



Building a Better Brookline

Economic Development Advisory Board

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Anne R. Meyers, Co-Chair
Paul Saner, Co-Chair
Dr. Robert I. Sperber, Founder
Cliff Brown
Derrick Choi
Susan Houston
Kenneth Lewis
Carol Levin
Thomas Nally
Marilyn Newman
Alden Raine
Donald A. Warner

Meeting Minutes: February 1, 2016

Attendees:

EDAB Members Present: Paul Saner, Ken Lewis, Tom Nally, Carol Levin, Susan Houston, Marilyn Newman, Cliff Brown, Ann Meyers, Don Warner

EDAB Members Absent: Bob Sperber, Al Raine, Derrick Choi

Economic Development Division: Andy Martineau, Kara Brewton

Materials: Cutty's Façade Loan Application, 2016 ED Work Plan,

Guests: Henry Winkelman, Regina Frawley, Sergio Modigliani

1. Development Updates

- **111 Boylston Street:** Andy Martineau stated that both the developer and Building Commissioner have said the building will open in April. Andy also stated that the Planning Board recently approved all of their proposed signage.
- **Circle Cinema:** Kara Brewton stated that an MBTA catenary line will not be moved as planned because it is a critical component of some of the track infrastructure. As a result the developer is redesigning the entrance to the parking area, which is a substantial enough change to require additional review by the Planning Board. In the meantime, the project has received a permit for a construction trailer and the Building Department is waiting on some additional documentation before issuing building permits.
- **Brookline Place:** Kara Brewton stated that the Children's Hospital Board voted recently to set aside funding for the project which is great news. They anticipate starting demolition in March and cutting and capping the utilities in preparation this month. They are scheduled to appear before the Transportation Board for the redesign of Pearl Street and signal improvements.
- **Industrial Island:** Andy Martineau stated that following the MIT study and the recent presentation by Claremont Companies for the redevelopment of 25 Washington Street, the Board of Selectmen voted to establish the River Road Study Committee (RRSC). Andy stated that the RRSC is charged with further reviewing the Claremont proposal as well as establishing criteria for a zoning overlay district for the industrial zone.

2. Review and Discussion of MIT/Route 9 East Visioning Study

- Andy Martineau provided a brief overview of the study process and outcomes, which include the identification of potential catalyst sites for future redevelopment opportunities, public realm and infrastructure improvements and complete streets. Andy stated that the process and meetings have generated a lot of interest and positive momentum, which has served in part as the impetus for the establishment of the River Road Study Committee. Andy stated that staff would like to further explore implementing some of the other recommendations; however, there is not sufficient staff or Board capacity to do so at this time.

Questions/Comments:

- There was some discussion about having the students return for another final presentation, is that still going to happen?
- Since the town is already taking action on the recommendations to create a zoning overlay district for the Industrial zone and because there is limited capacity to work on the other recommendations, staff did not feel it was appropriate to invite the students back to help kick-start additional work.
- Several Board members stated that the study and report were very well done and that other recommendations should be implemented.

3. Discussion and Vote on Façade Loan Application for 284 Washington Street, Cutty's expansion

- Andy Martineau stated that the Cutty's application represents the first phase of a two-part renovation, which includes expansion into the space next to their current storefront. Andy stated that the scope of the improvements includes new energy efficient windows and doors and the restoration of the storefront by exposing transom windows that were enclosed by a previous tenant.

Questions/Comments:

- Was there any competition for funds?
- Applications are accepted on a rolling, first come-first-serve basis and there were no additional applications to be considered. Staff continued to use the scoring criteria established a couple of years ago and the staff recommendation is based on those +criteria and scoring rubric.
- Should this program continue while there is limited staffing?

VOTED: The Board voted unanimously to approve Cutty's façade loan application in the amount of \$9,000 and to endorse staff to present the application to the Board of Selectmen for final approval.

4. Discussion of Next Steps for Planning for a Changing Brookline Workshop Series

- Paul Saner stated that he and Anne Meyers were able to meet with staff to discuss next steps and that while it is clear there is a desire to improve the town's processes and to look at certain aspects of zoning there is no capacity at the moment for staff, Board of Selectmen or the Zoning By-law Committee to do the work.

