PLANNING BOARD
FOR THE CITY OF CAMBRIDGE
GENERAL HEARING
Tuesday, April 25, 2017
7:00 p.m.

in

Second Floor Meeting Room 344 Broadway Cambridge, Massachusetts

H. Theodore Cohen, Chair
Hugh Russell, Member
Tom Sieniewicz, Member
Mary Flynn, Member
Steven Cohen, Member
Louis J. Bacci, Jr., Member
Thacher Tiffany, Associate Member

Iram Farooq, Assistant City Manager

Community Development Staff:

Liza Paden Jeff Roberts Suzannah Bigolin Swaathi Joseph

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H. THEODORE COHEN: Good evening,
everyone. Welcome to the April 25th meeting of
the Planning Board. We will start with our usual
update from Community Development Department.
Iram.

IRAM FAROOQ: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Today's agenda includes a public hearing on a zoning petition to create a listing and a fee for vacant and abandoned buildings. And we also under General Business have a pre-application proposal from EF for their third building at North Point.

The next meeting of the Board will be May

2nd and we will have a public hearing on the

Rafferty Petition which is a rezoning petition

for the corner of Cambridge and Third Streets and

that will be our first meeting when we switch to a 6:30 start time. The Ordinance Committee hearing on that petition will be May 3rd, the following day.

May 16th the Board will have a public hearing on the Observatory Hill rezoning petition which is a residents-sponsored petition to rezone the commercial strip in that area using a similar formulation to what was used along North Mass.

Ave. The idea is to protect the ground floor retail in the area and as well as support the neighborhood character of small scale residential. And the Ordinance Committee hearing on that petition will be May 18th.

There's also a petition on short-term rentals, and that hearing will be on May 23rd. So this is things like Airbnb and trying to regulate those uses so that it's not having a

detrimental impact on the housing stock in the city, and that it's better controlled in terms of impacts on residents in the neighborhood. The Ordinance Committee has scheduled a hearing on that topic for May 24th, the next day.

A few other items from City Council that are of interest, last night -- well, the City's budget was presented last night. So that's available for anybody who's interested for the coming year, fiscal year '18.

There's a couple of things that might be of interest to the Planning Board, which is that amongst specific projects, we, actually CDD, there's a proposal -- this is not approved by Council yet but that discussion will be in May, but there's new positions at CDD that have been proposed, and one of those is a new deputy director for planning, a second urban designer

who will be working with Suzannah, and a new zoning person to help deal with this large range of zoning petitions that comes up that's either investigating issues that City Council's concerned about or that our resident-sponsored petition. So that full group of people as we get the Council's sign off will be working closely with the Planning Board over the coming years.

But last night at their meeting, the City
Council also adopted the zoning for
reconstruction of buildings that are destroyed by
fire and that the Board had made a positive
recommendation on that topic and the changes that
the Board had suggested were welcomed and
included in the petition.

Today the Finance Committee conducted a public hearing on the Cambridge needs assessment which is something that CDD and Human Services

had been working with along with our non-profit partners, the Cambridge Non-profit Coalition as well as Cambridge Community Foundation to look at service needs for Cambridge population. So that's a really interesting document. And we'll send you a link to it. It's about 100 pages, so bedtime reading. But it is actually really important because it provides a snapshot of the significant needs that exist in the Cambridge population that are not always visible in the work that we do.

And then right now, so nobody can actually go, but right now there's a public meeting that's ongoing on changes proposal on Cambridge Street to create separated bike facility. But there will be more discussions and board members who are interested will have an opportunity to catch up.

I think those are just the major things, but thank you.

H. THEODORE COHEN: Thank you, Iram. I assume the budget, proposed budget included 100 percent increase for Planning Board member salaries?

IRAM FAROOQ: Yes, indeed. Next year we're going for 150.

H. THEODORE COHEN: 150.

STEVEN COHEN: Coffee and snacks.

H. THEODORE COHEN: Okay. Right now we have a public hearing on a City Council petition to amend the Zoning Ordinance by creating a new Section 11.900 maintenance and security of vacant or abandoned buildings. The proposed zoning would require that any building that is deemed to be vacant or abandoned for longer than 90 days shall be registered with Inspectional Services;

shall be secured and maintained so that it does not exhibit any evidence of vacancy; and shall pay an annual registration fee.

Is there someone who is making a presentation?

JEFF ROBERTS: Mr. Chair. I don't believe there's a presentation on this, so let me just frame this question a little bit of this petition. And I'll do it not by going through the petition, but by summarizing some of the discussion that occurred last week at the Ordinance Committee hearing.

So this was a petition that was submitted by some City Councillors and referred by the City Council as a zoning petition. Councillor McGovern introduced the topic by discussing an issue that community members have raised throughout the city of buildings that have been

held vacant for one reason or another over long periods of time. Some of the examples cited include the former movie theatre, multiplex in Harvard Square and the Vale Court property which has been under more recent discussion.

The proposal is aiming, as it was described, as aiming to create an incentive to, and/or fines and penalties to encourage the owners to make more productive use of those vacant spaces, and also to address the conditions of vacant buildings to make sure that a building, even if it's being held vacant, doesn't have negative impacts on the community or the surrounding area.

So when it was brought forward, there was a response from staff from various departments including CDD, Inspectional Services, and the Law Department. And while there was a sense that

there's a good intention behind this petition, there were some concerns that were raised and it was discussed or was put forward to the Council that this is an issue that the city staff should take some more time on to think through, to refine some of the proposal, to consider some issues, like for instance an issue that I raised and the Law Department raised as well, is whether zoning is really the most appropriate tool to deal with the issues having to do with the maintenance of property. It's certainly outside the scope of zoning and land use work that I typically do. But it was also acknowledged that other communities have adopted ordinances or other regulations having to do with vacant buildings in a lot of cases requiring a registration of buildings and then having standards for maintenance, and in some cases

imposing penalties if buildings are not registered.

There were some concerns raised as well from the staff, some more just on the intention and the outcomes of, you know, what the actual impacts of such a, such a requirement or a set of requirements would be, and whether the requirements might be more onerous on smaller property owners or small business owners more so than on larger property owners and property owners that have more resources to deal with those types of fees or fines.

So some of these were issues that were raised and the end result of that hearing was for -- was that the city -- or rather the Ordinance Committee decided to hold it in committee and asked to have the staff take some more time to work through some of these issues

and to bring forward some potential alternatives.

So I think the advice that I would give to the Planning Board on this one is that it doesn't appear that the Council is going to move to act quickly on this matter. Even if they do take action, it may be in a substantially different form than what's currently been proposed.

If Planning Board members have any -certainly there will be a public hearing, and if
Planning Board members have any comments or
suggestions, those can be directed to staff. I'd
certainly be happy to carry any of those forward
to staff and other departments who are working on
this issue, and we can take it from there. I
don't know that it's, it's absolutely pressing
that the Planning Board make a recommendation to
the Council, but of course it's the prerogative

of the Planning Board if you wish to make a recommendation or a communication directly to the Council, you could do that. But I'm not sure that it's necessary in this case.

H. THEODORE COHEN: Okay, thank you.

Well, unless somebody has -- the Board has a burning question right now, this is a public hearing and I would suggest that we go to the public and see what comments they have with the understanding based upon what Mr. Roberts has just said, that ultimately a proposal is likely to be very different than what is before us this evening, but I think we should all make our own comments and it would be helpful to have comments from the public, too.

So if there's anyone -- I don't know if there's a sign-up sheet.

LIZA PADEN: Nobody signed up.

H. THEODORE COHEN: Is there anybody who does wish to speak?

(No Response.)

H. THEODORE COHEN: If not, then it's up to board members.

I guess I'll start. Well, I guess my strongest recommendation to City Council is that whatever they end up proposing, they get a very strong opinion from the City Solicitor's office that what is proposed is legal. I agree that zoning may not be the best place for such an ordinance. It seems to me it is a health and safety and welfare issue. Probably a health and safety issue, and maybe it does stay within Inspectional Services, but I don't think it's a zoning issue since I view zoning as telling landowners, you know, what they can and cannot do with their property, versus what they must do

with their property, which I think this is intending to do.

I personally don't have any problem with a registration requirement so that the City and police and fire can know what buildings are considered abandoned or vacant and can keep a watchful eye over them. And I have no problem with a registration fee that is logically related to the cost to the City of administering such a program.

I do have a significant problem with the monthly fine that's imposed if property remains vacant or abandoned in excess of 180 days. That the fee of 4.17 percent of assessed value. You know, we get 50 percent of the value of the property in a year, 100 percent in two years. I think from my point of view in the absence of an opinion from City Solicitor, that this is not

legal and probably not Constitutional, that I view it as a taking of property. And if there is some sort of fee, I think it needs to be directly related again to the cost of administering and not based upon an assessed value that, you know, it may be that there is a difference between a cost of administering for a large property versus a smaller property, but I can't imagine it's simply a percentage of assessed value.

In thinking about this and whether it fit with zoning, since Massachusetts does have -- did pass the classification amendment, and I haven't familiarized myself with it again recently, the City can classify different types of property and tax them at different rates, perhaps it would be appropriate to have a class of abandoned or vacant buildings, and that those could be taxed at a different rate which could take into account

the need to maintain security and police and fire oversight of them. I don't know whether the classification amendment would allow that type of classification, but I think it's worth looking into.

