



South Boston Waterfront District Municipal Harbor Planning
Advisory Committee Meeting No. 1
Wednesday, February 3, 2016
District Hall, 75 Northern Avenue

Attendees

Advisory Committee (“Committee”): Bruce Berman, Austin Blackmon, Buddy Christopher, Rep. Nick Collins, Marianne Connolly, Sgt. Joe Cheevers, Sara McCammond, Jim Rooney, Greg Vasil, Julie Wormser

City of Boston (“City”): Richard McGuinness, Boston Redevelopment Authority (BRA); Chris Busch, BRA; Erikk Hokenson, BRA; Casey Hines, BRA; Michael Christopher, BRA

Government Representatives: David Biele, Office of Rep. Nick Collins; Pat O’Brien, Office of Sen. Linda Dorcea-Forry; Lisa Engler, Office of Coastal Zone Management (CZM); Ben Lynch, Department of Environmental Protection (DEP)

Proponent Representatives: Michael Kineavy, Cronin Holdings; Howard Manfredi, Elkus Manfred Architects; Rob Halter, Elkus Manfredi Architects; Rebecca Leclerc, Elkus Manfredi Architects; Tom Skinner, Durand & Anastas

Members of the Public: Valerie Burns, Regan Cleminson, Jeffrey Curley, Neil Fitzpatrick, Mike Foley, Alex Morris, Charles Norris, Tom Palmer, Lisa Pedicini, Tom Snyder

Meeting Summary

Mr. Chris Busch, BRA, opened the meeting at 6:05 PM by introducing BRA staff and the Committee in attendance. He explained that the Committee has been convened to provide input into the amendment and renewal South Boston Waterfront District Municipal Harbor Plan (MHP) in order to facilitate the redevelopment of the “Restaurant Parcels” located at 150 Seaport Boulevard, where the Atlantic Beer Garden and Whiskey Priest are currently located. Additionally, the amendment will serve to enhance the public’s access to and use of the waterfront there and incorporate the recommendations of several planning studies and city policies that have been developed since the MHP was originally approved in 2000.

Mr. Busch continued with an explanation of the planning area and historical context for the MHP. The South Boston Waterfront is an approximately 1000-acre area, roughly bounded by the Fort Point Channel, West First Street, East First Street, and Boston Harbor. This area includes filled and flowed tidelands owned by private entities and the Commonwealth, as well as the South Boston Designated Port Area. The MHP area totals approximately 108 acres and includes the tidelands subject to Chapter 91 regulations in South Boston from the West Fourth Street Bridge, along the Fort Point Channel, around Fan Pier, and ending at 150 Seaport Boulevard. Following its approval in 2000, the MHP was amended in 2002 to facilitate the

build-out of the Institute of Contemporary Art (ICA) and again in 2009 to incorporate the Fort Point District 100 Acres Master Plan. The Harborpark District Plan, Boston's original MHP for its entire waterfront, was developed to promote the waterfront's revitalization, activation, working port, and access, the latter of which is generally achieved through the 47-mile Harborwalk. The South Boston Waterfront was initially excluded by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts in its approval of the Harborpark District Plan in order to encourage a deeper vision for the area. The City responded with the development of the Seaport Public Realm Plan, which focuses on the promotion of access to the harbor, preservation of the industrial port, establishment of a vital mixed-use district, development as an integral part of a local and regional economy, and assurance that the community would benefit from the redevelopment of the South Boston Waterfront.

Mr. Busch explained that the Seaport Public Realm Plan led to the development of the South Boston District Municipal Harbor Plan. The planning area was subdivided into subdistricts in order to preserve their distinct attributes: Fort Point Industrial (P&G Gillette area), 100 Acres, Fort Point Historic, and Inner Harbor. He continued that the Secretary of the Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs (EEA) conditioned approval of the MHP with a number of requirements, which included a minimum of 50% open space on all major development sites; maximum building heights of 240-270 feet; limited shadow impacts on Fan Pier Cove; provision of the Harborwalk along the entirety of the waterfront; provision of Facilities of Public Accommodation (FPAs) on all ground floors; 127,000 SF of civic and cultural space; a minimum of one-third residential use on new development sites; water transportation facilities and operations subsidies.

