

**Harvard Allston Task Force
Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, February 27th, 2008
Allston-Brighton Resource Center
6:30 p.m.**

I. Attendance

Harvard Allston Task Force

Paul Berkeley
John Bruno
Cathi Campbell
John Cusack
Rita DiGesse
Millie Hollum McLaughlin
Bruce Houghton
Harry Mattison
Ray Mellone
Brent Whelan

Harvard University

Monika Bankowski
Mary-Helen Black
Will Donham
Kevin McCluskey
Joshua Poupore
Dan Rabinovitz
Alison Rainhardt
David Raszmann
Kathy Spiegelman
Dennis Swinford
Maile Takahashi

City of Boston

Gerald Autler, Boston Redevelopment Authority
Michael Glavin, Boston Redevelopment Authority
Linda Kowalcky, Boston Redevelopment Authority
Kairos Shen, Chief Planner, City of Boston
Commissioner Thomas Tinlin, Boston Transportation Department
Paul Holloway, Mayor's Office of Neighborhood Services
Carlos Montanez, Senior Planner, BRA (Allston/Brighton Community Planner)
Mary Knasas, Senior Planner, BRA (Community Planning Department)

Harvard Allston Task Force Chair Ray Mellone began the meeting at 6:45pm.

John Cusack gave an update on Construction Mitigation Sub Committee meeting that took place from 5:30pm – 6:30pm earlier in the evening. The Sub Committee involves neighbors, representatives from Turner Construction, Harvard's ADG and Boston Transportation Department. The next meeting will take place on March 12th, 2008. There will be a notice in the paper and the meeting is open to anyone who is interested. The main issues discussed at tonight's meeting were as follows:

- Turner requests for extended work hours;
- The protocol proposed at the last meeting has been approved by the BTM;
- A sign up sheet for people to receive updates from the Construction Mitigation office was passed around;
- The site: www.allstonconstruction.harvard.edu will provide updates including information as extended work gets approved, the times, crew and work equipment will be listed, limit of the work will be well defined;
- Proposed Saturday work schedule is 9am – 5pm

Mary-Helen Black, Harvard University gave an update on the Survey Needs Assessment Committee (SNAC) and the Ed Portal. She said that SNAC has met 4 times. The committee reviewed data from the Boston Public Schools (BPS) and from the State Department of Education showing where kids from Allston/Brighton go to school. A representative from BPS as well as Linda Kowalcky from the BRA helped the committee to analyze the data. Agenda and notes from the meeting will go on ADG web site. The RFQ is in the works and Harvard should be getting proposals from firms in a few weeks. Mary-Helen also gave an update on the Ed Portal. Harvard got the building permit for work at the Ed Portal at 175 North Harvard Street. The Ed Portal is still scheduled to open in April with the science tutoring, enrichment programming, etc. Once the program is developed in more concrete terms she will share the information at the Task Force meeting. Landscaping at the Ed Portal will be done in the spring and summer.

A copy of the data from BPS will be given to the Task Force members at the next TF meeting, per John Bruno & Millie McLaughlin's request.

Cathi Campbell briefly gave highlights of the BPS.

Brent Whalen said that there are four other topics that the SNAC is intended to examine: transportation, health, open space and housing. He asked people in the community who have knowledge and interest in those four other topics to help the SNAC committee to figure out what kind of questions need to be answered in the needs assessment survey.

Mary-Helen Black agreed that there are many topics that need to be discussed by the SNAC. She said that the education is the biggest and the most complex topic. In regards to the other topics, SNAC will be getting additional data from the City, from non-profits,

and there will be experts from the City attending the SNAC meetings to help the group analyze the data. Once the consultant is on board, they will work with the existing information and try to determine what other information is needed in order to cover all areas in the best possible way. She asked the Task Force and the community if people have data that may be helpful to forward the information to Mary-Helen.

