



NORTH END/WATERFRONT RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATION

P.O. Box 130319
Boston, MA 02113
www.newra.org

Date: Thursday, November 12, 2009

Time: 7:00 PM

Location: Nazzaro Center
30 North Bennet Street

November Meeting Agenda *Informed and Involved Neighbors Make a Strong Neighborhood*

Reports

7:00 PM – 7:30 PM

- President's Report
 - Introductions of new officers and committee chairpersons, Mark Paul
 - Introduction of members of the press – Phil Orlandella, Regional Review
 - Government Center Impact Advisory Group is starting up to impact development
 - Next IAG meeting is November 16th – 6pm in the BRA Board Room, 9th Floor
 - Membership renewal has begun
- Reports from City Hall:
 - Nicole Leo, Mayor's Office of Neighborhood Services
 - No report from Mayor's office
 - Kathy Carangelo-McIsaac, Councilor Sal LaMattina's Office
 - No report from Councilor LaMattina's office
- Membership Committee
 - Membership drive
 - Treasurer's Report - \$682 (Mary McGee reports in Sanjoy Mahajan's absence)
- Clean Streets Committee
 - Next meeting is November 17th at 7pm.
 - Streets have been cleaner; appreciation to Kathy and Sal for responsiveness to fast response on complaints
- Zoning, Licensing and Construction Committee
 - David Kubiak will discuss committee's review of 16 Hull St. review
 - Recognizing Frank Sciarre, who ZLC has requested edit his request for takeout at Going Bananas to not be transferable to future businesses
 - Today, licensing board was set to make a decision on the licensing issue at 5 North Square; ZLC will keep apprised
 - Next meeting November 24th at the Pilot House, 7pm; will review an application by Lucia for live entertainment licensure
- NEW Committee on Parks and Public Spaces
 - Looking to create an ad hoc committee to more rigorously review parks and open spaces issues; interested members should email exec@newra.org

Zoning and Licensing Applications

7:30 PM – 7:45 PM

16 Hull St., Peter McGinnis (owner), has filed an application seeking Board of Appeal approval to change use from 5 apartments to 8 apartments as part of plans to renovate the entire building. Plans include a new

roofdeck exclusive to the top-floor unit. Common area will remain in the basement for maintenance, trash and laundry.

Peter McGinnis was not yet present at 7:15pm to address the body.

BRA Greenway Updates

Peter Gori, Senior Manager with the Boston Redevelopment Authority, will present updates on plans for the Cross Street sidewalk and other parcels along the Rose Fitzgerald Kennedy Greenway.

7:45 PM – 8:00 PM

Status of redevelopment and plans for interim use of Parcel 9 for Haymarket Pushcart storage and trash collection.

Parcel 9 is the triangular shaped parcel on Blackstone. The RFP garnered 4 responses, which included 2 offices, 1 residential, and 1 museum proposal. The Turnpike has not yet selected any respondent. The present state is not sustainable due to garbage and other issues, which has led to an interim solution which entails the installment of trash compactors for the next 2+ years. Presently pallets and tent equipment are stored there. Fences would be rebuilt and an area with concrete pads for separated waste would be constructed. The BRA has worked through a design with DOT, but may hold off until the Spring to build it. The goal is an interim solution to clean and improve aesthetics of the area. On a side note, the compactors would only be there over the weekend, Thursday through Sunday. The remainder of the week it would only be used as storage. When a building is constructed, there will be indoor trash processing, so this will acclimate the vendors to that behavior and serve as a pilot. This could go as long as 5 years. We will not spend additional city dollars without working with the HPA (Haymarket Pushcart Assoc.) to hire additional resources to improve trash containment.

Naomi Paul, Prince Street – On behalf of Clean Streets Committee, confirms organic is defined as food trash, inquires as to nature of recycling program, and asks if it would be available to residents for trash (which it will not)

Ann Pastorio, North Margin - Inquires as to how streets will be cleaned in the area. Trash trucks are sealed and do not leak. Resources will hose down the area on Sundays.

The BRA made a comment letter to the Turnpike Authority favoring the residential proposal and the museum over the office spaces due to urban design/use, cost, and community input. Peter Gori will get a copy of the letter to NEWRA's executive committee.

The BRA is dealing with HPA on insurance issues due to the mechanization of the trash units which require insurance. The vendors want the storage but the BRA is trying to corral it in. Vendors are amicable to the separation of trash. The BRA generates minimal revenue from the recyclables.

