

Harvard Allston Task Force
Meeting Minutes
Monday, February 12, 2007
St. Anthony Elementary School
6:30 p.m.

I. Attendance:

Harvard Allston Task Force

Paul Berkeley
John Bruno
Cathy Campbell
John Cusack
Rita DiGesse
Brian Gibbons
Mike Hanlon
Bruce Houghton
Brighton Lew
Harry Mattison
Ray Mellone
Brent Whelan

Harvard University

Harris Band
Richard Benefield, Harvard University Art Museums
Kevin Daly, Daly Genik Architects
Will Donham
Chris Gordon
Peggy Hayes
Tom Lentz, Harvard University Art Museums
Dave Lewis
Lauren Marshall
Kevin McCluskey
Dan Rabinovitz
Alison Reinhardt
Kathy Spiegelman
Maile Takahashi

City of Boston

Gerald Autler, Boston Redevelopment Authority
Linda Kowalcky, Boston Redevelopment Authority

The meeting started at 6:40 p.m.

Gerald Autler, Boston Redevelopment Authority, introduced himself and started the meeting. Gerald said that the agenda is specifically on Harvard's proposed art center and that Task Force member Harry Mattison would also make a presentation.

Gerald thanked the following elected officials in attendance at the meeting:

- Representative Kevin Honan

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- City Councilor Sam Yoon
- Paul Holloway- Mayor Menino's Office
- Mike Bloom- Senator Jarrett Barrios' office
- Will Luzier- Senator Steve Tolman's office
- Representative Mike Moran
- City Councilor Jerry McDermott

Gerald announced the BRA's intention to begin discussions over the next year regarding planning initiatives for Allston and Brighton that are not specifically in Harvard's proposal. For example, implementation of the North Allston Strategic Framework for Planning (NASFP) and land use planning west of Barry's corner. Gerald said that at the next meeting he would have more information. He said that the BRA was ready to kick-off this process and move forward and has consulting help available. He said that Harvard would also kick-off its planning efforts for land not included in its institutional master plan vision.

Gerald asked audience members to hold their questions until the end of the presentations. He said after the presentations we would divide into two or three groups for smaller group discussion and then come back together to report out to the larger group. He said this was the community's opportunity to learn more about the art center project and provide feedback and ask questions. Gerald said that this meeting was intended to help him formulate the scoping determination for Harvard. The scoping determination identifies all of the issues and concerns associated with the project and the information Harvard needs to provide to turn their project into a complete proposal.

Gerald turned the meeting over to Kathy Spiegelman, Chief Planner for the Allston Development Group at Harvard University. Kathy said that at the last meeting audience members wanted to know how to contact Harvard and that there were three ways to do this: 1). Email allston@harvard.edu; 2). Call their office at 617-495-3525; 3). Go to Harvard's web site at www.allston.harvard.edu to find out additional contact information such as the mailing address. Harvard wanted to provide an opportunity for community members to speak with Harvard staff directly. This doesn't replace the public process and community members should still send their written comments to the BRA so they are included in the scoping documents.

Kathy addressed five items that were also raised at the last meeting.

1. Harvard's Academic Program- Why these two projects and how does Harvard intend to fill the gap between these two projects that are in the near term and projects that are further down the road in the 20-year master plan.

Kathy said that there hasn't been a decision at Harvard about the other academic program priorities. The appointment of Harvard President Drew Faust will help Harvard to move these academic planning decisions forward. Harvard will be working with the community as these decisions are made.

2. Public uses within Harvard's development

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Harvard's two proposed projects incorporate public uses on the ground floor of each of the buildings. These uses will continue to be developed through the programming of the project.

3. Building Heights- The heights of the projects verse the heights proposed in the North Allston Strategic Framework for Planning (NANSFP).

The wording of the NANSFP was written as such to prompt Harvard to provide community benefits if the heights of the proposed buildings were going to be greater than the height guidelines in the NANSFP. Community benefits have been discussed at several Task Force meetings and Harvard will continue to work with the community to develop a community benefits package.

4. Roadways and Traffic- How will the roadways work and what will be the impact on traffic?

Over the last year transportation and traffic issues have been discussed at several Task Force meetings. At the upcoming meetings Harvard would like to talk about the specific proposals and how it will all work as a system.

5. Construction Mitigation

At the last meeting there was a group dedicated to discuss construction mitigation issues and community members were able to meet Harvard staff members who will be responsible for implementing the construction mitigation plan. Harvard is already working to put these plans in place and understands the need for a thorough construction mitigation plan.

Kathy introduced Tom Lentz, Director of the Harvard University Art Museums (HUAM), to talk about the program for the art center.

