

Harvard Allston Task Force
Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, November 29, 2006
Honan-Allston Library
6:30 p.m.

I. Attendance:

Harvard Allston Task Force

Paul Berkeley
Mary Helen Black
John Bruno
Cathy Campbell
John Cusack
Rita DiGesse
Brian Gibbons
Millie Hollum McLaughlin
Brighton Lew
Harry Mattison
Ray Mellone, Chairman
Brent Whelan

Harvard University

Will Donham
Kevin McCluskey
Dave Moffat
Andy O'Brien
Dan Rabinovitz
Alison Reinhardt
Kathy Spiegelman
Maile Takahashi

City of Boston

Gerald Autler- Boston Redevelopment Authority (BRA)
Paul Holloway- Allston/Brighton Neighborhood Coordinator
Linda Kowlacky- Boston Redevelopment Authority (BRA)
Representative Mike Moran
City Councilor Jerry McDermott
Will Luzier, Senator Tolman's office

The meeting began at 6:40 p.m.

Gerald Autler introduced himself and asked attendees to put their names on the sign-in sheet. Gerald clarified that the Task Force meeting is run by the Boston Redevelopment Authority (BRA) so the only sign-in sheet posted should be the BRA's. He said that he would be happy to share the sign-in sheet with other organizations but only if attendees did not have concerns about their contact information being shared. Gerald said that since the last Task Force meeting he has sent out emails to his Allston neighborhood distribution list. If you received one of those emails it means that you are on his distribution list and you don't have to put your email address on the sign-in sheet every time you sign-in at one of the Task Force meetings. If you did not receive any of Gerald's emails between now and the last meeting then you are not on his email distribution list and you need to provide him with your email address.

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Gerald provided a few administrative updates. He said that he has heard several comments and concerns from the neighborhood about the BRA process. Gerald said that responding to Harvard's Allston development plans is a big task in front of the community and Harvard and the BRA have to work within the existing process and structure required by the BRA. Gerald acknowledged that the process may seem very rigid but suggested that it is a more fluid process than it may seem. For example, an end date for the comment period for the Project Notification Form (PNF) for Harvard's science complex is required so that the BRA can issue a scoping determination to Harvard. Even though the final date for comments is December 15, 2006 it doesn't mean the community can't provide input on the building beyond that date.

Gerald said that he understood that it was a confusing process with Harvard's multiple filings at different times but he tried to explain the process more clearly. In April 2006 Harvard filed an Institutional Master Plan Notification Form (IMP/NF) Amendment to amend its current Institutional Master Plan (IMP) for its Allston Campus. The amendment consists of three projects: 1). Science complex on Western Avenue; 2). Harvard University Art Museums (HUAM) arts center at 1360/1380 Soldier's Field Road; and 3). Interim art facilities located at 224 Western Avenue. There was a public comment period for the IMP/NF Amendment and the BRA issued a scoping determination. In response to the scoping determination, Harvard will file its IMP Amendment in December. In January Harvard plans to file a new Institutional Master Plan (IMP) that will provide a 10 year plan for its Allston campus. Harvard's science project will not move forward until the IMP Amendment is approved and the IMP Amendment will not be approved until the new IMP is submitted in January.

Gerald said that after all of Harvard's filings are made in January, the BRA will host a public meeting to look at all of the filings together as a whole. Even though the official comment period for the Science PNF ends on December 15th, the community will still be able to provide their input beyond this date. The process is actually more fluid than the BRA/law suggests.

The agenda item for tonight's meeting is community benefits and Task Force chairman Ray Mellone will lead the discussion.

Audience Member: Article 80 refers to a project impact group that will vote on the PNF. Is the Task force the project impact group and when will they take the vote on the PNF?

Gerald Autler: The Task Force fulfills the role of the impact advisory group. The group doesn't necessarily have to vote and they won't vote on the PNF document. The PNF document just kicks-off the review process. Once there is a fully developed proposal the Task Force can decide on the structure that they would like to use to support or reject Harvard's proposals.

