the Task Force members to reach out to their neighbors and other community members to share the progress of the Task Force.

The next meeting is scheduled for **Thursday, April 24, 2008, from 5:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. at Boston College High School – Loyola Function Room, 150 Morrissey Boulevard, Dorchester.**

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 7:00 p.m.