

**WENTWORTH INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY IMPNF
BRA PUBLIC MEETING
WEDNESDAY, MAY 13, 2009**

MINUTES

Task Force Members Present: Marica Arvanites, Cynthia Brophy, Robert Chambers,
Susan D'Amato, Pat Flaherty, Sheneal Parker, Carrie Simon, Adeline Stallings

Guests: Patrick Cunningham, Perkins+Will
David Damon, Perkins+Will
Felipe Schwartz, Vanasse, Hangen, Brustlin
Katelyn Sullivan, Boston Redevelopment Authority

Wentworth: LeMar Brown, Community Policing & Off-Campus Liaison, Public Safety
John Heinstadt, Vice President, Business & Finance
Mary Ollinger, Assistant, Business & Finance
Sandy Pascal, Associate VP, Community Relations & External Affairs
David A. Wahlstrom, Associate Vice President, Business
Annamaria Wenner, Associate Vice President, Student Affairs
Dick Towle, Master Plan Consultant (Fallon Towle Associates)

Katelyn Sullivan called the meeting to order and welcomed everyone to the Public Meeting for Wentworth's Institutional Master Plan Notification Form ("IMPNF"). She noted that there were several members of the Task Force present who have been meeting for over a year on the IMPNF and thanked them for their service so far. She noted that the IMPNF was filed on April 6th and that the comment period ends on May 21st. She said that the Article 80 Process going forward would be to submit comments which are then used to form the Scoping Determination which Wentworth will use to form their Institutional Master Plan ("IMP").

Dick Towle noted that Wentworth's previous IMP was filed in 1999 and approved in 2000. He explained that during the last IMP, Wentworth constructed two dormitories, adding 903 beds, bringing the total bed count on campus to 1,936. Additionally, Wentworth acquired two properties, 525 and 634 Huntington Avenue, which have been developed as open spaces as an interim use. He mentioned that last April, Wentworth filed for a one-year extension to the IMP to conduct a strategic study of Wentworth's needs. This intensive study included data from meetings with faculty, staff, students, alumnae, trustees, and the community and the information was used to inform the IMP. David Damon spoke briefly about the process and the information that emerged from the neighborhood meetings.

Dick reiterated that the IMPNF being reviewed tonight was filed on April 6th. Since the regular Community Task Force meeting time fell on the first night of Passover, Wentworth requested that the comment period be extended to 45 days. He explained that in addition to the Task Force meetings, Wentworth met with the Fenway Community Development Corporation ("CDC") and Mission Hill Neighborhood Housing Services ("MHNHS"). Again, Dick noted that the comment period concludes on May 21st.

Dick provided a brief introduction to the Wentworth campus, noting that it is comprised of 35 buildings on approximately 32 acres of land. He turned it over to Dave Wahlstrom for a brief overview of the day and evening programs. Dick added that Wentworth plans to maintain a

level enrollment, and with demographic trends showing a decrease in college-age individuals eligible to go to college, Wentworth will ultimately become more competitive, and require more *competitive* facilities. He noted that the primary goal of this IMP is to get students onto campus, specifically by building a Campus Center and a new dormitory. He noted the academic projects (additions to Annex complex and Ira Allen) and added that there would be significant campus-wide building renovations.

Dick emphasized the importance of new student activity space to attracting students back onto campus, and introduced Perkins+Will to discuss the proposed Campus Center. Patrick Cunningham explained why the tennis courts are a good location for the proposed building. He also spoke about the building's sustainability, and David Damon explored these in more detail. David added that the building is currently at the silver LEED level. Patrick continued, and talked about the Campus Center program.

A question was asked about the surrounding streets and the building height. Patrick reviewed the streets and elaborated on the orientation of the building. He noted that the building would be approximately 66ft high, with a floor plan of approximately 10k square feet. Patrick continued, and provided internal and external views of the Campus Center. Referencing the view from Ward Street, he indicated that the Ward Street parking lot would be reduced, making that area greener and more inviting.

Annamaria Wenner explained that there is very little programming space on campus. She noted that Watson Auditorium is often too formal for student events, and Tansey Auditorium too large. Unfortunately, this forces students to have most of their programming in the dormitories, which for security reasons, means they cannot open them up to the other Colleges of the Fenway. She added that, during their tenure at Wentworth, 70% of students are involved in a club or activity, and giving them a dedicated space in the Campus Center is exciting. Dick noted that in response to the question, "What would it take for you to move back onto campus?" student response was consistently, "More to do." He added that the proposed Campus Center would be a 21-hour operation, with programs Thursday through Sunday nights. He noted that this project is the most developed and will likely be submitted for small project review, adding that it is the key to the objective of bringing students back on campus. Reiterating that the focus is on the 426 students residing in Boston, the addition of a new dormitory will reach the full need. With this, David Damon spoke about the new dormitory, specifically designed to attract upper classmen back onto campus.