Kairos Shen, Chief Planner for the City of Boston gave an overview of how the BRA is going to take on the next two months worth of work related to planning in the neighborhood. There are two components to the work:

- Area-Wide Planning (North of the Turnpike)
- Harvard's Institutional Master Plan

Kairos presented the following points:

- Area-wide planning – it is important to ask the right questions related to planning
- The next three meetings should be focused on the questions Harvard needs to answer related to planning & development of their Master Plan
- Linear process is more effective
- The right sequence of events:
 - Review of the North Allston Strategic Framework – define questions & topics
 - Meeting with the Task Force to define questions relevant to the community but also relevant to the Institutional Master Plan and specifically related to Harvard
 - Dialogue between citizens/advocates in a Charrette format (possible two meetings: one on a weekday and one on a weekend)
 - Introduce folks from the planning team
- Kairos said that he will be personally involved in the process
- Introduced the following people that will be a part of the planning team (focused on the area wide planning):
 - Prataap Patrose, Deputy Director for Urban Design, BRA
 - Bob Kroin, Chief Architect, BRA
 - Tad Read, Senior Planner, BRA
 - Mary Knasas, Senior Planner, BRA (Community Planning Department)
 - Carlos Montanez, Senior Planner & Community Planner for Allston/Brighton, BRA
 - Dick Garver, Deputy Director of Infrastructure and Transportation Planning, BRA
- Team responsible for managing the Task Force
 - Michael Glavin, Senior Project Manager, Institutional Development, BRA
 - Gerald Autler, Deputy Director, Institutional Development, BRA
 - Linda Kowalcky, Deputy Director, Economic Development & Mayor's Liaison to Higher Education, BRA

Ray Mellone asked about the role of the Task Force will get involved in the planning due to the large amount of detail and overlap in many aspects of the process. Ray asked Kairos Shen to prepare his plan in writing that would be easier to analyze.

Kairos Shen said that it is impossible to separate the issues. He said that he will personally be involved in managing the planning process and there will be many City planners involved to make sure that all pieces fit together. He did not touch upon the content and suggested that at the next Task Force meeting when there is a discussion about the neighborhood plan there should be a draft of what the City planners think the questions and topics would be. He would arrange those topics thematically in order to categorize the questions. The City will be hiring consultants just as Harvard is hiring consultants for the Master Plan. The Task Force members should be engaged in the planning. The Task Force should remain central to the processing of the Institutional Master Plan but having the community participate in the larger dialogue is also critical. He said that the City is not going to structure the dialogue regarding the larger community because it is related primarily to the City. He said that the City's agenda is to make sure that there is continuity between the larger community and the Institutional Master Plan process.

Paul Berkeley asked whether or not there is a possibility of setting up objectives, milestones and agenda as to when the questions need to be answered.

Kairos Shen said that if the structure of the BRA team is right the Task Force would be comfortable moving from topic to topic. He said that at the next meeting he will give an overview of the scope of work, touch upon the questions and provide a draft schedule.

Bruce Houghton said that he was not clear about Kairos's structure and he wasn't sure who represents the neighborhood. He said that Harvard's development will change the dynamics of the whole region and the neighborhood.

Kairos Shen said that the neighborhood is welcome to participate in the larger planning effort together with Harvard and the BRA.

Gerald Autler said that the point is to integrate all of the work. The Task Force members should be active participants in working with Harvard and the BRA. Some of the topics will have to be broken down into smaller groups in order to talk about them in greater detail but the information will be reported back to the Task Force.

Bruce Houghton suggested that the BRA and others think about the membership of the Task Force committee. He expressed his frustration of the process that took place last year because the Task Force and the neighborhood was pressured to make decisions due to the deadlines forced upon them by the BRA.

Ray Mellone said that the process is at the stage that has never been approached before, very innovative and has never been done in this scale. He said that the Science Project was reviewed in a fast track. He said that Kairos's and Gerald's proposed schedule needs to be revised and coordinated.

Gerald Autler said that the schedule will be revised and adjusted accordingly.

Michael Glavin said that this project is very unique. He said that Kairos Shen will have much more capacity to work on this project with other agencies and departments in the City. The idea of these processes are that they are interrelated. He said that at the same time as the neighborhood planning work is being done, the IMP will be reviewed and at the same time Harvard will be fully engaged in working with a consultant. He said that there is a special jurisdictional responsibility that the Task Force has.

Brent Whalen said that if it is going to be a community wide discussion. He asked at what point in time the Task Force and the community would be able to ask Harvard questions about their intentions for development outside of the IMP and who asks questions and what Harvard's obligation is to answer those questions.

