

**Coolidge Corner Study Committee**  
**Meeting**  
**February 11, 2019**



**MEETING NOTES**

*Coolidge Corner Study Committee Members Present:* Neil Wishinsky (chair), Lauren Bernard, Roger Blood, Alan Christ, Linda Hamlin, Ken Lewis, Anne Meyers, Linda Olson Pehlke, Susan Roberts, Maura Toomey.

*Coolidge Corner Study Committee Members Absent:* Frank Caro, Catherine Donaher, Elton Elperin, Steve Kanen, Sergio Modigliani.

*Staff:* Kara Brewton

*Guests:* Pam McKinney (Town's Financial Real Estate Consultant, Byrne McKinney & Associates Inc.); Representatives from Chestnut Hill Realty including Jennifer Dopazo Gilbert (Law Office of Robert L. Allen, Jr.), Marc Levin; residents including Paul Saner, Beth Kates, David Leschinsky.

*Materials:* Agenda (2-11-19); Draft Joint CCSC/Planning Board Meeting Minutes (2-6-19); Draft CCSC Architecture Subcommittee Minutes (1-24-19); 2-page scope of work (Byrne McKinney & Associates 2-10-19)

Neil Wishinsky opened the meeting; Kara Brewton announced that the meeting was being videotaped and would be posted to Brookline Interactive Group (as we have with all meetings including Pam McKinney).

**Meeting Minutes**

The Coolidge Corner Study Committee approved the 2-6-19 meeting minutes. The draft Architecture Subcommittee Minutes from January 24<sup>th</sup> could not be approved since a quorum of the Subcommittee was not present at this meeting.

**Byrne McKinney Scope of Work**

Pam McKinney joined the discussion by phone and discussed the Scope of Work with the Committee, section by section.

**Section 1 – Address Global Issues**

- Kara Brewton announced that while no public meetings had yet been scheduled, the current owner of 30 Webster Street started the application process with the Board

**Coolidge Corner Study Committee**  
**Meeting**  
**February 11, 2019**

of Appeals to convert the use of that property to hotel use, likely an independent brand and 122 hotel rooms, with a parking ratio of 0.26 spaces per room. The building at 30 Webster was an assisted living facility, and more recently served as temporary space for a portion of the Coolidge Corner School while it was under construction.

- Ken Lewis noted that when the Pinnacle and HKS hotel feasibility reports were done for the Waldo Durgin site and the Holiday Inn site, neither this site nor the hotel proposed at Kenmore were part of the market mix. He is especially interested in updating hotel demand with respect to the future rent rate for purposes of modeling additional hotel excise tax.
- Pam McKinney stated that she would look at these and other market forces, but that off the cuff she was not especially concerned about the unbranded proposal at 30 Webster. Paul Saner added that his understanding was that 30 Webster was going to be an extended stay model, a much different market from the proposal here. Other hotel proposals are more important, including the 1200 Beacon Street expansion (which is much smaller than the assumption under the earlier hotel reports). While 1200 Beacon and the Kenmore project are not directly competing with this proposal by location, they are important projects to take into account.
- Regarding retail feasibility at this site, Pam stated that it certainly wasn't as good as the core intersection of Coolidge Corner or Harvard Street. Retail here would need to be more reliant on residents living above and the immediate residential neighborhood. She would like to come back with more empirical data on this question.

**Section 2 – Review the financials for the most current proposal**

- Ken Lewis noted that in October 2018, Chestnut Hill Realty (CHR) had shown 6,310 square feet of amenity space for the residential building. Many committee members at that time were asking for space that is partially open to the public, like an internet café. Even if the operator could cover Common Area Maintenance (CAM) charges and taxes only, such a space would be an important selling point to the neighborhood. He would like for Pam to assume no net revenue beyond that; Pam agreed. Linda Hamlin noted that the Holiday Inn renovations, which includes 38 additional rooms, also includes a small corner café.
- Kara noted that although the scope contemplates a 50/50 revenue split for any revenue from the commercial permit and overnight residential parking spaces at the corner of John and Green Street being moved from the Town lot to the underground garage, CHR is proposing that the revenue not be split since they are not only

**Coolidge Corner Study Committee**  
**Meeting**  
**February 11, 2019**

carrying the cost of constructing the spaces, but also carrying the cost of converting the parking area to landscaped park space. Kara asked that Pam model the updated proposal assuming that these 14 spaces be modeled showing CHR capturing all the revenue (at public rates).

