

COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS

CITY OF CAMBRIDGE PLANNING BOARD

IN RE: GENERAL HEARING

PLANNING BOARD MEMBERS:

William Tibbs, Chairman
Pamela Winters, Board Member
Thomas Anninger, Board Member
Hugh Russell, Board Member
Patricia Singer, Board Member
Steven Winter, Board Member
Charles Studen, Board Member

ASSOCIATE BOARD MEMBERS:

Beth Rubenstein, Assistant City Manager
Les Barber, Director of Zoning
Susan Glazer, Deputy Director
Stuart Dash, Director of Community Planning
Liza Paden

- held at -

City Hall Annex
Second Floor Meeting Room
344 Broadway, McCusker Building
Cambridge, Massachusetts
Tuesday, March 17, 2009
7:30 p.m.

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PLANNING BOARD MEETING

St. Patrick's Day

Tuesday, March 17, 2009

WILLIAM TIBBS, CHAIRMAN: Welcome to the March 17th meeting of the Cambridge Planning Board.

We don't have any public hearing scheduled for tonight. We have several discussions on the agenda. One is a couple of Zoning Board of Appeal cases and we're going to have a discussion of the Town Gown presentations, and I guess it will be a review of the Open Space Plan, too.

So, with that, I'll turn it over to Beth who will give us an update.

BETH RUBENSTEIN: Thank you, Bill. Welcome back.

Upcoming meetings: This is our last meeting in March, and then in April, we'll be meeting on April 7th and then April 21st; in

May we'll be meeting on the 5th and the 19th.

And just to let the Board know there are two zoning petitions, then there's one, a refile, and one a new file; Lesley University has refiled their petition, and the public hearing has been scheduled for April 7th; and then the Beale Companies have filed a zoning petition for the property what we call little Binney and Portland Street near the movie theater, the Kendall Square Movie Theater. They are looking for some height changes and some FAR changes bringing the FAR in line for nonresidential use as they would be for residential use and a couple of other things. So, that will be on the hearing schedule probably later in April.

Staff has completed the write-up for the permit on 650 Main Street with your good work last time, and there are many other things that the staff will be bringing to your attention over the next several months.

Some of the recommendations of the green building and Zoning Committee are going to be forthcoming and some of those will be in the area of zoning with regard to winter binds and green building standards.

We hope to be coming to discuss with you some planning work that the staff, that Stuart and his group has been doing with respect to the relationship with the City and the Charles River. And our ever popular recommended changes to the sign ordinance is always there waiting in the wings for when we have an evening or some time for it.

So, we will continue to be busy and that's what's ahead in the near future.

WILLIAM TIBBS, CHAIRMAN: All right.

Who is going to champion the Zoning Board of Appeal cases or at least bring them up so we can review them?

**1925 MASSACHUSETTS AVENUE AND 25 EIGHTH
STREET:**

TARYN PATRICK: Good evening.

For the record, it's Taryn Patrick with (inaudible) & Associates, Incorporated on behalf the Applicant, OmniPoint or T-Mobile, and the nature of the application that will be before the Board of Appeals is 25 Eighth Street. It's an existing wireless communication facility.

And what T-Mobile would like to propose is to add one antenna on the southwestern corner of the rooftop.

As you can see on the second page of the plans or probably the pictures are probably the better depiction of what we're trying to do. And they also will be proposing to add an extension to the existing cable tray.

HUGH RUSSELL: We don't seem to have plans of that one.

TARYN PATRICK: Oh, I'm sorry. You know what, you guys have the 1925. I'm sorry. We'll start with 1925.

BETH RUBENSTEIN: It's just a little test to see that you were paying attention.

(Laughter.)

TARYN PATRICK: Okay. Backing up, 1925 Mass Ave. Sorry.

On this application, T-Mobile is going to be proposing to add an antenna to the existing safety railing on the existing wireless communication facility. And they're also proposing to remove and relocate one antenna that is on the existing chimney. Not to increase any height or anything like that. So, essentially adding one antenna and removing and replacing an antenna on the chimney.