The other questions I have -- well, really in the exemptions or what buildings that are not considered vacant or abandoned, I know from my practice that when someone dies and a property goes into probate, it can take a significant period of time before the ultimate ownership of the property is determined especially if there happen to be a will contest. And, you know, it doesn't fall within the category of actively being offered for sale, lease, or rent. It's a property that's not being used, but with the intent to use it at some time in the future once the legal status is cleared

up. And I think there will be other situations where the legal status of a piece of property is drawn into question and shouldn't be considered vacant or abandoned.

Questions I think staff should consider, one thing this doesn't cover is just vacant land in the City and whether vacant land should fall, if we're going to have this, obviously there is not a fire hazard, and it can be a fire hazard with a building burning down, but if we're going to require that vacant or abandoned buildings are maintained and not appear vacant, then should vacant lots also not appear vacant?

Again, though, I guess that's getting into issues that requiring somebody to do something with their land.

I don't quite know how in the maintenance of commercial properties the interior versus

storefront when visible when passerbyers through storefront windows shall be maintained in a way that does not exhibit evidence of vacancy --

HUGH RUSSELL: A stage set.

H. THEODORE COHEN: Pardon?

HUGH RUSSELL: A stage set.

H. THEODORE COHEN: A stage set. Does it have to be, you know --

LOUIS J. BACCI, JR.: And maybe do that for lots, too.

H. THEODORE COHEN: -- setup. I just don't quite know how that gets done.

I guess those are really the extent of my comments. I think the idea of registration is not a bad one. I'd be curious to what other communities have done and what have passed legal muster.

IRAM FAROOQ: Mr. Chairman?

H. THEODORE COHEN: Iram.

IRAM FAROOQ: Thank you. The one contextual piece that I wanted to just mention is that for the Council, there's actually two or more concerns that have driven this particular petition, and one is as you noted, the health and safety, potential hazards, and any impact on the City in terms of supporting functions in a more robust way than otherwise. But perhaps the more important part that was driving this is that there's a sense that buildings, particularly in Cambridge, are being purchased not just by people who want to inhabit them or use them, but often for speculative purposes, and sometimes are just being left vacant as land banking or just as an asset that holds value and then is no longer contributing to the community and often having a detrimental impact in terms of the life of the

City. So when you talked about the storefronts question, that is really about how hard we worked to create those storefronts to animate the street, and then if they are vacant or if they have a presence that's in fact negative, then it's sometimes even worse than not having the storefront at all. And so the idea, the range of ideas that we talked about, and some of which are being investigated and applied in other communities are things like partnering with agencies or maybe an arts council type entity that might in fact put some use into that space. Council talked about ideas like having -- and I don't know if this is legal either, perhaps being able to think about a limited time requirement to lease it to a non-profit at a lower cost if there's no -- if a storefront is vacant. But the challenges are significant sometimes because it's

hard to know when you see a vacant storefront whether it's vacant because somebody's just holding it and not making an effort to market it or if the previous tenant who had a long-term lease left for some reason or closed up business and is still holding that lease so that there's no capability by the property owner to infract a re-marketed or occupy it. So there's a whole host of complexity that we need to investigate. And I think one additional -- a couple of additional things that we talked about was even the need to address different uses in different ways. So there might be a different solution for a storefront as opposed to an office suite or perhaps there's some size threshold so if an individual decides to leave their home vacant for a year or two and live overseas, that they don't in fact have to be penalized for that.

there's quite a range of things that needs
further investigation and discussion. But there
are in fact several models that we've started to
research across the country where people are
attempting to have similar impact and reduce the
amount of visible vacancies for sure. And so
certainly we'll be bringing those back to the
Council and to the Board.

H. THEODORE COHEN: Well, thank you.

And no question that at times the number of vacant storefronts in some of the major squares in the city are very disturbing and wonder why the landlords are leaving them the way they are. And if there is some way we can promote them not being left vacant, that would be great.

Steve.

STEVEN COHEN: I actually wasn't going to

say anything other than to agree with you, Ted.

But actually hearing your words, Iram, I guess

I'm prompted to say a few things. Thank you for that.

I'm a bit uncomfortable with the notion that we're, you know, looking for ways to compel a property owner to use his property in a way. It's one thing to restrict the uses that he can put it to -- he or she. But to compel it is more problematic. I think we have a legitimate municipal interest in addressing the appearance of that property that it doesn't appear to be abandoned property because that has an impact on its neighbors and the neighborhood in general. But to go beyond that, I think is problematic. And to regulate and to accomplish those things I think as Ted has said, I think is probably achieved through non-zoning purposes.

Now even if we had them register, and this is a more general comment, and I'm not sure what the registration actually accomplishes. You know, what actually accomplishes something is the 50 percent per year penalty. That would accomplish it. But actually what it would accomplish it would be to enrich the lawyer representing the property owner who will take it to court because, again, I have to respectfully defer to the city attorneys, but I'm pretty sure that A, that's not legal. I think there's got to be a reasonable nexus between any fees imposed. And then the costs imposed by that property upon the City is no nexus here at all. I mean this is just obviously a sledge hammer, a penalty imposed on the property owners. I suspect that that's a non-starter.

So I also think that we've had a few

issues here. You know, they're a little problematic for us. But there aren't that many. They don't occur that often. I think especially when it comes to retail properties, it isn't really that easy to get an appropriate tenant in a retail property, and sometimes you do have to sit and wait for six months or a year or two years to get the appropriate tenants. I think we'd be wading into dangerous waters if we, you know, thought that we could detect the actual intent of a property owner and impose him or her to do something that he's not otherwise prepared to do. We have limited interest I think in appearance, and I don't think we should be going beyond that.

H. THEODORE COHEN: Hugh.

HUGH RUSSELL: I actually found your explanation very helpful. It explained why I was

uncomfortable with it. And Steve's comments I think are right on the mark.

So how do you get attention of a wealthy person who may own property? And there is a wealthy person who has bought a bunch of property in Harvard Square and is, you know, I believe his business is in China and perhaps he's only looking for a way to take his money from China and put it someplace where there's perhaps less political instability.

So a brief story about a client of mine who tried to buy a building from Warren Buffett.

And my client, it was a developer in Manchester,

New Hampshire. He had control of several of the mill buildings along the Merrimack River and had gotten them tented up with job producing enterprises. And so there was a half a million square foot mill which was actually the Berkshire

property. So it was a -- you know, a long term holding. It had been vacant for 20 or 30 years, and he thought it would be best for Manchester if that building could have people, you know, having jobs there and earning money and paying taxes. And so he tried to see if he could -- and he found out it was for sale for three times the market price. And when he asked the middle manager, he said, well, that's what Mr. Buffett thinks it's worth. And well, can I come out and explain to this guy. He said, Mr. Madden, you don't understand. This is one of 12 properties that is in a property package that Mr. Buffett looks at for 15 minutes every quarter. So you would have one minute more or less to make your case and you wouldn't make it. I can tell you. And it's like how do you get the attention of some absentee owner to address the legitimate

issues of your city? You know, that's a problem.

And that to me is one of the central motivating problems behind this.

H. THEODORE COHEN: Mary.

MARY FLYNN: Thank you.

Just, I was very disturbed when I read it. Not that I was thinking necessarily that it was illegal, but it just seemed to me that it was putting undue burden on some property owners more so than others. And I guess my first reaction to it was number one I didn't think zoning was the right place for it?

And secondly, I was thinking to me

"vacant" and "abandoned" are very different

things, and the rules shouldn't apply to both

categories in the same way. For example, if

somebody who goes away for a couple of years, you

know, and I had the exact same thought, I mean

not for so long, but it was like well, what if I want to go away for six months and just leave my place vacant? You know, why should I have to register it? That's certainly nobody's business but mine. I think there are a lot of difficulties. I understand the problem, and I'm not adverse to the City and all of us trying to find a way to address it. I just think that this is not the right tool.

H. THEODORE COHEN: Anyone else?
Tom.

TOM SIENIEWICZ: No, just quickly, I very much appreciate Ted and Steve's comments and Mary's comments around this issue. I'm not -- my gut tells me this doesn't belong in zoning, and the definition of what's abandoned and what's vacant are key. In my own experience I did buy a building out of probate that had been sitting

vacant for to an excess of two years. And also those of you who know my property, I tore out the entire front lawn. So it may look like it's abandoned, right? But that's because there's a food garden, production garden in the yard. So some definition of what's abandoned or vacant becomes actually rather critical. You know, those who think that keep a neatly trim lawn is what looks to be occupied would take issue with what I'm doing in my yard.

- H. THEODORE COHEN: Anyone else?
 (No Response.)
- H. THEODORE COHEN: Then I guess what do we wish to do? Do we want to --

HUGH RUSSELL: Make a recommendation --

H. THEODORE COHEN: -- make a recommendation, make a negative recommendation, or make no recommendation pending future

development of the proposal?

Jeff, would that --

JEFF ROBERTS: I think you said a few different things. You say no recommendation or you would make a negative recommendation?

H. THEODORE COHEN: Well, it appeared -maybe if I was reading the Board correctly, the
idea is that we would make no recommendation I
guess pending further development coming to us
from the City Council or the Ordinance Committee
staff.

JEFF ROBERTS: I think that would be fine. And certainly you could just, you could leave the hearing open and we wouldn't schedule it again. But in case something came back around, we could schedule it. But generally that's -- if the Board doesn't have anything to communicate to Council, it would just, we would

leave the hearing open.