Mr. Busch focused on the Inner Harbor Subdistrict, summarizing the Fan Pier, Pier 4, and Seaport Square developments. He noted that the primary goal of the South Boston Waterfront District MHP for the Restaurant Parcels "is to complete a Harborwalk connection from Pier 4 along the seaward edge of the Restaurant Parcels connecting to a new Northern Avenue." Along with significant open space, these developments have included multiple civic & cultural uses, water transportation facilities, and water transportation operations subsidies.

Mr. Busch continued with an explanation of the existing plans with influence over the MHP process. He introduced the Inner Harbor Passenger Water Transportation Plan from 2000, which has been the City's guiding document for focusing water transportation resources in anticipation of growing ridership, especially to and from the South Boston Waterfront. While projections haven't been realized, an increase in ridership is expected. Continuing with the transportation theme, Mr. Busch highlighted the South Boston Waterfront Sustainable Transportation Plan from 2015, which was developed in the hopes of alleviating the existing and anticipated traffic of the area. Next, he spoke on the City of Boston's Open Space & Recreation Plan, which is updated every five years, the Fort Point Channel Watersheet Activation Plan, and Boston's various climate change preparedness and resilience initiatives. Finally, he listed a number of other on-going initiatives currently being conducted by the City,

including Imagine Boston 2030, Boston Creates, Housing a Changing City, Go Boston, Boston Bikes, Drive Boston, Complete Streets, and Vision Zero.

His presentation completed, Mr. Busch invited Mr. Tom Skinner of Durand & Anastas Environmental Strategies for Cronin Holdings to present additional context for the MHP process. Mr. Skinner provided a brief history of Chapter 91, which was drafted in 1866 to regulate the existing waterfront to limit harbor encroachments, preserve the public's right to navigation, and promote commerce. In 1979, judicial precedent expanded the purview of Chapter 91 to include filled tidelands, after which the Commonwealth, through its Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) Waterways Program, developed regulations over the course of ten years that affected both developments and activities on and near the water. Further legislation clarified that landlocked tidelands (i.e. those more than 250' from the shoreline and across a public way) are not regulated under Chapter 91. Current regulations prioritize water-dependent uses and ensure that private uses for tidelands and waterways serve a proper public purpose. Water-dependent uses require direct access to waterways, are presumed to have a proper public purpose, and are not restricted by Chapter 91's dimensional standards (but are subject to local zoning). Non-water dependent uses do not require direct access to the waterways, must provide amenities to ensure the public's enjoyment of the waterfront, and are restricted in size and location by Chapter 91's dimensional standards, of which there are eight: lot coverage, open space, building height, water-dependent use zone (WDUZ), FPAs, facilities of private tenancy (FPTs), pedestrian-access network (i.e. the Harborwalk), and new pile-supported structures. In the absence of an approved MHP, these standards are applied uniformly along the Commonwealth's coast.

Mr. Skinner paused for questions. Ms. Julie Wormser, MHPAC Member, inquired about buildings on pilings. Mr. Skinner clarified that any coverage on the watersheet is required to be offset by an equal amount of available watersheet elsewhere. Mr. Bruce Berman, MHPAC Member, asked for a clarification of FPTs on flowed tidelands. Mr. Skinner replied that FPTs are not allowed on flowed tidelands, unless substitute provisions allow for them and are offset. A member of the public inquired about floor-area ratio (FAR) requirements. Mr. Skinner replied that there is no specific FAR in Chapter 91, but defers to local zoning. He continued that massing, which is subject to Chapter 91, can be translated into FAR, but not always.

Mr. Skinner continued by explaining that MHPs are voluntary, state-approved, and used for many purposes, including alternative dimensional standards and the promotion of local waterfront goals. As mentioned, it is administered by EEA through DEP's Waterways Program and the Office of Coastal Zone Management (CZM). Substitute provisions replace dimensional standards for non-water-dependent use projects and must be offset to activate the waterfront with a variety of public amenities. Focusing on the South Boston Waterfront District MHP, Mr. Skinner provided a brief recap of Mr. Busch's presentation and added that the MHP allows building heights up to the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) maximum and aggregates and

focuses open space on the waterfront. Excluding the Restaurant Parcels, the MHP will be renewed as-is, as periodically required.