- Linda Olson Pehlke noted that the ongoing maintenance costs for the Town of the lot on John/Green Streets should be accounted for separately from Pam's work; comparing the cost to maintain the lot for parking purposes and then as a park.
- Linda Olson Pehlke confirmed with CHR that the rent for the residential parking was going to be decoupled from the rental rate for the residential unit.
- The group asked about why the scope included testing condo development, since CHR was clear that they would not be including ownership residential units. Kara responded that because zoning is silent on ownership models, we needed to be able to answer this question if it came up at Town Meeting; Beth Kates agreed. Marc Levin noted that if the community insisted on condo ownership instead of rental, they would choose the 40B permitting option. Pam noted that this scenario, even if not likely, should probably be modeled under Section 3, testing alternatives. Linda Olson Pehlke noted that the tax revenue modeling should probably include this scenario as well. Pam McKinney noted that with a condominium development, the required unit mix size would likely need to change, parking requirements would likely increase, etc.

**Section 3 – Test alternative scenarios**

- Hotel parking ratios – individuals noted that the 30 Webster proposal would be a 0.26 parking ratio (space/room), that River Road as built was 0.25, and that some in South Boston were 0.
- Residential parking ratios – Pam McKinney noted that if this were strictly a millennial project, then we could imagine parking ratios being reduced significantly. However, CHR is interested in marketing to residents wanting to downsize, where at least some individual renters would be looking for a parking ratio above 1. Susie Roberts asked that Pam McKinney test a parking ratio of 0.5, even if CHR is less likely to build it. Pam McKinney agreed.
- Maura Toomey noted that Dexter Park has lots of available parking spots that can't be filled, and she would be interested in knowing what the demographics and trip generation there is now. Kara noted that the regional planning agency, MAPC, was updating parking utilization rates for residential units across the region, and she would try and get that data. Pam McKinney also noted that she has comparable data points for what underwriters will be OK with.

**Coolidge Corner Study Committee**  
**Meeting**  
**February 11, 2019**

Neil Wishinsky then opened up the discussion to the public.

David Leschinsky introduced himself as a Brookline resident, owner of Eureka Puzzles in Coolidge Corner, and President of the Coolidge Corner Merchants Association. He noted that customer parking is a big issue for them, as many come from outside the area. A large residential building with too few parking spaces strikes fear in his heart. For the businesses to remain vital, there needed to be enough parking in the neighborhood. He also added that the Theatre was planning on expanding an additional full-run movie theatre, which would increase parking demand. Brookline has priced out their employees – most retail employees cannot afford to live here, and are traveling from Brighton or Somerville. Some can come by public transit, but not everyone. David realizes that it is hard to pick a moving target for parking ratios, but wondered whether parking could be built to convert to storage units or finished space in the future.

Kara noted that the current zoning draft did accommodate that idea of converting excess parking to finished space, but also wondered whether there should be an intermediate step where more parking could be made available to the public. She noted that parking demands are different for different types of retail. If we limit the supply of parking too quickly, then our retail areas will all be service and convenience type (like CVS), which can rely solely on purchases from immediate residents and daytime workers to survive. For example, from the perspective of an individual jewelry store, that type of business' customers will be much more sensitive to parking availability, and the customer base includes much more than the immediate residential neighborhood. David Leschinsky agreed. He noted that if we just wanted convenience stores and gyms, that would be one thing - but if we want stores that are more interesting, we needed to have enough infrastructure to support those stores.

Maura Toomey added that there also needed to be a critical mass of retail to exist in order to continue attracting customers. David Leschinsky agreed. He believes that in addition to competition with online sales, all of the construction projects serially going on since the Beacon Street project have disrupted people and their shopping habits significantly. A retailer or restaurant is asked to lock in a lease for 5 to 10 years at a time, but their customer impacts may be much more immediate. Moving forward, the merchants are looking to support events or live performance venues, which will require parking infrastructure.

Beth Kates stated that Town Meeting Members needed very clear revenue projections to weigh the different options: the 40B versus the proposed mixed use project, different hotel occupancy rates, the affordable housing payment that could result in four times the amount of affordable units constructed onsite, etc.

Paul Saner complemented the Committee in deciding there would be no parking minimums at the last meeting. He understood the Memorandum of Agreement would agree to mutual

**Coolidge Corner Study Committee  
Meeting  
February 11, 2019**

cooperation with parking being offered to the public until it can be converted to finished space.

**Next Steps**

Kara Brewton reminded the Committee that the next meetings will be February 28<sup>th</sup> and March 6<sup>th</sup>, with Pam joining us again on March 6<sup>th</sup>. The February 28<sup>th</sup> meeting will be focused on the Zoning By-Law draft. The Memorandum of Agreement with the Developer will go to the Select Board late February and early March.

**Meeting Adjourned**