

Economic Development Advisory Board Minutes

July 12, 2021

7 – 9 PM held remotely via Zoom

EDAB Board members (in attendance noted by Y/N)

Anne Meyers, Co-Chair	Y	Derrick Choi	Y	Carol Levin	Y	Marilyn Newman	Y
Paul Saner, Co-Chair	Y	Alan Christ	N	Ken Lewis	Y	Al Raine	N
Cliff Brown	Y	Susan Houston	N	Tom Nally	Y	Sandi Silk	Y

Staff present: Kara Brewton, Meredith Mooney

Guests included: Karen Voght, JohnVanScoyoc, Ann Burke, Wendy Machmuller, Devon Trevelyan, Jennifer Dopazo Gilbert, David Pollak, Robert Schram, Jeanne Isenstein, David Trevvett, Mike Toffel, Arlene Mattison, Andrew Fischer

Materials included: 7/12/21 agenda, Local Rapid Recovery Plan Update (Department of Housing and Community Development, 7/12/21), May & June minutes as revised by Paul Saner

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

Local Rapid Recovery Plan Update (Coolidge Corner & JFK Area)

Meredith Mooney and Ann Burke from the Department of Housing & Community Development presented the current draft project list following results from a survey as well as focus group conversations. These projects would then be submitted to the state for funding likely starting in September. Draft projects included streetscape improvements, creating an outdoor dining toolkit, public art installation pilot, district branding and wayfinding, art & film festival tied to the Coolidge Corner Theatre reopening, an events permitting roadmap, pop-up opportunities for new entrepreneurs, district marketing, creating property owner incentives to optimize retail mix, creating a district management entity such as a Business Improvement District, conducting a parking utilization/ management study, concept plans for a multi-functional parking deck at Centre Street, and streamlining local business licensing and permitting.

Derrick Choi noted that he has heard from some businesses and they really appreciated the feedback mechanism to bring up some of their concerns; he also wondered whether some of the projects could be combined. In response to some Board questions, Ann Burke noted:

- although some of the ideas are related, the state process wants very specific steps to be laid out when asking for financial assistance
- these projects are supposed to be planning, not implementation like subsidizing rent for pop-up venues

Ken Lewis state that if all of these projects ended up happening at the same time as the Theatre expansion, construction of Waldo Durgin, and the improvements to Colonel Floyd site, that while helpful

in the long term – they might be quite disruptive to rtailers in the short term. Additionally, any parking studies should consider parking demand that will change with increased density in the neighborhood.

Boylston Street Corridor Study Committee Update

Potential recommendations to date are based on work that was completed before this Committee got started, such as market demand for Boylston Street by real estate consultant Pam McKinney, as well as surveys and individual conversations of businesses and property owners in the corridor. The most consistent feedback to date is a desire to see Boylston Street as less of a highway. Businesses would not mind if some parking were removed from Boylston Street in exchange for wider (and more legal) parking spaces, but all of our small businesses wanted to see parking remain within 20' of their front door.

Opportunities and support exists for mixed-use development. The Committee also sees their work as an opportunity to mitigate heat island effects in this area. Specific ideas to date include:

- preserving the Madris building on the northwest corner of Cypress & Boylston
- preserving tree canopy areas just south of Smythe Street as well as on the Old Lincoln School property
- preserving curbside parking adjacent to existing residents that have no other driveway or access for even basic maintenance/ trade vehicles
- Idea to break down the western part of the Old Lincoln School wall to reveal space more usable to the community and provide visual relief
- Possibly trying to incentivize some infill development by allowing it to be as of right, as long as it is within a certain building envelope
- Transforming this section of Boylston Street by removing the median, narrowing travel lanes, and providing intermittent parking
- Studying specific mixed-use options at three sites: behind the Madris Building, between Cypress Street & Boylston Place, and at the Dunkin Donuts/ Valvoline property (265-275 Boylston Street)
- Considering redevelopment of 10 Brookline Place into a lab/ life sciences building
- Considering redevelopment to double the number of housing units at the Brookline Housing Authority site between High & Juniper Streets

Tom Nally noted that the Committee is dealing with balancing a wide variety of interest and opinions expressed, and to reach some common ground, which is not easy. He also added that the Committee wants to make sure the ideas explored are financially feasible.

Carol Levin is concerned about slowing down traffic on Route 9, as it will exacerbate the desire from parents to drop off students from Cypress Street.

