

BERKLEE TASK FORCE MEETING SUMMARY

Date: Tuesday, February 6, 2007

Place: Berklee College of Music

David Friend Recital Hall, Uchida Building, 921 Boylston Street

Present: See Attached List

1. Welcome and Introduction

Gerald Autler began the meeting with introductions and passed around a sign-in sheet for task force members and non-task force members.

2. Review of Berklee's "Four Strategies" and Implementation

David Hornfischer began the PowerPoint presentation (see PowerPoint).

(DH) The "Avenue of Music" image on the first slide was created by working with the Fenway Alliance in consultation with the Boston Transportation Department (BTD) after general approval by the Mayor's office. This image will soon be hanging on Massachusetts Avenue between Boylston Street and Huntington Avenue. While we will not be changing the name of the street as they did on Huntington Avenue – Avenue of the Arts – it will mark the street as having musical importance.

(DH) The offer of a Berklee tour is still available to those who have not received one.

Please provide more detail on the discussions that you have had with the churches. What concerns and questions did they have?

(DH) We continue to express interest if anything becomes available to purchase or lease. At this point neither church has anything for sale or lease. We do currently lease space from the Christian Science Center – 168 Massachusetts Avenue and 186 Massachusetts Avenue – and from St. Cecilia's church – 20 Belvidere Street.

(DH) Improvements have been made and are in the process of being made on Boylston Street. At 939 Boylston Street we are adding the "939 Café@Berklee," a non-alcoholic coffee house and performance venue addition to the neighborhood. There will also be student counseling and activity services on the second floor of this building. These were previously presented to neighborhood groups. A zoning board of appeals hearing on our use is scheduled for February 13, 2007 at 12 NOON. Recently, Berklee bought 1108 Boylston Street. The use of this space will continue as is under existing leases, but we will be fixing up the sub basement and adding a secondary exit.

Will you be using the small auditorium in the 939 Boylston Street building, the one with the Hereford Street side door?

(DH) I don't think there is a small auditorium there; maybe it is space in the Tennis & Racquet Club? We do have approximately 150 students that use the Tennis & Racquet Club.

3. Student Housing

(GA) Two handouts are being distributed. The first is the university accountability ordinance report and the second is an overview of five recent dormitory projects in the city. You will see that in Boston there is a trend of institutions wanting to house more students, leading to larger and taller buildings. Berklee's is not out of sync from other universities in what they are trying to achieve.

4. Transportation

Sean Manning from Vanasse Hangen Brustlin (VHB), consultant of Berklee, and Vineet Gupta from Boston Transportation Department (BTD), presented the transportation portion of the meeting.

Please clarify what is meant by "the building."

(DD) "The building" is referring to where 300-350,000 SF of space that Berklee needs will go within the realm of Massachusetts Avenue and Boylston Street.

(DH) This transportation presentation is more a focus on "what is and what needs to be studied." We hope that adding this additional space to the neighborhood will make traffic better, as we do not think what we want to do will make it worse. More students will be living at the campus core, decreasing vehicular traffic in the area.

(SM) We will be looking at what happens when all events in the area are occurring at the same time. We will also look at where a loading and servicing facility should be placed for a building.

What does VPD stand for on the last PowerPoint slide?

(SM) Vehicles per day

It is important that you do the traffic study with not just the Red Sox, but the Boston Pops, etc.

(GA) Vineet Gupta from the BTD has been asked to give an overview of the Fenway transportation issues and improvements that will be happening.

(VG) We, at BTB, are here to work with you. We also do our impact studies assuming the worst case scenario; for example, more square feet in a development and less people taking transit. Determination of precise location of access, such as loading and pedestrian crossings, will be important as we move along in the process. I anticipate that the challenge of traffic in the area will be with the night events, not the day to day student activities.

Current improvement in the area that have included pedestrian signals for the handicapped and opening ramp access to the Mass Turnpike off Massachusetts Avenue. An economic stimulus bill of \$55 million has been passed for the Fenway area. The bill is very specific as to where the money can be used and does not directly include the intersection of Massachusetts Avenue and Boylston Street.

It is important that as Berklee makes progress that transportation is not looked at in isolation, one must look at transportation in terms of networks.

(DH) A positive point is that Berklee does have most of their big events during the Red Sox off-season.