8:00 PM – 8:15 PM

Update on the Greenway District Planning Study relative to North End parcels.

Peter Gori is project managing the planning study, which has been underway since January. They are considering scale and use. Gori will present to the IAG the specifics of the plan at their next meeting. All information is available on the BRA website under "Planning Initiatives". Next public meeting is not yet scheduled but will likely be mid-December. BRA has not seen much commentary/letters from the North End/Waterfront.

The entirety of the Government Center Garage is within the Greenway. If any part of any building is within the study area, the entirety of the site is within that district. The letters that have been sent in have been directed to economic development, but we are looking for comments on the BRA's counter-alternatives which will be shown on Monday.

Kubiak asserts we have been told by the BRA that the garage would be reviewed as part of a master plan, but it now appears to have been redistricted. Gori asserts it has always been in the Greenway realm.

The Fulton St. parking lot is owned by the BRA currently. The space adjacent to the Callahan Tunnel is the only site where higher than 55 feet is being considered. The Greenway District planning study does consider guidelines of development (building both up and out) of the Martignetti building. In December, after sixth meeting, draft guidelines will be released to the public. Comments will be incorporated and final product will be released in early 2010.

8:15 PM – 8:30 PM

Updated plans for adding café seating and revising the parking spaces on the Cross Street sidewalk plaza in front of the Martignetti building at 64-66 Cross Street.

Peter Gori and John Romano (from the DOT) are here to listen to commentary about how Cross Street is functioning.

John Romano explains the history of the area. Ten years ago during Central Artery planning meetings, this shared pedestrian and vehicular place was envisioned. Residents wanted increased foot space and parking. Business wanted throughways.

To reiterate why the BRA is involved, they serve as the planning agency that has led the Surface Transportation Action Forum. Establishments serving alcohol need to be corralled, whereas other establishments do not. There are three restaurants along this area of Salem St and Hanover St.: Caffe Graffiti (proposing Apr-Oct, 36 outdoor seats on Cross St., 3 ft. back from the Freedom Trail and with pedestrian walkways); Nick's Deli received a license and put out tables and chairs that were not per the agreement (circular rather than rectangular) and encroached upon the Freedom Trail (he has been asked to correct); Gigi's Gelateria requested 24 seats open to the public and has been requested by the BRA to reduce that to 16 seats. Frank's Pasta Shop and Nick's Deli have proposed shared seating between the two establishments.

Regarding parking, the proposal for this seating would tighten the space in the middle of the crescent. BRA is proposing a modification to remove parking from the area, incurring some expense by removing the bollards and replacing with planters. There would be a net loss of approximately 12 parking spaces for overnight resident parking.

Questions:

Nikki Rafter, Prince St.: In response to Naomi's question earlier, is the longterm aim of the BRA for this area to build. The second question is how the BRA defines open spaces?

Gori: The responsibility of the BRA is to plan for growth for the next 20 years. The plan for this space was always for the businesses to spill out onto Cross St.

Kubiak: why is 3 feet clear sufficient sidewalk space?

Gori: it was actually 3 feet from the Freedom Trail, so on the other side of the trail would be additional space, totaling acceptable space per requirement. Space will be policed by the establishments.

Kubiak: can you explain with the sidewalk committee is?

Gori: there is a committee called the Greenway Streets and Sidewalks Committee. It is appointed by the Secretary of Environmental Affairs, made up of advocates and officials. We also need your comments to take back to the BTD regarding parking, because it's not solely the decision of the BRA.

Michlewitz: Is the seating permanent seating?

Gori: Anything can be written into the licensing, but all public sidewalk seating is Apr 1 – Oct 31. If hours are important, they can be written in.

Michlewitz: has there been any further discussion by the BTD about replacement parking?

Gori: We have talked to them, are waiting for comments, there has not been a solution yet.

Conti: In light of safety issues, is there an option to not have a vehicular roadway?

Gori: Physically, no. That is not to say with the modifications of all the bollards and high expense, but in order to get large trucks they must have through access to deliver.

Postorio: Someone will get killed due to the traffic lights.

Gori: Nicole Leo and I will have someone send an engineer out to observe safety issues.

Revisited

8:30 PM

16 Hull St., Peter McGinnis (owner), has filed an application seeking Board of Appeal approval to change use from 5 apartments to 8 apartments as part of plans to renovate the entire building. Plans include a new roofdeck exclusive to the top-floor unit. Common area will remain in the basement for maintenance, trash and laundry.