Dick briefly discussed the third project proposed in the IMP, the addition to the Annex. The addition would be the same height as the buildings around it and approximately 40k square feet. Dick explained that this addition would upgrade the facilities and provide some much-needed flex space so rooms are not used as intensively, allowing for renovations; it would not expand the academic programs.

Dick transitioned to the fourth project in the IMPNF, moving Sweeney Field to the Parker Street parking Lot. He explained that the proposal is to build a deck over existing parking with a playing field on top. He noted that there are currently 422 parking spots on that site, and that this project would likely reduce it to 400 spots. He explained that the need for this project is twofold. First, he explained that the current field is not regulation size so Wentworth is unable to play tournament/playoff games there; this would meet that need. There would be additional space, allowing the tennis courts to move there as well. It also moves these facilities closer to the showers and athletic amenities. Second, Dick explained that it frees up the existing Sweeney Field for future commercial development, perhaps office/research space. He explained that Wentworth is interested in attracting a technology company to create jobs for residents and graduates, as well as adding to the economic development of the city. He

emphasized that Wentworth is not proposing this development or looking for zoning at this time, but that they wanted to make it known. He added that this development would require an extensive review. Katelyn added that as part of the Article 80 process, institutions are required to make their best efforts to put down all of their planning activities for the next 10 years so that nothing comes as a surprise to the community or BRA. The IMP is part of a planning exercise as well as a permitting and zoning document.

It was suggested that Dick talk a little bit more about the framework for the Sweeny site. Dick explained that the framework for the site includes two buildings, with a maximum height of 14 stories, and public open space. He noted that the concept was developed using the same parameters that emerged from the strategic planning process. He explained that the visuals were removed because Wentworth is not proposing it. He reiterated Katelyn's point that we are thinking of it only as a future land use, and when Wentworth is ready to move forward with it, they will need to come back and go through a similar approval process.

There was a question about what is being agreed to in the IMP, i.e., the effect of the approval. Katelyn explained that they would be approving the land uses, location, and massing not the specific architecture of the four proposed projects. She noted that institutions are asked to include everything they are considering over the next ten years for the purpose of planning, adding that projects will need to go through an additional approval process before the projects come to fruition. Katelyn also noted that Wentworth approached the BRA with the Sweeney development included as a proposed project in their IMP, but that the BRA advised them to include it as a potential future land use as there needed to be more information.

A member of the public, as a resident, voiced her concern about her view, and suggested that Wentworth keep this in mind in moving forward with some of their designs. Dick noted that, as far as the dormitory, it is currently proposed for 6 stories if it is Wentworth alone. He added that Wentworth has been asked if they would be willing to partner with other colleges if asked to, and in that case, it could be as high as 9 stories.

It was asked whether parking would be eliminated at the Greek Cathedral due to the Ira Allen addition. Dick responded that parking, and the effects of the IMP, would be discussed shortly.

It was asked whether parking would be underground or whether the soccer field would be elevated. Dick explained that the field would be at grade at the Station Street edge and approximately 14ft above grade at Prentiss Street, using the natural grade to put parking underneath. He noted that the field will be what is seen from most locations, adding that there would be some sort of screening used in the other places so the cars are out of sight. He added that it has not yet been designed, and Wentworth is not looking for large project review on this. It was suggested that views/renderings be developed to gain a better sense of what it will look like and what pedestrians will see.

A member of the public noted that part of the reason Sweeney Field is so attractive is that you can watch people play, adding that it gets people engaged. It was asked if Wentworth had considered moving off-campus, rather than having a developer come in and build student rooms. Dick explained that the future development of Sweeney field will be Commercial, not residential in nature. He added that the intent is to bring students out of workforce housing and back into supervised dormitories on campus.

There was a question about Sweeney Field's shortfall as far as regulation size. It was also asked whether Sweeney Field could be expanded based on Wentworth's current land. John Heinstadt explained that it is a width issue; the field is approximately 10ft short. He added that Wentworth has a waiver from the NCAA to play games, but not championship games.

