

Roxbury Preparatory Charter High School

Public Meeting Notes

February 13, 2019 | 6:30pm | Our Lady of the Annunciation Melkite Catholic Cathedral

Public Comments/Questions

- George
 - Lifelong resident of the area
 - The neighborhood does not want 600 people on this site
 - Residents do not want this development shoved down their throats
 - The school is fine, but not in this neighborhood
- John
 - o Concerned about the school's impact on public transportation
 - The commuter rail operates on a one-lane track past Forest Hills
 - This development will decrease the number of trains available for commuters
 - What assurance can you give that students will not be crossing West Roxbury Parkway?
 - Response
 - We have not yet had specific discussions with the MBTA on transit
 - The bus stop we are proposing for the students to use is closer than the bus stop on the other side of West Roxbury Parkway; this will be the stop that they use, and they will not need to cross the parkway
- Sarah Rosha
 - Lives in Roxbury, child goes to Roxbury Prep Mission Hill
 - As a commuter, appreciates the transit-oriented design of the development
 - o Thank you all for working to answer the community's concerns
- Laurie Dean
 - West Roxbury resident
 - Welcomes Roxbury Prep and looks forward to the school benefitting the neighborhood
 - Appreciates the work of the development team
- Resident
 - Echoes the previous speaker's comments
 - What will the energy efficiency of the building be like?
 - Response
 - We are looking at a variety of options to make the insulation and the building as environmentally efficient as possible
- Devin Scholfield
 - Former truck driver
 - Where will trash pickup be at? Where is the loading taking place? How will this affect traffic in the area?
 - Response
 - Trash will be wheeled out to the curb

- No tractor trailers will be coming to the site; most roadways in the area cannot even handle a tractor trailer
- A 30-foot truck can turn around successfully in the turnabout on Anawan Ave.

Tom

- Roslindale resident
- Retired Boston Public Schools teacher
- What people will see when they are driving past this school will be students taking advantage of the opportunity to improve their education
- This school will be providing equal opportunity for education in the city
- We should be willing to wait 2 minutes in cars for education

John Mahoney

- o 30-year Roslindale resident
- Strong support for the development
- o Appreciates the development team bringing down the size of the building
- Wishes his kids, who went to BPS, could have been able to go to this school
- We should be talking to the MBTA and mayor about improving traffic throughout the neighborhood, which is bad without the development

Denise

- Roslindale resident
- Cannot imagine having 500 people coming through this street
- Where are people going to park if students drive?
- There is going to be absolute gridlock
- Response
 - Our school has a long history of students who use public transit; 90% of them do so
 - We will be enforcing a no-driving policy for students

Dan Singleton

- 45-year resident of Roslindale/West Roxbury
- Had a career in education
- Likes the design modifications
- Concerned about traffic and that there is not enough transit infrastructure
- Needs a transparent transportation study
- Response
 - The traffic study was not required for us to do, but we did one anyway
 - There would only be 2 minutes of additional delays in traffic if this is built

James

- West Roxbury resident
- Do you think students will be able to cross over the train tracks?
- Response
 - We are working with the MBTA on getting a crossing over the tracks at Bellevue Station

- If that does not end up being an option, students could also use the underground tunnel located at the end of McCraw St.
- The tunnel at the end of McCraw St. is not ADA compliant
- Concern about right turn on red at the intersection of Belgrade and West Roxbury Parkway
- Response
 - The right turn on red is not going to be removed
- John Anderson
 - West Roxbury resident
 - Moved here because of the values of this community
 - There is nothing more community-minded than kids going to school
- Elizabeth Wallace
 - o Lives 400 feet from the site
 - o Is anyone from the MBTA here? The BTD?
 - Response
 - No
 - What will the turn radius be with the new Anawan Ave.?
 - Response
 - Unsure off the top of my head, but cars can do it
 - What has the Boston Fire Department said about this site?
 - Response
 - They need access on three sides of the building, which we have provided
 - They don't look at our plans until later in the process
- Jay Curtis
 - Roslindale resident, employee of the school
 - o Roslindale is the only neighborhood in Boston without a public high school
 - Residents are happy that such a high percentage of students will be commuting
- Kenneth Castater
 - Has the MBTA guaranteed that there will be 10 buses waiting for the students after school gets out?
 - Response
 - We are matching our school schedule to the MBTA's service schedule
 - Arrival and dismissal are both staggered; all students will not be arriving/departing at the same time
 - Can all representatives of elected officials here stand up and give their opinion on the project?
 - Jack Duggan Mayor's Office of Neighborhood Services
 - We have no stance on the project; we are letting it go through the Article 80 process
 - Representative of State Representative Edward Coppinger