And we just wanted the Board's comments, feedback, so that can be placed in the Board of Appeals folder application.

WILLIAM TIBBS, CHAIRMAN: Can you kinda walk us through just -- I'm looking here and I'm just not seeing existing, so can you just at least tell us what you are doing?

TARYN PATRICK: Sure. Okay. If you turn to the third page of the photos, there's an existing billboard, and right adjacent to that billboard is the equipment, the existing equipment.

PAMELA WINTERS: Right or left?

TARYN PATRICK: To the right.

The proposed antenna will be mounted to that gray steel platform, and so that's actually a new antenna, and the reason why they're doing this is because of capacity reasons instead of going out and proposing a brand-new site, they're just gonna essentially beef up their existing site there. And they're also going to --

WILLIAM TIBBS, CHAIRMAN: Who owns that safety rail?

TARYN PATRICK: T-Mobile. That's the T-Mobile safety rail that encloses their equipment.

WILLIAM TIBBS, CHAIRMAN: Okay.

PATRICIA SINGER: It's the safety rail around the white box, not the safety rail around the billboard?

TARYN PATRICK: Right.

And if you turn to the next page, you can see the existing chimney to the very far right of the building. And there's an existing antenna there. What they're going to do is take that antenna and move it up to the -- basically to the top of the chimney.

WILLIAM TIBBS, CHAIRMAN: To the top of the chimney?

TARYN PATRICK: Yes. Flush-mounted, though. They're going to move it a little bit.

CHARLES STUDEN: My view of this is that the Tropicana Squeeze billboard so

eclipses everything else that's going on. I mean, what you're proposing to do here is --

TARYN PATRICK: It's very minimal.

CHARLES STUDEN: -- very inconsequential. I mean, my colleagues on the Board, I would be interested in hearing your perspective. It's almost laughable.

I mean, I would like to see the billboard taken down, but I know we're not talking about that tonight, so...

TARYN PATRICK: I appreciate that. Actually, I mean, the only reason why I'm here before the Board is because this will entail the special permit with the Board of Appeals in order for us to relocate that antenna.

CHARLES STUDEN: The only thing I would wonder is whether this kind of -- these kinds of antennas couldn't be combined with the billboard, although I'm sure there are proprietary issues associated with that, so

that you didn't have so many different things going on on the roof. Although, again, the billboard is so enormous and it just -- so I don't know.

TARYN PATRICK: The billboard is owned by a different company and T-Mobile does not have lease rights to that billboard.

CHARLES STUDEN: Right.

PATRICIA SINGER: So then when the antenna is moved up on the chimney, will it break the line of the chimney or will it be flush with the line of the chimney?

TARYN PATRICK: It will be flush with the line of the chimney.

Any questions?

WILLIAM TIBBS, CHAIRMAN: I agree. I don't have any particular problem.

TARYN PATRICK: Thank you.

(Passing out plans to Board.)

Okay. The nature of this application is for 25 Eighth Street, and

there's also an existing T-Mobile wireless communication facility on the rooftop of this property. It's about a seven-story existing residential apartment building.

And on this application, what T-Mobile is proposing to do is to add one antenna to the southwest corner of the rooftop, which you can see, if you turn to the third page of the photos.

And in order to add that antenna, they will have to extend the existing piece on the roof that will feed the lines of cable to the antenna. The antenna will be flush mounted against the building, it will not protrude above the building and will be tan to match.

CHARLES STUDEN: Which I really appreciate. Like the existing antenna, which also had -- it appears to be the same color as the masonry, the fact that the color and the fact that it's mounted flush to the

elevation actually goes a long way toward making it quite a bit more acceptable than otherwise when they're up on the roof projecting into the skyline, so...

TARYN PATRICK: Here again, the intent is to add one antenna for coverage reasons so they don't have to go out and propose a brand-new communication facility.

WILLIAM TIBBS, CHAIRMAN: Yeah. I don't have any particular problem with this one either.