Audience Member (Joyce Radnor): So construction on the science project won't begin until the amendment is approved? You can understand the community's concern about providing feedback on the filings if we don't know where it is going. I was one of three community members, including only two Task Force members, who provided comments during the IMP/NF Amendment comment period. I want to ensure that the City of Boston is committed to not approve the IMP Amendment until the new IMP is submitted.

Gerald Autler: Yes, the city is committed to that. Once everything is put forth by Harvard in January we can get away from the structure and start to look at it as an entire plan. Technically the comment period for the science PNF ends December 15th but that is just so that the BRA can issue a scoping determination to Harvard.

Audience Member (Joyce Radnor): How can the BRA issue a scoping determination if Harvard didn't provide a lot of information in the PNF?

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Gerald Autler: The BRA is aware of the list of information that is required in a PNF. On a basic level it only has to do with the proposed project. If Harvard says it wants to build a building, roughly a certain size with certain uses, the BRA then tells Harvard what is required to do this in the scoping determination. In January we will step back and look at all of the filings together.

Audience Member: Is the BRA committed to providing the community with access to all of the documents?

Gerald Autler: All of the documents such as Harvard's old IMP, the IMPNF Amendment, the PNF for the science project and the Task Force meeting minutes are on the BRA's web site at www.cityofboston.gov/bra/. Click on "Planning Initiatives" on the left hand side and then scroll down on the main screen and click on "Harvard Allston Campus Planning and Institutional Master Plan". You can also find the information on Harvard's web site at www.allston.harvard.edu

Gerald turned the meeting over to Kathy Spiegelman of Harvard University. Kathy made a few updates on behalf of Harvard. In Harvard's IMPNF Amendment it proposed three projects (as mentioned above). Harvard is now looking into the viability of locating the Harvard University Art Museums art center at the former Verizon Building at 224 Western Avenue. At the December 11, 2006 Task Force meeting more details will be shared about this project. The second update is that Harvard has reached an agreement with the Board of the Charlesview apartments and has made a purchase offer for a land swap. The land offered for the new Charlesview site is at the former Kmart building and land across the street located right next to the Teleford Bridge. This is a significant first step with the Charlesview Board and there will be opportunities at future meetings to ask questions and provide comments.

Kathy turned the meeting over to Kevin McCluskey, Director of Community Relations at Harvard University. Kevin said that the purpose of tonight's meeting is for the community to share ideas with Harvard about how Harvard's growth can benefit Allston. He said that by and large the Allston community and Harvard have had a good relationship. Like any relationship there have been some rocky moments as Task Force member Brent Whelan pointed out at the last meeting. In the future there will likely be more positive and rocky moments. Harvard is committed to working on its part of the relationship and beginning the next phase of the long-term relationship with the community on a positive note. Kevin thanked Representatives Mike Moran, Kevin Honan, City Councilman Jerry McDermott and Will Luzier, representative for Senator Tolman, for their leadership and active role in the planning process with the community. Harvard was pleased to have funded the North Allston Neighborhood Strategic Planning (NANSP) process and feels that the strategic framework produced from that holds great promise for Harvard and the neighborhood. There will be obstacles and challenges that Harvard and the neighborhood will have to overcome together and he is confident that this can be done. From a long-term perspective, he hopes that the Task Force members and community members can come up with ideas of mutual benefits and allow Harvard to be the community's neighbor. Harvard tries to be as responsive as possible and to help the neighborhood in a host of ways. Harvard will continue to try to do all of those kinds of things but it knows and understands that the community expects much more from the University. Harvard won't be able to respond to every request but it is excited to work with the neighborhood on a set of priorities in a positive, productive relationship and is looking forward to hearing the community's ideas tonight.