There is a multi family building, proposing to change from 5 to 8 units. It is currently a hodgepodge. We have created 2 2 bedroom duplexes, 3 2 bedrooms and 3 1 bedrooms. The top unit will have a private roof deck on top. The square footages will range from 1061, 773, 628, and 525 for 1 bedrooms. The hallways are generous and to code. They have created a trash area on the common floor. They will have a resource take trash out. AS far as rodent issue during the demolition, it will take about 3 weeks to demo and a dumpster will be required for 3-4 weeks and will absorb about 3 parking spaces. We were cited for parking, which is why we have to go in front of the BRA. We are not exceeding any height restrictions; it is an interior renovation.

Questions

Pastorio: Would you consider not having a roof deck due to proximity to the Old North Church?

McGinnis: There is an existing roof deck. We can design it and set it back so that it can't be seen. Mechanicals will be set in the back of the building. You shouldn't be able to visualize the deck from Hull St.

Ballantine: Are these apartments?

McGinnis: These are rental units.

Kubiak: To reiterate from the ZLC, we have the smallest rental units of anywhere in the city and this plan proposes to lower the average. More units will bring additional trash, congestion, and traffic. Such units also attract student renters. I have heard that 95% of your current renters in other buildings are rented by young professionals. We are looking for more units that are attractive to less transient renters, such as families. You are proposing something that goes in the other direction.

McGee: In the past, we have supported owner occupied construction. I think we need to consider this increase in transient units, the effects and the cause and effect of people who don't care about being part of a community. To gain a variance, you are supposed to have a hardship. I do not hear a hardship here. Wanting more units is not a hardship. I think we must consider if this is the way we want this to go.

Christian Kulikoski: What spot will the dumpster occupy?

McGinnis: We will have to put it in the residents' spots.

Final remarks: I might have 1 student in all my units. I don't think I would want a lot of students in these units. I don't see anything wrong with young professionals. I could have made the 2 bedroom unit much smaller, but I maintained a comfortable size. I do have a couple families in my current building. I will try to keep variety. I think I am enhancing the area.

Michlewitz: What are your other units?

McGinnis: 61, 63 and 63R Charter Street.

Results:

21 Support

23 Oppose

NEWRA Comment Letter on Cross Street Sidewalk Changes

8:30 PM – 8:45 PM

Review, discussion and vote on a NEWRA comment letter to be submitted to the BRA and the Mass. Dept. of Transportation on the proposed changes and outdoor tables and chairs on the Cross Street sidewalk in front of the Martignetti building. **A list of concerns with the BRA's sidewalk plan is attached for discussion.**

Discussion on presentation by Peter Gori on Cross Street Plans:

Kubiak: I think we should put an end to the mingling of pedestrians and vehicles. I've never heard of such a thing. I hope NEWRA will continue to say, as we have for years, that the roadway does not work. The vision of 10 years ago doesn't matter. Tables and chairs don't work. Seating for Graffiti may work, but most of the others will not. Gori says it's underutilized, has he been out there? When he says we all understood this was being done for those businesses, not true – those businesses didn't even exist at the time. We might be able to accommodate some, but not many.

Christian Kulikoski: First, regarding delivery trucks, there are not easily accessible options for left turns on Salem St. until Charter St. Secondly, I think we have to resist the chairs. It didn't exist 10 years ago.

Michlewitz: If we are taking out parking, they need to find replacement parking. My first suggestion is to get rid of the cab stand. It's an empty corner.

Casso: Fulton Street is available by lottery, per Michlewitz.

Todd: I ask that we consider taking out all parking from Cross Street.

There is no need for keeping it a vehicular lane. I would like the letter to say that and that people who live here would like that to be an open space and continuation of the Greenway.

Mark: Lighting would be nice over there. If the sidewalk is going to be so wide, can they move the Freedom Trail further from the building? Also, the horse and buggies are back.

Pastorio: What happened to the North End Sign

Luigi: The mural is gone. The brick wall in front of my Caffè (Graffiti) is now mine. But I'm going to take up the project and put up a mural of the North End with a map of the neighborhood. I signed onto this with outside seating included. I'm now over half a million in.

Pollison: Would like a request to the DOT to maintain the weeds and overgrown patches in the area.

Jane: Martignetti used to only plow their area. I do hope that whatever plan we come up there will be a clear understanding of who will maintain the area.

Michlewitz: I did talk to BTDC Commissioner Timlin and will be setting up a walkthrough with him in the coming weeks. I encourage anyone who wants to participate in the walkthrough to contact my office.