

# Harvard Square Kiosk and Plaza Working Group – Notes

Wednesday, January 31, 2018

- Attendees:
  - Working Group: Sarah Rosenkrantz, Frank Kramer, Abra Berkowitz, Bertil Jean-Chronberg, Tom Lucey, Robyn Culbertson, Janet Si-Ming Lee, Daniel Andrew Schofield-Bodt, Ken Taylor, Mary Flynn
  - Staff: Stuart Dash, Kathy Watkins, Daniel Wolf, Charlie Sullivan
  - Project for Public Spaces (programming and use consultant): Meg Walker
  - Touloukian Touloukian, Inc. (architectural consultant): Theodore Touloukian, Jared Ramsdell
  - Halvorson Design (landscape architecture consultant): Cynthia Smith, Bryan Jereb, Travis Lucia (HDR)
- Presentation: Firm Introduction and Preliminary Landscape Architecture Considerations/Concepts (Halvorson)
- Presentation: Firm Introduction and Preliminary Architectural Considerations/Concepts (Touloukian Touloukian, Inc.)
- Discussion
  - Good integration of historical and modern aspects
  - Look at removing brick from Plaza design?
  - Concerned about constraints of the small space – will be hard to get retail experience that qualifies as vibrant commercial experience
  - Likes example of Post Office Square – feeling of oasis, greenery
  - Opening up of Plaza and building provides more space
  - Kiosk is for residents, not just visitors
  - Community involvement in operation of Kiosk
  - Accommodate Working Group feedback and Call for Ideas summary into reports
  - Should share a future draft RFQ with community
  - Consider moving crosswalks near the Point for better pedestrian flow (response: this would likely extend the intersection's already long cycle)
  - Consider how historic identity applies to the Plaza as well
  - Challenge: how to create a wonderful place when dark, cold, snowy, etc.
  - Likes idea of analyzing building components added over time vs. original bones; flexibility
- Presentation: Program Development (Project for Public Spaces)
- Discussion
  - Rich palette of options
  - Liked small tables and performance space
  - For reading room – common table could break down when not in use
  - Likes outdoor rooms
  - Wouldn't want to do yoga in middle of Harvard Square
  - Equipment should be on wheels
  - Very ambitious – will need more than one employee in the Kiosk
  - Appropriate spot for tours

- Attachment to Out of Town News / print news theme
- Likes idea of a “news ticker” – could display news/events
- Key broad Out of Town News brand in some way
- Not everything needs to be hammered out in advance for fit out – design / program; great to have some structure, but keep it flexible to see what works
- Likes flexibility; different things at different times of day
- Seems a bit ambitious – fiscally viable?
- Tables for coffee in the morning
- Community meetings in Kiosk
- Work in conjunction with other groups
- Feels crowded; make sure programming responds to pedestrian traffic
- Concept is good for residents, too; will be used well if word is given out to residents
- Communal table – interesting but not sure how it will work
- Good to incorporate art
- Requires staff – who will manage
- Nice to see this concept catering to a range of different groups
- Flattening the elevation works well with program
- Regarding lighting – balance the following: promote beauty of Kiosk, support program, respect residents, etc.
- Program – spill out to other spaces
- Could connect to existing programs like Cambridge Open Studios
- Collaborative management
- Promote current events
- This is the City giving back the Kiosk to residents
- Plaza is a service to people
- Should feel organic; open, simple, good flow, easy
- Commerce is not the job of this place; selling coffee/books regularly is not respecting merchants or spirit of the goals of the place
- Public Comment
  - Don't over-clutter
  - Keep as a lingering spot
  - Fitness activity doesn't seem appropriate here; loves everything else
  - Put something useful in the Kiosk: coffee, seating, newspapers
  - Culinary program of the High School – could be a coffee operator
  - Wired glass in original Kiosk – is this possible?
  - Mobile elements – belong at waist height; can roll back and hide
  - Concerned about commercial use in Kiosk: competition with existing brick and mortar local businesses – offensive to them, not fair
  - Over-programming would be a mistake
  - Lighting – make it safe and welcoming
  - Provide electricity and water for programming and plants
  - Storage space for a communal table would be a challenge
  - Should be cohesive with Smith Center plaza
  - Maintain historic essence; don't need to strip everything down

- Destination for residents – gateway, village hub, connective tissue
- Consider seasons – shade, enclosures
- Commerce – cultural experience, Etsy crafts...
- Overwhelmed; over-programmed
- Liked decluttering idea from Halvorson
- Don't over-program – scale it down; too ambitious
- Need more room for plantings
- On the fence about having lots of commercial activity
- Too much programming would be difficult in this space
- Visitors can become overpowering in force and numbers – need more space for visitors
- Liked word art idea
- Can't be thought of as commercial; news/information, not commerce
- Redesign headhouse using Kiosk
- Commerce opportunities underground
- Should have a place for ridehailing