

**Wentworth Institute of Technology
Community Task Force Meeting
Faculty/Staff Function Room, Beatty Hall**

Tuesday, February 5, 2013

Minutes

**Boston
Redevelopment
Authority (BRA):**

Katelyn Sullivan, Project Manager
Marybeth Pyles, Senior Land Use Counsel

Task Force:

Robert Chambers, Mass College of Art
Patricia Flaherty, Mission Hill, Mission Hill Neighborhood Housing Services
Bill Kantaros, Annunciation Greek Orthodox Cathedral
Carrie Simon, Mission Main
Susan St. Clair, Mission Hill Resident, Problem Properties Task Force

Wentworth:

Jamie Fay, Permitting Consultant, Fort Point Associates
Edward King, Project Consultant, Edward M. King & Associates
Judy Kohn, Permitting Consultant, Fort Point Associates
Tom McCormack, Director, Planning & Construction
Mary Ollinger, Budget & Office Manager, Business & Finance
Sandy Pascal, Associate VP, Community Relations & External Affairs
Kevin Smith, Clerk of the Works, Planning & Construction
Bob Totino, Vice President, Finance
David A. Wahlstrom, Vice President, Business

Public:

Marica Arvanitas, Annunciation Greek Orthodox Cathedral
Matthew Brooks, Fenway Civic Association
Neil Conley, Local 7
C. Brennan Cooke, Fenway CDC
Mark Fortune, Boston Building Trades
Dorr Fox, Fenway CDC
Sarah Hamilton, MASCO
James Holske
Lilly Jacobson, Fenway CDC
Michael Kalambokis, Annunciation Greek Orthodox Cathedral
Katie Lauretano, Representative Sanchez's Office
Stephen Malley
Johanna Sena, Councilor Ross's Office
Ted Szostkowski, SMMA (SYMMES MAINI & McKEE ASSOCIATES)
Father Cleopas Strongylis, Annunciation Greek Orthodox Cathedral
Dick Towle, Towle & Associates
Marty Walsh, Boston Building Trades Council
Esther Wong, Vancouver Street resident

Welcome

Katelyn Sullivan called the meeting to order and welcomed everyone to the meeting. She explained that the purpose of the meeting was to review the Zoning Text and Map Amendment, required to make Sweeney Field Planned Development Area (PDA) eligible. Katelyn introduced her colleague, Marybeth Pyles, from the BRA Zoning Department and Sandy Pascal from Wentworth. Sandy thanked everyone for coming out on such a cold night, and introduced the Wentworth staff members and consultants.

Institutional Master Plan Overview (*PowerPoint presentation available at www.wit.edu/imp*)
Dave Wahlstrom introduced himself and provided a brief update on the Institutional Master Plan, approved in January 2011.

- A) Flanagan Campus Center:** 8,500 square-foot addition plus 48,000 square feet of renovation to Beatty Hall.
- B) Center for Sciences & Biomedical Engineering:** 19,000 square-foot addition plus 19,000 square feet of renovation to Ira Allen; state of the art biomedical engineering, chemistry and biology labs.
- C) Student Apartments @ 525 Huntington Avenue:** 110,000 square feet, 71 apartments, 305 beds. With primarily single-bedroom units, Dave explained that this apartment-style building was designed specifically for Wentworth's older students, to encourage them to stay in on-campus housing and from moving into the neighborhood. Dave noted that Wentworth would be breaking ground on this project later this month.
- D) Center for Engineering & Technology:** Anticipated for 2017-2018; 45,000 square-foot academic building to be located in the West Lot and house Wentworth's engineering programs.
- E) New Sweeney Field with Parking Below:** Anticipated for 2019-2020; to accommodate the development of Sweeney Field, Wentworth plans to relocate the existing Sweeney Field to a deck above a 330-parking space lot at the current location of the Parker Street parking lot. Dave noted that the brewery buildings would be reconditioned to be incorporated in support of the new athletic field.

500 Huntington Avenue Project (Sweeney Field Project)

Jamie Fay introduced himself and briefly described the project.

- 640,000 GSF in three buildings on 3 acre Sweeney Field parcel (78,400 SF Wentworth Center for Innovation in Engineering and Technology; 546,600 SF Office, Research and Development and Laboratory space; 15,000 SF Retail/Commercial on ground floor levels)
- Up to 490 parking spaces underground
- Buildings One and Two: six stories, 118' high to top of roof screen
- Building Three: 18 stories, 280' high to top of roof screen
- 64,000 SF of Open Space and Pedestrian Connections
- Floor Area Ratio (FAR) of 5.0. The FAR is the square footage of the proposed building divided by the size of the lot; it is a way of comparing overall density across sites.

