

## **BERKLEE TASK FORCE MEETING SUMMARY**

Date: Tuesday, June 5, 2007  
Place: Berklee College of Music  
David Friend Recital Hall, 939 Boylston Street  
Present: See Attached List

### **1. Welcome and Introduction**

The meeting began with a welcome from Gerald Autler. Sign-in sheets were circulated.

(GA) I spoke with others at City Hall and they have said that it feels the two groups—Berklee’s task force and the Air Right’s Citizens advisory committee – should remain separate. It is agreed that they should work together, but they are really doing too different tasks.

*(BR) I have a problem with a separate group for the air rights, as I am not sure how to talk about Berklee without knowing anything about the air rights.*

### **2. Update on / review of Four Directions**

*See presentation slides 3-28.*

(DH) We are getting closer on the purchase of two more buildings. I can not say exactly what buildings they are, but they are two of the properties that we have identified as interest along Massachusetts Avenue and Boylston Street.

*(KR) Are there are any plans to change the height of the buildings?*

(DH) They are no current plans to radically change the height or massing of the buildings.

*(BR) Do you have a statistic on married students?*

(JM) I am not sure what that statistic is, maybe around 5%, but lower than 10%.

Berklee café @ 939 Boylston

*(MW) I am envisioning what you are describing as to being similar to “the forum” at the Kennedy School of Government. The space of “the forum” sounds like what you want to do here, the uses switch around 6 PM in “the forum.” You might want to look at this as a model.*

Outer Boylston

*(MW) Does Outer Boylston need some student life/hang space as well?*

(DH) Outer Boylston will be suite/apartment style living. The students will likely have common spaces inside the apartments. Also, anything in Outer Boylston will have practice rooms for the students living there.

*(SL) This 10-minute walk is arbitrary. Has it been taken off the board if this is the right place for Berklee to grow?*

(GA) Berklee is trying to work with the community to meet their needs.

(DD) Berklee's effort is to create the best campus they can. A campus that is walkable, with less driving, and a campus where they can spend time collaborating with other musicians.

*(TH) Please keep in consideration some parking for student with drums or other large instruments.*

(DH) We will plan a few parking spots in the basement of the building because of the loading dock and we have discussed putting Zip cars or vans in that area.

*(BBS) I would like to revisit the discussion about the GrandMarc. What is Berklee's feeling about this development?*

(DH) They contacted us a while back and we expressed our interest, even though they are a little further away, but we told them that our students will need practice rooms in the building should they be housed there.

*(BBS) The general feeling in the neighborhood is that this will create a fairly dense area – there is no “hang space” provided in this development.*

(DH) We are not here to make their case; I will let them do that. We agree that the impact on the area needs to be clear

*(MW) There are a lot of unintentional consequences of concentrating students in a large building. It is a very real concern to me about where these 1,700 students will go on the weekends. They will be in the neighborhood. Beacon Hill learned this the hard way – as the building of Suffolk's on Beacon Hill, while concentrating the students, created a hot spot for private parties.*

*(TH) When Suffolk built their dorm, many of the students were not living in the neighborhood. The students we are discussing are living in our neighborhood. They are living in buildings that have not been renovated in 40 years. That is our goal – to make our neighborhood look great again.*

*(MW) I am concerned about more students moving into the buildings, while the current students remain in the apartments. We may be adding housing and students, not actually moving students from one point to another.*

*(MR's office) What is the timeline for the building and the order that the space types will be developed? I would like to hear the approach towards the development.*

(DH) This is a 10-year plan. We desperately need space; therefore, as space becomes available to Berklee we will utilize that space in any way that we can.

*(SL) Many of us who live in the neighborhood, like the open space over the turnpike. Currently, the Mandarin Hotel is going up on Boylston Street and it is looming over the existing buildings. The open space provides a breather for some of us and it allows the sunlight to reflect on all buildings in the area.*

*(RO) I would like to suggest that instead of the 34-story building that GrandMarc is proposing, that Berklee buy the YMCA site and do a 10-story building. This building would then be within zoning for the area.*

*(MW) That site might actually be a great site for Berklee housing.*

*(RO) Another real consideration should be the planned demolition of the State Street Bank, Berklee Performance Center, and Sherry Biltmore Hotel. It was built in four phases and it can be taken down in four phases.*

*(MW) Going back the YMCA building, has that been considered? I suggest that if GrandMarc is taken off the table, Berklee should make a proposal to the YMCA.*

*(BR) This could provide more space for Berklee and lower the height of the corner building.*

*(DD) For Berklee to make a financially competitive offer it may be hard, but we can take a look at the possibilities.*

*(GA) From a broader planning view, there are two other institutions already there and they would be better candidates for the site.*

