



**Downtown Waterfront Municipal Harbor Planning
Advisory Committee Meeting No. 38**
Wednesday, July 20, 2016
Boston City Hall, Piemonte Room

Attendees

Advisory Committee (“Committee”): Sydney Asbury (Chair), Bruce Berman, Joanne Hayes-Rines, Nigella Hillgarth, Jill Valdes Horwood, Lee Kozol, Susanne Lavoie, Bud Ris, Meredith Rosenberg, Lois Siegelman

City of Boston (“City”): Richard McGuinness, Boston Redevelopment Authority (BRA); Chris Busch, BRA; Erikk Hokenson, BRA; Adria Boynton, BRA;

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

Government Representatives: Lisa Engler, Office of Coastal Zone Management (CZM)

Members of the Public: Rita Advani, John DeChiaro Forbes Dewey, Donna Hazard, Mary Holland, Laura Jasinski, Gabor Korodi, Eric Krauss, Julie Mairano, Sy Mintz, Deanna Moran, Thomas Nally, Regina Noonan, Tom Palmer, Erik Rexford, Diane Rubin, Kendra Slaughter, Jay Spence, Dan T., Ginny T., Parnia Zahedi

Meeting Summary

Mr. Richard McGuinness, BRA, opened the meeting at 6:05 PM by introducing BRA staff and the consultant team. He explained that the purpose of the meeting was to share [the initial draft of the Downtown Waterfront Municipal Harbor Plan \(MHP\)](#). He added that the Committee would not meet in August to allow time to read the MHP, but would reconvene in September with a Committee working session on September 14 and a Committee meeting on September 28. Mr. McGuinness indicated that he would walk through the framework of the MHP and answer any initial questions.

Ms. Joanna Hayes-Rines, MHPAC Member, asked what the expected outcome of the Committee working session on September 14 would be. Mr. McGuinness answered that the meeting would allow the Committee to go through the draft MHP page-by-page to review and discuss in detail.

Mr. Bruce Berman, MHPAC Member, asked if the draft MHP would be made available to the public. Mr. McGuinness replied that the draft was provided to the Committee first at their request, but that any extra copies would be given to interested members of the public tonight and [posted online](#) the next day.

Mr. McGuinness recounted the outline of the MHP: background and goals; amplifications, substitute provisions, and offsets; Chapter 91 long-term license fees; preparing for climate change; and MHP consistency with state coastal policies. The MHP provides a comprehensive summary of the tidelands within Chapter 91 jurisdiction, a list of the water-dependent uses within the MHP area, and the planning and development context for the MHP area. A section looks back at the history of the Downtown Waterfront, while another looks forward at the potential impacts of climate change, including sea level rise. The parcel catalogue describes the developments and uses of the district and notes challenges and opportunities, such as Harborwalk inaccessibility.

Mr. McGuinness continued that the MHP follows the Notice to Proceed (NTP) issued by CZM, which outlines the goals of the MHP. Ms. Hayes-Rines inquired about Goal #6, the implementation of the Greenway District Planning Study Wharf District Guidelines, specifically the height limits prescribed therein. Mr. McGuinness responded that the MHP builds upon the Greenway District Guidelines with a more specific analysis of parcels within Chapter 91 jurisdiction, including the shadow impacts and waterfront access, and an exhaustive public process.

Mr. McGuinness stated that the MHP incorporates the [Public Realm and Watersheet Activation Plan](#) implicitly throughout and explicitly as an appendix. The next section details the amplifications, substitute provisions, and offsets for the Downtown Waterfront, including those for the three potential development sites: Marriott Long Wharf, Harbor Garage, and Hook Lobster. Regarding Chapter 91 long-term license fees, the MHP recommends that these fees be used to support open space maintenance and programming within and adjacent to the district. Ms. Hayes-Rines asked what these fees would amount to. Mr. McGuinness answered that it depends on the size of the development and the licenses term, but that a recently approved project in the South Boston Waterfront MHP, 150 Seaport Boulevard, was expected to contribute up to \$500,000. Mr. Bud Ris, MHPAC Member, questioned if these were recommendations or options. Mr. McGuinness explained that they are options for Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (MassDEP) at licensing, but the BRA is recommending that they be used in a certain way. Mr. McGuinness added that licensing fees can also be directed to subsidizing water transportation. Mr. Ris clarified that these are licensing fees, not offsets, which Mr. McGuinness confirmed.

