

Minutes

10 Brookline Place Committee

April 6, 2022 7:00PM
Held remotely via Zoom

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

Neil Wishinsky, Chair	x	Alan Christ	x	Brian Kane	x	Donelle O'Neil	N
Deborah Brown	N	George Cole	N	Liz Linder	x	Paul Saner	x
Shelly Chipimo	x	Matthew Hyatt	x	Tom Nally	x		
Diane Sokal	x	Anne Trecker	x				

**Deb Brown joined late.*

Staff & consultants present: Meredith Mooney, Sophie Robison

Guests included: Donovan Ennevor, Jennifer Dopazo Gilbert, Joseph Perkell, Stephen Burrington, Virginia Smith, Antonia Bellalta, John Kronenberger, John VanScoyoc, Karen Livingston, Lucy Kolessin, Matthew DeNoble, Peter Frumkin,

Meeting materials included: Agenda, Architecture Subcommittee Debrief Presentation

Neil Wishinsky opened the meeting remotely via Zoom due to COVID, ensured all members were able to participate with audio and video, and announced the meeting would be recorded.

Opening Remarks

Neil discussed why the Committee hasn't met for a little while. The property owner, Bulfinch, has been reassessing and considering the effort required on their part to navigate this process and check in with their financing partners on their path forward. They are committed to the process going forward and we feel we have a good path forward.

Architecture Subcommittee Meeting Recap

Alan Christ, Co-Chair of the Architecture Subcommittee, reviewed what the Architecture Subcommittee discussed towards creating a vision statement for the 10 Brookline Place development. The Committee collected a series of terms of key interest, which Alan presented in a word cloud.

In narrowing down the key topics, the Committee identified a series of categories of note:

1. Diversity/Inclusion/Accessibility
2. Sustainability
3. What makes a good neighbor?

Alan shared a couple examples of other buildings that maybe fit the vision for this area, including: Novartis Building (Cambridge, MA), Bolling Municipal Building (Boston, MA).

Moving forward, Alan reviewed the needed work from the Architecture Subcommittee, the financial negotiation, and community engagement. First, there needs to be a pro forma review to determine whether the building can or cannot be scaled down; second, rules for how we determine massing, setbacks, green components, and material

qualities; third, community outreach around the ground level, retail and community spaces.

Some questions that the Architecture Subcommittee developed for the Developer around the topics of the ground level public, retail and community spaces, as well as questions around massing, setbacks, and material qualities. The Subcommittee also discussed how to define stepped massing guidelines, parking, the pro-forma, and perspectives.

Comments from the Committee

- Brian Kane: Food hall (ex. Jackson Station? Connect from train to street), need to step down towards Brookline Village more than other ways, willing to trade parking for height to get less parking
- Tom Nally: The buildings you show are great examples and include examples of food service
- Diane Sokol: Still concerned about shadows on the T and Station Street. The existing building creates deep shadows on the north side, and a scale like the one shown would create larger shadows. This underscores need for setbacks
- Anne Trecker: Agree that the Bolling Building is a great example. Echo what Brian said about parking.
- Liz Linder: Agree about parking, except that as an abutter who has a hard time finding a good spot for my car, the ability to rent 24 hour spots would be good faith towards abutters. Could there be a dog park? Liz shared her screen to show some drawings that her neighbor, an architect made for the site. Liz wants lots of green space. The scale of the building makes Brookline Village look so small, but I do really like the Bolling Building (brings out the future in a historic space). There is something charming about the brutalist style of the existing building. Something about the Bolling Building that is so nice is the grand entryway that is iconic, but also contextual.
- Neil Wishinsky: The elephant in the room is the size of the building. Anything we can do to mask the massing and wiggle the pro forma to push down the building will be important. Walking down Station Street, there is currently a vertical, concrete wall that is very unwelcoming and isn't part of the Village. This is an opportunity to fix this.
- Tom Nally: Designer of Novartis Building is also designer of Vietnam Memorial in DC. The whole back of the existing building is concrete, loading docks, A/C and stairs, and we don't want the new building to have a "back". The building needs inviting "fronts" all the way around.
- Liz Linder: The current plaza is nice and something I've started using more during COVID. Would be lovely if it was more clear how to use it and that it's even there.
- Brian Kane: How is this work relating to the Boylston Street Corridor Study Committee? Tom spoke to these connections. Brian is interested in the Boylston Committee to attend a 10 Brookline Place Committee meeting and discuss what this could be a gateway "to".
- Neil Wishinsky: What will it take to get this to Town Meeting? The goal is to get to November Town Meeting, but we lost the last six weeks. We should continue to have this goal but have reasonable expectations and produce quality work.

Comments from the Public

- Charles Bellalta: Neil hit the magic word which is "the wall". In the biggest sense, the wall along Boylston and Washington is the major feeling with the current building. There's a natural tendency to want to start breaking things down. To solve this problem,

we might want a food hall/etc., but something we really need is actually tenants. We need the building to be filled to support the community programming we desire. The circulation and physical connections are really convincing because they'll provide real, physical, emotional involvement and use. I like the Novartis Building because it's appears as one whole building, while the Bolling Building appears as multiple separate building. Coherence of form to push down that wall.

- Stephen Burrington: Glad Brookline has such diversity and richness of architecture. The discussion the Committee is having this evening is jumping the architectural aspects of what the Developer wants, when these are not the foremost considerations. For example, 200-300 parking spaces is too many and this is discussing 600 parking spaces. The idea this would go to Town Meeting for a zoning change to look anything like it does right now is not realistic.

Next Steps

The next steps for the 10BPC include:

- Real estate financial consultant will review the Developer's pro forma. We will schedule a meeting for executive session in two weeks. Executive session on 4/21 at 5:30pm.
- Regularly scheduled meeting on Wednesday, May 4th
- After this, the Architecture Subcommittee will meet again
- Public design workshop in June timeframe

Closing

**Meeting adjourned at approximately 8:11 pm.