It was asked whether the new tennis courts would remain open to the public, and the response was yes. It was suggested that Wentworth consider making the fitness center in the proposed Campus Center open to the community as a community benefit. It was also asked if Wentworth students living off-campus can use the fitness center, and the response was yes.

A member of the public noted that the big pull for students to live off campus is alcohol. Dick suggested we jump ahead, and had Annamaria discuss what she is doing to draw students on campus. Annamaria explained that two of Wentworth's main goals are to create an atmosphere on campus where students can be academically successful and to help their students become responsible citizens. She talked about the many benefits of students living on campus, noting that national and Wentworth data shows that students who live on campus are more likely to succeed; they graduate faster, get higher grade point averages (GPAs), and are more academically involved. Because Wentworth realizes these benefits and wants to position their students for success, she stated that, beginning with the incoming class of 2010, all (traditional residential) 1st and 2nd year students will be required to live on campus. She added that she has received wonderful feedback from faculty and parents. In addition to mandating on-campus living, she has also been communicating the "hard data" about living off-campus to both parents about students; this includes GPA data, student arrest numbers, and information about the recent legislation making it illegal for more than four full-time undergraduate students to live together.

Annamaria noted that, this year, 73 more returning students decided to stay on campus for the Fall. She added that, of the 1,132 returner deposits, 52 of them are off-campus students who have decided to go back onto campus. She emphasized that she is not trying to "trick" anyone into moving back on campus, she is simply using the data. Annamaria noted that those who violate the student code of conduct in the community are held to a higher standard. She added that Wentworth has done an excellent job of tightening up the process, citing Sergeant Brown and his Friday and Saturday night ride arounds on the Hill. She noted that there is a very short time between when Sergeant Brown writes them up and when it gets to the Judicial Board. She explained that it seems to be working, with only two repeat violators this year. She also mentioned that she has successfully engaged students to move back on campus; students who had violated a policy but did not seem appropriate candidates for suspension, she offered them the opportunity to move back on campus. She noted that of the three situations where this was offered, all three students chose to move back on campus. She plans to continue to use this in the future.

Noting that it might not be a question for Wentworth, it was asked who is engaging the landlords. Dick responded that, as Wentworth discovers landlords violating the legislation, it is reported to the city. Johanna Sena noted that, as an elected official, she realizes that this is a multipronged issue. She added that they meet with residents, Inspectional Services Department (ISD), Boston Police Department (BPD), and Institutions to discuss how to handle this problem. She said that they discuss dormitories and policies, but also landlords. She noted that Councilor Ross was on the phone with landlords today, adding that many do not care and that everyone can only do so much. A member of the public noted that, while institutions can't do everything, they need to develop policies and strategies for housing students on campus. Another member of the public explained that real estate agents are also part of the problem. Dick said Annamaria has heard cases where real estate agents are actually counseling students into illegal leases. Johanna said that Councilor Ross is working with Councilor Feeney to fine the real estate agents. Annamaria added that the students are also to blame; they need to be responsible and know the laws and what they are signing.

A member of the public suggested that the price structure of housing be examined, making it more affordable to students. Annamaria remarked that she is currently working to get a student out of an illegal lease, where five tenants are renting a house for \$42k for the year. She added that rather than focus on the financial difference, she focuses on the fact that students get more “bang for their buck” when they live on campus. She also noted that there are options for year-long leases and Mary Ollinger noted that there is a process students can go through that allows them to have limited alcohol in their room if all tenants are over 21. Annamaria emphasized that students are held at the same level whether they are providing the alcohol or the location.

There was a question about the impact the IMP will have on traffic. Dave Wahlstrom spoke about the current parking conditions on campus and noted that there would be a reduction of approximately 271 spaces as a result of the IMP. There was a discussion about commuter numbers, specifically parking permit and Charlie Card numbers.

It was asked whether Wentworth is planning to add spaces for Zipcar. Dave noted that we had looked into this in the past, adding that there are a number of Zipcar locations very close to campus. It was suggested that Wentworth offer discounts to faculty, staff, and students.

Looking at the cumulative totals of parking permit sales, Dave noted that there has been a steady decrease over the past ten years. He added that the trend is likely to continue although the decline might not be as steep. Dick pointed out that of the 852 commuter students on campus, there were only 265 commuter student parking permits sold. He added that with a level enrollment and the proposed dormitory decreasing trip load, and a campus center, the demand should decrease.