Ray Mellone introduced himself and had the Task Force members introduce themselves. Ray said that community benefits is a tough question to answer and that collectively the Task Force hasn't yet come up with a proposal but they are working on this and have met amongst themselves already and are planning to meet again. The magnitude of Harvard's expansion is going to be long-term and ongoing and therefore the community benefits that come along with that should take the same form. The benefits shouldn't end when one master plan ends but rather should be continuous and overlapping. The concern of the Task Force is the large amount of development and how it will effect the character and identity of the community. North

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Allston is a stable, middle class, connected, friendly community and can remain so if preserving the identity is one of the goals for the community benefits. How the community benefits work out is still dependent on further instruction but the Task Forces' first ideas are that benefits should focus on education and training and things such as housing and senior aide. The matrix should be all encompassing and shouldn't just be a one shot deal. We can't exist as a community unless we work with Harvard to look at community benefits in terms of the magnitude and scale of Harvard's development. The Task Force is here tonight to listen to the community's ideas and collect your feedback.

Audience Member (Renata Von Tschnarner, Charles River Conservancy): The Charles River Conservancy is a non-profit organization that takes care of the parklands along the Charles River. The parklands should be made more a part of the new neighborhood.

Audience Member (Pricilla Anderson, Windom Street resident): Harvard is proposing moving its Graduate School of Education so I would propose programs that promote interaction between Harvard students and our schools. This will help to enhance Harvard students' education and provide opportunities for Allston students. Similarly, there should be programs between Harvard's Graduate School of Public Health and the community health centers such as internships for the students to provide enhanced health services for the community.

Audience Member (Athol Street resident): Educational opportunities are critical. The Gardner School is a PILOT school and has flexibility to work with Harvard. There currently aren't any arts/music programs at the school so a partnership could be formed between Harvard and the school.

Audience Member (Tim McHale, Litchfield Street resident): (Tim gave Ray Mellone a three page list of community benefit ideas). The park in Harvard Square by Peets' coffee is one of the best parks because it has community uses and retail and a good mix of open space. I propose a green promenade from the neighborhood around the Brighton Mills Shopping Center connecting to the river that has retail, vendors, kiosks, stage performances, etc. along the way. When the community comes together to work on the community the soul of the community is maintained and I applaud the interest that has been generated at these meetings lately.

Audience Member (Paul Creighton, Director, Allston Brighton APAC): The Task Force should think about the notion of community benefits. Typically in the Master Plan document community benefits are an appendix and most of the Task Force's work is with the big Master Plan. No other city in the country has faced what this neighborhood is facing when a University has acquired so much land in such a short period of time. The issue of community benefits has to be treated differently than it ever has been done before. The Task Force will be remiss in their duty if it doesn't force the city to address community benefits in a whole new way. It has to be a big, broad, deep vision and control what happens in the neighborhood. The university is going to do what it has to do to suit its interests.

Ray Mellone: You are mentioning the same things that I had mentioned earlier. The Master Plan that Harvard is proposing doesn't look at one slice of the pie; it's a long-running plan and thus we recognize that the community benefits have to correspond to this.

Audience Member (Mike Green): I think we should look at the amount of land along the river and how it is developed and how you can gain access to it from the neighborhood. In the past, Harvard buildings along the river have excluded public access to the river.

Ray Mellone: None of the land along the river is owned by Harvard but I think what you may be referring to is the interior of the neighborhood and access ways to the river. For four to five years we have been talking about that and the major issue is how it can be done safely and by managing the traffic.

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Audience Member (Alan, resident on the corner of Hopedale and Windom Street): I'm concerned about how the large projects will affect the community in ways that will spin out of control such as property taxes and traffic issues. I'm also interested in how Harvard's watersheds are being engineered and how it will effect the watershed for our property and the ramifications that may come along with this such as flood insurance. I would like to hear a detailed proposal from Harvard about this.

Ray Mellone: Your comments seem appropriate for the scoping process. Harvard had to be very careful with the watersheds when it was developing its athletic fields.

Gerald Autler: In Harvard's previous discussions regarding storm water management their plans suggest it will actually reduce flooding if it is done right. This is a goal the city has also articulated to Harvard.

Audience Member (Catalina, former principal of the Gardner School and representative of the current Gardner School principal): Harvard should help the children of Allston by helping to build a new state-of-the-art school. The current structure of the Gardner School does not support the host of programs that the parents are asking the school to implement. We would also like to see the school go from K-8 to K-12. Education should be the number one goal.

