

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

Wednesday, June 19, 2013

Minutes

BRA: Katelyn Sullivan, Project Manager

Task Force: Cindy Brophy, Gainsborough Neighborhood Association
Matilda Drayton, Alice Heyward Taylor Tenant Task Force
Patricia Flaherty, Mission Hill Neighborhood Housing Services
Bill Kantaros, Annunciation Greek Orthodox Cathedral
James Kaselis, Annunciation Greek Orthodox Cathedral
Judy Mercer, Alice Heyward Taylor Tenant Task Force
Sheneal Parker, Fenway Resident
Carrie Simon, Mission Main Tenant Task Force
Susan St. Clair, Mission Hill Resident, Problem Properties Task Force
David Welch, Mission Hill Neighborhood Housing Services

Wentworth: Robert Brown, Design Consultant, Perkins+Will
Edward King, Project Consultant, Edward M. King & Associates
Judy Kohn, Permitting Consultant, Fort Point Associates
Tom McCormack, Director, Planning & Construction
Erik Miller, Assistant Director, Center for Community & Learning Partnerships
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
Bob Totino, Vice President, Finance
David A. Wahlstrom, Vice President, Business
Courtney Wright, Admin. Assistant, Center for Community & Learning Partnerships

Public: Shaina Aubourg, Mayor's Office of Neighborhood Services
Matthew Brooks, Fenway Civic Association
Constantine Calliontzis, Annunciation Greek Orthodox Cathedral
Aurora Cammarata, Spagnolo Gisness & Associates
Dorr Fox, Fenway CDC
Alexander Hernandez, Wentworth Student
Ulla Hester, MASCO
Peggy Kanteros, Annunciation Greek Orthodox Cathedral
Annette Kaselis, Annunciation Greek Orthodox Cathedral
Helen Karys, Annunciation Greek Orthodox Cathedral
A. Macauley
Luis Pineiro, Representative Sanchez's Office
Wade Phillips, Vancouver Street resident
Alison Pultinas, Mission Hill resident
John Sullivan, Spagnolo Gisness & Associates
Nicholas Torres, Wentworth Student, Wentworth Student Government

Welcome

Katelyn Sullivan called the meeting to order and welcomed everyone to the meeting. Task Force members introduced themselves, and Sandy Pascal introduced Wentworth staff members and consultants. Katelyn reviewed the agenda, and explained that tonight's meeting would be reviewing some of the changes that have been made to the 500 Huntington Avenue project based on community feedback.

IMP Projects Overview and Update *(PowerPoint presentation available at www.wit.edu/imp)*

Dave Wahlstrom introduced himself and provided an update on the Institutional Master Plan Campus 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 look at new academic facilities on campus.

- A) Flanagan Campus Center:** 48,000 square-foot renovation and 8,500 square-foot addition to Beatty Hall. Provided new fitness, recreation, food service, bookstore, dining and radio station facilities. *Came online in 2012.*
- B) Center for Sciences & Biomedical Engineering:** 19,000 square-foot renovation and 19,000 square-foot addition to Ira Allen. Provided new chemistry, physics, biology, and biomedical engineering laboratories. *Came online in 2012.*
- C) Student Apartments @ 525 Huntington Avenue:** 305 bed residence hall. Will bring housing capacity to 2,240 beds, approximately 75% of full time day students. *Anticipated opening Fall 2014.*
- D) Center for Engineering & Technology:** Academic building; will stretch from the quad into the West Lot parking lot. *Second half of the Master Plan (2015-2020).*
- E) New Sweeney Field with Parking Below:** Relocate Sweeney Field to the Parker Street Parking Lot with parking below. *Second half of the Master Plan (2015-2020).*

Dave explained that during the development of the Campus Master Plan in 2008/2009, one of the findings indicated that while Wentworth has substantial land, they do not have the resources to build new academic facilities. Thus, it was recommended that Wentworth look at leveraging the land on Sweeney Field (500 Huntington Avenue) for the purpose of paying for academic facilities.

