

**Wentworth Institute of Technology  
BRA Public Meeting  
500 Huntington Avenue PDA  
Faculty/Staff Function Room, Beatty Hall**

**Tuesday, July 9, 2013**

**Minutes**

- BRA:** Katelyn Sullivan, Project Manager
- Task Force:** Robert Chambers, Mass College of Art  
Bill Kantaros, Annunciation Greek Orthodox Cathedral  
James Kaselis, Annunciation Greek Orthodox Cathedral  
Sheneal Parker, Fenway Resident  
Susan St. Clair, Mission Hill Resident, Problem Properties Task Force  
Adeline Stallings, Mission Main Tenant Task Force  
David Welch, Mission Hill Neighborhood Housing Services
- Wentworth:** Edward King, Project Consultant, Edward M. King & Associates  
Judy Kohn, Permitting Consultant, Fort Point Associates  
Tom McCormack, Director, Planning & Construction  
Howard Muise, Transportation Consultant, Vanasse Hangen Brustlin  
Mary Ollinger, Budget & Office Manager, Business & Finance  
Sandy Pascal, Associate VP, Community Relations & External Affairs  
Matthew Pierce, Design Consultant, Perkins+Will  
Kevin Smith, Clerk of the Works, Planning & Construction  
Yanni Tshipis, Property Consultant, Colliers International  
Bob Totino, Vice President, Finance  
David A. Wahlstrom, Vice President, Business
- Public:** Shaina Aubourg, Mayor's Office of Neighborhood Services  
Jeffrey Barros, Representative Sanchez's Office  
Constintine Calliontzis, Annunciation Greek Orthodox Cathedral  
Mark Fortune, Boston Building Trades  
Dorr Fox, Fenway CDC  
Jim Hoffman, Mission Hill Neighborhood Housing Services  
Lilly Jacobson, Fenway CDC  
Peggy Kanteros, Annunciation Greek Orthodox Cathedral  
Annette Kaselis, Annunciation Greek Orthodox Cathedral  
Sam Loso, Wentworth Student  
A. Macauley  
Johanna Sena, Councilor Ross's Office

*PowerPoint presentation available at [www.wit.edu/imp](http://www.wit.edu/imp)*

**Welcome**

Katelyn Sullivan called the meeting to order and welcomed everyone to the Public meeting. Sandy Pascal introduced Wentworth staff members and consultants, and Katelyn reviewed the agenda.

## IMP Projects Overview and Update

Dave Wahlstrom provided an update on the Institutional Master Plan projects. He provided some background on the previous Master Plan (approved in 2000), specifically the addition of beds and Wentworth's transition to a residential campus. He explained that the current Master Plan focuses on upgrading the campus amenities to sustain an active and vibrant residential community, and updating antiquated academic facilities.

Dave explained that the Institutional Master Plan evolved from a Strategic Planning process the Institute went through in 2006/2007, followed by a Campus Master Planning process in 2008/2009, which the community was involved in. He explained that during this process, the community's concerns focused on four main issues:

1. The condition of the Warehouse Building (660 Parker Street)
2. The condition of the Brewery Buildings
3. The "sea of cars" on Parker Street
4. Student behavior on Mission Hill

He added that Wentworth tried to address three of the four concerns in the IMP.

Dave provided a brief overview of the five projects in the Institutional Master Plan:

- A) Flanagan Campus Center:** 8,500 square-foot addition and 48,000 square-foot renovation to Beatty Hall. Provided new fitness, recreation, expanded dining, new offices and a bookstore downstairs. *Came online in 2012.*
  - B) Center for Sciences & Biomedical Engineering:** 19,000 square-foot renovation and 19,000 square-foot addition to Ira Allen. Replaced a number of the labs in Willson Hall, which was built in 1962. Labs include chemistry, physics, biomedical engineering and material science. *Came online in 2012.*
  - C) Student Apartments @ 525 Huntington Avenue:** 305 bed residence hall. *Construction began in the spring; anticipated opening Fall 2014.*
  - D) Center for Engineering & Technology:** Academic building; approximately 45,000 square feet. Will sit off the quad, and replace a couple existing building appendages. *Second half of the Master Plan (2015-2020).*
  - E) New Sweeney Field with Parking Below:** Relocate the existing athletic field to a deck above parking. With a 16-foot elevation differential between Station and Prentiss Streets, the deck would be level with Station Street and the parking would be level with Prentiss Street. This project would reduce the number of parking spaces, and provide Wentworth with a NCAA regulation field (the current field is smaller than regulation size). Additionally, this project addresses three of the four concerns raised by the neighborhood by eliminating the "sea of cars" and incorporating the Warehouse and Brewery Buildings into the project design, and repurposing them as athletic support and Physical Plant. *Second half of the Master Plan (2015-2020).*
- Bill Kaneros asked if the parking lot under the new Sweeney Field would be used the same way it is today, providing offsite parking to the hospitals. Dave explained that there will be a loss of parking over the course of the IMP, so that will most likely be all Wentworth parking.
  - Sheneal Parker asked about the garage outlet, expressing her concern about the congestion on Parker Street. Dave explained that the outlet for the garage would be on Halleck Street. He noted that Wentworth will need to go through an Article 80 process before the project commences, where those issues would be examined in more detail.