Jamie discussed the public benefits of the project:

- Job Creation (up to 1,900 Construction Jobs; up to 1,500 Permanent Jobs)
- Economic impact of over \$2 billion to the Boston economy over the first ten years
- Substantial housing and jobs linkage payments
- Tenant will create jobs, co-op placements and internship opportunities for local residents and students
- Expanded Retail/Commercial opportunities will attract new businesses and employers to the area
- One-phase development will support the planned Wentworth *Center for Innovation in Engineering and Technology*

Jamie discussed the relationship of the project with the surrounding community and the pedestrian connections it will provide between Ruggles Street and the Fenway. He showed aerial views of the proposed project, including a view down Huntington Avenue showing the relative size and massing of the proposed project.

Mission Hill Neighborhood Text and Map Amendment

Jamie explained that the Sweeney Field site is current zoned as an Institutional Subdistrict, allowing for university uses. He explained that in order to move forward with the proposed project, the zoning for the site needs to be changed to a Community Commercial District, similar to One Brigham Circle and Parcel 25. Once the base zoning is changed, Wentworth may propose a Planned Development Area (PDA), which is a site specific review of the proposed project design (including massing, height, etc). Those two steps – zoning amendment and PDA – essentially provide the appropriate zoning required for the 500 Huntington project. However, to include the *Center for innovation in Engineering and Technology* in the project, Wentworth will need to file an amendment to their Institutional Master Plan to allow for university uses within the PDA. Once that is complete, Wentworth could solicit and select a developer to develop the site, and the developer would take the project through another very detailed review process with the BRA, Article 80B Large Project Review. Jamie emphasized that at this point, Wentworth is simply trying to establish the appropriate zoning to go out and solicit developer interest in the project.

Jamie noted that the process is very complicated, and he went through the project schedule:

- Wentworth Community Task Force Meeting to review Map and Text Amendment for Community Commercial (CC-3) Subdistrict February 5, 2013
- BRA Board action to recommend Map and Text Amendment to Boston Zoning Commission (BZC) February 14, 2013
- Community Task Force Meeting on Draft PDA and IMP Amendment (IMPNF) March 12, 2013
- BZC Hearing for approval of Map and Text Amendment March 13, 2013
- Wentworth files PDA/IMPNF March 14, 2013
- Community Meeting on PDA/IMPNF April 9, 2013
- End of Public Comment period on PDA/IMPNF April 29, 2013

- BRA Board Meeting recommending the PDA and approving the IMPNF May 16, 2013
- PDA Development Plan approval by BZC June 12, 2013

Jamie explained that in order to accommodate this project, the existing Institutional Subdistrict zoning needs to be changed to Community Commercial (CC) zoning, which would allow for private uses. He showed the existing zoning map of the Sweeney Field site as well as what it would look like under the proposed zoning change, with the 3-acre Sweeney Field site labeled as a Community Commercial District. He identified some of the uses allowed in the CC-3 District, including the opportunity it opens for a PDA, noting they would be able to be much more specific about the uses in the PDA.

Jamie pointed out that the Community Commercial Subdistrict would allow for certain height and FAR allowances, which would then be superseded by the PDA. Marybeth noted that the proposed underlying zoning for Sweeney Field (CC-3) would be the same as the zoning for One Brigham Circle (CC-1), with a maximum height of 55 feet and the maximum FAR of 3. Jamie added that the numbers in the presentation – 18 stories, 280 feet height, FAR 5 – reflect the maximum that could be developed under a PDA, despite the lower development limits of the underlying zoning.

Jamie showed a map displaying the two approved CC districts, as well as the proposed CC for Sweeney Field. He reviewed the next steps and project schedule (outlined above) and Katelyn opened the meeting up for questions.

Questions/Comments (Task Force)

- A member of the Task Force asked how real estate taxes would work on the property once it becomes a CC-3, since Wentworth would be using part of the development. Jamie explained that as long as Wentworth owns the site and continues to use it for institutional use, the real estate taxes would not change. However, once the property is sold or leased to a commercial developer, then it would fall under the normal rules of assessment for the City of Boston.
- A representative from the Greek Cathedral voiced her concern about the size of the building and the obstructed views from Huntington. Another representative from the Cathedral said he would like to meet with the development committee and Wentworth to talk about the building and reiterated the concern about the building blocking the view of the cathedral from Huntington. Katelyn said Wentworth would be open to speaking to its abutters about the project.
- There was a question about whether the Boston Civic Design Commission (BCDC) would be reviewing the project. Jamie responded that they would review the design of the project when it goes through the Article 80 Large Project review, after the rezoning has been completed. Katelyn added that Wentworth has not filed anything yet, but once they file the PDA the BCDC may review it.
- A member of the public asked whether the PDA will contain information about Wentworth's commitments to the public realm. Jamie responded that it is likely. He noted the level of design is conceptual at this point, but that the commitments to open spaces and the relationship of the buildings to the street will definitely be part of the PDA development plan.

