

Harvard Allston Task Force

Meeting Minutes

Monday, May 7, 2007

Honan Allston Library

6:30 p.m.

I. Attendance:

Harvard Allston Task Force

Paul Berkeley
Cathi Campbell
John Cusack
Rita DiGesse
Brian Gibbons
Mike Hanlon
Millie Hollum McLaughlin
Bruce Houghton
Harry Mattison
Ray Mellone, Chair
Brent Whelan

Harvard University

Keith Collar
Will Donham
Chris Gordon
Peggy Hayes
Robert Lue
Kevin McCluskey
Dan Rabinovitz
Dave Raszmann
Alison Reinhardt
Kathy Spiegelman
Maile Takahashi

City of Boston

Gerald Autler, Boston Redevelopment Authority
Paul Holloway

Allston Task Force chair Ray Mellone began the meeting at 6:35 p.m. and turned the meeting over to Kathy Spiegelman, Harvard University, for some announcements from Harvard.

Kathy said that Stefan Behnisch, architect for the proposed Science Complex in Allston, came to a Task Force meeting in April and Harvard would like to have him come to a meeting in June to provide clarity on the design and heights of the building before Harvard files the Draft Project Impact Report (DPIR) for the Science Complex in June. Kathy said there is a construction mitigation follow-up meeting on May 14, 2007 and

Harvard is hoping to have another small working group meeting on the proposed roadways.

Harry Mattison asked Harvard to provide advance materials to the Task Force and community so they can have something to react to at the meetings. Kathy said in the past Harvard hasn't provided materials in advance because so many things are changing and once the handout is available it may already be out of date. Mike Hanlon said it would be helpful to the Task Force to fulfill their responsibilities as Task Force members. Kathy said the materials for the DPIR are in process and won't be finalized until the document is filed but that if Harvard can get draft materials to the Task Force members before it files the DPIR it will. Harry emphasized that he would like materials in advance of every meeting so people can review it and form their questions and comments.

Ray Mellone expressed concern about scoping the Institutional Master Plan Notification Form (IMPNF) that was filed in January and reviewing one project at a time. He said with the IMP review process there is an expectation that you will be reviewing buildings with very specific information such as heights and footprints. He said the IMPNF doesn't meet this expectation and is vague. For example, the proposed roadways are a problem to review because there is an incomplete picture about the other projects that will eventually be proposed around the roads. Ray thought Harvard should identify which roadways will be permanent and what Harvard plans to do on the land next to the Science Complex over the next five years.

Brent Whelan said that in the small group meetings he didn't see any viable plans for the roadways or the proposed access to the Science Complex. He said what the community last saw from Harvard was completely unacceptable and there hasn't been an update since.

Harry asked for advance materials for the upcoming roadways meeting because there is a lot of information presented and it's hard to digest it without any preparation. Chris Gordon said Harvard would work with the Task Force members to get materials out to them in advance if materials are available.

Joyce Radnor asked for clarification about the roadways. She thought that at the previous meeting it was discussed that the roadways would not be included in the DPIR and that it would be included in a different review process. Kathy said that she wasn't contradicting that but that the DPIR will include any roadways that are needed for the science project to function.

Kevin McCluskey introduced himself as Director of Community Relations at Harvard University. He thanked the Task Force members for their work on the community benefits matrix that was passed out at the previous meeting. He said the information is shared with Harvard colleagues and they are asked to think about how their work can contribute to the community benefits goals of the community. Kevin introduced Keith Collar, Executive Director of Research Innovation and Outreach at the Graduate School

of Education, and Robert Lue, Dean of Harvard Summer School; Senior Lecturer on Molecular and Cellular Biology; and Director of Life Sciences Education.

Kevin thanked the elected officials in attendance: Representative Kevin Honan, Representative Mike Moran, Mike Bloom from Senator Barrios' office, and Will Luzier from Senator Tolman's office.