STEVEN COHEN: Could we make a negative recommendation as drafted but we're receptive to proposed revisions from staff?

H. THEODORE COHEN: Yeah, I think that would make sense. We could say that we're not making a recommendation but have severe concerns about the petition as currently drafted and understand that City Council has asked staff to review it and to perhaps come back with a revision that we would then preview and make a recommendation on. Does that meet with everyone's approval?

LOUIS J. BACCI, JR.: That's better.

TOM SIENIEWICZ: Yes.

H. THEODORE COHEN: So I guess all in favor of such a non-recommendation?

(Show of hands.)

H. THEODORE COHEN: Okay, thank you.

The next matter we have is a pre-preliminary conference with regard to the EF Education First building No. 3. Sorry.

I guess they're bringing in the model?

Why don't we take a five minute break so that

they can bring in the model and get set up.

(A short recess was taken.)

H. THEODORE COHEN: Okay, we're back.

And now this is a pre-application conference for E.F. Education for Phase III at North Point Boulevard. Make your presentation.

RICHARD McKINNON: Be sure that I guess the mic is on. There we go. Okay.

Mr. Chairman, when there used to be three television networks, there used to be a program called Beat the Clock. I feel like I'm playing it.

H. THEODORE COHEN: I hope you've been advised that we've asked that all presentations be kept to no more than 30 minutes.

RICHARD McKINNON: That's right, exactly.

Good evening, Mr. Chairman, Members of the Board. My name is Richard McKinnon. I live at One Leighton Street at North Point. And thank you for seeing us tonight before we actually file our Special Permit applications.

I've had an unique opportunity. For three decades I've been the development consultant to E.F. Bertil Hult and his family. When he made the decision to leave One Memorial Drive, his offices down there, and come to North Point, this is what North Point looked like. His offices at One Memorial Drive did not look like that. And his employees were absolutely horrified at his decision. But he believed in

Cambridge and he believed in its vision for North Point. Urban development, connected to a system of parks that were connected to one another. A system of walkways, pathways, ultimately getting people out to the Charles River.

As a corporate citizen, EF will have invested nearly \$400 million in North Point should we get permission to build EF-3 since they've been out there. Furthermore, we, although we're an educational institution, we have educational and not-for-profit entities. We have two schools. We don't make -- in lieu of tax payments, we make tax payments to the City of Cambridge. We're taxed as if we're a full commercial operation. Those are agreements we made with the City and we'll make it again on this building.

As to the relationship with DCR, he

donated the front lawn of his first project to

DCR so that they could shape North Point Park the

way it's shaped today. And when you drive into

North Point and bear right, you're driving over

what would have been Bertil's front lawn all the

way down to the river itself. As you'll learn

from Shawna that that relationship with DCR has

really been strengthened over the years.

And finally as part of our community, every high school kid at CRLS knows about the local challenge. Most of them take it. It's a competition, and it's become such a part of going to Cambridge Rindge and Latin, I don't think we could get out of working in partnership with the City if we wanted to anymore.

Look, I'm biassed to be sure. I've worked out at North Point from the start and I live at North Point now. But I firmly believe

that it was a good thing that Bertil made a decision to go there many years ago. He's invested tremendously in there and he's been a perfect partner I think with DCR and for the City.

Speaking for Bertil I also note he's never regretted that he made that decision, that he put his faith in Cambridge, and the integrity of its government.

So with that opening, I'm going to introduce Shawna Marino who is director of EF properties.

SHAWNA MARINO: Thank you, Rich.

Good evening. Thank you, Chairman Cohen,
Members of the Board. My name is Shawna Marino.

I'm one of the real estate directors with EF

Education First, and I'm here tonight with our

development team from Wilson Architects, Zen

Associates, VHB, and DLA Piper.

As Rich said, EF has been a pioneer at

North Point since the 1990s. We've been before

this Board for a Special Permit review on both of
our existing buildings, EF-1 which currently
houses Hult International Business School, and

EF-2 which is our current North American
headquarters. We understand the Planning Board
rules so we're going to try to make our
presentation as brief as possible, but I'm happy
to get into as much detail on anything that you
like during our Q&A period.

To start I'm going to briefly summarize the project. The EF-3 site today -- the EF-3 building, sorry, sits on 125,000 square foot site. That's currently used as a temporary operations and maintenance facility for DCR. EF is acquiring the site from the Commonwealth for

\$20.4 million. The proceeds of the land sale will go directly to DCR to help them build a permanent new DCR maintenance facility which has been long planned as part of the Central Artery mitigation components. Because DCR land is involved, a special Legislative Act was passed in 2014 authorizing the sale of this land to EF.

The EF building's total gross floor area will not exceed 300,000 square feet, which is a 2.4 FAR. So we're completely in compliance with zoning. And the occupied building area is about 240,000 square feet with an additional 60,000 square feet for parking in the building, which as you know, counts towards FAR. There is no parking outside the building. The building height will not exceed 150 feet. It will be 12 stories all in compliance with zoning. So you see here our model demonstrates all of these key

factors.

The building will be institutional in nature and house up to 500 student residential beds, plus office space and ground floor public uses, including a gym and a fitness center. We are also committed to building to a LEED v4 Gold standard.

Lastly more than 60,000 square feet or an acre and a third of land will be turned into active recreational open space maintained by EF in perpetuity as part of this project.

As a brief matter of background, EF as you may know, is an international company. Our mission is to open the world through education.

And here in Cambridge and around the world we do this through language learning, academic degree programs, study abroad, cultural exchange, and educational tours. We have 1200 staff in our

Cambridge office today, and we're more than
46,000 staff and teachers all over the world in
53 countries.

As Rich said, EF is owned privately by
Bertil Hult and his family. Bertil also founded
as you may remember from the Town Gown in January
the Hult international Business School which was
formerly the Arthur D. Little School of
Management. And Hult offers international
business degree programs to graduate and
undergraduate students. And in addition to
Cambridge, Hult has campuses in Dubai, London,
New York, San Francisco, and Shanghai.

Hult was recently approved to launch and undergraduate program here in Massachusetts. And our expansion at North Point is intended to help Hult increase its classroom space and to house up to 500 international students. The EF-3 building

will also have office space that will allow EF to hire 300 more permanent staff, which will bring our numbers to 1500 at the North Point campus.

We understand that housing, student housing, all types of housing is in really high demand in Cambridge. So by offering on-site housing to the Hult students, we're hoping to alleviate some of that demand while also creating a vibrant, energetic campus setting at the North Point neighborhood.

In terms of timing, we hope to break ground this October and our plan is to be finished by late spring 2019, just in time for Hult's summer class schedule.

Here is the EF-3 site today. It is currently owned, as I said, by the Department of Conservation Recreation and it's used as a temporary operations maintenance facility. We're

acquiring this 125,000 square foot parcel from the Commonwealth in order to develop the 300,000 square foot building. But this project is not just about a building. This is truly a public private partnership. The proceeds from the land sale are going to DCR to help them build a long planned but never funded permanent maintenance facility to satisfy their needs for the upper and the lower Charles River Basin. That permanent facility will be going back toward Boston Sand and Gravel and the railroad, underneath the highway ramps, and around the highway ramps.

Since this land is technically parkland because it's owned by DCR, it isn't accessible, but it is not accessible for public use today although it is parkland. Our project is proposing to open up the site for public use and finally create another new public park

destination at North Point.

Now, there are a number of factors that have played a role in our building design and our site plan. I'm going to go through some of these key issues before I turn it over to Chris Martin from Wilson Architects to talk about the architectural solution to some of the factors.

So first off, you see here this is a 20,000 square foot area that we've had to give back to DCR as a permanent easement to give them a little bit more space for their maintenance facility. This corner of the site, there's an MWRA sewer line that runs here, and with the necessary setbacks that entire corner is unavailable for permanent structures.

Next as you can see on our model and in the site plan here, the site is surrounded by elevated highway ramps, both the onramps for

Route 1 and 93 and the Gilmore Bridge. Along the Gilmore Bridge, in addition to the elevation, there's a 20-foot easement that comes into the site that we need to honor to massDOT for future widening -- potential widening of Gilmore Bridge and future maintenance needs.

Since the building will house students, we also have fire access requirements around the whole structure.

And lastly the creation of new public green space is a requirement for this project.

The land is on Commonwealth owned filled tidelands which makes it subject to DEP's Chapter 91 Waterways License process. This requires that 75 percent of the ground floor of the EF-3 building as well as all the exterior space around the building is open to the public. And the acquisition of any type of DCR land triggers

special requirements for the sale of state land that is used for park or park-related purposes. So even though these are state requirements for the project, EF is really excited about the prospect of developing new parkland at North Point. We see this as our major opportunity to activate the area, to create a new public park destination, and to complete this missing link between our North Point Boulevard between the Charles River and East Cambridge.

These factors, they may not be obvious, but they have been real restrictions and obligation that fall upon this site, and it makes it a unique project, a unique site, a unique circumstance and so it has called for a creative architectural solution.

So with that, I'm going to turn it over to Chris Martin from Wilson Architects to present

our building design and site plan.

CHRIS MARTIN: Good evening. It's nice possible here. My name is Chris Martin and I'm with Wilson Architects. I'm a principal there.

Actually, I'm the President of Wilson Architects.

