

**Harvard Allston Task Force
Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, August 13, 2008
Allston-Brighton Resource Center
6:30 p.m.**

I. Attendance

Harvard Allston Task Force

Paul Berkeley
Cathi Campbell
Rita DiGesse
Mille Hollum-McLaughlin
Bruce Houghton
Ray Mellone
Brent Whelan

Harvard University

Monika Bankowski
Mary-Helen Black
Will Donham
Kevin McCluskey
Joshua Poupore
Alison Reinhardt
Dennis Swinford
Maile Takahashi

City of Boston

Gerald Autler, Boston Redevelopment Authority
Michael Glavin, Boston Redevelopment Authority
Linda Kowalcky, Boston Redevelopment Authority
Anand Vaishnav, Chief of Staff, Boston Public Schools

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

Mellone turned the meeting over to Kevin McCluskey of Harvard University to give an update on behalf of Harvard. The update included information on Construction Mitigation issue involving the styrene release from sewer lining project.

Phil Coleman from Turner Construction gave further explanation as to the chain of events and approaches that will be in place to prevent future events of this kind. He mentioned a three phased approach:

- 1st phase – installation of carbon activated filters
- 2nd phase – neighborhood monitoring plan
- 3rd phase – chemical treatment of styrene gas

Kevin also announced Harvard's acquisition of the property located at 1340 Soldiers Field Road/441-443 Western Avenue. He said that there are currently three tenants occupying approximately half of the building and that their tenancy will not change in the near future.

Gerald Autler from the Boston Redevelopment Authority announced that copies of the document regarding the Scoping Determination for Harvard University's proposed Allston Campus Institutional Master Plan are available for review. He said that the fall schedule will be announced at the next meeting. Upcoming meetings:

- **September 10th** – Community-Wide Plan meeting: “armature” of planning district, mutually beneficial development strategies.
- **September 24th** – Community-Wide Plan meeting: focus on transportation, with BRA consultants, Harvard consultants, EOT, MBTA

Linda Kowalcky introduced Anand Vaishnav, Chief of Staff of the Boston Public Schools.

Anand Vaishnav gave a presentation on the Education:

- Overview of the students in Allston-Brighton and North Allston/North Brighton
- Overview of schools in Allston/Brighton – MCAS performance
 - In some cases special needs students can submit portfolios of their work instead of taking the MCAS test; all students with disabilities are being tested either with accommodations or without
 - Why is Lyon School better in MCAS scores?
 - K-8 school, each classroom has 15 kids (10 + 5 special needs students); 3 teachers per classroom
 - “No Child Left Behind” program – each child has to reach proficiency by 2014
- Discussion of PILOT vs. Charter schools
- Discussion of drop out rates and kids
 - State allows kids to drop out at the age of 16
 - Project Re-connect (helping kids to go back to school)
 - Directing kids to alternative campuses
 - On-line make up classes
 - Course failures in early grades (e.g. 9th grade) – higher risk of dropping out
 - Will look into possibility of tracking drop-out numbers in Allston/Brighton and will report back to Linda Kowalcky
- Explanation of the BPS assignment system

Maile Takahashi gave a presentation on Education Partnerships. The main points of the discussion were as follows:

- GSE not able to be there, but they are full partners in the discussion (as demonstrated by commitment to Survey/Needs Assessment Committee process)
- Commitment to Transformative Project and hopes that survey will assist in pointing to a type of project. We've heard so far about significant school partnerships and a community center.
- Harvard is interested in partnership with BPS and the neighborhood. Looking for the intersection of Harvard's strengths and resources, BPS priorities and objectives, and neighborhood needs, concerns, and interests (through survey and Task Force)
- We have begun to look at relevant University/Community collaborations to get our collective thinking and discussion started. Surveyed 20 schools, but will focus on two programs that we have visited: Clark/Worcester and Penn/West Philadelphia
- Each of these partnerships were shaped by their unique context – the neighborhood and its needs, the university, and the city and school system. As we look at these examples we want to learn from what's been done in other places, and develop an educational partnership that would be unique to this context.
- Overview of partnership approaches, examples of Clark and Penn
- Next steps: Explore opportunities for potential collaboration, BPS priorities, Harvard strengths and resources (i.e. core competencies), the survey results, Task Force discussion. Continue our early commitment and creation of the Education Portal.
- Excited about our early commitment and creation of the Education Portal – mentoring over 30 students, over 80 people came to Science Fair, expanding program in the Fall.

Discussion highlights

- Why not just do what the Mary Lyon is doing (because they have such good MCAS scores)? (small class sizes, extra assistance in room)
- Education Partnership survey done by GSE and shared with Allston Development Group
- Education experience involves more than what happens in the classroom (e.g. enrichment programs, athletics, museums, etc.)
- Education Portal – the more Harvard departments get involved, the more programs can be provided to the community
- Education Portal – wide range of ages (age 7 though freshmen in college)
- Mary-Helen Black is working with other partners within the University to continue developing partnerships and expand programming at the Ed Portal

- Dynamics between the BPS and Harvard – making sure that Harvard is aligned with basis goals for the BPS
- BPS looking internally at the system, goal is to expand quality of the BPS
- GSE is a partner in developing the education program for Allston/Brighton
- Create a partnership so nobody is left behind no matter which school they go to
- Concern about BPS wide vs. neighborhood receiving the benefit
- Balance between Harvard supported programs at BPS and City involvement
- Continued interest in a community/resource center to provide Harvard's benefits (not the schools) (i.e. programs like the minstrel show are good community building events)
- What about adult education, particularly ESOL classes?
- Love the Ed Portal - kids love the science mentoring, movie night
- Ed Portal gives immediate benefit to the community
- Track the Ed Portal usage
- Need aggressive after school program for neighborhood kids
- Harvard should provide funding to increase adults in classrooms
- Don't want Harvard's resources getting lost in BPS system
- What's GSE's role in defining this benefit? (want GSE defining the program/approach, rather than Harvard just responding to BPS)

Michael Glavin from the Boston Redevelopment Authority said that the Task Force is helping to frame the questions and the objectives. He said that it doesn't mean that there is a solution for every child. Solutions will evolve over time.

The meeting adjourned at 8:51pm.