Dave noted that, in addition to opening up 500 Huntington Avenue for possible development, the relocation of Sweeney Field addresses three of the community's four concerns they had with respect to Wentworth campus:

1. Improving the condition and appearance of the Warehouse Building (660 Parker St.)
2. Bring the Brewery Buildings up to a usable level
3. The "sea of parking" on Parker Street

And the other being...

4. Behavior of students living in Mission Hill

Dave explained that the Warehouse and Brewery Buildings would be incorporated into the design for the new athletic field on Parker Street, and that the "sea of parking" would essentially be replaced by a green space. On the last item, Dave described the efforts

that are being made – specifically by the Dean of Students and Public Safety – to reduce student behavior issues in the neighborhood. He explained that Wentworth has seen a decline in the number of students living in Mission Hill, noting that numbers decreased from 357 in the Spring of 2008 to 259 in the Spring of 2013 (from the University Accountability Ordinance Report). He noted that, of Wentworth’s 643 students living in the City of Boston, 330 live at their permanent residents (i.e., with their family, or they are adult students). So the goal with the new residence hall – 305 beds – is to address those students living in Boston that do not live with their families, and ultimately provide housing for up to 97% of Wentworth’s students. He added that, realistically, a small number of students will not be able to live on campus (due to religious, health or other reasons) but the goal is to be close to 100%.

- Susan St. Clair asked for clarification about the numbers. Sandy explained that with the addition of the new residence hall in the Fall of 2014, Wentworth will be able to provide housing for up to 97% of its students seeking local housing in the City of Boston. Dave added that, depending on what the full time enrollment is – if it’s 3,000 – Wentworth would be able to house 75% of that population of students. Pat Flaherty commented that Wentworth still has a sizeable commuter population, and students commuting from home. She noted that, if Wentworth has 259 students living in Mission Hill – and the new residence hall is going to add 305 beds – Wentworth should wind up with zero students living in Mission Hill by the Fall of 2014. Dave agreed, and said that was the goal.
- Cindy Brophy asked where the other students live off-campus. Dave explained that the UAO report has a complete breakdown based on zip code for those that live in the City of Boston, noting that Wentworth has students across the City

500 Huntington Avenue Project

Judy Kohn, from Fort Point Associates, described the approval process for the 500 Huntington Avenue project:

- Zoning Map and Text Amendment created Wentworth Community Commercial CC-3 District on 500 Huntington site and allow Planned Development Area (PDA)
- Planned Development Area (PDA) Development Plan Approval (Summer 2013)
- Institutional Master Plan (IMP) Amendment to allow College or University Uses in the Planned Development Area (following PDA approval)

She 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, Wentworth will also be including building elevations; schematic layout drawings; and a discussion of building materials. Further, Wentworth is proposing to provide additional information about transportation, impacts (including shadow and wind), mitigation and historic resources.

Robert Brown, from Perkins+Will, provided a general overview of the project:

- 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; and
- Up to 15,000 SF for retail/commercial on the ground floor levels
- 410 parking spaces below the development
- 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
- 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*).

Robert 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 turn lanes and accommodate "Cycletrack" bike network
- Planned Improvements to create Wentworth Hall Landscape and Plaza Areas to enhance Views and Connections with Adjacent Uses

Robert presented a number of images and renderings.

- Bill Kaneros asked for clarification about the buildings, saying that originally there were three buildings – one 18-story building and two 6-story buildings – but now it appears to be one big building. Robert explained that it is more like one and a half buildings. He explained that the design is interconnected; the private development connects to the Wentworth Center for Innovation and Technology on the 5th and 6th floors. However, he added that for the purposes of the project, it will be treated as a single building by the Building Department.