Mr. Skinner outlined the anticipated schedule for the MHP process: four to six Committee meetings, a public hearing, review and approval by the BRA Board through the spring, followed by submission to the Commonwealth in late spring and a 30-day public comment period, and a decision from the Commonwealth in early summer.

Upon the conclusion of Mr. Skinner's portion of the presentation, Mr. Busch invited Rep. Nick Collins, MHPAC Member, to comment prior to his departure for another engagement. Rep. Collins stated his appreciation of the BRA's effort to engage the public by convening the Committee. He continued by highlighting the need to protect the waterfront for the public in light of the significant development the City is experiencing and noted that the proposed development is ceding ample rentable space in order to do so. Rep. Collins concluded that he is excited for the jobs that the proposed development of 150 Seaport Boulevard will create.

Mr. Michael Kineavy, Chief Operations Officer of Cronin Holdings, introduced Cronin Holdings' project team. He provided a brief history of his organization's real estate developments and holdings in the area, noting that they acquired the Restaurant Parcels nearly ten years ago and opened the Atlantic Beer Garden in 2007 and the Whiskey Priest in 2009. Cronin Holdings currently has over 800 people working along the City's waterfront, approximately half of whom are Boston residents. He emphasized the need for a neighborhood of private, public, and non-profit interests, which Cronin Holdings has a history of supporting. Mr. Kineavy continued that the architecture of the proposed development of 150 Seaport Boulevard is a response to Mayor Marty Walsh's call for more distinctive architecture in the City and expressed hope that the public would approve.

Mr. Rob Halter, Senior Associate at Elkus Manfredi Architects, provided a brief overview of his presentation and opened with a more detailed examination of the Restaurant Parcels. He explained that the parcels are composed of a quadrilateral parcel owned by Cronin Holdings, within whose footprint the buildings are, and a triangular parcel leased from the City. The Harborwalk would be seaward of the Restaurant Parcels and the sidewalk along Northern Avenue would be improved. Mr. Halter invited Mr. Howard Elkus, Principal of Elkus Manfredi Architects, to present the inspiration for the building's design. Mr. Elkus stated the site is uniquely positioned at the exit of the Mass Pike (I-90), effectively creating a gateway for the Seaport. He continued that the water's edge also provides a unique landscape where the built environment terminates and meets the flat sea. He continued that rather than replicate the forms of the neighboring buildings, Elkus Manfredi Architects sought to complement them while capitalizing on the "romance of the sea." The design's overall inspiration is the bow of a ship, which Mr. Elkus called the bow of a ship one of the most honest forms in the world: strictly functional, but beautifully formed. Mr. Elkus presented initial sketches of the building form and listed a variety of its aspects that sought to enhance the view corridors from both the

interior of the building and the street. He proceeded to explain the development of the design, where a parallelogram was dynamically modelled to enhance open space, optimize views, and expand the urban realm. Mr. Halter continued the description of the design, highlighting the smaller base form featuring two-stories of retail/restaurant space that allows for maximum ground-level open space, a continuous Harborwalk, and an improved sidewalk condition. Mr. Halter next showed the interior floor plans for the base and noted that the critical mechanical infrastructure has been elevated to the second floor in the interest of resilience to flooding. He then revealed the final building form, which Mr. Elkus also described further by highlighting the transparency of the building in an attempt to be neighborly to both the surrounding built environment and the water.

Mr. Skinner returned to present the substitute provisions of the MHP for building footprint, building height, and WDUZ that are needed to allow for such a development. He explained that the ground-level building footprint is 48.5% of the site, but that due to the cantilevered design, the total building footprint – which Chapter 91 regulates – is 64% and requires 3,374 SF to be offset. Additionally, the total net-new shadow for the building is 16,640 SF (12,197 SF over water, 4,443 SF over land), which Mr. Skinner indicated would be explained in more detail in future meetings. Further, the building is designed to exceed the Chapter 91 height limit and requires the relocation of 208 SF of the WDUZ from the north side of the Harborwalk to the east side. Mr. Skinner concluded his presentation with a recap of the public realm improvements the development would entail, including the continuation of the Harborwalk, expanded public exterior space, expanded view corridors, two levels of active uses, and the MHP offsets and stated that the next Committee meeting will be on February 17 at 6 PM.