*(TH) I propose that it should be joint venture between Berklee and The New England Conservatory. How can the city support a building with possibly housing for four institutions, but not support a joint venture of these two institutions?*

*(GA) I am not sure how this will work from a broader, community perspective.*

*(CR) I believe this is a good, creative idea and I feel like it is being brushed aside. I have some concern that a 40-story tower is already decided for this corner.*

*(GA) A tower has not already been decided for this corner; Berklee is listening to the community and taking into consideration all ideas. The concern for the YMCA is that there are two institutions at that corner already that are being pushed for space.*

*(DD) Berklee will soon be filing an IMPNF. They will be looking at all ideas that have been offered throughout the meetings. Berklee has to keep in mind their financial model and determine what feasible opportunities are for them. We owe you to look at the options.*

*(MW) I suggest that Berklee start a conversation with The New England Conservatory about the possibilities of a joint venture on the YMCA site.*

*(TH) They have some of the same interests as Berklee does. A 10-12 story building would work on that site. The community has spent 5 years developing the zoning for that corner through Northeastern's IMP, and we would like the zoning to be respected.*

*(CR) I suggest that if anyone is interested in developing anything in the area that we invite them here to talk to us. It is hard for me to help Berklee plan without knowing what else is being planned for the area.*

*The discussion returned to Mass Turnpike Air rights planning and an earlier task force idea to have interested developers speak to this task force informally.*

(GA) No developer has been designated for the Mass Pike air rights, so it seems a little premature to invite them to these meetings.

*(CR) What about the parking garage and bowling alley on Dalton Street?*

*(FM) I am part owner in the garage that you are speaking of, and this is something that we would be interested in – working with Berklee or a developer in the area. We are concerned about any RFP that the MTA may release as the last one that they released was already locked and loaded. It usually takes two-three years of intensive planning to put together a turnpike proposal and we do not want something to already be predetermined. My other partners and I would like to be involved.*

(DD) Task forces are created to not have locked and loaded proposals.

*(BR) The more transparent that the developers or institutions are the less probability there is that anything will be locked and loaded.*

*(MW) I would like to know why the BRA decided they were not going to invite other developers to come and speak with us. I object to the parallel CAC process and I would like to come back to why this was decided by the BRA.*

(GA) There were a few concerns by the BRA. Everyone agrees that Berklee and the air rights should be planned together to some degree. However, a development over the Turnpike is much more complex and these are two fundamentally different processes. The BRA was also concerned about the amount of work that one group can take on when it is essentially two different exercises.

*(MW) I think the BRA is underestimating the skill and willingness of this task force. Without the two processes working together, it could lead to a terrible outcome for the community and the developer.*

(GA) We are also worried about the opposite scenario. What if Berklee isn't a feasible occupant of a Turnpike development?

*(MMC) I am concerned that for an air rights CAC, there are a lot of interests that are not represented in this task force. There needs to be the voice of other stakeholders on that CAC.*

*(MW) Why were the air rights developers not invited to come in and speak?*

(GA) The information that the BRA and this task force needs is how Berklee could appropriately mesh with an air rights development.

*(KR) There might be some developers with some interesting ideas of how this could be done.*

*(TH) The tower proposed is going to be too tall. It is too much mass for that corner.*

(DD) Housing on Outer Boylston is developing into a real option. It is the only realistic option that exists at the moment. Air rights is a complex development, and it is hard to negotiate receiving space in an air rights building that is affordable to Berklee.

(DH) Berklee's Board of Trustees has continued to push us to maximize our value on the corner. We need to use all the space that we have to meet our needs. We do not have a lot of control over the air rights and the cost of the being in an air rights project scares us.

*(MW) I propose that in order for this task force to determine what should / should not be included in air rights development, we need to invite the developers here to speak.*

*(MMC) I oppose the motion. Why would a developer come to speak to us in this competitive process before an RFP has been released?*

(GA) Some of the concerns that Meg has are shared by the BRA.

*(BR) The invitation should be extended to people who are interested in this area, not only the air rights.*

*(MW) I am willing to extend the invite to the developers if the BRA does not want to do it themselves.*

### **3. Timing / Next Steps**

(DH) Berklee is intending on filing an IMPNF in September.

*(BR) We want to see a draft of the IMPNF before it is filed.*

(DD) We will get you a draft before we file.

(GA) What other meetings do you see between now and when Berklee files their IMPNF in September?

*(KR) We know what one meeting should be – inviting developers in the area to come speak with us.*

*(MW) I propose we do this for a July meeting.*

(GA) The next meeting is then set for Tuesday, July 10, 2007, at 6 PM. The location of the next meeting will be emailed to you. We will also set a meeting for Tuesday, September 11, 2007, where we will review the IMPNF filing. You will receive a draft of the IMPNF filing before the meeting.

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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.