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 and \$1M in job linkage) and substantial tax revenue to the City of Boston (as much as \$10M a year)
- 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

Katelyn Sullivan reviewed Wentworth's proposed approval timeline for the project:

- Task Force/Community Pre-filing Meeting on PDA, Tonight
- Wentworth file PDA, June 21st
- 45-day Comment Period on PDA Application
- Task Force /Community Meeting on PDA, July 9
- BRA and BCDC Review, July/August
- BRA Approval Anticipated, Mid-September
- Zoning Commission Approval Anticipated, Mid-November

Questions/Comments (Task Force)

- Cindy Brophy asked about plans for landscaping and green space along Huntington Avenue. Robert said that right now, in its existing state, the area along Huntington Avenue is not wide enough to handle any additional trees. He pointed out a few isolated plantings, and places where there may be opportunities for some greening, but he noted the Boston Transportation Department may object and want to keep it open for traffic sightlines. He emphasized that it would not be as lush as other areas because they simply don't have the room. Cindy expressed her concern about the "canyonization" of Huntington Avenue, and emphasized that as the Avenue of the Arts, it should feel more welcoming and open. She reiterated that Wentworth simply consider it as they move forward with the design. Sandy asked Katelyn if that would be something that could be looked at more closely after the massing gets approved. Katelyn said absolutely, and explained that the landscaping could definitely be addressed during large project review, which will be another approvals process the project will go through once Wentworth finds a partner.
- Susan St. Clair said she thought Wentworth really listened and incorporated the community's feedback. She said it looked good to her, but she would be interested to hear what the Cathedral thinks. She added that, to her, it looks like Wentworth changed a lot.
- James Kaselis said he was very pleased, and thanked Wentworth for really respecting their opinions. He said he sees really big changes, and they appreciate it. He added that they like to work with Wentworth, like they always have in the past and will continue to do in the future. He said he was sure the whole plan will benefit both the community and the college.
- Judy Mercer said Wentworth did a good job, and that it looks beautiful. She thanked Wentworth for listening – she knows it wasn't easy to go back and flip things around – but she appreciates it. She said it's going to be beautiful and add something to the community, and that Wentworth did a fabulous job.
- Matilda Drayton said she was very pleased that Wentworth listened to their comments, and that it makes Alice Heyward Taylor feel very proud to have abutters like Wentworth. She added that they really do appreciate it and they can't thank Wentworth enough.
- Judy Mercer explained that seeing Wentworth incorporate her feedback into the design makes her feel valued. She said universities can come in and do what they want – and ultimately battle with the community – but she really appreciates Wentworth listening and making it work.

- Pat Flaherty said they are not used to hearing institutions go back and reworking their ideas. She said that knowing there was an added process to slow things down to figure it out – but still understanding that there are certain needs of the development – is great. She said she was thrilled to hear that the Greek Church likes the design, adding that she liked how the development extends beyond Parker Street so the Greek Church isn't isolated. She said she liked how the front door of Wentworth seems connected to the Greek Church – and to the outdoor space across the street – noting that it's an exciting part of the development that wasn't in the original plan. She also thanked Wentworth for responding to the community feedback about parking spaces and reducing the number.
- Sandy explained that Wentworth tries to work with their students to get them to understand that listening to voices in the community always makes for a better process, and Wentworth really believes that. She said she feels much more engaged with the project now that the community changes have been made. She said she is really excited about the plaza area, and the entire project as a whole.
- Matilda Drayton said that they have 165 units at Alice Heyward Taylor, and she hopes that they can get some jobs. She said it's good to know they will be able to get something out of it, because sometimes that's not the case. She thanked Wentworth.
- Pat commented that, with the new jobs and technologies it's going to bring into the area, there really is an opportunity for neighborhood youth to get involved and be engaged.
- Sandy made a quick announcement about the Greek Festival, which will be held at the Greek Church on Parker Street at the end of September. She explained that it hasn't been held at the Parker Street location in probably 20 years, and it's going to be really neat opportunity to bring all the pieces of the community together. Bill spoke briefly about it, and said they have tremendous support from the museums and the schools. He noted that people are excited about it and that eventually, they're hopeful it could become a major cultural event for the area.

