

**Economic Development Advisory Board
Lab & Bio/Life Sciences Subcommittee
Minutes**

April 6, 2021

4:00-5:30 PM held remotely via Zoom

EDAB Board Lab Subcommittee members in attendance (noted by Y/N)

Cliff Brown	Y
Marilyn Newman	Y
Carol Levin	Y
Paul Saner	Y

Staff present: Kara Brewton, Meredith Mooney

Other EDAB members present: Ken Lewis

Guests included: Ted Tye, National Development; and Young Park, Berkeley Investments, and his colleagues from Berkeley Investments, Samantha Kaufman and Morgan Pierson

Members of the Public included: John VanScoyoc, Hugh Mattison, Carla Benka

Materials provided ahead of time to the Board & via links in the agenda included: 4/6/2021 agenda; draft minutes for 3/16/21 meeting, with edits proposed by Subcommittee members.

Paul Saner opened the meeting remotely via Zoom due to COVID, ensured all members were able to participate with audio and video, and announced that the Zoom meeting would be recorded with the Zoom transcript feature enabled to facilitate the preparation of summary minutes.

Paul welcomed and thanked the guests for being available to provide the Subcommittee with their perspectives as to potential development of lab facilities in Brookline.

Overview Presentation - Young Park, Berkeley Investments

During the past 10 years Berkeley Investments, a Boston-based investment and asset management company, has focused more on development projects and currently has a broad “Innovation Portfolio” under management and development. Berkeley has special interest and experience in adaptive reuse of older structures, principally in Boston, immediate suburbs, and inside Route 128. Recent projects include:

- Waltham Watch Factory, redeveloped for commercial and creative office, mature tech start-ups, plus loft apartments.
- 176 Lincoln St. Allston, 2 buildings on the Pike across from New Balance compound. Partnering with Harvard for development on Harvard-owned land. “Lab ready space,” apartments, retail, garage. Active ground floor is planned for fabrication/maker space, local retail and restaurant, artist live work units.

M. Newman Draft 4-9-21

- Former Sasaki headquarters in Watertown Square, old mill building, converting to life science and R&D. 100,000 sf. Rezoning proposal was extremely well received. Found some old subbasement space which helped adapt the first floor heights for lab.
- Ballardvale in Wilmington, group of buildings developed originally as flex office. Over approximately 4 years, Berkeley has gradually introduced innovation type tenants and more recently some life science companies.
- 200 Exchange, Malden – former operations center for Bank of America, 300,000 sf near Orange Line T stop. “Lab hotel” for smaller uses (30,000- 40,000 sf), cost effective renovation for newer companies.

Overview Presentation – Ted Tye, National Development

Development company active since mid 1980’s with range of experience. Office, life science, multifamily, senior housing, retail, hotels. Eastern Mass. focus, mostly new construction with larger floor plates and floor heights. On several properties are partnering with Alexandria Real Estate Equities. Projects include:

- Longwood Center in LMA – Dana Farber and Children’s research labs
- 15 Necco, was going to be GE headquarters, 300,000 sf, average floor plate 28,000 sf. Parking 1.0 spaces/1000 sf in a garage National Development controls across the street.
- 99 Coolidge, Watertown, former Mount Auburn Club, in permitting now. Parking 2.3 spaces/1000 sf.
- WBZ site in Allston – rebuilding the WBZ studio and 3 new buildings, 35,000 sf floor plates, parking TBD (Boston trying to push parking down too much. Even with public transit, do still need sufficient parking.)
- Dorchester Ave. South Boston – mixed use development for lab, residential; in permitting.

Important considerations include:

- Are sites actually available? Notes availability of MassBio ratings as one source of info.
- Life science businesses do like to cluster. Eg, Kendall, Allston, Watertown, Newton at Riverside.
- A welcoming town.
- There is a bubble for next couple years – helps if you can get it done quickly.
- Not needing a Town Meeting vote helps (i.e., if zoning already in place).
- Favorable zoning: appropriate heights, penthouse heights, floor plates, parking, ground floor uses, loading areas. Ground floor chemical storage areas and inside loading facilities (even if have some ground floor retail in the front, do need these other facilities.)
- Life science is not 9 to 5. People come and go all day and night, need to drive for safety reasons.

Questions from and discussion with Subcommittee members (summary of key points)

What does it take/how far along must a property be to be “lab ready”?

Means push to fit out as far as can upfront. Adaptive reuse and smaller projects can potentially be available much sooner which is an advantage. Necessary to provide timely infrastructure to operate when sign the lease.

Malden (Berkeley) example – had good power facilities (2 nearby substations) and other good building attributes, 4 floors are ready now. Not such a great location for tenants but is more affordable than many other spaces.

What could be appropriate for Brookline, among wide range of potential life science uses?

