



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: May 2, 2016

Attendees:

EDAB Members Present: Paul Saner, Ken Lewis, Tom Nally,
Carol Levin, Marilyn Newman, Cliff Brown, Anne Meyers, Don Warner, Al Raine,
Derrick Choi, Susan Houston

EDAB Members Absent: Bob Sperber

Economic Development Division: Kara Brewton, Andy Martineau

Guests: Arlene Mattison

Materials: Agenda, draft minutes from March, ED Tobacco Memo, draft EDAB letter concerning Tobacco ban (WA10), River Road Study Committee Progress Update PowerPoint.

1. Review and Approve Minutes

- Minutes from March 7, 2016 were approved.

2. Public Hearing and Potential Vote on Warrant Article 10: Ban on Tobacco Sales

- Anne Meyers opened the public hearing and discussion of a draft letter from EDAB endorsing the Selectmen's "no action" vote.
- There were no members of the public present that wished to make a statement about the warrant article.

EDAB Questions/Comments:

- Why has this issue come up now?
- The petitioners are both local doctors that decided to submit the article for this town meeting cycle. There are no other reasons.
- Are there any metrics on the impact of not selling tobacco only in Brookline?
- Public Health professors have debated the impacts of imposing a ban only in Brookline, which remain unclear.
- The businesses that would be impacted by the ban are certain that they would be forced to close their doors even if a phased approach were adopted.
- The article is not motivated by or targeted at minors.

EDAB Discussion of Draft Letter Endorsing Selectmen's "no action" vote:

- The Board discussed including draft language surrounding alternative approaches to imposing a ban on tobacco and acknowledging the public health concerns related to tobacco use. During the discussion, the Board acknowledged the merits of decreasing tobacco use. However, the Board decided that the scope of their charge does not include public health matters and that the letter should reflect the Board’s primary concern about the impact a ban on tobacco sales would have on Brookline businesses and the town’s commercial areas.

VOTED: The Board Voted unanimously to endorse the Board Co-Chairs to submit an amended letter to the Board of Selectmen supporting their “no action” vote on warrant article 10.

Public Hearing Closed

3. Staff Update on River Road Study Committee (RRSC)

- Andy Martineau provided an overview of the RRSC’s progress to date noting that the Committee is exploring several uses in addition to the proposed hotel, including different mixed-use commercial scenarios and residential (age restricted and micro unit) mixed-use scenarios
- Andy observed that the process started with the MIT visioning study from last fall, which started a new conversation about the redevelopment potential of Route 9 east resulting in an updated vision for potential redevelopment and a recommendation to replicate the Davis Path Study Committee process to create an overlay zone for the industrial district.
- Andy stated that the MIT report shows large scale massing with a recommendation to increase the baseline FAR subject to further refinement by the Committee and additional financial and market feasibility analysis.
- Andy noted that the sites are physically constrained and that a town-owned storm water easement and proximity to River Road that has been determined to be park land protected by article 97 present additional challenges with respect to parking geometry and creating efficient floor plates.
- Andy stated that the Committee has developed several guiding principles and that their focus has been on enhancing the public realm and park land, while incentivizing parcel aggregation through zoning that allows for revenue driven development at a scale that enables projects to be feasible from a market and financial perspective. Many of the public realm enhancements the Committee is exploring fall under the umbrella of Complete Streets and the zoning will likely include a provision to fund some of those improvements.
- Andy also stated that the architecture subcommittee has begun creating design guidelines for the district due in part to some of the feedback
- The Committee is working with Pam McKinney who is a real estate consultant to further analyze the different uses and the proposed scale of redevelopment the Committee is trying to work within.
- Andy stated that Claremont Company will present revised massing at an RRSC meeting this Wednesday, May 4 and that Pam McKinney will present her preliminary findings at an RRSC meeting on May 18.

EDAB Questions/Comments

- *I do not see fitting 30K SF of medical office on any of these locations, but 5-10K SF of local docs could be feasible*
- *The discussion draft pro formas and massing created by the Committee were an exercise to demonstrate the scale likely necessary to incentivize redevelopment in this area*
- *Development of these parcels will take place in the future. The Committee should be flexible with the uses allowed in the overlay zone in order to accommodate changing market conditions.*
- *These sites are very tight and will be challenging to redevelop. Could the town trade land somewhere else and keep this area as park land?*
- *The Committee will need to be judicious in how much they ask developers for in the zoning.*
- *Pam's analysis will inform how much the town can reasonably ask for without precluding development.*
- *Has the committee considered any public uses for any of the sites?*

Public Comment Questions:

- *The hotel proposal is too tall.*
- *The comprehensive plan envisioned this area as tennis courts, which may no longer be realistic, but greening the edges of this area should still be a priority.*
- *Many of the taller buildings in the immediate area have setbacks and green around them.*
- *I understand that the Town needs more tax revenue, but the process should consider more than just money.*

4. Development Updates

Red Cab:

- Kara Brewton stated that the hotel is trying to have a soft opening in May with a grand opening to follow in early June.

Circle Cinema:

- Kara Brewton stated that some of the landscaping has started and that the developer obtained a waiver to work during off hours because the MBTA prohibits work next to the tracks while the T is running. The developer anticipates completing construction in the summer/fall of 2017.

Brookline Place:

- Kara Brewton stated that the pedestrian easement is anticipated to be recorded in the coming weeks and that site work will start ramping up over the next few months.

111 Cypress Street:

- Kara Brewton stated that the Chair of the Board of Selectmen has been getting a lot of pressure from various groups to purchase 111 Cypress Street to address some of the school capacity issues.
- Kara stated that the property owner has filed a 40B application and that they are aware of the town's potential interest in the property.

Waldo/Durgin Garages:

- Kara Brewton stated that the Waldo/Durgin Committee will likely restart in the fall.
- Chestnut Hill Realty is expected to submit a redevelopment proposal in the near future

5. Board Member and Staff Updates:

- Kara Brewton stated that a shared-work space is taking over the long vacant 202 Washington Street and that a Vermont-based artisan food business is rumored to be taking over the neighboring retail space formally occupied by Japan Mart.
- Kara Brewton stated that the Centre Street east parking lot study will be delayed until the Major Parcel study is underway
- Kara Brewton stated that the Library Trustees are reevaluating their options for a new Coolidge Corner branch and that they have decided not to apply for funding with the upcoming state grant cycle.
- Kara Brewton stated that she will be meeting with the HR Department this week to discuss hiring a new Economic Development and Long-term Planner.
- Andy Martineau and Don Warner discussed starting work on the potential redevelopment of the Chestnut Hill Office Park.
- Kara Brewton stated that Anita Jamison is trying to find a way to keep Irving's Toy Store open in some capacity, while selling the other portion of the building.
- Kara Brewton stated that the Transportation Board has hired Livable Streets Alliance to run a design charrette for the redesign of Hamilton Square, which is the public way next to Clear Flour Bakery.
- Al Raine stated that there is large residential development proposal for 54 Auburn Court
- Carol Levin stated that she and others continue to push the Park and Open Space Commission to be strategic and to take a more holistic approach to their open space plan update.
- The Board discussed the Beacon Street bike improvements that will be trialed this coming year and also discussed the proposal for Bike accommodations on Babcock Street, which are now being delayed for a year while the T-Board reevaluates the different options proposed.

Meeting Adjourned