Tom thanked the Task Force for the opportunity to come and speak to the community again about the art center. At one of the previous Task Force meetings Tom had spoken about how the HUAM is moving to a two site operating model and moving toward a new model of visual learning. Tom said that HUAM is different from traditional museums because it has a different public profile than the Institute of Contemporary Art (ICA) or the MFA because it is not driven by attendance. Instead HUAM is driven by its mission of teaching, research and access to art. Tom said HUAM's use of collections is also different because providing access to the art is essential. This is done through study centers to provide close, intimate interaction with the art. The vast percentage of HUAM's art is light sensitive and it has to be rotated frequently. To off set this task, HUAM uses study centers as a way to provide access to the art. HUAM provides a venue for learning and discovery. Like a library, the study center allows HUAM to provide the community, staff, students and faculty with access to the art. 1/3 of the building is planned for public areas, including galleries, 1/3 would be office/research space, and 1/3 is reserved for the collections. The art center would be a permanent location for HUAM to display contemporary art. While the Fogg is being renovated in Cambridge the art center will also store art work from the Fogg and about 200 employees would be on site. When the Fogg renovation is complete, about half of the

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employees will go back to Cambridge and the remaining employees will stay. The resulting vacated space in the art museum will allow for future growth of the building without adding square footage.

Tom said that he thought the 224 Western Avenue site was an excellent location because it's where the campus and the community meet. He said that he didn't want the museum buried on the new campus where no one could find it. He thinks that the museum will provide uses that are compatible to both the academic and public community. Public spaces in the building include:

- galleries (approximately 14,000 square feet)
- study center
- multi-purpose room
- public education classroom
- green space/landscaping
- public lobby, multi-level connection to all public spaces
- public café
- museum shop

Tom talked about how important it is to HUAM to provide access to the art. He said that HUAM has developed many programs with the Cambridge community to allow the community to have better access to the art. He said that proposed public amenities include:

Museum Collaborations with Schools and Honan Library

- museum coordinated visits from local schools
- local school teacher training including workshops, support materials, and curriculum ideas
- museum coordinated art projects within local schools
- visual literacy programs
- opportunities for displays of student artwork
- librarian-led story telling with art programs

Public Education Programs (Public Education Classroom)

- dedicated public education staff for the Allston community
- weekend and after-school programs
- workshops in sketching, photography, print-making, calligraphy, etc.
- story hours
- family weekend programs

Public Programs (Multi-Purpose Room)

- lectures
- seminars
- concerts
- local artists/performers (multi-cultural, dance, theater, etc.)
- gallery Talks
- free docent tours

Tom introduced Kevin Daly of Daly Genik Architects, the architect firm for the art center. Kevin described the design process to date and presented preliminary designs. Highlights of his presentation included:

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- Daly Genik has vast experience in transforming industrial buildings and buildings in industrial and urban settings into schools and art facilities.
- Daly Genik thinks that because the building is located on a site on the periphery of the community and the campus it will have a catalytic effect and presence to spur more public and shared buildings. Daly Genik brings this expectation to the project as it works on the design.
- The collection needs to be central and accessible.
- This will be one of Harvard's most accessible buildings and won't require an ID card to enter. It will provide direct access to the works of art.
- Harvard has been continually meeting with the abutters of the site to hear their feedback. Immediate neighbors will have a lot of input on the design.
- The design has been motivated by urban design principles and urban influences including: providing a catalytic presence, taking up a small frontage of the road, having a prominent entrance, serving as a welcoming public venue and demonstrating its public programs at the street level.
- Public amenities will include a 24-hour lobby, bookstore, museum store and café.
- The building will use the massing and the site of the existing Teele hall building to keep the loading off the street and away from the residential properties.
- Shadow studies have concluded the building won't cast significant shadows on the neighboring houses.
- Daly Genik has reviewed the NASFP and has designed the building to be lower in height on the residential side of the site. The overall massing of the building is actually quite lower and it will be less conspicuous at the street level than was suggested in the NASFP.
- The three program components include: collection, conservation, and exhibition space.
- The building will have a glass front with a vertical lobby and study center.
- Several sustainable design elements are being incorporated including day lighting, storm water management, landscape strategies and energy conservation.

Gerald Autler turned the meeting over to Task Force member Harry Mattison for a presentation. Harry said that there are some key questions that need to be answered including is this the best location for a significant, new culture facility and does it adhere to the planning framework that was established in the NASFP that was created 3-4 years ago by residents, the City of Boston and Harvard.

Harry quoted several passages from the NASFP that described the proposed framework for development at Barry's Corner that includes a focus on retail.