Audience Member (Bob VanMeter, ABCDC): All of the community benefits need to look at preserving the Allston-Brighton community. Education is critical to keep more families in the neighborhood. Middle-low income housing is also critical. The NANSP suggested mid-income buyer subsidies to help families buy into the neighborhood. We need a school and a community center. Right now St. Anthony's is not fully utilized. I think an early action item should be financial resources to help the Task Force and Community members bring on independent consultants to help analyze Harvard's plans. Harvard donated \$250,000 for the NANSP and I think they should provide similar or greater funds now. At the Task Force meetings Harvard provides their professional consultants and the community should be able to do the same to help balance the equation.

Audience Member: Harvard should create a private school so young people can stay in the community. Harvard should provide college-prep and math tutoring courses. Is Harvard going to keep the current retail that is in the neighborhood? I'd like to see more retail on Western Avenue with a school.

Ray Mellone: After school programs and college prep courses are important things and the Task Force is thinking about that too.

Audience Member: There should be a school through 12th grade to keep people from leaving the neighborhood.

Audience Member (Kathy Pheonix, Joseph Smith Community Health Center): Harvard should think about the creation of an endowment for the community. It should be a significant investment relative to the land usage and square footage that Harvard will be developing. Harvard is ready to invest around \$1.2 billion in its development and a portion of this could go to the community's development. The community's needs will change years from now but an endowment could allow us to redirect the funds over time.

Audience Member: I'm in favor of Harvard's expansion but Harvard should do something now that will provide benefits for future generations such as a private school. You can capitalize on Harvard's intellect through a private school.

Audience Member: If you use the Peets' coffee park as good criteria for a park then the proposed science project is a complete failure with its interior court yard. I'm in favor of continuous green space from the

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neighborhood to the river that blends into its surroundings. Pedestrians and bicyclists need to feel safe on the streets. The conditions right now are not very friendly. North Harvard Street is basically impassable to bikes and Cambridge Street is a very unfriendly road for pedestrian and bicyclists. Harvard should think about access into, through, and out of the community. I would encourage the Task Force to go through the neighborhood at night and get an understanding for what I am referring to. I would also like to see alternate proposals for bike paths right along the sidewalk.

Gerald Autler: There have been several ideas and presentations about bike paths and where they should be located. This is something that we'll talk about more in January.

Audience Member (Representative for the Ringer Park Advocacy Group): Low-income families are often left out of the arts. One can't develop an appreciation or desire for the arts without access to it. Harvard should provide arts programs with the community and access to these programs should be brought to the community in a non-threatening approach.

Audience Member (Jeff Jones, Hopedale Street resident): Harvard should build a new road parallel and east of Western Avenue that would come out of the other side of the Genzyme parcel. The proposed "Allston Square" on Western Avenue is going to significantly slow down traffic on that street and there will need to be another access way out of the neighborhood. A new street would be of mutual benefit to Harvard employees and the community.

Ray Mellone: These are good comments for the scoping session.

Audience Member (Carol Eastman, Medical Director, Joseph Smith Community Health Center): We should be approaching the community benefits issue with new ideas. Because Harvard is tax-exempt a great deal of tax base is lost for the city. If Harvard is investing billions of dollars in its development then there is millions of dollars in tax revenue that is not going to be paid. I propose taking three years worth of taxes that Harvard would have paid if it wasn't tax-exempt and putting it into a trust fund. The community can use the interest generated to fund all of these ideas. Harvard is not an easy institution to get money out of so if the community gets money of it now we can fund all of the good ideas on an ongoing basis.

Ray Mellone: The endowment might be subject to what the Mayor requires for PILOT payments. The Mayor will decide the amount of the PILOT payment.

Audience Member: The elementary school needs to be updated. We do have a high school but we need another junior high school. Middle school students need more activities to do. Maybe Harvard could open up their athletic facilities and offer family nights. There used to be Allston sports leagues for the kids to participate in but there aren't any now. Let's use some of the things Harvard has now that we can take advantage of. The community needs to get more active and continue to come to these meetings and stay informed. A lot of the issues people are bringing up have already been covered at the Task Force meetings.