- We support the school but are against the development of the school at this site
- Representative of City Councilor Matt O'Malley
 - The councillor has concerns, but I am taking notes on the comments tonight and will be reporting back to the councilor with the comments
- Representative of City Councilor Annissa Essaibi George
 - Taking notes on the comments tonight and will be reporting back to the councilor with the comments

Resident

- There's not room for 20 people on the sidewalk area, let alone 500
- Likes information on staff managing outdoor traffic at dismissal times
- What ensures that you will continue to maintain the no driving policy for students? How will you enforce this?
- Response
 - We will have a staggered dismissal time, so there will not be 500 students on the sidewalks at once
 - We have 5 points of staffing outside during dismissal, and we will work with the community to ensure that students are not driving
 - We will put the no driving policy into our agreements with the city
 - The policy will be signed by students and families as a part of the student/family handbook
 - If a resident notices a violation of the policy, please report it back to the school; we will work with the family and the student to enforce the policy

John

- Went to West Roxbury High School
- Why not use the old West Roxbury High School as a site for the project?
- There is not enough space for the students at this site
- Response
 - We were told by the city that the West Roxbury High School site is not an option
 - BPS is planning to rehabilitate the West Roxbury High School site
 - We are providing more square feet per student than many BPS schools

Tara Lynch

- Lives in the abutting condo building
- Disheartened by the development team's references to "just the condo building"
- You say that you have been working with the condo building, but who are you working with?
- Has not heard anything from the development team until tonight
- Cross-hatching will not work to prevent parking

- Response
 - When I said "just," I was only talking about traffic (i.e. traffic on Anawan will just affect the condo building)
 - During arrival/dismissal, we plan on using on-street parking spaces in front of the school as pick-up/drop-off
 - We are hoping to be sensitive to abutters' concerns; we are hoping to give you temporary parking spaces on Anawan
 - We are hoping to work with your condo residents going forward
- What about water drainage? Will that flow into the condo building?
- Response
 - We are putting in a drainage system that will likely help the condo building
- Shradha Patel
 - o Principal of Roxbury Prep High School, Roslindale resident
 - This is the site for our school
 - We reviewed over 50 sites
 - Racially and economically, this community reflects the students of our high school
 - There is great access to public transportation at this site
 - These students are the neighbors that I want
- Raheem Shepard
 - o Represents carpenters who live in this area
 - We support the school
- Senior at Roxbury Prep High School
 - Relationships between faculty and students at the high school are great
 - One campus will allow for more progress
 - Currently, my friends and I do not feel safe going to school
 - It takes me almost an hour to get to school now; this site would take me 15 minutes to walk to
- Roxbury Prep High School Parent
 - This area was zoned for a school
 - Traffic is inevitable
 - The most important thing here is education; focus on that
- Nancy Borowitz Roslindale IS for Everyone (RISE)
 - o Roslindale resident, educator
 - This school needs a home
 - A lot of people in Roxlindale support this project
 - Developers are willing to address abutter concerns
 - Elected officials are not hearing enough from supporters
- Maria
 - Mother of students at Roxbury Prep High School
 - Students are high-achieving because of the great teachers
 - People should understand that we live in a city; traffic is everywhere

Resident

- Will this property be leased to the school?
- Response
 - Yes
- Will the developer be making a profit on this?
- Response
 - This is a business transaction, yes
- o Will Anawan Ave. be private?
- Response
 - We are not making it private
 - Even if we did, it would be private but open to public travel

Janice

- West Roxbury resident, Roxbury Prep alum, works for Roxbury Prep High School
- We are saying that it's okay for kids to drive to other places, but just not here
- A lot of these students wouldn't be able to afford cars anyway
- There are parochial/public school options for people in the neighborhood who wouldn't directly benefit from this school
- Need an option for low- to middle-income kids
- Junior at Roxbury Prep High School
 - It is refreshing to see a nice building meant to be a school
 - As a Roslindale resident, it would be a convenient commute for me

Ken

- o 25+ year Roslindale resident
- Kids are arriving just after 7am and leave at staggered times
- This is not a traffic issue
- Developers have done a thorough job

Judith

- West Roxbury resident
- My husband used to commute via the commuter rail, and he would get a notification 3 times a week that it was not running
- Are you going to build on the lot that another developer planned as condos?
- Response
 - No, we can assure that we won't build on that lot
 - We adjusted attendance numbers to reduce the size of the school

