



Building a Better Brookline

Meeting Minutes

April 1, 2019

Robert Sperber, Founder Emeritus

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

EDAB Members Present: Paul Saner (Co-Chair), Anne Meyers (Co-Chair), Cliff Brown, Derrick Choi, Ken Lewis, Carol Levin, Tom Nally, Marilyn Newman, Al Raine, Donald Warner, Alan Christ

Staff: Kara Brewton, Meredith L. Mooney

Materials Presented: Agenda (4/1/19), Revised Draft Meeting Minutes (2/4/2019), PowerPoint Presentation by Kara Brewton on the Waldo-Durgin Overlay District and Coolidge Corner Study Committee (4/1/19)

Members of the Public: Natasha Woolfson, Leila Abelow

With a quorum present, Paul Saner opened the meeting.

- **Approval of Meeting Minutes:**

- **February 4, 2019 meeting minutes were approved unanimously as amended.**

- Paul Saner opened the public hearing on **2019 Annual Town Meeting Warrant Articles:**

- **Article 13:** Amendments to the Zoning By-Law and Zoning Map to Establish and Accommodate a Waldo-Durgin Overlay District (Submitted by Neil Wishinsky on behalf of the Coolidge Corner Study Committee and other residents)
- **Article 14:** Authorizing the Select Board to Enter into or Amend Agreements Pertaining to the Waldo-Durgin Development Project (Submitted by the Select Board)
- **Article 15:** Authorizing the Select Board to Accept and Execute a Restrictive Covenant and Related Agreements for Securing Tax Payments for the Waldo-Durgin Development Project Site (Submitted by the Select Board)

- Kara Brewton gave a presentation updating EDAB on the Waldo Durgin Overlay District and Coolidge Corner Study Committee process, which touched upon:

- The proposed zoning and overlay district;
- A comparison of the 40B and mixed-used proposal;
- An explanation of why the mixed use overlay zoning option is preferable, citing:
 - More local control over site design;
 - Below ground parking infrastructure;
 - Ability to create on-going conditions through the Special Permit process;
 - Financial benefit to the Town;
 - Additional benefits that Chestnut Hill Realty has agreed to;
- Retail, café, and other non-residential uses on the ground floor;

- Mitigation commitments (e.g. pedestrian safety improvements, a potential through-block pedestrian connection, sponsored shared bike stations);
 - Sustainability aspects of the project (e.g. LEED Silver Certifiable with potential to be Gold, enhanced energy use index targets);
 - Town Meeting package components:
 - Proposed Zoning – Waldo Durgin Overlay District;
 - Design Guidelines;
 - Memorandum of Agreement, which includes reference to a Public Use Easement for pedestrians, to be adopted at future Town Meeting;
 - Tax certainty agreement.
- Paul Saner presented on the mixed use proposal’s contribution to the Brookline Housing Trust Fund to assist with affordable housing production.
- The 40B proposal has a higher number of near-term affordable units, compared to the 11 affordable units included in the mixed-use proposal.
 - However, through the Housing Trust Fund, the Housing Advisory Board could leverage the mixed-use proposal’s cash payment to create a significant number of additional affordable units.
- Ken Lewis provided an in-depth review of the mixed-use project’s fiscal impact:
- Fiscally, the mixed-use option is better for the Town and will generate higher tax revenue for 3 structural reasons:
 - Commercial taxes are 1.64 times the residential rates;
 - Hotels generate occupancy excise tax= 6% of room revenue;
 - Fewer affordable units will generate higher weighted average assessed value PSF for the residential building.
 - The project is estimated to generate \$3.36 million per year, which is \$3 million over existing tax revenue. Both are conservative estimates that have been vetted by both the Town Assessor and commercial real estate consultant, Pam McKinney.
- Kara Brewton asked for EDAB member feedback on how to improve delivery of the Waldo Durgin presentation to audiences that aren’t as familiar with the project.
- Derrick Choi - Aspects that need to be addressed or emphasized:
 - An answer to the question ‘Why do we need more hotels?’
 - Paul Saner and Ken Lewis added that hotels support small businesses.
 - Shadow studies
 - Traffic studies
 - Highlight the innovative aspects of this project and process:
 - Improvements along John and Pleasant Streets
 - Parking ratios
 - Al Raine underscored this point. Parking in the mixed-use proposal includes a lot of best practice strategies.
 - Marilyn Newman- Given the Town’s contentious history with 40Bs, the extent to which the developer has presented something helpful and beneficial with this project is a narrative that needs to be brought to the forefront. Waldo Durgin and the Coolidge Corner Study Committee was a much more meaningful process than a developer simply dangling a 40B over our heads.
 - Carol Levin – This project has done an excellent job of balancing competing interests. The fact that this is the most optimal outcome needs to be underscored.