- A Task Force member noted that at the last meeting, Task Force members from Alice Taylor were interested in looking more closely at the height as it relates to Alice Taylor, and that we should plan to do that at a future meeting.
- There was a question about the projected time frame of the project. Jamie responded that Wentworth hope is that the rezoning process – which creates a buildable envelope for the site – would be concluded by June. At that point, Wentworth will be having conversations with private developers to take the project to the next step. Dave explained that Wentworth wants to be poised to take advantage of the market. However, before they could realistically move forward with the project, they need to relocate Sweeney field, which would take 1-2 years. He noted that something happening on Sweeney Field is still probably 4-5 years away, but it depends upon the economy.
- A member of the public asked about 280-foot height of the building in relation to the 18-stories. Jamie explained that because of the nature of the use, the floor-to-floor height might be fairly high. He added that the 280 feet incorporates the mechanical and penthouse structures on the top which can be as high as 20-30 feet above of the highest floor.
- A member of the public pointed out that the PDA approval comes after the text and map amendment, and asked if Wentworth was just seeking approval for the 55-foot maximum height and 3.0 FAR at this point. Katelyn concurred, and said that there would be two opportunities to weigh in. A Task Force member said the PDA dimensions are approved in the text amendment, but Marybeth explained that the language of the text amendment says that if a PDA Development Plan is submitted, then the maximum height allowed in the PDA is 280 feet, but it still has to go through the community review process with the BRA.
- A question was asked about whether taxes will get paid on the entire development or just the portion used by the private developer. Jamie said he was not completely sure but he believed Wentworth's use of the roughly 80,000 SF of the project would not be subject to real estate taxes, but the remaining 560,000 SF would. A follow-up question was asked, and it was reiterated that the piece of the project being used by development would remain exempt.
- A Task Force member asked if Wentworth would be selling the development rights but maintaining ownership of the site, through a ground lease. Jamie agreed, noting the plan is to have a long-term ground lease with a developer. The Task Force member asked if the Wentworth space would be maintained through a lease-back arrangement, and Jamie said he didn't know if that had been determined. There was a brief discussion about taxation requirements, and Katelyn said she thought we would know more by the next meeting when the draft PDA is available. She added that she would try to find out some more information for the next meeting as well.
- It was asked whether Wentworth would have any control over the project once it sells it to a project developer, and whether the developer could completely change the project. Jamie responded that that would be a good question to answer when they get to the PDA, adding that if the developer were to come forward in the future to make a change in what has been approved, they would have to go through the whole process again. Marybeth added that if a developer in the future wanted to change the dimensions of one of the structures, for example, or a use other than what is permitted under the PDA, they would have to amend the PDA development plan and go through the whole process again – submit an amendment, there would be a 45-day public comment period, go to

the BRA Board and the Zoning Commission. So if a developer wanted to change what is allowed in the approved development, they would have to come back for an amendment.

- There was a question about where the height of the building came from. Jamie explained that there is a combination of reasons for the 18 stories: it created a reasonable FAR, a significant amount of open space (with the smaller building footprint pushing the building taller), and it is within the height range of a number of buildings along Huntington. Jamie added that it meets Wentworth's goal of facilitating private development on the site.
- Clarification was requested regarding the location of the 18-story building, and Dave explained that it would be located on the corner of Parker and Ruggles.
- There was a question about whether the 18-story building was set back from Huntington to accommodate the Museum of Fine Arts and shadows. Jamie responded that was not the case, and that they had wanted to keep medium height buildings along Huntington, which pushed the taller building back. As a follow up, it was asked whether shadow studies had been done, and Jamie responded that they had. There was a brief conversation about shadow, and Jamie reiterated that shadow is definitely one of the things you look at in establishing building heights and locations. Katelyn added that this project will also have to go through Large Project Review; Wentworth will submit a Project Notification Form and a Draft Project Impact Report with more information like shadow studies, transportation and environment, but that will come later.
- There was a question about traffic studies and shadow. Jamie explained that those types of studies – wind, traffic, shadow, etc. – are typically done during large project review, which would happen after a developer is selected and an architect is brought on board. He reiterated that all Wentworth is trying to achieve at this point is set a maximum zoning envelope, which would create the opportunity to go forward and review a specific project and its impacts.

With no further questions or comments, Katelyn encouraged the group to gather around the model for additional explanation and informal discussion. She adjourned the meeting at approximately 7:15pm.