(Marty Waltz) I would like to comment about T. I recently learned that there is no objective to add capacity on the green line. While the T is adding the low, flat cars, they are not increasing the fleet of trains as the older cars are being taken off line as new low, flat cars are being added. While the Green line is at capacity, the future of the Green line is not getting any better.

(DH) If more Berklee students are housed at the core, it may mean less Berklee students will be using transit as they will be within walking distance of all the facilities.

The area needs to plan for projects that increase the demand on the T. If the demand doesn't increase, then the T will not increase.

I recently noticed that there are not as many 18-wheelers that block Cambria Street – a positive outcome. What has happened?

(DH) My guess would be that the Boston Convention & Exhibition Center (BCEC) is getting the larger shows and while the Hynes Convention Center last year had its best year – it is getting shows that do not require 18-wheelers for setup.

The Massachusetts Convention Center Authority (MCCA) should be asked to weigh in on what exactly is the reason for the decrease traffic to the Hynes Convention Center.

If there is a new building at the corner, there is a possibility that there will be an increase in service traffic – Berklee should look at creating a building that does not increase service traffic to the area.

(DH) We will look at bringing the service into the building so that it does not sit on the street.

What prompted the left turn onto the Mass Turnpike?

(VG) We received a request from the city to conduct a neighborhood study to evaluate an entrance to the Mass Turnpike and determined that was possible to do this.

(Marty Waltz) This actually dates back 20 plus years to the Prudential Center mitigation agreements and development.

When you are coming up Massachusetts Avenue, is it legal to make a left turn on Boylston Street?

Yes.

The illegal left turn is from Boylston Street East onto Massachusetts Avenue North

(DD) I would like to comment on Marty's recent transit findings – Boston can not support the next round of growth without increasing transit. And as suburban development increases, urban congestion increases, development that is displaced from the core, increase traffic at the core.

(MW) This is the exact same issue that every other task force in the city faces.

(GA) The task force should be looking at transit capacity at this corner.

(DH) Every year, we provide the city with a ridership report, and the most frequent request in the report this year was to increase service on the T.

(VG) \$8 million in improvements have been allocated for the Park Street station to break up the bottleneck that occurs there.

(DD) The total hours lost in traffic increased 50 percent, while population only increased 5 percent between 1990 and 2000. This trend will continue at an exponential rate if we do not do something.

With the decline in usage of the Hynes, is there any discussion that has occurred on how the space in the Hynes may be useful for Berklee.

(DH) The Hynes is a functioning convention center. In fact, it has seen an increase in the number of shows. I was hypothesizing that the type of show has probably changed, impacting the number of trucks needed for a show, not the number of shows.

(MW) It should be noted that space can not be built on top of the Hynes as the deck that the Hynes currently sits on will not support any additional buildings on top. It is very expensive to tear the Hynes down and build a larger deck.

Has any discussion occurred on whether it is possible to lease or charter space from the Hynes.
(DH) We may be able to use some space if we are in a pinch – we would not want to this long-term. Using some Hynes space occasionally would be a possible solution to the interim issue, the two-years when we may be without a theater.

Does the 55 bus stop at Fenway station?

(VG) No, but it would be a good direction to investigate. Yawkey Way does have some space to get buses right up to the platform.

Every few years the MBTA tries to get rid of the 55 bus. The community values this bus route and would be willing to work with the MBTA to make it a better route, perhaps a longer route.

(GA) As Berklee's plan continues to develop and become clearer, maybe then it would be appropriate for the MBTA to come to a meeting.

Since one of Berklee's strategies is continuing the discussion of air rights projects with developers, we were thinking that it would make sense at the next meeting to review the history and background on the air rights proposals, Civic Vision report, etc. It will be good to educate ourselves on this now, so we do not have to scramble to educate ourselves at a later date.

The report *A Civic Vision for Turnpike Air Rights* was handed out. Copies are posted to the Berklee Task Force website at: www.berklee.edu/taskforce.

(MW) Two years went into the development of this report. There are several air rights parcels in the Back Bay historic district, of which this group should have a informative discussion around the nitty gritty details. Please read as much of the report as possible in advance of next month's meeting.

(DD) One of the toughest challenges that Boston faces – which I believe Berklee has been doing an excellent job at – is how do you integrate preservation and change at the same time.