Keith Collar thanked the Task Force and community members for their time and said he was excited to learn more about their ideas. The Graduate School of Education's (GSE) ability to connect with the Boston public schools is essential and allows GSE to connect the work the faculty is doing with research and policymakers. Keith Collar provided a handout that explained the GSE's mission, examples of collaboration between different Harvard departments, and examples of the GSE's work with public schools (handout attached). GSE works with Boston, Cambridge and schools in surrounding communities and is committed to doing good things for the children in the local communities.

Questions and Comments included:

Millie Hollum McLaughlin: Has Harvard done any research specific to Allston schools?

Keith Collar: The GSE has had initial conversations with the Gardner School but he didn't know if any specific research had been done on Allston.

John Cusack: Can you clarify the program that prepares interns for risk and prevention?

Keith Collar: This program prepares students as guidance counselors.

Paul Berkeley: Harvard needs to do some outreach to find out what kids in this neighborhood need. Kids in this neighborhood may not go to school in Allston but should be afforded the same benefits. There should be an assessment of what level the kids are at today and what they need to do to get into the college of their choice. This should be a measurable goal so statistics can be measured on what is achieved.

Brent Whelan: Is Harvard prepared to create a partnership with our neighborhood and not necessarily just with our schools? I'm hoping we can establish a different model/relationship between the community and Harvard and address educational needs from early childhood through development and adulthood. It doesn't need to be unique programs customized for this neighborhood but should be comprehensive services for the whole neighborhood. He said Allston is a whole community with educational needs so there needs to be a coordinated process.

Ray Mellone: Harvard should look at the community's goals and think in an innovative way about how it can be an incubator for the learning process. Harvard is a world-class institution and should look at the community as if every child who lives here is a potential undergraduate.

Harry Mattison: How many students and faculty does the GSE have? How many students go on to be teachers?

Keith Collar: We have 600 Masters students, 400 Doctoral students and 60-100 faculty members. I don't know how many students go on to be teachers but I can get that number for you. We have 13 degree programs and the teaching degree is just one program.

Cathi Campbell: This is the perfect opportunity for Harvard to work with the City of Boston. As part of the census data we should find out where every child living in this neighborhood goes to school. On my street, Aldie Street, almost none of the kids go to the same school. This would allow an assessment to be done of the school age children living in Allston.

Kevin McCluskey: I would think this is something Harvard could do with Boston.

Paul Holloway: That is a good idea and I will take it back to City Hall.

Cathi Campbell: Even if it isn't done with the city this is something Harvard should be able to do and can have volunteers go and knock on every door in the neighborhood. Harvard should put in the time and effort to have a valid understanding of the educational needs and report back to the community.

Kevin McCluskey: This is something we would have to work with the community to do so it doesn't come across as Harvard being intrusive.

Representative Mike Moran stressed the importance of Harvard working with the Gardner School and entering into discussions with the school. The Gardner school is trying to become a Pilot school so it can have more flexibility. Harvard should consider this. For example, Boston College is now running a school.

Keith Collar: We have had the opportunity to meet with the principal of the Gardner School and will continue our discussions.

Kevin McCluskey: We already do have a relationship with the Gardner School on several fronts but we do recognize that now it's about taking it to a different level and developing a broader and deeper relationship.

Audience Member: To confirm, about 65-70% of the children who attend the Gardner school live in the Allston-Brighton neighborhood.

Keith thanked the Task Force and audience members for taking the time to listen to him and share ideas. He said he was excited about continuing the discussions.

Rob Lue thanked the Task Force members and community members for giving him this opportunity to come and speak. He said he viewed tonight as a brainstorming session to start to think about ways the community and Harvard could collaborate on science education. Rob explained that Harvard has been in the process of completely changing the way it teaches life sciences to undergraduates. Rob said there is tremendous potential for science education. Many people in the field are now recognizing that how the public learns about science should be part of a larger whole and needs to be a coordinated effort, especially examining how science is taught in elementary schools and high schools. Rob said the field of life sciences is at an enormously exciting time and in order for it to be

meaningful people need to understand the field and students need to learn about it. Rob explained some of the outreach programs that take place now at Harvard.