Kairos Shen said that with the BRA planning staff engaged and also bringing technical and professional input to the community-wide planning process, now there is a place for questions. He said that the BRA will be asking Harvard, not in the context of the Master Plan but in the context of the area plan that the BRA would be doing. He said that the Allston Development Group is not the only group at Harvard. He said that there is the Beacon Yards and long term opportunities exist there. He said that the Beacon Yards group might be asked to present to the Task Force and explain all the details. He said that the City would develop a long term policy to inform what is consistent with a given planning area.

Ray Mellone asked how long of an outlook would Master Plan have.

Kairos Shen said that the idea is to look at 20-30 year time frame.

Ray Mellone said that if Harvard owns most of the land in that area, would there be a conflict of interest if there is something that Harvard does not agree on with the community or the BRA on the type of project.

Kairos Shen said that in this situation there will be no project. He said that the whole point of working with the community is to make it clear that there will be a discussion about different options on the use of the land.

Ray Mellone said that what happens if Harvard comes up with a new idea between now and the 20-30 year of the proposed plan. He asked if Harvard needs to develop something for the immediate use and they need the land and if the project doesn't comply with the vision created in the 20-30 year plan what happens then?

Kairos Shen said that the plans are not static documents, they have to be dynamic. He said that some things sometimes cannot be predicted but the BRA can develop certain principles that are required. He said that there are different manifestations on the principles that the City and the community may agree on. He said that the City has a

variance process that allows to change the zoning. He said that the Master Plan can also be changed through the amendment process.

Millie Hollum-McLaughlin said that one of the problems that the Task Force and the community had in the process was the communication, especially in terms of reaching consensus. She asked Kairos what can be done about the communication issue and if it can be somehow built into the planning process.

Kairos Shen said that it would be a good idea to focus a part of next meeting on the communication process. He also said that in the past the meetings were schedule driven instead of being result-driven. He said that he will work on developing a clear way of communication between the Task Force, the community, Harvard and the BRA. He said that if you spend the time planning well, you will get better and faster results.

Harry Mattison asked what the closure is of this process as a whole or on topic by topic basis.

Kairos Shen answered that the closure means that there is a sense of the right principles and right policies that the City needs to have for all of the topics.

Harry Mattison asked if there is a plan published at the end and signed by the Mayor.

Kairos Shen said that this would be one of the potential products that the City would like to get to. He said that he is open-minded about what the end product will be. He said that he is more interested in achieving an agreement on the issues, a conceptual framework that everyone can agree on.

Harry Mattison asked to what extent the framework is going to be followed.

Kairos Shen said that people should be open minded about things. He said that in order to get the best out of Harvard (in his opinion) is to clearly state the aspirations and the policies through which the community and the City would achieve and help Harvard achieve collectively our collective aspirations. He said that he would like to see the fuzziness in places where it would be beneficial to all the parties to have the room for adjustments and to have the concreteness in places where it would be beneficial to everyone to have the concrete things planned. He said that everyone needs to know and realize where the flexibility is actually needed.

John Bruno urged people to look at the big picture. He said that he was pleased to see Kairos Shen's staff at the Task Force meeting. He sees this project as a big puzzle where all the pieces have to interrelate.

Harry Mattison suggested that there be a 1-, 5-, 10-year plan and asked the BRA to take into consideration things that the community is living with right now.

Kairos Shen said that the BRA will do that.

Kairos Shen said that there are regular conversations occurring between John Palmieri, Director of the BRA and Chris Gordon, COO of ADG. There will be a meeting between Harvard's President and the Mayor. The City is supportive of the campus in Allston. He said that the Article 80 protocol was driving the previous conversations. He said that the agreement with Harvard is to have the right amount of time to ask the questions. It is important to write down the questions and in a form a scope in the appropriate time, so Harvard can begin to work according to the questions that need to be answered as opposed to Harvard operating in isolated sphere. He said that Article 80 is a law in terms of the City's zoning ordinance; it governs how the City is reviewing the projects. He said that often times the planners work on projects before the Article 80 kicks in. He said that Harvard should be confident that they are not in a hurry to file Article 80.

There were a couple of comments from the general public.

The meeting adjourned at 8:31pm.