



Downtown Waterfront Municipal Harbor Planning Public Meeting

Wednesday, June 24, 2015

Atlantic Wharf, Fort Point Room, 290 Congress Street

Attendees

Advisory Committee: Sydney Asbury, Bob Venuti, Eric White, Bud Ris, Andrew Grace, Phil Griffiths, Lois Siegelman, Meredith Rosenberg

City of Boston: Richard McGuinness, BRA; Lauren Shurtleff, BRA; Chris Busch, BRA; Kara Nagle, Councilor Linehan's Office; James Chan, Councilor Linehan's Office; Maura Zlody, Boston Environment Department

Consultant Team: Matthew Littell, Utile; Tom Skinner, Durand & Anastas

Government Representatives: Maria Puopolo, Senator Petruccelli's Office; Patrick Lyons, Office of Representative Michlewitz; Lisa Engler, Office of Coastal Zone Management; Ben Lynch, Department of Environmental Protection

Members of the Public: Judy Ehrlich, Heidi Wolf, Marcia Barron, Norma Poon, Vadim Kuksin, Nicole Rafter, Seth Lattrell, Charlie Fula, Maddy Cammakata, Dieter Reuther, Will Adams, Bill Zielinski, Ron Wallis, David Weaver, Sonia Wu, Tin Ying, Janet Jung, Frank Nasisi, Martha Mazzone, L. Bailey Berman, Michael Olson, Larry Post, Deborah Burnes, John Abdelahad, Paul Magnin, Donna Mager, Selma Rutenburg, Judy Tomer, Robert Hahn, Barry Bluestone, Joseph Benoit, Pat McAneny, Stephanie O'Neil, David Roderick, Emily Goldberg, Nolan Previte, Roger Berman, Carolyn Spicer, Keiko Prince, Mike Panagano, Richard Koch, Fred Alper, Niki Areyne, Suzanne Rogerson, Georgie Hotchkiss, Julie Hatfield Leland, Jessica Seney, Neil Aresty, Todd Guber, Jackie Rock, Sheree Dunwell, Evelyn DeRosa, Thomas DeRosa, Joanne Bothwell, Hill Horwood, Don Chiofaro, Chris Sinclair, Dorothy Willey, Richard Willey, Luke Riscitelli, Eugene Silva, Maggie Dow, Barbara Yanke, David Arnold, Christina Reale, Pamela Bardhi, Peter Gori, Marc Ehrlich, Ginny Houston, M. Willock, Christine Greeley, Julie Marrano, Diane Rubin, Karen Reuther, Jarret Johnson, Linda Cravens, Jim Cravens, Al Raine, Jane Stricker, Rob Stricker, Andrew Denkwerth, Jonathan Berk, Deborah Fung, R. Thompson, Juno Salado, Liz Poratni, Pamela Koch, Deborah Spirio, Scott Webster, Megan Fahy, Liz Nelson Weaver, Denise Wilson, Gerard Wilson, Philip Frank Koviak, Tom Lambert, Joan Green, Raymond Green, Gil Propp, Christian Merfeld, Anusia Gillespie, Paige Fults, Tony LaCasse, Victor Brogna, Russell Gilfus, Sy Mintz, Pam McDermott, Anna Yu, Paul Delios, D. Frattaroli, Elizabeth Cook, Victoria Ippolito

Meeting Summary

Richard McGuinness, BRA, began the public meeting and introduced BRA staff and the consultant team and noted that the meeting would go over the same material and recommendations for the harbor plan presented at the last Advisory Committee Meeting on June 10th. He mentioned that all the presentation material is already posted on the BRA's planning webpage. The material focuses on the three properties where new development is proposed within the Downtown Waterfront planning area, Hook Lobster, Long Wharf Marriott and Harbor Garage, and the city's recommended maximum building dimension substitutions for those locations to be included in the harbor plan. He indicated that next phase of the planning effort will involve a discussion of an offsetting strategy, or mitigation for the substitutions to

the Chapter 91 standards. The offsets will embody the public benefits from the public realm plan and will be implemented through an offsetting mechanism or formula. He mentioned this evening's meeting is a public meeting and the city's consultant team will first present the recommendations and then the meeting would open to comments and questions from the public.