- Additional EDAB member comments or questions on the presentation:
 - How were the heights determined? What were the driving factors?
 - For the hotel, massing was driven by very careful massing shadow studies.
 - The resident building wasn't based on shadows. The committee advocated for reducing the 15-story proposal. The massing then had to be sufficient to support square footage to make the project cost effective, etc.
 - Would more affordable housing units have been included in the 15-story proposal?
 - Theoretically, yes, but an additional 3 or 4 stories would have been required.
 - What will the apartment rents be?
 - Average of \$4.30/per rentable SF per month, which doesn't include parking. Spaces can be rented for an additional cost.
 - What's the parking ratio?
 - 1.1 per resident
 - .35 per room key
 - 1.0 per rentable SF of commercial space
 - Will there be any more public process on this project between now and Town Meeting?
 - While the Coolidge Corner Study Committee has concluded its work, there will be many public hearings ramping up to Town meeting.
 - Many speakers for Town Meeting have already been lined up, including Werner Lohe, head of the Climate Action Committee, who is supportive of the parking ratios and innovative structure.
 - Town Meeting Members from Precincts 2, 8, 9, 10 have all received an email update on the project from Kara Brewton.
 - Property owners and the commercial area have also received project notifications.

- Public comment:
 - Leila Abelow, 32 James Street, currently parks behind Beacon Street at Waldo, and doesn't understand how the parking will work.
 - Kara Brewton explained that Chestnut Hill Realty will be moving those spaces below ground and maintaining the same rate.
 - Staff will follow-up with Ms. Abelow in this request for more information.

- **Paul Saner closed the public hearing on Warrant Articles 13, 14, and 15.**

- **Given that Warrant Articles 13, 14, and 15 will be presented to Town Meeting as a package, EDAB voted unanimously to recommend favorable action in an omnibus vote on Warrant Articles 13, 14, and 15.**

- Board and Committee Updates:
 - Newbury College (Paul Saner):
 - The Select Board-appointed committee on Newbury College has met regularly for many consecutive weeks.
 - All meetings have had executive sessions, where valuation scenarios were presented.
 - The committee has engaged a commercial real estate advisor (McCall & Almy), as well as architectural (Icon), and engineering (C-3) consultants.
 - The committee has advised the Select Board that the Town should make an offer on the entire property.
 - It's believed that the Town will make an offer, and may have a second bite of the apple through eminent domain.

- Upcoming Meeting with Rep. Tommy Vitolo (D – Brookline):
 - Paul Saner reported that Rep. Tommy Vitolo, Brookline’s new state rep who is on several legislative committees, including Community Development and Tourism, had asked to meet with Kara Brewton and the EDAB co-chairs.
 - The co-chairs will report back on their meeting.
- Staff Updates:
 - Open Economic Development and Long-Term Planner Position (Kara Brewton):
 - Applications for the ED-LT Planner position will close this Thursday.
 - There are currently four good potential applicants.
 - Tom Nally has agreed to take over the Boylston Street Corridor Study until a new planner can take over the project.
 - Warrant Article 16 regarding a Parking Benefits District (PBD):
 - Anne Meyers: The Brookline Chamber didn’t take a position on this warrant article.
 - Cliff Brown: The warrant article language lacks clarity around how the revenue will flow to the PBD.
 - Anne: It’s likely that Advisory will make changes to the warrant article. EDAB may take the article up in May.
 - 30 Webster Street (Kara Brewton):
 - The owner of 30 Webster Street is planning on going to the Board of Appeals to convert to a hotel use. The formal permit package has not yet been filed, but is penciled in for early May. Kara will forward to EDAB once it’s been filed.
 - Paul Saner: Credit to Kara for spotting this opportunity. This should be included in in the Economic Development sponsored portfolio. The room excise tax could double or triple the present level of taxes being paid by the School Department.
 - Recreational Marijuana Tourism (Kara Brewton):
 - We are seeing tourists coming to Brookline for the recreational marijuana.
 - What’s being done to encourage people to come up to Brookline Village and patronize local stores and restaurants?
 - NETA’s operations manager has been really diligent about handing out brochures promoting local businesses.
 - We don’t know if Brookline Village businesses have started to benefit from recreational marijuana sales at NETA.
- Board Business:
 - **Regarding EDAB’s board leadership, Cliff Brown nominated EDAB’s current co-chairs, Paul Saner and Anne Meyers. The motion received a unanimous vote of support.**

Meeting adjourned.