Convert/replace office
Not large industrial
Labs are generally safe, can reassure neighbors.

Need vivarium space?

Need to provide some for scientific/academic uses. Most common animal is mice. Could potentially avoid primates.

Level 2 lab is sufficient.

Are smaller projects potentially feasible? What are minimum dimensions?

Small not impossible but harder. (Berkeley's Watertown project is an example of a smaller project.)

Brookline will be expensive to build in so need some economy of scale.

Discussion that 150,000 sf might be kind of a minimum.

A floorplate in 35,000 sf range is ideal but some smaller companies could adapt to smaller. For new buildings, typical 18 foot ground floor height, would like 15 foot floor to ceiling on upper stories.

For adapting office buildings, 13 ' 8" is tight but can work (see 15 Necco).

Highest floor also needs more height to accommodate extensive piping to penthouse facilities. As an example, 5 stories might be 73 feet high, not counting penthouse which is not occupied.

There's opportunity for Brookline to aggregate smaller uses into a "village" of life science uses.

Is noise an issue for infill labs?

Local noise ordinances will control.

Penthouse cuts noise by enclosing equipment, but some communities undercut that by trying to bring down penthouse height.

If there are major institutional tenants, is there a worry that whole building will eventually become tax exempt?

Yes, a risk that the institution will buy the building.

Developer should be straightforward with the city. If there's a private developer partner, should pay taxes.

What about Fossil Fuel Free (front line issue in Brookline presently)?

Tye: Hard to do. A complete prohibition would pose significant problem. Major tenants want and need some natural gas. In Watertown, National Development combined gas with a substantial solar array. Energy for sufficient air handling at reasonable cost to support lab and medical uses is an issue, and sufficiently robust heating and cooling for the whole building.

Should look toward convertibility for when the electric grid becomes cleaner in the future. Residential side construction will move faster toward alternatives to FF than will the lab/life science uses. All will eventually evolve, but consultants generally say, unclear how soon. For larger scale projects cost effectiveness is not there yet on the all-electric side.

Park: Tenants are focused on reliability of service more than type of fuel. They rely on separate pathways for power distribution. That might change eventually with utility scale battery farms and such, but right now it would be very difficult to convince a tenant to accept a restriction on utility options.

Comment on permitting aspects?

Certainty of execution is key. An approach that requires a special permit for each tenant (as Malden was asking for 200 Exchange) is very problematic and not typical. Berkeley is trying to get Malden to allow a special permit for the entire building.

Tye - A special permit for the building, with some restrictions and Board of Health review of particular uses, would be a good solution. Watertown is a good model.

Morgan Pierson - Watertown is very enthusiastic about removing permitting barriers within the reason, to keep the pace on delivering leasable space to a market that is underserved right now. Planning Department takes the lead, regs are set up to accommodate, predictable timing to permit (6-8 months).

Tye - Boston is difficult! Slow *and* unpredictable.

Thoughts about potential Brookline locations? Eg, Brookline Village 10 Brookline Place, TJ Maxx and Santander on Comm Ave; Star Market Beacon St.; Chestnut Hill West?

Brookline Village makes the most sense. CHW is second best, though less good location than Brookline Village. The others are not great.

Is there a rule of thumb re land value per buildable sf?

In this crazy irrational market with so much buyer demand, land cost may not be as relevant. In Watertown, National Development paid a little over \$30 million for its site for what will be about 250,000 sf of space, which is a reasonable comp for this purpose.

Subcommittee Organizational and Other Business

[Cliff Brown left to attend another meeting.]

The Subcommittee members present VOTED by roll call vote to approve the March 16, 2021 meeting minutes as edited, and with one additional comment offered (in favor: PS, CL, MN).

Our next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, April 13 at 8:30 AM. The planned agenda is for the Subcommittee to discuss current status and progress of our investigation.

For the following two scheduled meetings (April 27 and May 11), we will seek to invite as guests Steve Magoon, Watertown Director of Community Development and Planning, and Dr. Swannie Jett, the Town of Brookline's public health commissioner, to discuss municipal regulatory perspectives. The agendas for these meetings will also include time for continued Subcommittee internal discussion.

The Subcommittee then discussed the scope of a proposed lab exemption from the requirements of the proposed Fossil Fuel Free (FFF) Warrant Articles 25 and 26, which Articles were the subject of public hearing at last night's (4/5/21) full EDAB Board meeting. Kara Brewton will be compiling a summary of EDAB comments and concerns expressed at the EDAB meeting with respect to the FFF Articles to forward to the Advisory Committee. Marilyn Newman will provide Kara Brewton with the lab exemption clarification language that she suggested last night, and other specific drafting comments discussed at the meeting, for inclusion in the EDAB package going to the Advisory Committee.

Meeting adjourned at approximately 5:44 pm.