Matthew Littell, Utile, first reviewed the harbor planning and development review process and then discussed the area-wide design context and objectives, including existing building heights, density, floor area ratios in and around the planning area, as well as key view corridors and attributes to preserve. The harbor planning process is the first step to establish a broad brush set of controls for any new development in the planning area, with more detailed project development review occurring during the Article 80 and MEPA processes. The Chapter 91 Waterways Regulation baseline building dimensions for the three properties were presented. Matthew then discussed the Long Wharf area and the Marriott property and the related the public amenity and programmatic priorities of the Public Realm Plan. He also referenced the shadow protection zone on Long Wharf to prevent new shadow from development in the planning area over an hour in duration on October 23rd, which is the standard for assessing shadow. The initial proposal from the Marriott owners was reviewed along with proposed modifications to the massing and a recommendation of 80% lot coverage with 20% open space on the property was presented, which will reduce the amount of open space on the site but function to better activate the area around the property and Long Wharf.

The Hook Lobster property was then discussed with recommendations for 70% lot coverage and ultimate building height of up to 305-feet. The public realm enhancements for the area that had previously been reviewed were addressed along with a review of the shadow analysis. Matthew noted that the controls for the building dimensional standards should not be limited just to floor area ratio (FAR) but should also include maximums for building volume to assist in limiting impacts of shadow, skyline and presence of new buildings. Regarding the Harbor Garage site the planning objectives related to the property were reviewed including views to the Custom House Tower, views to and from the city and water, and porosity through the site.

Matthew then reviewed the Chapter 91 baseline scenario and presented a number of massing scenarios for the property with a variety of lot coverage and building configurations that would function to remove the existing garage, create more open space on the property and prevent shadow on Long Wharf. A number of controlling dimensional and numeric factors were tested for the property resulting in maximum dimensional standard recommendations for the property of: 600-feet in height, 9.5 million cubic feet, 875,000 square feet and a minimum of 30% of the site as open space. Matthew stated that the purpose of the material presented is not to recommend any one scenario but rather to establish a set of numerical criteria or tests below which there are a number of possible development scenarios that will meet the city's objectives for the site and planning area. The various tower and massing scenarios presented all run into one of the maximum dimensional controls. Beyond the numeric and dimensional standards there are the ground floor uses, qualities of open spaces, adjacencies, design and architectural considerations, all of which are more specifically dealt with through the development review process, but can be discussed and referenced in the harbor plan.

Sydney Asbury, Committee Chair, asked that those that had questions or comments to come up to the microphone at the front of the room and also asked that people be respectful and brief with their comments.

Richard Koch, Resident of InterContinental, commented that all the shadows presented fall on the water and questioned the accuracy and extent of the shadow models, and also referenced traffic congestion and concerns with more extensive traffic with further development. He also referenced the North-South Rail Link and whether the building foundation at Hook would preclude that project.

Neil Aresty, Harbor Towers Resident, spoke of storm inundation and effects on the Downtown Waterfront District and noted he was excited about progress and expressed an interest in having the Harbor Garage replaced by a new development. He noted that Harbor Tower's mechanicals are in the basement of the garage and the need to work collaboratively to have those systems relocated out of harm's way. He also referenced a parking garage in Brooklyn, which functions like a vending machine and noted that a similar design could work at the Harbor Garage location and expressed a need to think creatively.

Victor Brogna, Mercantile Building Resident, referenced the Notice to Proceed from the Office of Coastal Zone Management and the substitution guidance section which states that substitutions be at least as effective at meeting state tidelands objectives, and asked the BRA to reference the specific performance standard in relation to the substitution so that the public is clear on those provisions. He also asked if the BRA has had any conversations with state regulators regarding the substitutions proposed so far in the planning process. Rich McGuinness noted that the BRA will go through the policy objectives and substitutions. He mentioned that state regulators are attending Advisory Committee meetings and the city has been meeting with CZM and DEP through the planning process. Regarding process he stated that the harbor plan has to be approved by the BRA Board and then goes to the Secretary of EOEEA and they run their own public review process before determining if the plan is to be approved.

Tin Ying, Harbor Towers Resident, observed that there have been qualitative and quantitative parameters presented which appear to allow for flexibility for tradeoffs and asked when the formulas or algorithms for the tradeoffs will be decided and presented. Rich McGuinness noted that the city will get into that level of analysis at future meetings and formulas and metrics will be presented for consideration by the Advisory Committee and public.