One example of outreach to high schools is a three stage program that runs all year round. The first stage is in the fall and brings high school science teachers to Harvard to learn from Harvard faculty and to develop the high school science curriculum. These teachers have access to all of Harvard's resources to help them teach. This is an ongoing relationship and has involved over 300 teachers in the area. In the second stage, the teachers bring their students to the Harvard labs. This is a customized experience and has involved over 700 students. In the summer Harvard holds a small intimate workshop with a smaller number of teachers to develop curriculum and teaching materials.

Rob said many of the scientists, including himself, feel a moral obligation to create open, transparent, and meaningful partnerships with different constituent groups. Rob said that the relationship between Harvard scientists and the Allston community has the potential to be a new model for how institutions can collaborate and provide outreach to their host communities and could set an example for other large research institutes to follow.

Questions/Comments:

Ray Mellone: I like the idea of encouraging advance placement classes at the high school level and science appreciation classes. The introduction to science also has to start at the ground up for every child.

Rob Lue: I agree with you. We're not just targeting the top end of students. For example, Princeton has a program that focuses on the top elite students. This excludes a large part of the population and science needs to be diversified and more inclusive.

Bruce Houghton: The community members are not trained "educators" and Harvard should take the initiative to introduce programs that will work for the Allston community. Harvard has the knowledge and the resources and should bring this to the community. The community is sitting here asking Harvard to do that and is waiting for Harvard to make some proposals. Harvard should just start doing that.

Kevin McCluskey: Harvard agrees but at the same time this is going to be a new model between the institution and the community. It's not just something that is going to start at the spur of the moment. We want it to be something that has substance. The community can't be forced to do these programs so it has to be something that will be meaningful to the community.

John Cusack: It's never too early to start reaching out and starting these initiatives as early as the elementary level.

Rob Lue: We are still at the early stages of reaching out to elementary schools and we absolutely recognize that elementary schools need to be involved. For example, we have a program for undergraduate students to go to elementary schools to help in the classroom. Another program brings elementary school

students to Harvard for a science day. There is no shortage of ideas and we'll continue to brainstorm and develop ideas together.

Brent Whelan: The programs need to be something regular and ongoing not just one day focused on science. Is there going to be a facility on the Harvard campus for community outreach programs?

Rob Lue: I have my own personal wish list for outreach programs such as expanding more hands-on opportunities for students. The physical set up of teaching labs is evolving and I think part of the time the labs should be dedicated to elementary and high school students. It should be a dual purpose model that leverages Harvard's resources.

Millie Hollum McLaughlin: For example the Zoom program emphasizes discovery learning.

Chris Gordon: We are still working out the programmed space within the proposed science building but that idea is being proposed for some of the teaching labs within it.

Audience Member: Is the building going to be a bio-safety level three? What kind of research is happening inside the building?

Rob Lue: I'm on the education side not the research side so I can't answer that.

Kevin McCluskey: We are not looking at labs that are bio-level three.

Kathy Spiegelman: All of Harvard's labs are built with the intention of being able to accommodate levels 1, 2 and 3. Harvard is happy to invite someone from the Harvard Environmental Health and Safety department to one of the meetings to explain the safety management of the labs.

Audience Member: We have an elementary school right on Holton Street that can be used for science labs and education.

Mike Hanlon: Harvard should increase its summer school scholarships for high school students.

Kevin McCluskey: This Task Force was the catalyst for the Honan scholarship program. This is a program we can build and expand upon.

Rob Lue: We usually have 2-5 Allston-Brighton students in the summer school program but we need to make it more widely known. Part of the problem is also working with the schools and streamlining the process to get students who are interested to us. In part we have to rely on guidance counselors to refer students to us and do more aggressive outreach ourselves.