Harry also said that in 2003 Harvard established four University Task Forces to study Harvard's proposed development in Allston and the Allston Life Task Force report had several suggestions that haven't surfaced in Harvard's proposed plans including: 1). Moving Harvard's Museum of Natural History to Allston; 2). Creating a world museum complex; 3). Constructing new art exhibition space.

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Harry said that the extension of Harvard's athletic facilities into Barry's corner violates the boundaries proposed in the NASFP. Harvard's Barry's Corner plan excludes many of Harvard's properties that aren't in Harvard's 50-year plan.

Initially Harvard was going to use the 224 Western Avenue site for interim-art uses. What makes this site so special for a permanent art facility? Why should this site be the site? A bigger site would allow for the design of a bigger building. This would be a better solution for the community and allow Harvard to meet the institutional needs it expressed tonight. Harry suggested that there should be two ongoing discussions including background on the NASFP and why this site was chosen for the location of the art center.

Gerald asked community members to break out into three smaller groups to discuss the art center. Facilitators for their groups were as follows:

Group 1

Gerald Autler, BRA

Kathy Spiegelman, Harvard University

Richard Benefield, Harvard University Art Museums

Group 2

Linda Kowlacky, BRA

Harris Band, Harvard University

Daron Manoogian, Harvard University Art Museums

Kevin Deabler, CBT (architects)

Group 3

Paul Holloway, City of Boston, Mayor's Office

Maile Takahashi, Harvard University

Paul Pucciata, CBT (architects)

After discussion, a representative of each of the groups reported out to the larger audience.

Group 1- Gerald Autler

- Questions focused on whether this is the appropriate location for a building of this size and whether it creates the kinds of uses that are needed/wanted in Barry's corner.
- From a residential context, will the building be an obstruction for the adjacent houses?
- Will building the museum at that site enliven Barry's corner too much or will it even have the impact the community is looking for.
- If the height of the building is in violation of the NASFP, what kind of public benefits will be provided for the community?

Group 2- Mille Hollum McLaughlin, Task Force member

- What are the future plans for the Dunkin' Donuts and Gas Station even though these are not Harvard owned properties?
- What is the plan for parking on the site? Where else will parking be available for the art center staff and visitors? Can we make parking on Allston streets for residents only?

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- Will the Franklin Street entrance stay open or will it be a pedestrian path?
- Are there a certain number of parking spaces required by code?
- Why is Harvard including the Charlesview property in its Master Plan when there is not a final agreement on the deal?
- Why is the museum going to be for modern art rather than the Museum of Natural History or the Peabody Museum?
- What other collections will be shown in the art center?
- How will Harvard ensure interface with the community?
- What is the guarantee that community benefits will be delivered?
 - o Is there a budget
 - o What about educational programs?
 - o Space usage, etc?
 - o There art center will have staff dedicated for community programs.
- When will a cooperation agreement or Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) be finalized?
 - o (Answer: Before/with approval of the building)
- Give examples of the different kinds of educational programs. What levels of the schools will participate?
- Will there be a fence between the Teele Hall building and the Art Center? Is the fence staying or going? What is the parking potential?
- How long will construction take?
 - o (Answer: 15 months for construction and 3 months to test the mechanical and get the building running properly).
- What is the height of the building compared to Teele Hall?
- Why this site as opposed to alternative sites? Were other sites explored?

Group 3- Ray Mellone, Task Force member

- Resolve the conflict with Dunkin' Donuts next to the museum
- Structure looks heavy- the design material looks like concrete
- Were other sites considered?
- Is this site final? There is not enough room for what Harvard wants to do. Printmaking, painting- needs more space.
- What are the zoning laws?
- What is Harvard going to give the community?
- There isn't a plan for parking
- What is meant by public benefit?
- Does Harvard have an option to own on the property? How many properties in Allston does Harvard have an option to own?
- There should be library access for community.
- Can there be a web site with information on Harvard's property acquisitions and properties it has options to buy?
- If it is a 24/hour lobby will people be able to wait inside for the shuttle?
- What will the shuttle hours be?
- What is the expansion potential for the museum? Teele is an ugly building.
- What is the status of Dunkin' Donuts? Can Harvard purchase or move it?
- Does Harvard have any alternative sites?