Questions/Comments (Public)

- Alison Pultinas asked about the timing of the project, specifically how the construction would coordinate with moving Sweeney Field. She also asked how Wentworth is dealing with the student recreational needs as far as open space. Dave explained that Wentworth is doing a feasibility study now to explore the move of Sweeney Field. He has been told that it will take about a year to move the field, which will coincide with the Article 80B permitting process for 500 Huntington Avenue, and then probably three years of construction for the new development on 500 Huntington Avenue. In response to her second question, Dave explained that the current Sweeney Field will be operational until the new Sweeney Field is complete, so there will be no down time. He added that with intramurals, Wentworth is fortunate to be tied in with the Colleges of the Fenway so the six colleges work together on intramural sports and locations.
- Dorr Fox asked if affordable housing linkage would be included as a condition of the project, and Dave and Katelyn both said that it would. Dorr asked if it would be possible to include a clause designating that the affordable housing be located in the vicinity of the project, as a condition of the approval. Katelyn said that there is a process to designate it for the neighborhood, adding that that would be further along in the process, probably part of the large project review. Dorr asked whether the BRA would be the applicant for something like that. Pat Flaherty said she's been able to work with some of the institutions in that context, on something called a housing creation linkage, where they specify in their cooperation agreement with the BRA. It goes into the coop agreement as housing creation – versus just linkage – and then the project's identified, it

needs to get approval from the neighborhood housing trust, which oversees the linkage fund, that makes a recommendation to the BRA Board and the BRA Board gives their input as well. So it's an approval process, but in the original cooperation agreement the desire to make it housing creation linkage to the impacted neighborhoods is put forth early and then there's a process for it to go to and the project has to be approved. The other alternative is that it goes straight to neighborhood housing general fund and people can apply for it but we have been trying – and we've been successful – children's hospital's done it long time ago. Mass College of Pharmacy has done it. Sandy noted that Wentworth will do whatever they can to support that effort, noting they won't be the ones that approve it, but they'll work with the community, the BRA, and our developer to make that happen. Dorr: So it's Wentworth that actually has to make the request? Pat, yes, with the BRA.

- Matthew Brooks asked about the program for the ground floors, and whether there were any plans to activate the courtyard space year round, as far as retail wraparound, or anything besides the commercial space. Dave said that on the ground floor of the oval building – which would be used by Wentworth – there would be a Wentworth welcome center as well as gallery space used to display student and faculty work. Dave explained that he's gotten feedback for food/restaurant space, which would spill onto the courtyard as well. And with the space in the tower, there would be a lot of lobby space. Robert Brown said there's a lot of potential, with some Huntington Avenue frontage, but it's just a question of what it might be.
- Alison Pultinas noted that Northeastern's Institutional Master Plan includes a possible high rise where the Rubenstein buildings are located, and asked if Wentworth has collaborated on any sketches. Dave said that, beyond a few pencil sketches, the answer is no. He said they'd like to see from Northeastern what they have in mind; Wentworth is reaching out to them to do something like that and see what their plans are.
- Allison Pultinas asked about how much communication Wentworth has had with the Museum of Fine Arts about the project. Dave said Wentworth met with them about two months ago. Wentworth reviewed the proposal with them, but has not received any feedback.
- Allison Pultinas asked if Wentworth had any potential developers lined up, and Dave said no.
- Allison Pultinas said that the PDA approves the height and the massing of the buildings, but does not guarantee that the final buildings will look like the renderings in the PDA. Katelyn said that was correct, and explained that the materials and building specifics would be reviewed and approved during the large project review process, but that the configuration and placement of the buildings and open spaces are approved in the PDA.
- Allison Pultinas commented that it did not seem like the open spaces were being used effectively, noting all the pathways. Sandy explained that Wentworth hopes to use it as a space that can be activated – by student work, church events, community events, and etcetera. Sandy noted that they are still working on that, and that it will continue to be part of the discussions.
- Allison Pultinas asked if the Ruggles sidewalk would be widened. Dave said they haven't gotten to that point in the planning yet. He imagined something would be done there but he didn't know what. Alison requested that the sidewalk be widened.

Katelyn adjourned the meeting at 7:00pm. While no formal vote was taken, it was the sense of the group that the Task Force was in support of the project.