Ray Mellone: Residency should be key to their acceptance. Genzyme has a good model to follow.

Audience Member: Recently there was a program called "Science in the City" that was done in collaboration with MIT and the CRWA that emphasized learning about science in an urban environment and providing tools to get students more excited about science.

Rob Lue: Yes, I went to that and was part of the program. We also have a science symposium at Harvard Medical School with high school students that we are interested in growing and expanding. These kinds of events can also have lasting impacts.

Rob thanked the Task Force members and community members and said he looked forward to working with them more in the future.

Will Donham, Harvard University, announced that in about two months Harvard is hoping to put up an anemometer in its athletic fields to analyze the wind power capability in that area. An anemometer is a device that collects wind data and is about 150 feet tall and 6 feet wide. Harvard is hoping to put it up in the beginning of July and it will be up for 12-18 months. It will be located in the middle of the athletic fields on the far side of the hockey rink.

Harry Mattison asked what the permitting process would be for such a device.

Gerald Autler: City Hall is still examining the zoning codes and what will be required through the zoning process. The BRA has started conversations that include Jim Hunt, Chief of Environmental and Energy Services, and are discussing the appropriate way to approach this that doesn't impede the exploration of alternative energy sources but also doesn't undermine the protections afforded by the zoning code. He asked Task Force members and the general public to contact him with any thoughts and questions and said he would report back on what decision was made about the permitting/zoning process.

John Cusack: How much data can be collected and will the information be useful for other reasons down the road?

Will Donham: It will collect a certain amount of regional data- not just 6 feet in front of it.

Chris Gordon: The wind consultants picked this particular spot for a reason. We can find out the radius it will measure and get back to you.

Harry Mattison: What does this mean in terms of what direction Harvard is heading in with this?

Chris Gordon: We don't know if wind power will even work in this area and whether it will be a viable solution so that is why we are studying it.

Paul Berkeley: Will the device produce noise?

Chris Gordon: I don't think so but let us find out and we'll get back to you.

Gerald Autler: At the last meeting we discussed that I would provide a chart explaining the different review process. I apologize that I haven't finished it yet but I will have it for

the next meeting. As I mentioned before we can have more city representatives from various departments attend these meetings. The community should know that there are a lot of professionals involved in City Hall who are asking many of the same questions as the public, and many of them would be happy to come out and speak to the community.

Gerald and the Task Force discussed what should be addressed at the next Task Force meeting on May 23rd. Gerald said that there needs to be a follow up meeting on traffic and roadways. Ray Mellone expressed his desire to know more about the roadways and what else will be proposed around the science building. Ray said that the Task Force shouldn't be on the hook for coming up with a determination for something it doesn't even know enough about. Ray asked for clarification on what roads would be permanent. Chris Gordon said that there are two distinctions between the roadways: 1). Roadways that are needed for the first science building and 2). Roadways that are need for the full build out of the master plan. Chris said that Harvard is still working out its thinking about the roadways but that it would give the Task Force and the community as much information as it had.

Ray suggested holding an executive meeting between now and May 23rd to address needs and process. Brent said that the executive meetings seem to antagonize people in the community and that it should at least be public so people can observe and listen.

Paul Berkeley asked about Genzyme's expansion and how it will impact the neighborhood and parking and traffic concerns. Gerald said that he could bring more information on the Genzyme expansion to a future meeting.

Gerald decided that the roadways discussion would take place at the next Task Force meeting on 5/23 and the following meeting could be about the Science Complex.

Harry Mattison asked for clarification about when the deadline date is for the public comment period for the Institutional Master Plan Notification Form (IMPNF) for the new master plan. Kathy said the deadline would follow the filing of the DPIR but that she doesn't have a final date yet. She didn't want to give out a date until she knew it was final.

The meeting ended at 8:30 p.m.