Rachel Rush

- Roslindale resident
- Who has decided what my quality of life improvements will be?
- Response
 - Certainly not us
- Who gives permission for Anawan St. changes?
- Response
 - The PIC, BPDA planners, and BTD planners

- Who gives permission for changes to the "paper street"?
- Response
 - Whoever owns the street

John McPhail

- 50-year Roslindale resident
- Neighbors do not want this
- This is not good for us
- We would be happy to see you go

Carol Moscow

- Prior speaker does not speak for me
- o To all families with kids, you are welcome
- A world-class city is not just made of condos
- o If this school makes me wait another minute in traffic, I'm fine with it
- Elected officials: don't just listen to the people who are against the school

Resident

- Things being shown are idealistic; they are not practically applicable
- Will the school still just accept only 100 kids from Roslindale?
- I am not convinced yet

Brooke Nash

- o 25-year Roslindale resident
- Lives off Belgrade Ave.
- 100% in support of the project
- I drove my kids to school every day to a Dorchester charter school that did not have public transit
- We need schools that are accessible by public transit
- The neighborhood welcomes you

• Jamie Gumber

- Lives ½ mile from the site, teacher at Roxbury Prep
- o I only speak for me, and previous speakers only speak for themselves
- Kids have phones; they know when the bus is coming and do not go outside until the bus is here
- I have spent many hours standing outside the school ensuring safe pick-ups and drop-offs
- This site is the right site

Scott

- Lives directly behind train tracks from the site
- Looks forward to the development of the school

Ruth

- Disappointed at the format of the meeting; the presentation was one-sided
- ¼ of residents are older; many cannot give feedback through the online comments form
- The MBTA shares data with developers, but not with the community

Deborah

- Parent of a Roxbury Prep High School student, Roslindale resident of 17 years
- At the other location, the school is located along 8 lanes of traffic; this is an improvement
- o Our students behave so well; they know how to cross the street
- Faculty members are there to keep the students safe
- Traffic is everywhere; kids don't increase traffic
- I live by 2 schools, traffic is so bad, but I don't complain because I am happy that students are receiving an education

Cole Evans

- Wife is a retired BPS employee
- o Traffic is an extraordinary situation in this neighborhood
- The commuter rail is delayed or not running ¼ or ½ of the time
- Siphoning off money from public schools is not how we are going to solve education inequality

Jake

- How many parking spaces are there?
- Response
 - There are 76 parking spaces (52 for faculty members, but we are estimating that only 48 will drive)
- Concerned about fire access
- Response
 - This site is absolutely fire truck accessible

• Susan Donovan

- This site has been an auto repair site for over 70 years
- Old auto shops are one of the worst types of sites to put schools on because of the pollution
- Response
 - Part of the project will be a full remediation of the site to be fully useable
 - We will actually benefit the community by cleaning up the area

Sarah

- GBANA was not notified until Christmas about the filing
- People have not been met with
- Will you allow us to form an IAG?
- Response
 - Absolutely not
 - All projects being approved are 2-3 stories higher than this
 - Over 2 years, we significantly cut back to respond to community concerns
 - We have spent 2 ½ years with the community
 - I have been doing this for over 2 decades, and I have never seen a small project with so much scoping

■ We have been doorknocking and have reached out to GBANA to set up a meeting; we were unsuccessful

Resident

- Teacher at Roxbury Prep High School and resident of the neighborhood
- The freshman class council raised \$200 in a fundraiser, and they are wanting to invest it into the Roslindale community
- How is a 15-minute longer commute more important than years of education?

Suzanne

- The greatest concern I have is safety
- There was a woman killed on Centre St. last week
- The fact that you came back with a second proposal shows that this is not the perfect site
- Response
 - Student safety is our top priority
 - We have had no incidents at our other locations
 - Because this is the ideal location, we were willing to make accommodations for community concerns

Elliot Schwartz

- Resident of West Roxbury
- The rotary at Centre St. and West Roxbury Parkway is already a chokepoint
- o I am calling on all elected officials to push for an independent traffic study
- The transportation study should include the rotary
- Response
 - Our transportation study is thorough, and has been vetted by the BPDA and the BTD
 - There have been no requests from BPDA/BTD for us to include the rotary in our study

Sebastian Burk

- Not initially a fan of the charter school
- I like that you are working with the city
- This will fill Needham trains coming into the city, which are already empty now
- Sebastian's Pizza is going to be doing really well
- This could enliven more businesses in the area
- o In favor of the school