Susan Houston and Kara Brewton discussed the multi-year timeframe as well as leadership by Public Works that would be needed to budget and implement any MassDOT improvements.

Paul Saner strongly encouraged that any ground level non-residential space be specified by the percentage of floor area, not just linear space, and possibly encouraging active non-residential uses beyond retail. While it probably didn't make sense to do any zoning changes now for the Audi car dealership and UHaul properties on the southeast corner of Boylston & Cypress Street due to the risk of losing tax certainty to medical or education uses, he would hate to see another 30 years go by before we figure out what to do with those properties. This is especially true after Paul spoke with the Tax

Assessor and realized that increasing the zoning potential could bring in additional tax dollars in the short term and hopefully promote redevelopment. Specifically for the tire and muffler properties south of Boylston Street, he wondered whether the Committee had looked at any options that would incentivize the two property owners working in conjunction towards redevelopment. Kara Brewton noted that the MIT study did consider a 3-4 story mostly residential building at the tire/muffler site, which is being considered with the eastern side of the corridor for as-of-right development.

Sandy Silk mentioned that it would be helpful to have linkage between the commercial growth and maybe the Brookline Housing Authority redevelopment, especially if easier access and more street presence could be accommodated. Additionally, she cautioned the need for enough parking in this district to support retail and especially restaurant uses.

[Derrick Choi left the meeting.]

BFAC Moderator Committee reporting

Paul Saner reviewed a draft response to update the Brookline Fiscal Advisory Committee Moderator's Committee on recommendations they made, relative to the Economic Development Advisory Board. He included a note to clarify that the Economic Development Advisory Board does not have anything to do with the Town's Payment In Lieu of Taxes (PILOT) policy; that is handled by the Finance Department. Ken Lewis liked the distinction made in the last bullet on the first page regarding stabilization of the commercial sector, as he thought previous BFAC discussions almost equate multifamily residential and commercial as equally contributory to economic development. Sandy wondered whether the discussion about commercial rental subsidies for Green Street should be included; Paul Saner thought it was important, but not large enough scale to be included here. As there were no other questions, Paul stated that he would be reporting that EDAB reviewed the document and had no concerns with the way the information was reported.

May & June EDAB Minutes

Kara Brewton shared Paul Saner's edits to the May and June minutes. The Board made additional edits to the minutes. May and June minutes were approved by roll call vote, in favor: PS, AM, MN, AC, SH (although abstaining for the June 21st minutes as she was not there), CB, PS.

Review of Regulatory Term Sheet for Zoning & Public Health as it relates to Biolab Uses

Paul Saner, Carol Levin, and Marilyn Newman reviewed the term sheet with EDAB members, noting that the structure will allow Brookline officials and a Brookline Biosafety Board to ensure that all state and federal regulations are properly implemented if one of these uses is operating in Brookline. Susan Houston suggested that if we were going to include in the definition robotics and photonics, that "medical device industry" might also want to be included, as that industry identifies itself separately from other uses listed. The Subcommittee will discuss that further at their next meeting.

Board Member & Staff Updates

Ken Lewis noted that the US Open Men's Championship would be held at The Country Club in Brookline from June 13th to July 19th in 2022. This event will have a projected attendance of about 175,000 throughout the week and almost 100 million television viewers internationally. Ken will be the EDAB representative to the the Community Participation Committee (CPC) which will be Co-Chaired by former Select Board chair Ken Goldstein. Other Town members will include a representative from the Parks & Recreation Commission, the Commission for Diversity Inclusion & Community Relations, a local business group, and a Select Board liaison. There will also be six members of The Country Club on the CPC. The CPC has not yet met. The CPC is charged to find ways to promote the Town during this event, and facilitate local business participation. Anne Meyers asked whether there could be a shuttle to run through Brookline Village, Coolidge Corner, and Washington Square. Ken was not aware of the final traffic plan but noted that use of satellite parking lots and bus shuttles will be a critical component of the traffic management plan for the event.

Meredith Mooney noted that she has been working with the Office of Diversity, Inclusion & Community Relations to help them launch a Diverse & Inclusive Business Directory which they are now collecting entries for. Additionally, the Town's ADA coordinator will be putting together an educational program for businesses on how they can be more inclusive as well.

The next meeting will be August 9th.

Meeting adjourned at approximately 9:00 pm.