I'd like to describe the solution you see in the model before you and really have you understand how we are solving and taking advantage in leveraging, in our view, a number of challenges on the site and linking between the North Point development, North Point Common and North Point Park by the river. And as Shawna mentioned, this is the missing link and this is our opportunity to actually create an emerald necklace from North Point Common, including this site, and passed EF-2 to the North Point Park.

We have put a couple of guidelines on the site. It's actually a very challenging site

mentioned. Twenty/20 is set back with the North Point development and the planned development, and we'll get into that in a second. And then actually EF-2 is pulled closer forward, closer to North Point Boulevard. And the MWRA is in the mix of all that as well. How do you begin to solve that and create the kind of environment that EF and the City is seeking?

We have created a footprint that you might not immediately get to, but I'll illustrate how it actually is doing all of the things that I think a building of this type and a good neighbor should do.

If you look at this, this is a view from the east, and you can see that North Point

Common, the Gilmore Bridge -- this is EF-3, the proposed building, and then North Point Park.

And that the challenge is how do you really create this -- a public domain that is green and engaging and really creates that linkage that Rich mentioned at the very beginning? And also how do you tie back to the North Point development as well as back to North Point Boulevard? And so this is a real challenge. And we think that the orientation of the building begins to do this quite successfully.

This is a top down view of that same 3-D model. And you can see that right here at the Gilmore Bridge is what I would call a rotational node, that there's a desire line that needs to turn the corner and make its way further east as you work your way from west to east. And this is an opportunity to create what we call a pocket park at the front so that you're actually engaging with the front door of the building as

opposed to the back service entries that we've now pushed back into the shadows and back against the bridge and back against the highway ramps.

The building itself is actually fairly modest in its scale relative to its neighbors.

Twenty/20 and Regatta Towers, are -- sorry, excuse me -- are quite significant as compared to this 12-story building and it's working well below the zoning restrictions at 150 feet. So we're at 144 feet.

The program itself is seven floors of both apartment-style and traditional double dorm style for the students. And then an office floor. Student services at this fourth level.

And more importantly is this idea of an activated ground plain that is both an exterior experience as well as an interior experience, that this is the way in which the public experienced the

building truly. And you might also notice that it's acting as a buffer to the DCR maintenance facility as well as the highway ramps and the shadow of the sand and gravel facility.

Now, we are developing what we think is actually a fairly playful exterior facade with syncopated rhythm of windows, a tone on tone -- and I'll get into the colors that we're actually thinking about in a moment. With accent colors within the windows themselves. So texture, tone on tone, and we are working to understand what Cambridge is seeking in terms of the color pallet for this building.

Some precedence that we think actually capture some of that are this building right here which is a warm -- I will call it a warm grey tone. And you can see the alternating rhythm of texture and richness. The ground level, which is

we're developing as a ground podium that you may see here in the model, could have a richer texture and much more engaging for the public.

And then the idea of accent color incorporated into the fenestration and other areas of the building that really bring a richness and coupled with the warm tones of the wall.

North, northeast. You can see that the upper bed tower has -- pardon -- has -- I'm going too fast here. Has a double story expression, but there is a podium that is the ground public plain.

That is the park and Shawna's going to get into the facilities on the inside, but these are fully public facilities. And that we're thinking of this as an engaging, exciting place to be for the city and its residents.

Moving in closer, there's this idea of a, the lobby acts as a lantern. And again, Shawna will get into the interior. But we're looking to create a seamless transition inside and out, blurring both and moving through. You might notice at the back here we're proposing a gym, and that would be the climbing wall you see day and night.

This view I think actually captures the reasons for the siting and the development of the shape of the building. This is looking west towards North Point development. This would be North Point Common back through the Gilmore Bridge. And the idea is to create a continuous public parkland experience as you work your way east. And then the building is participating in that environment. You can see all the amenities that Shawna will get into in a moment. And then

the idea that the lobby itself is a lantern or beacon within the context of that and draws people into it.

Looking east actually is a different experience. And this actually shows the fact that Regatta Towers, EF-1, the Regatta Towers parking deck, all are north facing and create a fairly industrial edge on the south side of North Point Boulevard. We're proposing to create some relief on the north edge and allow that edge to be developed and also allow that edge to have natural light reflected off the building facade into that area. And, again, make that connection back to the river and back to the west to North Point Common.

This is a view of looking at how the ground plain, the materials, the seating, the character, actually moves into the lobby. We're

looking at the idea of a food truck inside the lobby to bring people in. So that people feel comfortable inside and outside of this building. That that's when we've succeeded in developing this ground plain that I'm describing in the beginning.

And finally, the idea that the lobby acts as a front porch or a lantern in the context of certain times of day, and so you see a colored soffit here and then a transparent lantern that has a range and scale of activity around it that we really think will make this a very engaging place for everybody to be.

SHAWNA MARINO: So as you can see, our vision for this project is for the ground floor and the outdoor public space to be integrated and to really work seamlessly with one another.

Wellness is an important EF culture piece, and we

think that Cambridge shares this priority as well. And so we see this as an indoor/outdoor environment that's centered around fitness and recreational activities that is welcoming to the public, and inviting the community to participate in some of these wellness centered recreational uses.

75 percent of the EF-3 ground floor is going to be open to the public. And we're proposing the main uses to be a new public gym and fitness center that you see here in green.

We'll have a two-story rock and boulder climbing wall over here that you'll be able to see directly from when you approach the site along Museum Way and North Point Boulevard.

We are proposing a food truck cafe in the middle of the lobby. So if you're a passerby and if there was, you know, any sort of curiosity, we

want you to come in and grab a coffee or a juice or smoothie and hopefully that makes it feel more than the typical kind of corporate cafe you might see in inside of a building.

We'll also plan to have publicly accessible restrooms as well as public bike storage, short and long term. And to help us, you know, really plan the outdoor space around this building, we didn't want to just do it on We wanted to seek community input. So our own. before we came here and before we started the true permitting process for this building, we conducted an on-line survey with the East Cambridge neighborhood, with stakeholders in the We received more than 200 responses, and folks voted for predominantly or overwhelmingly an outdoor sort of adult fitness circuit and stations as well as a multiuse flex field that

could be used for soccer or frisbee, as well as outdoor space for yoga and tai chi. So our proposed site plan for around the building as you see incorporates all of these different uses. And the key, because, you know, today it's a maintenance facility, so how do we make sure that tomorrow people know it's a place where they can come and be part of? We wanted to really make sure that the frontage on North Point Boulevard was activated and inviting. And so as you look here, this pocket park is a really key component. And we've been working very closely with the CDD staff to figure out the best way to make that gateway from the western side of the Gilmore Bridge from the important connections from the Murphy Stairs and from the Lechmere T. We wanted to make sure this was a gateway so that when you're coming underneath the Gilmore Bridge,

you're greeted by park space and benches and these fitness stations that you're sort of invited in to experience and then go around the site in a circuit. And you'll see the connections around and through the site are strategically located so that you can easily get to our planned bike parking that will be long-term covered bike parking that's accessible to the public back here. There's also bike parking around the site scattered. There's bike parking inside. And then as you come around this way or if you approach our site from the North Point Park area or from the North Bank Bridge or from Museum Way, you'll be greeted with this nice beautiful multiuse field which we think is a great use for the site because it can be used all year round. And, you know, people can use it for Frisbee golf or soccer or any sort of planned

community events and activities, and we'll be doing a lot of programming as part of our Chapter 91 requirements.

In the back one thing to point out, this area here as you might remember from the beginning is a tricky space because of the MWRA sewer line. It's also, you know, right kind of at the edge of the highway ramps, and so we wanted to do something with it that could still be activated. And so our idea is a sports track which can be used for extreme fitness classes or boot camps, things that are sort of complementary to the gym and fitness center.

These are some of the examples of what
we're thinking in terms of the landscaping
vision. Tim Houlihan from Zen Associates is here
tonight so if you have any specific questions
about vegetation or plant types that we're

considering, he is more than happy to answer your questions.

These are some ideas just to give you perspective of what we're thinking for the recreational activities and the different uses. And like I was saying, the connections at this site are truly extraordinary. We feel very lucky. I mean, when you think of what North Point used to look like and now the fact that there's three Hubway stations within a half mile, I mean who would have thought 30 years ago when you looked at that site what it would be today? And we're really blessed that there's bike connectivity, multiuse path, the pedestrian circulation. There's a number of ways to get to and from the site. And we, you know, thanks to Cambridge's investment in infrastructure, we're really thrilled with how much the site really

works into the overall connections in East

Cambridge and through to Boston and to

Somerville.

Our engineers, our traffic engineers from VHB are here tonight. So of course if you have any traffic related questions, we're happy to get into it. We've submitted our TIS to CDD and that's under review. But there's some good headlines around our transportation story. More than 75 percent of EF staff and students bike, walk, or take public transportation to and from our campus. And so we, we really pride ourselves on that. We have a really strong PTDM plan and program in addition to the sort of organic characteristics of our workforce and student International students, they don't bring body. cars with them when they come here. So they're not permitted to drive and we don't give them

parking spaces. So that's another, you know, group of students who will be coming to the site.

A lot of them will now be living on the site in addition, so we're already taking care of the traffic in that sense.

There is, like I was saying before, a

Hubway station. And we'll also be looking at

amending or PTDM plan with the City to look at it

as a whole campus approach.