Felipe Schwartz said that as part of their services, Vanasse, Hangen, Brustlin (VHB) will be preparing a transportation report based on the IMP. He noted that they are just starting their studies now, and explained that there are two major elements: existing conditions and build conditions, including trip generation, mode share, traffic impact, and mitigation efforts. Felipe noted that they will be providing information and soliciting feedback. He added that VHB will also be examining student move in / move out procedures and implications. He noted that VHB would be giving an extensive presentation in the future.

A member of the public noted that Wentworth sits at the intersection of three major streets: Huntington, Ruggles, and Louis Prang. He noted that there could be major impacts if Sweeney Field is developed. He added that the entrance to Wentworth off of Ruggles Street is difficult and suggested that, with a Huntington Street address, Wentworth’s entrance should be on Huntington. He also suggested that it is an appropriate time to examine both the issue with the entrance and the addresses of the buildings.

It was asked whether VHB would look at the potential impacts of development of Sweeney, and the response was yes. It was asked how this would be done without knowing how big the development will be. Felipe responded that it is calculated based on program. Dick added that Wentworth will do a full traffic study when they come forward with a plan.

There was a discussion about the fact that a number of the projects in the IMPNF are dependent upon the Sweeney development, making it difficult to truly separate it from the Master Plan. Dick noted that Wentworth plans to go ahead with the Campus Center, the dormitory, and the expansion, adding that from a financial perspective, some of the projects may need to be scaled down or delayed.

It was asked whether the dormitory would be privately operated if it was shared with other schools. Dick replied that it would be filled with Wentworth students, and possibly other COF

students, adding that it would be a fully supervised dorm. He added that in terms of Wentworth's needs, it would be six stories, but if other schools were interested in collaborating, it could have as many as 390 beds. There was a question about who would discipline these students, and Dick replied that it would be Annamaria. It was asked whether the dormitory would go right up to the street, citing the loss of green space and canyonization of Huntington Avenue. David Damon and Patrick responded that it is a small site, and that as it is now it now it will go up to the sidewalk. They noted that what was shown in the presentation was only conceptual and that they are only beginning to look at the architecture building, adding that there are ways to deal with these issues. Dick added that Wentworth is very concerned about preserving and improving green space, as demonstrated with their involvement with the Evans Way Park. He added that the location makes sense for a number of reasons, and being near the 555 dormitory will add to the supervision. It was asked who owns the properties that would be behind the building, on Vancouver Street. It was noted that 17 and 19 Vancouver Street are privately owned buildings. A member of the public emphasized the need for open space, adding that with more students living on campus, the current spaces will receive more usage. It was suggested that Wentworth explore alternative forms of greenery, including green, or "living," walls.

It was suggested that there be adequate time allotted between when the new tennis courts are built off Parker Street and when the current tennis courts are removed from campus, emphasizing the need for adequate athletic and recreation space for students. There was also a question about Wentworth's current bed leases to other schools. Dick responded that this semester Wentworth is leasing 173 beds this semester, 42 of which are to Emmanuel with the others going to Massachusetts College of Pharmacy and Health Sciences (MCPHS). Dick noted that Wentworth does not anticipate leasing to Emmanuel next year, and the following year it is unlikely they will lease any beds. Dick added that our intention is to utilize all the existing beds; with the 260 proposed with the new dormitory plus those beds currently leased, we will be able to meet the full demand. There was a question about when Wentworth will know about vacant beds for the fall, and when decisions are made about leases. Dick replied that there will definitely be a decrease in leased beds for the fall, but that currently the number is uncertain. He added that Wentworth does not see itself filling all of its beds at the present time, and that from an economic perspective, it will need to look at the options available, most likely with MCPHS. Dick pointed out that with the class entering in 2010 being required to live on campus their first two years, the following year will experience higher internal demand and few, if any, beds available to lease.

It was asked whether the transportation study would include a study on bicycle spaces, specifically whether there enough and if they are being used. Felipe replied that it would. There was a question about whether skateboarding would be viewed as a mode of transportation, and Felipe replied that it would be examined. Dick noted that Wentworth is aware and concerned about the dangers these can be to pedestrians. He added that on the Parker Street side of the Campus Center, there will be a new bike arrival zone. It was suggested that Wentworth do a study examining the bicycle use of its students. There was a question about the Urban Ring, and Dick responded that Wentworth has concerns about its potential impact, specifically its effect on Ruggles Street. Felipe noted that this would definitely be examined.

A Task Force member pointed out that, while she was not taking a position against the proposed dormitory which borders the Fenway, she had some concern that the Fenway was being overburdened by student residences of the surrounding institutions.

With no further questions, the meeting adjourned at approximately 8:10pm.