Rita DiGesse: St. Anthony's is acting as the community center in Allston right now. People are using the facility for public meetings all the time. It is still St. Anthony's Parish but you can go through the Parish to get to the hall.

Audience Member (Patrick, Arden Street resident): I'm in favor of the endowment. I've heard so many good ideas tonight that an endowment would allow the community to work on proposals over time and would give the community control.

Ray Mellone: Who would you have run the endowment?

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Audience Member (Patrick, Arden Street resident): The community could elect a board to run it.

Audience Member (Mansfield Street resident): I'm in favor of the endowment and also of scholarships to participate in Harvard programs like the Harvard Office of the Arts offered to take pottery classes. I also think Harvard should open up their pool for use by the community. I want to ensure that retail is kept viable in the neighborhood. Allston use to be a walking neighborhood- you could walk to the store and do your errands. To preserve the character of the neighborhood it should be kept a walking neighborhood. Harvard should implement accessible retail for the residents.

Representative Mike Moran: Representative Kevin Honan, Councilor Jerry McDermott and Senator Tolman and I have brought up this issue of a community trust already and we've been talking with some of the other institutions in the neighborhood about this. We have institutional issues in our neighborhood and I'm thrilled to hear that people in the community are bringing up this idea of a community trust with out even knowing that we have been talking about the same idea. This means we may have grass roots support for it. A similar trust was created in East Boston as a result of the airport expansion and in Mission Hill around the Fenway. A trust is good because it can function in perpetuity and give money back to the neighborhood. I fear that if Harvard issues one check and provides funding for one thing then the community will miss the little things along the way. Sometimes it is the small projects in the community that can make the difference. The community is not speaking in a vacuum. Please call your elected officials offices to show your support for this idea because it is something that we are going to need support in the community for and it is something that we are working on and would like to accomplish.

Audience Member: Harvard and the Task Force should speak with the principals of the Allston-Brighton schools to have them write up proposals for the schools. We should go to the people who are actually doing the jobs in the community to understand their needs.

Audience Member: I'm confused. If the community is concerned about walking to retail then why does Harvard own all the retail now? I'm concerned about what's going to happen with three properties in the neighborhood: 1). MDC place on Western Ave./Market Street (Speedway property)- is the BRA and Harvard working to acquire this property? 2). Kevin Forbes property on Lincoln Street and 3). The proposed new Charlesview site- which resulted in my shopping center being closed down.

Gerald Autler- The BRA will be at the meeting on Monday night (December 4th) to be involved in the coordination of the state process for the Speedway property.

Representative Mike Moran: That is a DCR piece of property and it needs special state house legislation in order to be disposed of. The delegation had a meeting three weeks ago and it was decided that the building was dilapidated and we should try to put something there. We decided to host an open design charette to collect proposal. This is not a definite by any means. Rumors get started when people say "it's going to happen."

Audience Member: Why did Harvard offer that property to Charlesview then if it didn't own it?

Kevin McCluskey: Harvard never said that it owned that property. It was offered to Charlesview as a conceptual idea with the assumption that Harvard would have had to go through a very extensive process to acquire that site. As far as I know, Harvard is not currently involved in the design charette process to acquire the site.

Ray Mellone: Charlesview is not a topic issue for tonight's meeting. We have to let the process play out to some extent.

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Harry Mattison: I don't think it's necessarily a bad thing if Harvard acquires the Speedway site. Is Harvard considering purchasing this property?

Kevin McCluskey: Harvard tries to be as transparent about its acquisitions as it possibly can. At this time Harvard has no plans for that end of Western Avenue. In the NANSP it was clear that Harvard and the neighborhood have a shared goal to reinvigorate retail along Western Avenue and create pocket parks.

Representative Mike Moran: There has to be legislative oversight on the Speedway site. Harvard is an obvious purchaser for the Speedway site but we have decided to hold a public charette for other developers too. If the community is supportive of the proposals we would write legislation and gather the public's input.