So in closing we think that there are a number of benefits to this project and we are really pleased that we've had the opportunity to continue to grow in Cambridge because we, we are growing all over the world and EF can really expand anywhere. It's sort of the nature of our international business. But North Point has a really special place in our hearts and in our corporate history now. We've been here for 30

years and we want to continue expanding. And we think that the EF-3 project gives us the great opportunity to expand, but it also brings a number of benefits to the city and to the community. We'll be creating more than an acre of new publicly accessible park space with this project. It's going to be fulfilling that key missing link on North Point Boulevard between the river and East Cambridge. We think that the student housing component is going to be bringing this exciting energy and 24/7 activity to the North Point neighborhood. We'll also be starting to block off some of those industrial old North Point uses like Boston Sand and Gravel and the maintenance facility to try to frame out the North Point Boulevard neighborhood. And this, the site's going to have a lot of clean-up now. I mean, one thing that Hugh knows is there's a

stockpile of contaminated soil there that the state and folks have been trying to remove for a long time. And so this project is going to finally allow that to be cleaned up and for the whole site to be remediated.

And as Rich said, you know, we generate a significant amount of local tax revenue for the City of Cambridge as well as a number of other economic benefits through international student investment and the work we do in Cambridge. And we, we're just really excited to continue to expand here and we look forward to continuing to be a good community partner to the City and to our neighbors.

So with that, we're happy to take your questions and the whole team is here.

H. THEODORE COHEN: Thank you very much.
So for board members and for the public,

this is going to be a PUD, and in accordance with the PUD Ordinance, if the developer requests, as they did, a pre-application conference. The purpose of the conference is to familiarize both the developer and the Planning Board with each other's intentions with respect to the PUD. at the conference, the Planning Board shall familiarize the developer with the process for obtaining a Special Permit for a PUD and explain some issues that should be considered in planning the project. The developer may discuss his range of options concerning development and inform the Planning Board of his development concept.

And as a final caveat, any statement made by either the Planning Board or the developer concerning potential disposition of a Special Permit application is not legally binding. So this is really sort of an open ended discussion

about what is being proposed. I would imagine with Mr. McKinnon's involvement that there is no need to familiarize him or the proponent, the applicant, of the process for obtaining a Special Permit and the issues that should be considered in such a permit. And so I think really we just want to talk about the proposal and what we like, don't like, questions we have, and, you know, what -- with how the developer should be proceeding from here.

So anyone has any questions, comments, please start.

Hugh.

HUGH RUSSELL: Using the Sieniewicz formula, I would say that --

H. THEODORE COHEN: Peanut butter?

HUGH RUSSELL: Yeah.

That the use of this building providing

housing for your students is terrific. It's really appropriate. It will mean that the impact of your school will not have that kind of negative impact on the East Cambridge neighborhood, you know, people trying to find housing.

And so then the middle layer is I think there's an opportunity to do something with the rooftop design that is more interesting. I mean, right now it's just pieces of white cardboard around the roof. And so I'm not saying that you're proposing to make, you know, crystalline white volumes of those size, but this is a building that's going to be looked down upon to some extent. I think it's going to be seen particularly from like the highway ramps and there's an opportunity to do something with the rooftop structures that might be more whimsical

or interesting or -- you know, it's on the edge of stuff and it could be a little more dramatic.

And then my third point is do you really need two floors of parking? How did you come to that conclusion?

SHAWNA MARINO: May I answer that question?

HUGH RUSSELL: Right. If most of the users aren't even allowed to have cars.

SHAWNA MARINO: Sure. So I'll answer but also Susan from VHB is here so we can get into detail if you want. But one point to make is that we've looked at our parking strategy from a campus-wide approach. So today we're a little bit over -- we're a little bit under our demand. So even though we have such a strong, low SMV rate, we are -- we're still only offering I believe the total parking number is -- I'm trying

to remember the exact number, but it's less than what our demand is. So by offering -- we're proposing just 115 parking spots on this building, and we're trying to also bring that down right now if we can. And so the parking that we're proposing is meant to alleviate the overall demand with the 1500 employees on the overall campus as well as the faculty that will be here with Hult and the staff that's involved in the Hult expansion. So you're right, that the students are not using this parking. We've tried to really minimize the parking space in this building as much as possible while still providing some new supply to alleviate some of that demand.

And I -- if I can, too, comment on the $\\ \text{rooftop mechanical treatment.} \quad \text{We're looking into} \\ \text{that.} \quad \text{We agree with you that there may be an}$

opportunity to do some more interesting things to screen the mechanicals, and I think it's really good feedback. And Sebastian Avendano here is from the EF architectural and design team. I don't know if you have anything to add on the rooftop structures.

SEBASTIAN AVENDANO: Should I come up?

SHAWNA MARINO: Yeah, yeah.

SEBASTIAN AVENDANO: Hi. It wasn't so much -- I mean, yes, I think obviously this is still for us a development, and so one of the reasons that we're here is to hear your feedback and see which are the places we need to go and how we need to develop it. But I think in response to the relationship of the levels of parking and the student accommodation, a part of the strategy there is us looking at is what is the student experience and their relationship to

the onramp and on to the freeway. And I think
there was a concern that we wanted the level of
those things to be at a point that they're not
looking at the side of the ramp and getting a
view above that. That was also part of the brief
that we provided to the architect as well.

HUGH RUSSELL: So as I understand it, the fourth floor of the structure which has the terrace is going to be the sort of common areas for the students and other educational, dining, and stuff like that?

SHAWNA MARINO: Yeah.

HUGH RUSSELL: Which makes sense to me.

H. THEODORE COHEN: Yes, I think perhaps we could, you know, move along more efficiently if we gut out all of the Board's questions and comments and then let you address them all at one time rather than going back and forth.

SHAWNA MARINO: Yes, absolutely.

Whatever is best for you. No problem.

H. THEODORE COHEN: That will work a little bit better.

Hugh, do you have more?

HUGH RUSSELL: I'm done.

H. THEODORE COHEN: You finished a whole sandwich.

THACHER TIFFANY: It's open face.

H. THEODORE COHEN: It's open face.

HUGH RUSSELL: Well, if you want the other white bread, I have to say the open space strategy is wonderful, too.

H. THEODORE COHEN: Good.

Thacher, do you have questions, comments?

THACHER TIFFANY: I agree with Hugh about -- well, both comments but specifically about encouraging you to try to do something a

little more adventurous with the roof. It is, you know, it will be seen a lot from the highway like your other buildings. And so it's a great opportunity to do something more exciting. So don't let us stop you.

The only other thing that just kind of caught my eye, and this is probably a structural issue that maybe just has to be that way, but there's something about the column near the entrance that feels a little wrong. And so if that's something you're thinking about, I'd encourage you to think about it more. It's like every view it's like right in the way. Obviously it depends where you're coming at and maybe it's just the views you've chosen, but something to think about. It feels a little imbalanced.

And yeah, the open space is great. I'll be there.

H. THEODORE COHEN: Mary.

MARY FLYNN: I second the support of the open space and I do agree with Hugh that it's wonderful that you're actually providing housing for the students. I think that will help to activate the area and will nicely tie in to what's going on both on the riverfront and on the other side of the highway.

Other than that, I don't really have anything to add at this point.

SHAWNA MARINO: Thank you.

H. THEODORE COHEN: Tom.

TOM SIENIEWICZ: So generally, I mean, you started with a question about the overall pallet of the building. I think you're going in the right direction in my opinion with the colored accent and the precedence you showed looked pretty handsome and I think would be

appropriate for the site. I will say this, though, I don't know about the top, but I think something could be more interesting at the top, but the EF building that is on the -- I guess it's EF-2 that's on the highway now. I always look forward to the fact that you can look into the classroom. When it was built, you could see the steel and it was for me it was great anticipation that you would be able to like be a bit of a peeping Tom at 60 miles an hour and see a lecture. And it marks that building not as an office building but as an educational building.

So this is a strange site, right? You've got people going at, I don't know if I have to, I was going to say 70, but 45 or 50, right? Around that great curve. And also on the other ridge.

So there are a lot of people seeing your building, seeing your architecture at high speed.

And I just thought it was great to have -- you know, something like that classroom to mark the side of the building with that moment. That urban moment. Ah, you're making it a place making thing. And I don't know what element the program could deform to say, oh, you know, there's that large window, there's that bay windows. It's not a sign or a light, but something that would mark it I think would be, could really add to it.

So the landscape strategy, I -- it may be because of the renderings that I saw. And what I guess I want to understand is at what speed are people driving down this dead end street? It appears, if you don't understand it in the plan to have a turnaround circle at the end, if you look at that street, that's a street built for 40 miles an hour, right? The amount of paving in

the foreground of each of those perspectives suggests very high speed, suburban kind of conditions, large turning radiuses at the corners. And in fact if you look at the sidewalk detail, there's a pull-off lane, there's a sidewalk, there's a -- this is wider than Fifth Avenue, right? So I -- with -- I don't understand it. I thought once you come underneath the bridge from North Point, maybe this is gravel, right? That it's more parklike and less like a, I don't know, like a, you know, ubiquitous some kind of condition in Ohio somewhere. I don't, especially since you have such a great and wonderful commitment to the sense of this as being historically a public parkland. So maybe that's a bike lane, but we've got a bike lane over there, too. Somebody going down the wrong way on the street, so -- but I

think that that could be -- yeah, it's -- you've captured Cambridge perfectly. You don't get doored that way.

LOUIS J. BACCI, JR.: Right.

TOM SIENIEWICZ: So, I don't know, maybe this is already all constructed and everything.

