

Minutes

Boylston Street Corridor Study Committee
March 8, 2021 12:00PM
Held remotely via Zoom

Committee members (in attendance noted by Y/N):

John VanScoyoc, Chair	Y	Wendy Friedman	Y	Tom Nally	Y
Rachna Balakrishna	Y*	Joe Gaudino	Y	Carlos Ridruejo	N
Deborah Brown	Y	Wendy Machmuller	Y	Mark Zarrillo	Y

*Joined shortly after meeting started, as noted below.

Staff present: Kara Brewton

Meeting materials presented at the meeting included: Agenda; Draft Committee minutes from 2/3/2021 & 2/22/2021, 2/17/2021 Urban Design & Massing Subcommittee; Draft Letter to Bulfinch regarding 10 Brookline Place – initial conceptual direction, including revisions by M. Zarrillo (3-8-2021); presentation “What is Equitable Development”, D. Brown (3-8-2021); screenshot of Preservation of Affordable Housing website & site visit photos

Guests included: Deane Coady, Jennifer Gilbert, and a phone call participant.

Review & Approve Minutes

By roll call vote, the Committee approved minutes from 2/3/2021 and 2/22/2021 (in favor: JVS, RB, DB, WF, JG, WM, TN, MZ). By roll call vote, the Urban Design & Massing Subcommittee members approved the 2/17/2021 minutes (in favor: TN, JG, DB, MZ; abstained: WF).

[Rachna Balakrishna joined the meeting].

Discussion on desired outcomes for the corridor with an equity lens (D. Brown)

Deborah Brown shared a presentation with the Committee, including an outline of how equitable development should be defined, especially as it relates to this Corridor. A summary of the discussion follows:

- Need to have measurable benchmarks that can be assessed for existing and proposed conditions (e.g., asthma rates, access to greenspace as sq. ft. per capita, number and cost of residential real estate, etc.)
- Need to understand how the benefits of any changes would actually accrue to the residents
- Need to have a plan that is race-conscious, incorporates “trickle-up” community wealth generation, attracting quality jobs, raising the living standards for lower-wealth residents, and moving further towards public accountability with any private-public agreements
- Identify funds for women and minority owned businesses
- Members especially liked the following specific ideas:
 - This stretch being a zone with incentives for minorities and small businesses

- Creation of a community center, especially if it could be added at Old Lincoln School
- Narrowing the pedestrian distance/ time crossing of Boylston Street near High Street
- Intrigued about streamlined permitting per Dallas and Houston, Texas
- Complementary ideas that could be possible, for example with the Brookline Housing Authority property west of High Street & 10 Brookline Place

Additional ideas from the public included:

- Measurable goals should include more tree canopy, rooftop gardens
- Should consider a geo micro district in lieu of fossil gas infrastructure, community public pool on the hardtop area adjacent to Old Lincoln School

Further discussion included at-grade pedestrian crossing, especially to line up with the lights near Walnut Path & Old Lincoln School, connecting in a more straightforward manner to the (hopefully replaced) Davis Path footbridge.

Further discussion on letter to Bulfinch regarding 10 Brookline Place

Kara Brewton walked the Committee through the draft letter that was part of the review package, and additionally showed on screen some text changes and a revised diagram that Mark Zarrillo had offered. She thanked Mark for the suggested edits, although wasn't sure that the phrase pointing towards affordable housing being located at 10 Brookline Place also needed to be included in the letter at this point. Mark Zarrillo noted that labeling the three open space areas 1-3 was not meant to designate any prioritization, just simply open space locations. He also thought that landscape areas should, yes, include tree canopy, but also benches, landscape materials, etc. As most Committee members had not reviewed the materials provided ahead of time, the Committee agreed to take this letter up, including Zarrillo's edits, at a future meeting.

Public Participation Subcommittee Update

Wendy Friedman noted that they were thinking about holding different neighborhood association and other group meetings, such as with the Lincoln School community to get input in addition to the survey results, which has been extended to March 14th.

Other business

John VanScoyoc shared with the Committee that he and Kara Brewton had toured the corridor with representatives from the national nonprofit housing developer Preservation of Affordable Housing (POAH). They were interested in some sites such as the Jiffy Lube/ Dunkin Donuts parcels as well as the parking lot adjacent to the Madras building between Boylston Street and Brington Road, and would be back in touch after conducting some more property research about this area. Deborah Brown suggested that perhaps other local affordable housing developers should also be reached out to, maybe as a panel discussion to better understand what kind of incentives might be needed from the Town – she will forward some ideas of some of those companies.

Meeting adjourned at approximately 1:15 pm.

**** Appendix to minutes****

For ease of reference, the additional local affordable housing developers recommended by Deborah Brown following this meeting were:

Pennrose Properties,
Beacon Communities,
Trinity Development,
Schochet Companies, and
Leggat McCall