Meredith Rosenberg, MHPAC Member, praised the BRA for rejecting the Harbor Towers 1.3 million square foot proposal, as well as the New England Aquarium's recent letter regarding the BRA's proposed maximum substitution standards. She asked about outcomes of prior MHP processes and referenced a chart that has been developed from prior approved plans that reviews prior projects substitutions and approved offsets. She noted that the Chiofaro proposal for Harbor Garage and the maximum substitutions presented by the BRA exceed prior precedent.

Paul Delios, Owner of Kane's Doughnuts, stated that he is a tenant at One International Place, and praised the Chiofaro Company for how they maintain and activate the public spaces at One International, which is open to all in the surrounding area to sit and enjoy. He noted that as a small business coming into Boston there has been great support from the Chiofaro Group who have been great stewards to the tenants. He believes that the Chiofaro team will bring positive things to the Harbor Garage redevelopment.

Christina Reale, property owner and resident of South Boston, lauded the Chiofaro Company's management and programming at One International Place and expressed interest in economic growth,

innovation and development along the waterfront and noted that the transformation of the Harbor Garage property would assist in those endeavors.

Todd Guber, Folio Resident, noted he loves living in the Downtown Waterfront area and that the Harbor Garage is an eye sore and much can be done to improve the site. He expressed interest in progress and hopes that a new development proceeds on the Harbor Garage property.

Martha Mazzone, Fort Point Resident, endorsed the prior positive statements about the Chiofaro Company and their proposal for the Harbor Garage site. She noted that the city needs to be progressive and grow and expressed support for new, iconic design and big thinking for the planning area. She referenced the Boston Harbor Project and that we now have a harbor that serves as an incredible resource. She mentioned that the construction in the Seaport District has blocked views and access to the harbor and there is very little street activation in that area. She noted that the Harbor Garage site design will open the property and create new connections to the Greenway and the harbor.

Norman Previtie, Commercial Street Resident, stated that the Harbor Garage project is great for the city and will help advance the city as an international destination and the development will bring jobs and improve the surrounding area and resident's real estate values.

Heidi Wolf, InterContinental, asked how the maximum recommendations were determined and what has changed from the Greenway Guidelines to increase proposed heights, and how the substitutions are related to public benefits. Rich McGuinness, noted that the recommendations started with the Greenway Guidelines, which did not recognize the water's edge and impacts on the waterfront. He noted that the analysis has looked at the type and extent of density that will be necessary to have the properties redeveloped and function to open and activate the area and waterfront. He also noted that the public benefit discussion will be reviewed at the next Advisory Committee meeting.

Gil Propp, referenced transit and transit capacity and existing traffic congestion in the area and noted the need for added capacity. He inquired about the status of the Northern Avenue Bridge and the need to improve transit routes and capacity. He also expressed support for the Harbor Square proposal and noted the area is a gateway to the city and the need for innovative design for new buildings along the Downtown Waterfront.

Donato Favaroli, North End Resident, expressed support for Mr. Chiofaro and his project.

Karen Reuther, Fort Point Resident, mentioned that her view has changed and has been blocked by new development, and accepts the change with the new and improved services, rather her issue is with the design of the new buildings and a game changing building and design is needed for the Downtown Waterfront.

Mary Holland, Harbor Towers Resident, inquired about the acceptance of covered space as open space as part of the planning effort. Rich McGuinness, noted that the garden under glass proposal would not be considered open space, but could serve as mitigation for other substitutions.

Elizabeth Cook, Harbor Towers Resident, expressed concern with traffic and future congestion and praised the New England Aquarium's recent letter regarding the redevelopment of the Harbor Garage site.

Peter Gori, Fort Point Resident, noted the disconnection in the Downtown Waterfront area and the challenges for area businesses. He mentioned he worked on the Greenway Guidelines and indicated there were various schemes and heights along the Greenway and the current process is more thoughtful in its analysis of height and massing.

Larry Post, Harbor Towers Resident, mentioned that the garage is an eye sore and redevelopment will increase property values, businesses, tourism and open the area and create new public amenities and wants to see the project proceed and will be great.

Barry Bluestone, Northeastern University, referenced public open space and the Chiofaro plan will open the property to the public and all neighbors in the community and draw people into the area to use the waterfront and the Greenway. He also noted that we have to think about economic feasibility to make the project work and unlock the public space and amenities.

