



Task Force Working Meeting #1
Thursday, February 7, 2008
Location: BRA Board Room, Boston City Hall

Task Force Attendees:

Fr. George Carrigg, St. Christopher's Church
Patrick Connolly, Boston Teacher's Union
Bill Cotter, Columbia-Savin Hill Civic Association (CSHCA)
Matt Gordy, CSHCA
Chris Hart, Adaptive Environments
Sherina Hendrix, Dorchester Bay Economic Development Corporation (DBEDC)
John Lowe, McCormack Civic Association
Victoria Maguire, Representative Martin Walsh
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
Don Walsh, CSHCA/DBEDC, Chair

Ex-Officio Attendees:

Boston City Council President Maureen Feeney
James Chan, Office of Councilor Bill Linehan
Mike Christopher, Office of Representative Martin Walsh
Carol Houghtaling, Office of Representative Brian Wallace
Jane Lindsay, JFK Presidential Library & Museum
Brian Maher, Boston College High School
Megan Malloy, Office of Senator Jack Hart
Patricia McCormack, Commonwealth Museum & State Archives
Drew O'Brien, Office of U.S. Senator John Kerry
Renie Smith, Office of Council President Feeney

City of Boston Attendees:

Jim Fitzgerald, BRA
Casey Flynn, Mayor's Office of Neighborhood Services
Patrick Hoey, BTD
Bob Kroin, BRA
Tad Read, BRA
Carole Schlessinger, Crosby, Schlessinger & Smallridge
Lauren Shurtleff, BRA

Members of the Public:

Arthur Bernard, UMass Boston
Juan Cofield, Boston Realty Associates, Inc.
Joseph Corcoran, Corcoran Jennison Companies
Greg Dicovitsky, Transit Realty Associates
Catherine O'Neill, Corcoran Jennison Companies
Seth Riseman, Utile, Inc.

Meeting Summary

On Thursday, February 7, 2008, the first meeting of the Columbia Point Master Plan Task Force was called to order at approximately 4:00 p.m. in the BRA Board Room at Boston City Hall by Tad Read, BRA Senior Planner.

Tad began the meeting by greeting the Task Force members and thanking them for attending. After a round of introductions, Tad announced that the firm of Crosby, Schlessinger & Smallridge has been selected as the consultant for this project, with Carole Schlessinger as the project manager. He continued with a review of the agenda.

Tad then gave a brief summary of the background behind the project, noting that it has been several decades since a significant planning effort had been put forth on Columbia Point. Several development projects are now on the horizon, and UMass Boston is in the process of completing their Master Plan. These projects create exciting opportunities but also create significant challenges. Tad explained that the purpose of the Master Plan will be to develop a unified and comprehensive plan for Columbia Point that will allow new development to move forward in a coordinated fashion, and in a way that is most responsive to the needs and aspirations of the residents, businesses, and institutions on Columbia Point.

Tad then reviewed the consultant scope of work with the Task Force, highlighting the five major components:

- An inventory of existing conditions, with a specific focus on land use, multi-modal transportation, and urban design.
- Formulation of a common vision.
- Review of Alternatives.
- Preparation of the Master Plan.
- Mitigation and Benefits Plan.

Council President Maureen Feeney inquired about how the Task Force would be interacting with the developer proposals already on the table, and asked if the Kosciuszko Circle, which is owned by the State, is eligible to be put on the table as mitigation. Tad responded by saying that while none of the proponents have filed any plans yet, they will be coming in and presenting their conceptual plans to the Task Force within the next few months. He added that the BRA has been in contact with the Department of Conservation and Recreation already and that they are aware of the Master Planning process.

Returning to the roles and responsibilities of the Task Force, Tad indicated that Mayor Thomas M. Menino has appointed Don Walsh, CSHCA/DBEDC, as Chair of the Task Force. He added that Don has accepted this role and will be chairing all future meetings of the Task Force. The Chair's role will be to help the Task Force stay focused on the agenda and keep the meetings moving along, as well as ensuring that a range of view points are allowed to be shared.

The role of the Task Force will be to advise BRA staff as they develop the Master Plan, as part of a mutual learning process. Tad explained that the BRA is eager to learn about what it's like to live and work on Columbia Point. Task Force members will also represent the concerns and opinions of their neighbors and colleagues.

Tad indicated that Lauren Shurtleff, BRA Planner, would serve as the contact person from the BRA for the Task Force. He then reviewed a few other housekeeping items regarding Task Force policy, asking that members attend all meetings regularly. If a Task Force member misses three consecutive meetings, they may be asked to relinquish their membership. All Task Force meetings will be open to the public.

Lauren then gave a brief overview of the Project Schedule, indicating that the next meeting will be devoted to a presentation of key background information on land use, transportation, and urban design. Part of the meeting will also feature a hands-on exercise with maps in order to allow the Task Force to show the Project Team their perspective. At the third meeting, the major proponents will come in and present their development concepts to the Task Force. The fourth meeting will feature a presentation by Pamela McKinney, of Byrne McKinney & Associates, who is a real estate and market specialist. She will be able to give the Task Force a good understanding of the remaining market capacity on Columbia Point for different land uses. A walking tour will be held in late May, thus capping off the first phase of the project. Details on further meetings will be provided later.

The first public community meeting will likely be held in late April, giving the public their first opportunity to provide input on the Master Plan. This meeting will be advertised in local papers and on the BRA website.

Next, Carole Schlessinger, BRA Consultant, gave a PowerPoint presentation, which can be found on the BRA's Columbia Point Master Plan website. The presentation highlighted some of the existing conditions on Columbia Point and illustrated some of the opportunities for the future, including green building, sustainability, and transit-oriented development. Examples of other successful mixed-use districts in Boston and throughout the country were provided. Carole also gave an overview of potential community benefits and mitigation, which can include traffic and transit improvements, as well as improvements to open space.

At the presentation's conclusion, Don Walsh asked if Dorchester Avenue was part of the study. Jim Fitzgerald, BRA Senior Planner, indicated that for traffic purposes, the intersection of Dorchester Avenue and Columbia Road would be included in the Master Plan.

Afterwards, Lauren asked Task Force members if Thursday afternoons were a good time for them to meet in the future. It was determined that the first Thursday of the month would work for most people present, and the next meeting was tentatively scheduled for **Thursday, March 6, 2008, from 5:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m.** In terms of location, **Boston College High School** had previously offered their school as a meeting space, and it was agreed that the next meeting would be held there.

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 5:30 p.m.