(MW) A question that I raised at the Suffolk University and Massachusetts General Hospital task force meetings, that I will raise at this one as well, is how an institution creates a master plan when you do not own the land on which you want to grow. Alex Krieger informed me at the Suffolk University meeting that there are several examples of other master plans where this has

been done. We should look at what these other examples have done, instead of reinventing the wheel.

(DD) Berklee has already done most of this – identifying where they do have an interest, for example around the intersection of Massachusetts Avenue and Boylston Street and Outer Boylston and where they do not have an interest, for example the historic, residential neighborhoods of the Back Bay and Fenway.

(DH) Our Board of Trustees have told us that we need to fully develop the land that we do have first before we look at buying other properties in the interest zones that we have identified.

(GA) The question is raised about how you create the quality of campus that is desired with fragmented land ownership.

(DH) We have been speaking with Emerson College, as they have been setting a good example of how this is achievable.

Would Berklee consider developing the larger triangle that is available next to the Hynes Convention Center?

(DD) That is one of the air rights parcels. Structurally it will be one of the more difficult parcels to develop – it will have to be a high value use, as any low value use means a massive building to make that parcel economically feasible.

(MW) Can whoever owns the old theater (Summer Shack) site bring in developers to make the parcel more manageable. As the adjacent land will most likely be needed for the development of that parcel.

(DD) I think the question Marty is trying to get at is if Berklee can be the engine for the development of that parcel. In any air rights parcel, the first floor of the building and the top of the building are the high value uses. Berklee is looking at being inserted in the middle of the project, as they are not a high value use. Berklee can not drive any air rights project themselves, but they are able to contribute to the project in spaces that are less desirable to most developers.

Would you require freshman to live in the dorms, assuming that you get more dorm space?

(DH) We would be open to discussion of that requirement; however, there would have to be a process that could allow for the “non-typical” freshman students that Berklee receives to opt out of freshman housing. Maybe the requirement could be that all students under a certain age need to live in Berklee housing.

There are historic buildings adjacent to the Berklee campus. I would like the college to look at the expansion, the “what if,” and not limit the historic study to what the college owns.

(DH) Rita Walsh, from VHB, has been hired to look at the two buildings that are currently on the site.

A historic preservation plan may be of use here.

(MW) The goal should be doing a simple inventory within a ten-minute walk from the campus core of the other historic buildings. This is typical for Article 80 reviews, and most likely will have to be done at some point during the process. All that needs to be done is identify what historic buildings are there, what in your master planning area is of historic value.

(GA) I believe the Boston Preservation Alliance is not trying to limit development of the historic buildings, but trying to identify what developers would be desirable in certain cases.

(DD) Berklee is a great developer for most of these building because they are very interested in melding history with change.

5. Next Steps and Future Meeting Topics

(GA) For the March meeting we will be diving into air rights. Please read as much as you can from the *A Civic Vision for Turnpike Air Rights* report prior to the meeting.

The next meeting will be held on Tuesday, March 6, 2007, in the Davis Room at 136 Massachusetts Avenue. The meeting begins at 6:30 PM.

Prepared by: Jill E. Kaehler, Goody Clancy

Note: If any attendees feel that these notes do not accurately reflect discussions, please notify Gerald Autler at the BRA. Amendments will be made at the subsequent work session.

BRA Community Meeting Sign-In Sheet for 2.06.07

E-Mail

(Please put down e-mail only if you do not currently receive my e-mail updates)

Name	Address	E-Mail
Fay Slivan	Rep. Byron Ruching Rm 401 State House	
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Sarah Kelly	Boston Preservation Alliance	
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Tim Horn	120 Norway	
Laura Bryant	Office of Marty Walsh	
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Task Force Sign In Sheet for 2.6.07

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| 1. | David Dixon | Goody Clancy |
| 2. | James McCoy | Berklee |
| 3. | Jill Kaehler | Goody Clancy |
| 4. | Valerie Hunt | |
| 5. | Richard Pendleton | FCDC |
| 6. | Sean McKinley | FCA |
| 7. | Susan Ashbrook | NABB |
| 8. | Ellen Shortell | NABB |
| 9. | Tim Horn | FCA |
| 10. | Barbara Simms | SUN |
| 11. | Fay Sliger | Rep. Byron Rushing's office |
| 12. | Narty Walz | State Representative |
| 13. | Sita Smith | City Councilor Michael Ross' Office |
| 14. | | |
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