But I would put in another 20 feet of lawn and slow down the cars somehow and put a lot more trees in. And even -- I was just looking at this diagram, the dimension of this street in front of this building is greater than that highway, two highway ramps. So that seems weird to me. And I think the cars should move at about ten miles an hour through there, right?

Even this picture, the existing condition looks that way. So maybe there's no way to fix it. But I think certainly the detail in front of the building could help.

But other than that I applaud the housing. I agree with Hugh about that. I don't have so much of an issue with the column. But anyway, good luck, and I look forward to seeing you again.

H. THEODORE COHEN: Steve.

much to say in terms of the use of location and the architecture. I like what I see at this stage. If I could just step off the reservation for just a moment, I must admit I'm just really curious about the school and what its mission is and who the students are and who Mr. Hult is and what's the relationship to Sweden and EF au pair?

SHAWNA MARINO: I can answer all of those questions if you like.

STEVEN COHEN: If the Chair would permit it.

TOM SIENIEWICZ: Have a Town Gown report.

STEVEN COHEN: It's not within our jurisdiction, but it's nice to know who we're dealing with and what exactly the mission is.

H. THEODORE COHEN: Well, I suggest perhaps that's a discussion for after we talk about the building and you can take a look at the recent Town Gown report that talks about it.

Maybe that's a more of a private conversation we don't need to have right now.

STEVEN COHEN: Okay.

H. THEODORE COHEN: Lou.

LOUIS J. BACCI, JR.: I guess I'm mostly in agreement with my colleagues here. I'd like to see something more done with the mechanicals for sure. Also, you have some very long kind of flat facades here. There are going to be a lot of people looking at this building. North Point

itself, plus all the people on the highway and so forth.

Getting back to Tom's comments, it needs something. I don't know what it is. Color maybe. Contrast. And I'll have to disagree on Tom with one thing.

TOM SIENIEWICZ: What's that?

LOUIS J. BACCI, JR.: I like the ample roads.

STEVEN COHEN: You have a truck.

LOUIS J. BACCI, JR.: We have a lot of incidents.

And so one other question. So 300 more staff and how many more students?

SHAWNA MARINO: A thousand.

LOUIS J. BACCI, JR.: A thousand. Now I see why the large roads and walkways.

That's it, Ted.

H. THEODORE COHEN: Okay. I like the building and, you know, I sat on building 2 and I think it's very successful and like that you see it from all the areas when you're driving around there, when you're walking around there. And so I hope that this becomes another, you know, main visual point of things. I know Mr. Martin (sic) talked about the syncopation of the windows. just this one, my personal point of view is that I'm not wild about the fenestration of sort of changing randomly. That's just my personal point of view. You've got a couple of architects who probably have a very different point of view about it. But I agree that, you know, the building needs something to really differentiate it and make it become a great visual element I spent a lot of time yesterday walking there. around North Point and walking around the Common

going to the park, and obviously that site is great for development, turning something into it.

Is there some sort of -- going to be some sort of other connection under the Gilmore Bridge or it's just through North Point Boulevard?

SHAWNA MARINO: I can answer that when we're --

H. THEODORE COHEN: Yeah, yeah. I mean, because, you know, it's great, I walked around Twenty/20 and up the bridge and up the staircase, but then you're right on the highway and you can't get across it.

Which you mentioned the 20-foot easement in the event of the expansion of the bridge or maintenance of the bridge. So I assume access to the parking is on the roadway by the bridge. If the bridge ever were expanded, would you still have enough area?

SHAWNA MARINO: We would, that's, that's one of the key reasons why we put the vehicular access there was so that if they go ahead and widen some day, it wouldn't go over park space and which would then prevent it from being open space to the sky. So that way if they do widen it, it's just covering our driveway.

H. THEODORE COHEN: Okay.

You know, I agree with all the other comments. Certainly something great on the top, you know, that would be really a wonderful visual element. Maybe that's the equivalent of the broken glass in building 2 that would be the thing that everybody would see and talk about the building.

Those are really my comments.

Suzannah, I know you've been looking at this. Do you want to throw in some things right

here?

SUZANNAH BIGOLIN: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

We've had a lot of meetings with EF which have been really productive and we're really excited to see the site developed and the transformation that will occur. We focussed a lot on the site planning and the site design, and we're really happy to see this effective ground plain and all sort of fun and interesting ideas that are being considered at the moment. And also the project has evolved quite a bit since we first saw it. So one of the key areas we've been looking at is the relationship of the building to the street. And that's primarily based on the ECaPs design guidelines which call for a consistent edge along public streets and avoiding blank walls and parking facilities facing streets. And we also want to encourage a sort of active streetscape and pedestrian environment.

So the kind of siting of the building has been an area that we've been focusing on in trying to get the main pedestrian entrance to face the street, and initially it was kind of tucked behind and in the middle of the building, so it's moved towards North Point. I think it's now directly on.

Yeah, we're pleased to see the entrance is very prominent now.

I guess we would still want to consider some elements of the open space area here and making sure that the building at the ground plain is active and interesting. And then the design of the podium, I guess, is another area because it is screening the parking as it faces North Point Boulevard. We've been talking about that quite a bit as well. And so that's sort of the key areas. And we also have encouraged all the

colors and textures, so we're hoping that kind of evolves as well. That summarizes -- I guess the other main point has been the relationship of the building to the street that we're focussed on.

And then actually I might add some sustainability comments as well.

We're really happy to see that you're considering LEED Gold now. So that's something that the team has been working towards. And we continue to sort of look at some of the energy modelling between LEED and stretch code. I think there was some discrepancies that we noticed.

And also looking at the rooftop and sort of solar ready opportunities as well. Depending on the shading. So that's some of the key issues.

That summarizes my points.

TOM SIENIEWICZ: Maybe, Suzannah, you

could help me with this. The model shows in the landscape relative, you've been working with them on the landscape and maybe the proponent can answer this question, the model shows vegetation and a wall of vegetation between the open space and the street, and the rendering promises the opposite condition.

SUZANNAH BIGOLIN: Yeah.

TOM SIENIEWICZ: Do you know what we're working toward?

SUZANNAH BIGOLIN: We have been discussing that quite a bit because the open space needs to be welcoming and public, and there's a sort of need to balance some of the activities with the soccer field but I think --

SHAWNA MARINO: Yeah, also can I -JOHN HAWKINSON: Can you use the mic,

please?

SHAWNA MARINO: Yes, does this work?

Okay, great.

So this just -- admittedly we finished this at I think five o'clock tonight. So it was a surprise that we're even bringing our model and we were pleased that it was ready. But the landscaping on here isn't exactly what we're proposing just yet. It was done to try to get something ready for tonight. And so what you're seeing here with this barrier is that what you're talking about?

TOM SIENIEWICZ: Yes.

SHAWNA MARINO: Yeah. So that's definitely I think a little heavier than what we're planning in our plans. But there is a need to balance the sort of soccer balls flying onto North Point Boulevard with, you know, having an inviting, accessible, open groundscape. So I

don't know, Tim, if you want to talk any more about this, this is from Zen Associates our landscaping team or do we want to hold it for our submittal. But I think that's something we're definitely very focussed on. We're trying to extract that balance, and Stuart Dash has been looking at this, you know, really closely to try to figure out the right kind of balance of accessible to the open space and then kind of keeping some of the organized sports games protected in that area.

There is -- this is a fence an existing fence here today with greenery. It's the boundary of the MWRA sewer pump station. So that, that's going to stay a fence there, but we are trying to figure out what to do in this area.

TOM SIENIEWICZ: I like it open. I like it more public.

SHAWNA MARINO: Right, okay.

H. THEODORE COHEN: Will board members before we have responses, I have a question, just curious, this is not a public hearing but there are some members of the public here. Do we wish to hear from them or save their comments for a more formal public hearing you welcome comments?

STEVEN COHEN: Sure.

MARY FLYNN: Sure.

H. THEODORE COHEN: All right, are there any members of the public who wish to speak?

Please. Please state your name and address for the record and we'll ask that you speak for no more than three minutes. There is a -- we'll try to monitor. Please go ahead.

RENATA VON TSCHARNER: Thank you. My
name is Renata von Tscharner and I'm President of
the Charles River Conservancy and I appreciate

the opportunity to make some comments.

I am here to raise with you tonight the Charles River Conservancy concerns about how the disposition of public open space owned by DCR for this project does not meet the applicable laws of the Commonwealth. And also about the necessity for the City of Cambridge to take responsibility for assuring that the substitute space offered by EF for public use in the interior lobby in this new building is indeed meaningful for the public, and particularly for the residents of East Cambridge, a neighborhood which is already suffering a deficit of recreational opportunities.

A bit of background. The mission of the Charles River Conservancy founded in 2000 is to make the public riverfront parklands more active, attractive, and accessible for all. Our 35,000

volunteers, including over 2,000 landscape
volunteers, annually maintain and upgrade the
parklands along the urban Charles from North
Point Park to Watertown. As you probably know,
the Charles River Conservancy spent many years
fundraising and building the Lynch Family Skate
Park adjacent to EF-2 in North Point Park.

In November 2015 we handed this new unique recreational facility of about one acre of reclaimed land over to ECR as an additional gift of 25,000 per year to pay for maintenance for seven years.

The City of Cambridge is partnering with DCR to provide lighting for the skate park which we very much appreciate. It is our great pleasure to let you know that these former forlorn industrial wasteland is now one of the most heavily used recreational facilities in the

DCR's state park system.