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- Meade Street resident- concerned about noise traveling to her home.
- The multipurpose room seems small. The Gardner School is lacking art programs. How can Harvard bridge the gap in art education?
- The public education room is small. Harvard should establish on-going programs for schools and art education.
- NANSF provides for a larger open space. Are there plans for greening the Teele Hall parking lot?
- Is Harvard exploring issues of groundwater flooding? One way to do it is to provide more green space.
- Is Harvard going to put in a 'reading' well soon? If there is going to be dewatering.
- Are you going to landscape the Franklin Street entrance?
- What will people experience when they step out of the museum?
- How do you access the museum? On foot or on bus? The intersection is not very safe.
- What is the attraction for those who don't have kids, or whose kids are not in school? How is it a benefit to a diverse crowd?
- What will the access from Franklin Street be? NYNEX wanted to use that for trucks and they were denied.
- Need stores in Barry's corner to buy things.
- Art center should be on the athletic area across the street.
- What about privacy for abutters? How do you screen the roof?
- What happened to Harvard's plans to create practice/rehearsal space?
- What is the estimated construction time?

Gerald said that this was the kind of feedback that he was looking for to include in the scoping determination to Harvard. Gerald reminded everyone that the official deadline for the public comment period for the IMP Amendment is Friday, February 16th. The deadline for the art center is March 2nd and the deadline for the Institutional Master Plan Notification Form (IMPNF) for the new master plan is March 16th. Gerald said to send your comments regardless of what document it applied to and he would sort it out.

Harry Mattison asked whether the people who spoke at the public meetings still had to send their written comments to the BRA. Gerald encouraged everyone to submit written comments and said that the meeting minutes from the last meeting and this meeting would also be treated like comments.

Gerald asked for feedback on the format of the meetings and whether people liked having break-out sessions. He said that one community member expressed concern that it was a way for Harvard to impose a "divide and conquer" strategy. Gerald said that he thought the smaller group discussions were good because it gives more people the opportunity to speak. John Cusack suggested that the classrooms be used for the break-out sessions because the acoustics were better. Gerald asked the audience to raise their hands if they were in favor of the break-out sessions and the majority of attendees raised their hands. Gerald said he was going to book St. Anthony's for future Task Force meetings. Gerald opened it up to questions and comments. Discussion included:

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- Task Force member Brent Whelan: Break-out sessions allow more people to speak but then it becomes less centralized and harder for the Task Force member to represent the community as a whole. He asked community members to copy Task Force members on their comments to the BRA or post their questions and comments on the google group that was established so that everyone in the community can see the questions and comments.
- Gerald said that all public comments submitted to the BRA are made available to the public.
- Audience member: asked for clarification on what could be included in the comments to the BRA. Gerald said they could be general or specific comments.
- Audience member: Concern over the NASFP being violated by the developer (Harvard). A lot of work was put in by the community, BRA and Harvard to develop this framework.
- Audience Member: Concern over the relationship between Harvard and the community. Initially the community entered the process with an open mind and as a partnership and there seems to have been a tipping point. Beginning to question the integrity of the partnership. The community and Harvard have to look out for each other and there is still a chance to resurrect the relationship. Harvard needs to recommit to the principles in the NASFP. Harvard's success is the community's success and the community's success is Harvard's success.
- Task Force member Harry Mattison: Clarification on the process to approve the amendment. What about the difference between the IMPNF and the amendment filing? Does the change of the art center location constitute a significant change?
- Audience Member: Clarification is needed on the article 80 process. The scoping determination for the science complex has been submitted to Harvard. Does the community have a window of opportunity to influence Harvard to do what is suggested in the scoping determination before it files the Draft Project Impact Report? Gerald said that the community doesn't need to wait to discuss issues of concern before Harvard files the DPIR. These issues will be agenda items for discussion in the upcoming meetings.
- Audience Member: Is a state/environmental review required? Kathy Spiegelman said that the Massachusetts Environmental Protection Agency (MEPA) determines how its review process will synch up with the BRA review process. Kathy said Harvard has already begun discussions with MEPA. Harry Mattison asked whether the MEPA review would be completed before the City approval. She said that Harvard didn't have a date yet when it would file documents with MEPA but it would let the Task Force know and the goal is to align the review processes.
- Task Force member Brent Whelan: Isn't the new art center a significant change from what was filed in the IMPNF for the amendment? Would the BRA really determine that the two locations were in some way reasonably the same? Gerald said that there is flexibility to the process. He said besides asking Harvard to start over, it could ask Harvard to provide more information. Gerald said that he couldn't determine how the BRA Director would decide on this issue. It's up to the BRA to determine whether there's been a significant change and if so what direction to take. Harris Band, Harvard University, clarified that the approval of the IMP Amendment only gives Harvard the zoning permission to use the property for institutional use. The individual projects will still have to go through large project review.

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- Audience member: can we have a show of hands to get on the record how many people don't like the location of the museum. Gerald said he couldn't acknowledge a public vote at this time in the absence of discussion and encouraged audience members to submit their comments in writing to the BRA.
- Audience member: Harvard doesn't even own this property. Does it have any back up plans?

Gerald ended the meeting at 9:00 p.m.