Mr. Busch opened the floor to questions from Committee members. Mr. Jim Rooney, MHPAC Member, asked for a more detailed explanation of the building's programming. Mr. Halter replied that two bottom floors will include 8,500 SF of restaurant space and approximately 130 condominiums on the remaining floors. Ms. Wormser asked for the building's height and its relationship to the FAA height limits. Mr. Halter answer that the current design is 250' and is currently undergoing the FAA's TERPS analysis. He added that the existing building is 22-25' away from Pier 4, a line that will be maintained. Mr. Berman commented that this design proposal is the latest in a string of two or three that have sought to open view corridors. He requested that the development team consider how the building's edge at the water-level could interact with users of the water, such as the boating public. Ms. Marianne Connolly, MHPAC Member, asked if the surrounding buildings had also gone through the MHP process. Mr. Busch replied that those within the Chapter 91 jurisdiction had and that the Restaurant Parcels had not because the owners had not expressed an interest in additional density at the time of the MHP processes.

In response to Ms. Wormser's question regarding underground parking, Mr. Skinner affirmed that the current design calls for underground parking. He continued that additional analysis of the flood maps are being conducted to ensure that the unique characteristics of the site are

accounted for. Ms. Wormser expressed concern that the building would experience chronic flooding as opposed to nuisance flooding in the future given climate change and sea level rise. Mr. Halter responded that, in addition to the flooding analysis, the ground floor of the building will be elevated 1.5-3' above the ground and protected by flood barriers as needed. Mr. Austin Blackmon, asked if the flood barriers would be transported to the site each time, which Mr. Halter confirmed. Mr. Skinner added that maintaining the activation of the ground level and the public's access to the waterfront, as required by Chapter 91, is sometimes difficult to reconcile with expected flooding. Mr. Halter continued that additional measures will be examined once the flood analysis is complete, but that the building's core functions would, at the least, be elevated.

Mr. Blackmon, MHPAC, asked how many parking spaces are proposed for the development. Mr. Halter replied that there are 170 parking spaces for both residential and commercial uses. Mr. Blackmon followed up his initial question with another on job creation. Mr. Kineavy replied that 400 construction jobs would be generated and that permanent jobs are still being calculated.

Mr. Busch opened the floor to the public for questions. A South Boston resident and Local 7 Ironworker, inquired about jobs for residents. Mr. Kineavy replied that they are working with local union representatives to maximize the number of jobs for residents. Mr. Tom Snyder asked about public safety, specifically access for firefighters along the Harborwalk. Mr. Busch replied that the building will comply with all regulations necessary for building permits, including public safety. Mr. Snyder also asked about access to boats and ships from land. Mr. Busch replied that there are a number of areas throughout the city designed for such uses, including much of Charlestown, Chelsea Creek, East Boston, and the South Boston DPA, but that most of the water's edge in the South Boston Waterfront District are for transient vehicles due to the wave action of the area.

Ms. Wormser requested a clarification on site assembly. A representative from Cronin Holdings explained that Cronin Holdings has leased the discontinuance of Old Northern Avenue adjacent to the parcel they own and is seeking to purchase the discontinuance area.

Mr. Ben Lynch, Department of Environmental Protection, asked if the public sidewalk is included in the footprint. Mr. Skinner replied that the cantilevered portion of the building does extend over the sidewalk. Mr. Jim Rooney, MHPAC Member, asked if the adjacent sidewalk to the east is owned by MassPort, which Mr. Halter confirmed.

Mr. Busch informed the Committee and public that the next meeting is scheduled for February 17 at 6 PM in the Piemonte Room on the Fifth Floor of City Hall.

Meeting adjourned at 7:35 PM.