The Conservancy's next initiative is a swim park just upriver from the skate park on the western edge of North Point Park.

All of the above background is just to say that we, the Conservancy, is a committed steward of our precious Charles River Parkland and remain steadfast in doing all we can to create new recreational open space and to maintain the open space resources that can be so vulnerable to the pressures of economic development and generating tax revenue.

To the EF-3 project. As parkland advocates, we are concerned that EF's proposal fails to achieve the no net loss of public land and required by Chapter 265 of the Acts of 214 and the Article 97 Land Disposition Policy. This loss of 105,000 square feet of public land will

have a detrimental impact on Cambridge and its citizens. East Cambridge already has proportionately less open space than other neighborhoods in Cambridge and this will exacerbate existing disparity.

EF has negotiated a purchase price for the parcel and the relocation and expansion of the existing DCR facility, but this payment does not compensate Massachusetts taxpayers and the City of Cambridge for the permanent loss of parkland.

Under the legislation Article 97, EF has an independent obligation to achieve no net loss of open space by providing substitute land or an equivalent in natural resource and recreational services through an open space agreement with the City of Cambridge.

H. THEODORE COHEN: Ma'am, if you could

conclude your comments.

RENATA VON TSCHARNER: All right.

EF has incorrectly conflated their obligation to pay fair market value to the parcel this obligation to achieve no net loss. We are surprised when just two weeks ago EF offered an additional million dollars for landscaping of the DCR owned open space behind the newly acquired EF-4, which they claim fulfills this obligation. However, this pledge is insufficient given that the project will eliminate 105,000 square feet of existing land protected under Article 97.

The City of Cambridge --

H. THEODORE COHEN: Ma'am, really, if you have written comments, you can submit them to us.

RENATA VON TSCHARNER: All right. So I think this MOU with the City of Cambridge is particularly important for the Planning Board

because you're part of that agreement and you need to play an active role to make sure

Cambridge --

H. THEODORE COHEN: All right. We're really trying to focus on the building and the space right now. And so we appreciate your comments and we'll take your written comments and then there will be a further hearing on this at a time in the future.

RENATA VON TSCHARNER: Thank you. It's a bigger, bigger scale issue. But I have comments and should I give those copies to each of you?

H. THEODORE COHEN: Councillor Carlone.

COUNCILLOR DENNIS CARLONE: Hi, Dennis
Carlone, Nine Washington Avenue, Cambridge.

Some of you might know but maybe not everybody, I did the original plan for Community Development for North Point, and this site was

always a critical site. If you could go to, I think it was the last slide, Shawna, that showed the ground plain in plan.

Yes, that's great.

And it -- one of the things that was critical to me about North Point is the connection under the bridge and what the road --I think it's North Point Boulevard is named, what has become of that. And as you know, there's parking here, there's service stores at the end. And I think in part the building is deflecting from that. If you were to say in an urban area you have a big park on one side of a bridge and a large park on the other side on the river, you wouldn't necessarily think there would be a park In fact, I feel that the park makes in between. it feel suburban. I get the point that DCR wants open space. I understand that. But it seems to

me that that angle is about as arbitrary as you can get and it dilutes the street yet again. The street edge. I know nobody has mentioned this.

I think there are many great things about this.

I'm one of the promoters that mentioned to Rich

McKinnon that there should be a building here not a maintenance facility.

RICHARD McKINNON: That's right.

COUNCILLOR DENNIS CARLONE: And I still feel that. A dormitory, I think that's fabulous. An act active ground floor, it's fabulous. But it should help the urban design structure. I mean, I hope that the garage across the street, actually, the edge gets in-filled with housing some day, and I think that indeed could happen. But having open space as the link, eh, it makes no sense. And I realize Renata had another perspective and EF has yet another perspective.

Nevertheless, the soccer field or the playing field, I get that. I think that will be pretty much Hult related no matter the fact that anybody can go there, it is their domain.

In addition to the geometry, and I get the back geometry, getting the trucks in and deflecting from the highway, that doesn't bother me. The street edge bothers me. And given the condition of the other buildings along the way, my God, we need a little structure on a street to edge and reinforce the street. It still could be set back. There still can be some open space, but more of an urban edge.

My biggest issue is, is that, I think the facades are bland. And we have a lot of bland buildings on this side; black, white, grey. It's almost -- I notice what the Board is wearing tonight by chance. And so maybe that's a message

to all the architects that we should fall in this range. I'm not wearing this shirt on purpose and I'm not suggesting that Shawna's got an idea in her jacket. That there -- I think if it's a dormitory, there can be color. And I'm not talking about shocking color or -- but just some life to it. And I have no doubt that the architect -- sorry -- is intending to do that. But concrete? I assume it's concrete. God. we've got a lot of that out there, including the highways and the bridges and underside of the bridge. How about something that says it's full of students and full of life?

I want to also say that I came tonight to hear Suzannah's comments, and I think every one of her comments is right on and I'm thrilled that you asked for her comments. And when I did this for Community Development, there was a dialogue

with the Planning Board design review, and they were very similar to the comments you heard tonight in my comments.

I think the roof is important, but God, compared to the facades, it's miniscule. The facades are the major picture. I think there's a lot of great things about this, I think the uses are right. I'm thrilled that we're gonna have more people here, but I think urbanistically there are some moves that can happen that will make it a much better building.

Thank you.

H. THEODORE COHEN: Thank you.

Is there anyone -- sir.

JASON ALVES: My name is Jason Alves.

I'm the Director of the East Cambridge Business

Association. We actually invited EF to come down
to our meeting this Tuesday so we'll be seeing

the plans officially. I will be providing feedback to the Board as the process goes forward. I just wanted to come and say, you know, EF just kind of demonstrated and showed everybody what a great public partner they've been to the City of Cambridge. I think that they're, you know, the gold standard of, you know, you can trust what they say. And a lot of the park lands down in North Point have really been produced as a result of their efforts and their work. So they certainly deserve a lot of credit for bringing the area to life. As far as design of the building, I know that you have great building at EF-2 and I'm sure they'll work through any of their design problems and issues and take the advice of the community and the Board. So looking forward to seeing the project go forward.

H. THEODORE COHEN: Thank you.

Is there anyone else who wishes to speak? Heather.

HEATHER HOFFMAN: Hi. Heather Hoffman,
213 Hurley Street. I wanted to agree with
Councillor Carlone about the blandness of this.

EF has not engaged in timid architecture before
and I hate to see them start. I think they
can -- they can do something that's much cooler
looking. And so I hope that they will
reconsider.

As to the roof, I worked at 75 State

Street in downtown Boston for a while. They got sued by Exchange Place because Exchange Place did not want to look at ugly roof. So there is actually precedent for having an interesting looking roof for people looking down. So I wouldn't discount it, but many more of us are

going to see the walls. In fact I dare say that everyone who sees the roof will also see the walls.

With respect to playing fields and the other fitness things, there's been a whole lot of discussion in East Cambridge about having recreational facilities indoors and outdoors that are available to the rest of us and affordable to the rest of us. The outdoor ones are affordable, probably free. But indoors, that's an issue and that's been brought up a lot of times. And I dare say that any playing field that is reasonably reachable from Kendall Square will find itself populated. Take a look at -- I mean, they come up to East Cambridge. There's a park down on Hurley Street with basketball courts, and that is full of people from Kendall Square at lunchtime during the week. So if they can get to

this, they'll use it. And we certainly do need fields that are usable for actual games. That's what people are doing at Rogers Street. It is a huge need. It's something that the city has not done a good job providing in the eastern half of the city. And, you know, I would just say that listen to everything that Rhonda Masse has been saying for 20 years about that, and it's true. So having, having a playing field available is fine if there were any way to make it something usable, you know, kind of regulation usable, that would be even better.

Thanks.

H. THEODORE COHEN: Thank you.

Is there anyone else who wishes to speak?

(No Response.)

H. THEODORE COHEN: If not, then Shawna, if you could -- you and your team could address

some of the comments and questions.

SHAWNA MARINO: Sure. Okay, so I think a few things that I can touch on that the Board asked to start or any comments?

H. THEODORE COHEN: That's fine. And obviously if you don't have answers today and you can address them when you come forward with your application.

SHAWNA MARINO: Right. I mean this is all extra, right?

H. THEODORE COHEN: Yes.

SHAWNA MARINO: Because we're going to be before you one more time, two more times.

H. THEODORE COHEN: Two more times.

SHAWNA MARINO: Right, exactly.

So first off, just starting with Hugh's comments, I think, you know, like I was saying before what everyone was talking about the

rooftop, we'll look into that. So blanket response on the rooftop mechanicals, our design team will look into it and we'll come back when we submit with something hopefully more creative than what you've seen here today. And admittedly, I don't think the model even shows all of that. And it certainly does not show the colors and the facade. It's all done so that the focus is on really the shape of the siting.

Parking. One point on the parking just to make is that we are under the zoning maximum and we are -- the minimum is I think 108 spots for the use. And so unlike on EF-2 when we actually had to seek a waiver to go under the minimum which we did, we're trying to not to have to seek a waiver and stay within the zoning. So we think we're in a pretty sweet spot that that works well for the demand and the zoning, but we

can talk more about that when we come before you officially.