Questions/Comments:

- It is a shame that we cannot continue working on this initiative in the short-term as it is an opportunity to change how Brookline is viewed by developers.
- The scope of the work needed to continue working on this in the short term is beyond that of a volunteer board.

5. Review and Discussion of 2016 Economic Development Staff Work Plan

- Kara Brewton provided an overview of an updated FY 2016 ED Work Plan
- It was noted that over the past year both she and Andy Martineau have been working on an increasing number of non- Economic Development related projects and initiatives, including the K-8 school study and subsequent pre-development planning, the Capital Improvement Program, staffing the Planning Board's sign and façade meetings, Hubway, Strategic Asset Plan, TDM policy, pay-by cell meter technology, wayfinding and more. Kara stated that she anticipates her involvement with school planning to continue until at least October which is the milestone for the School Committee and Board of Selectmen to select a single site for an additional K-8 school. Kara also noted that the ED Division will continue to provide support to organizations like the CCMA, Chamber and the merchants generally as they take on more ownership of community events and programming.

Questions/Comments:

- EDAB should be concerned that ED staff in a hot real estate market have significantly less time to work on ED initiatives and to support additional new development projects.
- EDAB has spent the last year encouraging the town to take a more proactive approach towards long term planning via the Planning for a Changing Brookline workshops and the MIT study, yet we are not adequately staffed to carry forward additional recommendations outside of the River Road Study Committee.
- How can the School Department rely on ED staff assistance without contributing some additional funding to ensure ED projects do not fall by the wayside?
- Planning for long-term school needs will not likely end in October as there is still the question of whether one new elementary school is enough and what to do about the high school.
- ED staff should not be responsible for correcting or working on other department's problems.

- The town is facing another override in the coming years that will be substantially larger than the one that was passed last spring. There is a dire need for additional tax revenue and the town needs to quantify that need and figure out what to do about it.
- Long-term planning is a part of economic development. We are doing it to some degree, but efforts are fragmented. How does the town plan for the long term in a more concrete fashion?
- There is no sense of urgency for generating additional tax dollars.
- Those long-range planning efforts recently underway have been driven by outside forces -- School issue years in the making, Town Meeting warrant article leading to Housing Production Plan, advocates for master planning leading to the Strategic Asset Plan and Large Parcel studies.
- We should not discontinue our efforts to plan for the long term. There is always the tendency to focus on immediate needs versus positioning the town to be more proactive and to develop more effective processes and solutions as a result.
- Does the Town have the organizational structure and staff to do effective long-range planning?
- The Advisory Committee recently formed a Long Range Finance and Policy Sub-Committee. We should be looking for ways to help augment their work.

6. Staff Updates

- Andy Martineau stated that he and Lara Curtis have begun meeting with Department Heads to discuss their current and anticipated needs as they relate to municipal facilities and services. Andy also stated that the RFP deadline for the Strategic Asset Plan has passed and that the RFP yield one response that met the basic RFP requirements, however, the scope of the proposal goes well beyond the goals of the study. As a result staff is refining the scope and will likely rebid the project while continuing to work on the project internally.
- Kara stated that she will begin working on a plan for reconfiguring Hamilton Square.
- Kara stated that the merchants and senior center successfully worked together on a solution that allows Senior Center Volunteers to park in the Centre St. parking lot

7. Misc./Other Business

- Tom Nally stated that he has reached out to Scott Englander about possibly collaborating on implementing some of the Complete Streets recommendations included in the MIT study. Tom noted that some of the recommendations may not be feasible on Route 9, but that there are some ideas that could be refined and considered further.

- Ken Lewis suggested that the proposed bike lane on Beacon Street heading towards Washington Sq. could have negative impacts on traffic circulation and parking for the area businesses.
- Kara stated that she and the Town Administration will be meeting with their counterparts in Newton to discuss partnership opportunities.
- The Irving's Toy's building is still for sale