## 500 Huntington Avenue Project

Judy Kohn, from Fort Point Associates, briefly described the approval process for the 500 Huntington Avenue project. She explained that the process began a few months ago, when Wentworth filed for a zoning map and text amendment to create the *Wentworth Community Commercial CC-3 District* on the 500 Huntington site, which allowed for a Planned Development Area (PDA). Wentworth submitted the PDA Development Plan to the BRA in June, and the approval process should be completed around the end of the summer. Following the PDA approval, Wentworth will submit an IMP amendment to allow college/university uses in the Planned Development Area.

Judy displayed the zoning text amendment that was approved in March, and moved on to discuss the PDA Plan requirements. She explained that the Boston Redevelopment Authority (BRA) Article 80C Review requires the PDA Plans to include information about location and appearance of structures; open spaces and landscaping; proposed uses of the area; traffic, circulation and loading; access to public transportation; and proposed dimensions of structures. Additionally, the PDA Plans may include building elevations, schematic layout drawings and information about building materials. She explained that Wentworth has submitted the PDA Plan, as well as some supplemental materials to support the application, including a transportation impact analysis, a shadow analysis and a historic resources impact analysis. She added that Wentworth is also in the process of preparing a wind impact assessment analysis that will be provided shortly.

Matthew Pierce, from Perkins+Will, provided a general overview of the project program:

- 640,000 GSF in two buildings on 3 acre Sweeney Field parcel
  - Up to 78,400 SF for the *Wentworth Center for Innovation in Engineering and Technology*;
  - Up to 546,600 SF for office, research and development, laboratory space, services and community uses
  - Up to 15,000 SF for retail/commercial on the ground floor levels
- Two levels of underground parking; 410 parking spaces
- Building One: six stories, 118' high to top of roof screen
- Building Two: six stories with 18-story component, 280' high to top of roof screen. Matt explained including the 18-story tower allowed for significant open space on the parcel.
- 57,600 SF of open space and pedestrian connections
- Floor Area Ratio (FAR) of up to 5.0 (*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*).

Matthew described the five major modifications that were made to the original project design to address concerns of Wentworth's neighborhood and abutters:

- Parking spaces below grade reduced from 490 to 410
- Tower setback from Ruggles Street increased from 40' to 118'
- Open space and pedestrian connections reconfigured to increase views to the Greek Cathedral and Huntington Avenue
- Improvements proposed for Parker Street to add left turn lanes and accommodate "Cycletrack" bike network. This includes Wentworth providing land to address street and sidewalk widening.
- Planned improvements to create Wentworth Hall landscape and plaza areas to enhance views and connections with adjacent uses

Matthew presented a number of images and renderings.

- Bill Kaneros noted that the original design had three buildings and now there are two. Matthew said that was correct, and explained that when the 18-story tower was closer to Ruggles Street there was a pedestrian passageway between the tower and the other 6-story building; by moving the tower away from Ruggles Street, that passage was eliminated so it's essentially one building with a change in massing.

Dave Wahlstrom outlined the public benefits of the project:

- Economic impact of over \$2 billion to the Boston economy over the first ten years, including approximately 1,900 construction jobs and 1,500 permanent jobs
  - Significant housing and jobs linkage payments (approximately \$4M in housing linkage that Wentworth would like to steer back to the local area; and \$1M in job linkage)
  - Substantial tax revenue to the City of Boston by putting 3 acres of nonprofit land back on the City tax roll
  - 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
  - Improvements to Parker Street and surrounding Intersections
  - One-phase development will support the planned Wentworth Center for Innovation in Engineering and Technology
- David Welch said he thought that the traffic backups were on Ruggles Street, not on Parker Street, adding that he tries to avoid that area all together. Howard Muise concurred, and said that there is much more of a backup on Ruggles than Parker. He explained that drivers making left hand turns off Parker Street end up blocking the intersection as well, and that providing the extra capacity on the intersection approach will reduce the amount of "green time" for Parker Street, which will be shifted to Ruggles and help relieve some of the congestion on Ruggles Street.