In terms of the column and the sort of potential awkwardness of that. I think that's something we're going to look into and the entryway. And as Suzannah mentioned, a lot of our focus over the past few months with CDD and with Suzannah's team has been on strengthening the relationship between the street and the building and really making sure that that entry point is -- has a strong North Point Boulevard frontage. That's something that we'll continue working with Suzannah on.

The -- one thing I wanted to bring up in terms of the layout of the multiuse pathways here, and I think this rendering shows it well.

So we've walked the site with Cara Seiderman and Stuart Dash and others looking to figure out how

you link up the multiuse path that's on the eastern side of the Gilmore Bridge that's built today through to the site in front of the MWRA and around our EF-2 building with a total opposite configuration that's on the western side of the Gilmore Bridge. So we wanted to decide, you know, do we go with one or the other or do we do something totally different? And the consensus is that we -- there's a commuter bike lane on the road and then there's a sidewalk and then there's the multiuse path. And the multiuse path is really for strollers and sort of slow bikers and maybe fast walkers, who knows. But then the sidewalk is different and obviously the commuter bike path is different. So we know there's a lot going on. There's some models that we've looked at from other parts of the country that Cara wanted us to study to see how all of

these different kind of pathways intersected.

And so we think that this could work, but I just wanted to let you know what the context was overall for the site and the neighborhood.

Certainly, Steve, we can talk all about EF history and the relationship between EF and Hult, and I'm happy to talk to you about that offline or in, you know, in our submittal we can address some of the history if that's helpful for you. It is in our Town Gown submittal as well.

And in terms of the facade, like I said, we're gonna keep looking at that. I don't know if Sebastian wants to talk at all about sort of where our inspiration for the facade and sort of what we're thinking about or if you'd like to, I think it might be helpful to hear from the designer who sort of come up with the vision for what the colors look like?

SEBASTIAN AVENDANO: Yes?

SHAWNA MARINO: Yes, please, come up to the microphone.

SEBASTIAN AVENDANO: I mean the role that we play in, you know, in the company EF is always to promote good design which is both responsive to the student needs and to its context. And so, yes, we have looked a lot in the development and the discussion of the syncopate facade and trying to find a way to activate and find some variation of that facade has come a little bit out of the changing use inside the building, and so we've got different sizes of units that respond to different needs. And it's -- we're not there yet. I think we recognize that we're not there yet. So the fact that we have comments about those things reflects our own kind of uncertainty. And I would say the same thing with regard to relationship to the street; the entrance, the columns, and all those kinds of things I think are things that we continue to debate. So I'd say, you know, those are all kinds of things that we welcome.

There is, you know, the question of siting and the relationship to the street and to the neighboring site, which I don't know -- I'm happy to -- perhaps we go back to one of the slides that shows the site in plan with the relationship to the --

SHAWNA MARINO: Like the ground floor and the -- oh, I know which one you're talking about. Like here?

SEBASTIAN AVENDANO: Yeah, yeah.

And so I guess, again, this has been subject to most debate, you know, in the whole process of trying to find the right orientation

of the building on the site. And I think, you know, the conclusion and I suppose the response, the reason why this is, is obviously trying to find out what is the appropriate response and how do you decide what the setback is when you have one which suggests this and obviously the other side of the street which is parallel to this line And then as you go passed the Gilmore there. Bridge and you find this other condition over here -- and I suppose we arrived at this thinking, well, okay, let's say we do pull this back down to this thing, which is again something we've studied and we're happy consider to if everybody feels it's something we should be looking at. But I suppose we felt that this being part of the building which is the one open to the public and has an open space, so we're looking at the accessible public bike parking

over here together with this whole lobby area which is -- we kind of see both as an area of people coming in for coffee but providing shelter in the winter, this kind of tall space with three-story high glass. You're going to get the natural warmth of the sun given the orientation of the building. So we feel that this is the appropriate facade to dress with this. And we feel that if we were to pull this down, as you're coming from this direction, then you would be looking at part of the building which isn't necessarily the most public and open part of the building. We can't get away from the fact that we need to provide a whole series of amenities to service the building. And so I suppose that's -that kind of explains, you know, the rationale behind and how we arrived here.

SHAWNA MARINO: Yeah.

And that's a really nice lead in into a little bit of some of the comments around the open space and the fact that we're acquiring a currently owned DCR owned parkland. I will remind you what, you know, we're looking at today is a maintenance facility, right? And so we understand that this is certainly DCR land that's playing a very important function, and that's why this is truly is a public/private partnership, and there's really three core tenants to that. It's the funding from the land sale is going directly to DCR instead of the normal sort of state coffers. It's going directly to DCR so that DCR can build this permanent long-planned maintenance facility. Without the EF project we're not sure when that would happen. And the maintenance facility is a park resource and a park need.

Secondly, this is giving back really over an acre and a third of now publicly accessible park space. And today it's not accessible. But I think in the future this is going to play, this is going to now be a key link and a part of the North Point area that folks use and enjoy today. And when you think of the 30 years ago of what that used to look like, I'm not sure any of us ever expected so much activation here at North Point thanks to what we think has been a number of public/private partnerships over the years between EF and the Commonwealth.

Just if it's helpful, I have some slides here in the back that we thought this might come up and I want to educate the Board on what the no net loss policy is and how it is a factor in the project and this is -- here we go. The no net loss policy is some of the special requirements

that comes with purchasing or acquiring DCR land.

And we believe we're meeting the no net loss

policy through a number of different factors. So

the purchase price goes to DCR. There's also

this permanent easement that goes back to DCR.

All of the site area outside of the building will

be open to the public. And actually 92.5 percent

of the site is going to be public use after the

development of our project. So it's I think 78

percent of the ground floor is open to the public

and all the site area outside of it.

We -- we're also proposing to landscape an area that's over here at the corner of North Point Park. It's something that the Regatta

Tower neighbors have been requesting for a long time. It's an area that's owned by DCR but it's not landscaped or maintained. And as you know, there's gonna be a number of pedestrian

improvements along Monsignor O'Brien Highway in the coming years. So we see this as a key enhancement to the North Point Park area by helping sort of welcome in folks from Monsignor O'Brien Highway and bring them into the park network that way.

We also, you know, we've really embraced I think the different uses at North Point like the skate park and all the other, you know, different populations that are starting to, you know, kind of land here. And we've got skaters in and out of lingo and in our building lobby and around our building all the time. And we do a lot of work with the Charles River Conservancy. And we're, you know, very much, you know, excited by all of their different initiatives. And we really think we've worked well together with a lot of the different stakeholder groups to try to activate the North Point neighborhood. And hopefully you've seen that we've really, you know, done what we said we would do and we've been a good steward of the parkland in this corner of North Point.

One last thing is I think what Heather was talking about in terms of the affordability of the recreational facilities and ensuring that what we're proposing will be open to the community. This is very much central to who we are anyway. If you've ever come over to Lingo, for example, you know, it's a really affordable. You know, easy going place to grab a bite to eat. And our pricing for annual and day passes at the gym will be as affordable as they need to be for the students who are there. So we're, we're committing to having affordable rates for memberships and ensuring that it's very

accessible and open to the East Cambridge neighbors.

I think that was most of the key
questions. And of course we're going to be going
back and submitting our filing in the coming
weeks so hopefully we can address anything else
at that time.

H. THEODORE COHEN: Good, thank you.

Board members, other questions or comments? Hugh.

HUGH RUSSELL: I have a comment. I've been staring at this model from a perspective that you're not seeing. I'm seeing the interesting part. And I guess -- so if we can turn this microphone on for me. Thank you. Is it on?

TOM SIENIEWICZ: It was on.

JOHN HAWKINSON: It is, yes.

HUGH RUSSELL: Thank you. So this end is interesting because there's an interesting glazing this way and there's actually a stripe of less glazing here because the rooms are getting turned at that corner. So I'm wondering, you've got an interesting shaped building here. I couldn't see that little notch here, but if you could somehow inflect this elevation right about here to sort of signal that there's a wing that's hitting it in a different way. I mean, you know, that means maybe this comes out like that, and maybe then this elevation gets inflected to show that wing. And this is something similar happens on that corner. So you celebrate the corners with a -- maybe a modest change in plain, some -something that is like this in taking advantage of the corner orientation. I mean, this is not as bland as it looks.

The other point I would make is that I think this is the floor of a student service, but it looks like it's the same. So, and maybe there's a place where you can take Tom's advice and open up a corner and see into something if there's something on that corner.

CHRIS MARTIN: I really like that idea.

HUGH RUSSELL: And the next floor is offices, so maybe you don't do it there because it gets a little confusing. But just --

TOM SIENIEWICZ: Yeah.

HUGH RUSSELL: -- just ways you can think about that maybe if the corners are special, the middle, which wants to be more regular because it is regular kinds of rooms, this amount of variation might be sufficient to carry that off. That's my thinking.

SHAWNA MARINO: Thank you.

H. THEODORE COHEN: Okay, any other comments? Questions?

(No Response.)

H. THEODORE COHEN: Well, if not, thank you all very much for coming and having this conference and we will look forward to seeing what comes next.

SHAWNA MARINO: Thank you very much.

H. THEODORE COHEN: Thank you very much.

SHAWNA MARINO: Thank you.

H. THEODORE COHEN: Liza, I didn't ask earlier if there were any transcripts? No.

And I don't think there are any BZA matters, so we are adjourned. Thank you all very much.

(Whereupon, at 9:15 p.m., the Planning Board Adjourned.)

* * * * *

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