

**Harvard Allston Task Force
Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, June 25th, 2008
Allston-Brighton Resource Center
6:30 p.m.**

I. Attendance

Harvard Allston Task Force

Paul Berkeley
John Bruno
John Cusack
Michael Hanlon
Bruce Houghton
Harry Mattison
Ray Mellone

Harvard University

Monika Bankowski
Mary-Helen Black
Will Donham
Joshua Poupore
Kathy Spiegelman
Maile Takahashi

City of Boston

Michael Glavin, Boston Redevelopment Authority
Linda Kowalcky, Boston Redevelopment Authority

Harvard Allston Task Force Chair Ray Mellone began the meeting at 6:47pm.

Presentation to the Task Force & Community, 6/25

Overview

- Copernicus presented the community issues that have emerged in its conversations with community leaders, experts, and stakeholders, as well as through its review of secondary data. The public was then provided the opportunity to comment on these issues, as well as suggest any that were missing.

Additional comments to be added to Education Issues

- More education programs needed for Seniors
- Sports programs needed for kids

- “K-0” needed in Allston-Brighton
- Adult education: science/lab skills (for jobs at Harvard)

Additional comments to be added to Housing Issues

- The issue was raised about reducing disturbance during construction
- Potential need for a housing land-lease program
- Need for more artist housing
- Need to stabilize the housing market
- Need education programs related to housing issues (energy efficiency, mortgages, etc.)
- Need for increased home ownership in the neighborhood

Additional comments to be added to Health Issues

- Need for ambulance service in North Allston / North Brighton
- Access to healthy, affordable food, particularly the elderly
- Educational programs on health topics needed
- Environmental health a concern
- Potential for resident to be able to participate in Harvard health insurance plan
- Harvard could donate money to homeless programs that are in financial distress
- HIV and pregnancy among teens are important health issues
- Better/more convenient access to healthcare for ALL residents
- Long waits/capacity at the Joseph M. Smith Health Center
- Need for a good neighborhood walk-in clinic for things like the common cold

Additional comments to be added to Public Realm Issues

- Not just creating, but also PROTECTING green space
- Not using fertilizer and pesticide in green space
- Develop green pathways (emphasis on having more than one in the neighborhood)
- More community gardens
- Potential need for a skate park
- Potential need for a place to recycle batteries, light bulbs, etc., in Allston-Brighton
- Shelter space and transition housing for the homeless

Additional comments to be added to Transportation Issues

- Parking lot needed at an area church
- Not just traffic calming, but traffic restrictions and re-routing, particularly during peak hours
- Bike lanes on every street
- Safety of crossing neighborhood streets is an issue

Other

- The issue was raised about giving residents priority for new jobs at Harvard associated with the building and operation of new facilities
- It was suggested that we interview Toby Romer, Principal of Brighton High, as well as the Director of the Vocational Advancement Center

Public Comment Forms

The following comments are from the written forms submitted at the Task Force Meeting on 6/25.

- I would like Harvard to increase the supply of housing for very low-income people.
- I would also like Harvard to conduct a needs assessment to see if there is insufficient capacity in existing Boston-area homeless and domestic violence centers and thus, if Harvard should construct homeless and/or domestic violence shelters in the Allston-Brighton area to increase this capacity, so that no homeless person or domestic violence victim in the Greater Boston area is turned away.
- Possibility of Allston-Brighton residents being able to participate in Harvard U. health insurance program.
- More buses down Western Ave. to accommodate much bigger population due to condos, townhomes that will be constructed on site of Brighton Mills Shopping Center, not to mention more congestion. Harvard could provide buses itself, talk with MBTA and make sure they provide sufficient buses, or pay MBTA to provide more buses going down Western Ave. past Brighton Mills Shopping Center.
- Since the Smith Health Center is not able to reasonably accommodate all Allston-Brighton residents, perhaps Harvard could provide a health clinic in the area.
- Harvard could donate money to homelessness prevention programs like the State of Massachusetts Rental Voucher Program (MRVP) and rental Assistance to Families in Transition (RAFT) programs.
- Adult Ed. Programs should include training that is specifically geared toward getting its trainees in to decent, well-paying jobs and developing advanced skills.
- State parks.
- Community gardens.
- Waste issues
 - Trash barrels + recycling bins in green spaces
 - Access to recycling (batteries, CFL bulbs)
- Bike racks.

- Have some meetings in the morning for those who cannot come in the evening.
- What happened to the economic and business development benefit?
- Be it construction or Harvard jobs, local residents “should” be part of the 1,000 construction jobs and the thousands of jobs that will be part of the Science Center and other facilities.
- Sports programs.
- Intervention of real estate dynamics:
 - Escalation cycles in sale prices – discrimination against long-term residents.

Issues or opportunities related to Public Realm (beautification/greening of neighborhood) should include the following:

- Design and implement “green streets” retrofits along neighborhood streets like Everett St, Western Ave, North Harvard, Travis St, etc. focusing on urban forestry and storm water management strategies (rain gardens, storm water planters, etc).
- Incorporate “green ways” or linear/interconnected open spaces through the campus that would connect residential areas to the river.
- Provide interpretive signage as part of the design and implementation of “green streets” and “green ways”, so there is an opportunity for public education with regard to environmental restoration and green infrastructure.
- In addition to areas and uses of Charles River, there is a need for enhancing and restoring the parkland along the river, including addressing shoreline erosion.
- Sports programming to go with new facilities.
- Artist housing/studio space.
- Strong public community health programs (environmental health, health literacy, wellness, nutrition, safety, domestic violence abuse prevention).
- General issue:
 - “Raise the bar” on serving all.
 - Optimize, not just upgrade.

The Task Force meeting adjourned at around 8:45pm.