Harry Mattison: Would the purchaser of the land have a requirement to convert the site in the short-term rather than the long-term?

City Councilor Jerry McDermott: Whoever bids on the site is going to be financially viable. I'd like to applaud all the ideas shared tonight such as the K-12 funded school and the environmental ideas put forth by the Charles River Watershed Association. There are so many good ideas and unfortunately we can't get it all done. I would encourage community members to call their representatives and whenever you send something to the BRA or Gerald Autler please copy your representatives. The community has to be united, these ideas can't be a wish list they have to be demands. This is a great opportunity for the community and it has to be a win-win situation in order to get the best deal for future generations.

Audience Member (Paul Alford, Windom Street resident): For eight months I have been attending these meetings and I was thinking about ideas as a poor person. We have to tap into Harvard's two resources: money and education. I'm a little nervous that the Mayor will decide where the money goes. I hope the money stays in this community. If the other communities want the community benefits then let Harvard develop there.

Ray Mellone: For PILOT payments the money goes to the City of Boston and the neighborhood doesn't necessarily see the money. Community benefits are different from that- it's about quality of life issues. The community benefits have to correspond to the magnitude of Harvard's expansion and are open ended.

Audience Member (Bob VanMeter, ABCDC): PILOT laws do allow an institution to commit 20 percent of its payment to non-profit organizations within that community. Therefore \$450,000 could go to the neighborhood if Harvard and the city agreed to it. BU's PILOT payment to Boston is more than twice Harvard's payment.

Brent Whelan: Representative Moran can you clarify whether the institutional trust you are referring to would be considered Harvard's PILOT payment?

Representative Mile Moran: We have to figure out what would work best but it would be an institutional trust fund for the community that all five of the major institutions, St. Elizabeth's, Harvard, BC, WGBH, 5th?, would contribute to. In East Boston the fund is done through PILOT payments and then the city cuts a check back to the East Boston foundation. For the Mission Hill fund the installment is paid in 3-4 checks. The fund has bylaws to adhere to. We're still in the preliminary stages of figuring it all out.

Audience Member: Where will the community benefits proposal come in the IMP? Can we ask for anything after the IMP?

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Gerald Autler: The appropriate way to look at community benefits is long term. In the short-term the community benefits in the IMP will be the building blocks for long-term benefits that will ramp up over time.

Audience Member: On Tuesday and Thursday next week (December 5th and 7th) there will be a meeting for the proposed Charlesview site abutters at St. Anthony's beginning at 6:30 p.m.

Audience Member (Pallavi Mande, Charles River Watershed Association): I want to thank City Councilor McDermott for mentioning the CRWA's efforts. The community's comments on open space and watersheds are all related to community benefits that residents would like to see in the short-term and long-term. The CRWA has been working with several local agencies and I would encourage other residents who are concerned about these issues to join the Task Force's open space sub-committee.

Audience Member (Paul Alford): On Monday night (December 4th) we have reserved a room at the library from 6:30-8:00 p.m. to help anyone who is interested in drafting responses to Harvard's PNF. We will also have envelopes and stamps available.

John Cusack: Please leave the wish list that is outside the conference room so the Task Force can copy down all the ideas.

Gerald Autler: Please send me your comments for the PNF document by December 15th. All of the comments that are specifically related to the building will be incorporated into the body of the scoping determination. All of the other comments will be included in the appendix. The Task Force will be compiling all of the ideas that were voiced tonight. At the December 11th meeting Harvard will make a brief presentation about the Harvard University Art Museum project. Does anyone here have an objection with me sharing your contact information to other interested organizations? Additionally, I'm going to try and schedule a January workshop to review all of Harvard's fillings. Does anyone have any objections to a Saturday workshop? It is possible that we may need to do more than one workshop. Also there has been a request to have a Spanish translator at the meetings so I will arrange this. Are there any other languages that need a translator for these meetings?

Gerald ended the meeting at 8:35 p.m.