Katelyn Sullivan reviewed Wentworth's proposed project approval timeline:

- Task Force/Community Pre-filing Meeting on PDA (June 19)
- Wentworth filed PDA (June 24)
- Task Force/Community Meeting on PDA (July 9)
- 45-day Comment Period on PDA Application ends August 8
- BRA and BCDC Review July/August/September
- BRA Approval Anticipated Mid-September
- Zoning Commission Approval Anticipated Mid-October through Mid-November

### **Questions/Comments**

- David Welch asked if the parking under the field would be classified as a garage or open air parking. Dave responded that he has been told that if over 50% of the perimeter of the structure is open, then it's classified as open air parking. And when we went through the IMP process we took the field to a schematic level of design so folks could get a feel for

what it looked like all the way around and I believe we achieved it, but when it goes through that Article 80B process that we'll know. Susan St. Clair asked what the advantage is of one over the other, and David Welch said there are significant cost differences. Dave Wahlstrom explained that it has to do with the fire safety issues.

- David Welch recalled the planning process for the Mass College of Art dormitory. He remembered people saying it would be their “signature dorm” and that it would be “spectacular” – and he thinks it’s a beautiful building. But this project, he said, this project is really something; it’s going to be a game changer for the area.
- Lilly Jacobson asked if Wentworth had any details about the affordable housing. She said she knows Northeastern is going through their IMP process, and they have talked about working with DND to pool the money to be used in the surrounding neighborhoods. She asked if Wentworth would be open to something like that. Dave said Wentworth has been talking internally about it, and have spoken to the BRA. Katelyn said Wentworth will most likely put together a basic Development Impact Project Agreement based on square footage, which will memorialize those statements; but to designate any money, Wentworth will have to go through the full process that involves DND, Neighborhood Housing Jobs Trust and the BRA. This would happen when there is a project and final square footage is decided upon during Large Project Review.
- Sheneal Parker asked if Wentworth has reached out to CDC’s in the area to have conversations about the housing agreement. Katelyn said she thinks Wentworth has reached out. She noted that this will really happen closer to Large Project Review, and that it would start to get developed once Wentworth has a development partner.
- Constantine Calliontzis asked if there have been any project modifications since the last Task Force meeting. Dave said no, there have not.
- Constantine asked if there would be any retail space in the lower floors. Dave explained that there would be retail space in the lower building facing Huntington Avenue. Constantine asked if there would be retail space in the lower floor of the oval building (at the corner of Huntington and Parker). Dave said no, and explained that the ground floor of the oval will be a “Wentworth Welcome Center” and gallery space to display student and faculty work, noting that it will be a great space to take advantage of for the school.
- Susan St. Clair asked about Wentworth’s outreach for the meeting, since it’s a meeting for both the Task Force and the general community. Sandy explained that we put notices in the newspaper and that Pat Flaherty – and other community members – send out notices to community groups. Katelyn added that she sends out notices to her email distribution list, which she has been compiling over the past four years, so anyone who has ever come to a meeting and left their email address would get notified. Susan said she was just curious because attendance seems low; they must just not care or have already heard about it. Sandy said some people have heard this so many times, and Wentworth has addressed a lot of the issues. Susan agreed, and said she thinks Wentworth has done a fine job responding to people’s concerns, which is probably why there are so few questions.
- Sheneal Parker brought up the 1,900 construction jobs, and encouraged Wentworth to find creative ways to reach out to the community so residents that are qualified for the jobs are able to take advantage of the opportunities. She said that’s her biggest thing... outreach.
- Lilly Jacobson suggested that Wentworth reach out to the community with regard to the retail space as well, to bring local businesses or people interested in starting small business into the retail space, and not just chains. Dave said Wentworth would be open to talk about that.

- David Welch said he assumes, that with a building like this, Wentworth would need to “eat” some of the costs – and subsidize rents – to bring rents down to a place where retailers can afford it, and so it does not become a revolving door. Dave Wahlstrom said it will be a factor for the developer; they are going to be the ones working with the retailer(s). David Welch asked if we would have one person taking the entire square feet, and Dave Wahlstrom said he did not know.
- Dorr Fox said he was a little confused about the process for the affordable housing allocations, saying he thought it would be included as a condition of the project approval. Katelyn said Wentworth is only going for PDA level approvals at this point. This project is considered a Development Impact Project and will need a basic Development Impact Project Agreement. She explained that specific conversations about affordable housing allocations will happen when 500 Huntington goes through Large Project review, and any proposals for housing will go through their own approval process with DND and the BRA. Dorr asked who the agreement was between; Katelyn said it would be between Wentworth and the BRA. Dorr asked if there was any public input on that agreement. Katelyn explained that there is public input and discussions that will happen at meetings and with Wentworth once a development partner comes on board. Katelyn said that it is an ongoing conversation and that it is very early in the process. Sandy said that Wentworth is trying to find out the exact steps in the process to make it happen, adding that Wentworth is committed to doing something that will focus the money in the neighborhood.

Katelyn adjourned the meeting at 6:50pm. She reiterated that the PDA documents are available online, and that comments should be submitted to her by August 8, 2013.