The MHP also includes a section on climate change, which incorporates the [latest climate change projections](#) for Boston recently published by [Climate Ready Boston](#), and a final section on MHP consistency with state coastal policies. Mr. McGuinness detailed next steps for the draft MHP, which include the goal of approval by the BRA Board at their November meeting. After such approval it would be submitted to the state, who would host a public comment period and hearing and a consultation with the BRA, and then a final decision would be issued by the Secretary of Energy and Environmental Affairs (EEA).

Mr. McGuinness solicited questions or comments from the Committee. Mr. Ris noted that there appeared to be ample support for the South Boston Waterfront MHP from the Mayor's Office at the state's public hearing on the MHP and wondered if there would be such support for the Downtown Waterfront MHP. Mr. McGuinness replied that the South Boston Waterfront MHP differed as a site-specific amendment, as opposed to a district-wide MHP and suggested that the Mayor's Office is looking for public feedback as the document remains a draft.

Ms. Diane Rubin, representing Harbor Towers, asked if there is a deadline for comments. Mr. McGuinness explained that there is a city-sponsored, 30-day public comment period once the final draft is issued by the BRA, but that comments are welcome prior to that period. In addition, the state will have their own 30-day public comment period once the MHP has been submitted to them. Ms. Rubin wondered if any changes would be made to draft based upon public comments. Mr. McGuinness answered that all comments would be considered and incorporated as appropriate. Mr. Tom Palmer, representing Harbor Towers, wondered how there could be a 30-day comment period prior to the BRA Board's November meeting if the last Committee meeting is scheduled for October. Mr. McGuinness stated that the BRA Board meeting is on November 17, allowing ample time for a public comment period.

Mr. Ris asked if there was agreement with the developers of the three sites examined in the MHP. Mr. McGuinness declined to speak for the developers, but that these are the same provisions presented since June 2015.

Ms. Rubin inquired if the MHP would initiate zoning changes. Mr. McGuinness confirmed and added that any zoning changes would occur following the Secretary's Decision on the MHP and must be approved by the BRA Board and Zoning Board of Appeals.

Mr. Ris wondered if BRA Staff feels that the MHP is "transformative." Mr. McGuinness answered that the MHP outlines building envelopes and cannot comment on potential projects, but that, together with the public realm improvements proposed, they will significantly improve the Downtown Waterfront in a number of ways, such as flood resilience, water transportation, access to the waterfront, etc.

Ms. Mary Holland, Harbor Towers, asked why the BRA would propose certain heights if they don't expect developers to build that. Mr. McGuinness explained that there are typically trade-offs between height and lot coverage given the maximum square feet and building volumes allowed. For example, a building may be taller with a smaller footprint or shorter with a larger footprint. Ms. Holland asked what Chapter 91 prescribes for lot coverage. Mr. McGuinness answered 50% in the absence of an MHP.

Mr. Palmer inquired if the state had indicated approval of the draft MHP. Mr. McGuinness declined to speak for the state. Mr. Palmer asked why the Greenway Guidelines were included as a goal of the MHP. Mr. McGuinness explained that the implementation of the Greenway

Guidelines were a goal of the NTP, but that the Greenway Guidelines were clear that additional height would be considered assuming a thorough public process.

There being no further questions or comments, Mr. McGuinness informed the Committee and public that the draft MHP would be [available online](#) the following morning and that the next meeting would be on September 28, 2016 at 3 PM in the Piemonte Room on the fifth floor of City Hall, Boston, MA. He ended the meeting at 6:40 PM.