Pat McAneny, Fenway Resident, noted he is excited by change in the city and views the redevelopment of the Harbor Garage site as important to draw people and activate the waterfront.

Joe Benoit, Harbor Towers Resident, noted he would like to see the garage removed and have the site opened to the surrounding area, but how the site is developed is important and the Chiofaro proposal and the BRA's proposed massings take too much space and are too massive, and supports scaling the project down.

Bud Ris, MHPAC Member, referenced the urban design metrics present in the Downtown Waterfront area and noted that there is no justification of the scope of recommended maximums presented in the existing urban context. He noted that one cannot rationally get to the recommended numeric metrics based upon what exists in the area, so there must be some economic justification driving the numbers and if that is the case than that analysis should be made public. He sees the numbers that have been presented as a departure from the planning that has occurred to date, and conversely the Hook Lobster site and Marriott Long Wharf recommendations do work within their contexts and there are viable tradeoffs for those proposed densities. He also noted the maximums should not be set until we see what is going to happen throughout the whole planning area; how much more access throughout the area, how much more open space, what will be done to support water dependent uses in the area. He mentioned that there has not been any discussion of climate change in the process and climate change must be incorporated into the planning effort based upon city's own Climate Action Plan. He suggested guidelines including that new structures have a base elevation of 4-6 feet above grade to protect new development and limitations on uses on the ground floor and flood proofing of areas below the flood elevation. He stated that the three development sites should serve as a model for climate resiliency.

Marcelle Willock, Harbor Towers Resident, stated that Harbor Towers was a pioneer development and there has been a long commitment by Harbor Towers to the neighborhood and they want what is best for the community. She noted that Harbor Towers is not concerned with views, rather they commissioned an architect to look broadly at the area and impacts upon the surrounding waterfront area, and the interest is keeping Boston the world class city that it is. She noted that Harbor Towers has been meeting with Don Chiofaro and a new development is favored and mentioned they have indicated that height is not the enemy, but we want progress that benefits the whole waterfront.

Frederick Alper, noted that through the presentation there was no mention of the New England Aquarium which is a cultural icon, and the shadows and noise that will come with development need to be considered. He stated that the proposals for the Harbor Garage site are too large and there needs to be moderation with the proposed progress.

Robert Stricker, Harbor Towers Resident, expressed support regarding the scenarios presented for the Harbor Garage site, and referenced the material as thoughtful. He indicated the garage should come down with thoughtful design that opens the waterfront and new development that is iconic. Traffic and climate change are also issues that need to be addressed as part of the project.

Deborah Burns, Harbor Towers Resident, referenced Harborwalk and all the recent, positive development and connections along the waterfront. She mentioned that the existing garage should come down and indicated that height and mass of new development are not as much of a concern as the activation and what the waterfront can be in the future. We need a beautiful new landmark along the waterfront that will make the district even more dynamic, work with the Aquarium and function to alleviate the traffic congestion.

Frank Nasisi, Harbor Towers Resident, stated that he fully supports and endorses the Chiofaro Team's redevelopment of the Harbor Garage. He noted that there have been members of the Harbor Towers Trustees that have spoken against the Chiofaro proposal, but the trustees do not represent all the residents of Harbor Towers and their positions on the project. He mentioned that the area around the garage is dead space and more activity and destinations are needed; an iconic and exciting building is what is needed.

Ginny Houston, Harbor Towers Resident, expressed support for the redevelopment of Harbor Garage, and would like to see a new building replace the garage structure. She noted that Don Chiofaro has been listening and giving consideration to concerns expressed by Harbor Tower's residents.

Mike Penagano, Works in Seaport, noted he works at an ad agency and referenced the younger demographic in the city and indicated that the younger generation would like to see new development and the city progress. He expressed concern with the architecture and lack of activity at the ground level around the Seaport and the need to not make those same mistakes with new development.

Frank Mirano, Harbor Towers Resident, noted that there are a lot of positive comments and opinions being expressed, but the Harbor Garage site is part of a larger municipal harbor planning process and there is more than one project to consider and we need to understand and grasp all the details.

Sydney Asbury thanked all in attendance and noted that the BRA continues to take comments and questions on the process and staff may be contacted for follow up.

Meeting adjourned at 8:00 PM.