TARYN PATRICK: Thank you. Thank you. Have a good evening.

TOWN GOWN RECAP:

WILLIAM TIBBS, CHAIRMAN: We now go to the Town Gown discussion comments.

Beth, do you have any?

BETH RUBENSTEIN: I didn't have anything to say other than just a reminder that, you know, often the Board uses this occasion to comment on what they heard back in February, and also to highlight any areas about which they would like to hear more next year.

As I think the Board knows, in every August, we begin the process anew and send out a letter to the institutions with a list of questions to be filled out, and there's that section that you've all initiated the sort've institution-specific questions.

I think this is a good time to just add to that list if you have some items you are interested in.

CHARLES STUDEN: Beth, did the

comments that the Board made during that discussion get recorded somewhere when --

BETH RUBENSTEIN: I'm trying to remember if we had a transcriber for Town Gown.

PAMELA WINTERS: We did.

BETH RUBENSTEIN: Thank you. I guess we did.

CHARLES STUDEN: It would actually be helpful to see those. Of course, we don't have the advantage of doing that tonight.

BETH RUBENSTEIN: We can certainly email copies of the transcript.

CHARLES STUDEN: Because my sense is that, you know, the institutions went to a lot of trouble to make these presentations to us, and in many ways, I liked what I heard that evening and saw that evening. It's a little hard to remember right now what it was we said, although, I do have a couple of things that I wanted to mention, but I don't

know if this is the right time so I refer to other Board members.

WILLIAM TIBBS, CHAIRMAN: You started, go ahead.

CHARLES STUDEN: With regard to Lesley University, I, you know, very much liked many of the things that they talked about when they came to us. And I see enormous potential in Porter Square as they begin to develop a campus in that location, but, in particular, I would like to see them do, as they develop that area, is to develop it in a way where there is some sort of meaningful open space, some kind of organizing open space. I know they're purposing to create a plaza along Mass Avenue in conjunction with the relocation of the church and the relocation of the Art Institute of Boston, and that's going to be a very nice amenity. But I'm thinking of something a lot larger, frankly, you know,

I'm going to say, you know, a quarter of an acre, which isn't that big really, but big enough that you could recognize it and it would become an amenity, both to the neighbors and the community, as well as to the institution, because that's a very congested area that doesn't have a lot of open space, and I think it could work to the advantage of Lesley, as well for their facility, staff and students. So that would be one thing I would like to see when they come back to us.

And then in terms of Harvard's presentation, I understand that the planning in Allston has been slowed down, the science building is not going to go forward for the moment, they're going to cap off the garage and take some time to reexamine the master plan and a number of issues related to developing a campus in that area, and I see this as actually being an advantage because

one of the things that has always concerned me is how Harvard is going to develop a campus in that location and connect it in a meaningful way to the campus in Cambridge. And by "connecting it," I mean, pedestrians, bicyclists, and also people either who are driving or taking some form of transit. And the studies that were shared with us, to me, always left me feeling like that had not really been solved in as creative and imaginative way as it might be, and to me, it's so important to the success of a campus there, the ability to get people back and forth.

And so, I was wondering if perhaps next year, as I know there are a lot of changes going on at the university, right now it would be nice if they can could come back a year from now and maybe give us an update on that particular aspect of the Allston planning, which is the transportation piece,

their latest thinking on both the short term as things developed there, and what that would look like, and then in the longer term are there, you know, what are some of the things that are being examined in terms of how you would move people back and forth across the two campuses.

WILLIAM TIBBS, CHAIRMAN: I just wanted to agree with that somewhat.

I think the plans we saw, I think showed long-term kind of approaches to how all of this would fit together, but it would be nice to get a sense of, you know, in a phased way, if you're doing this project, are we just relying on existing roadways or is there something that we're doing there, so I think that's -- to see how that phases in because it was of -- the interesting thing is it's clearly a very long-range plan, so how do these things fit together as they do projects?

CHARLES STUDEN: Yes.

WILLIAM TIBBS, CHAIRMAN: Go ahead, Pam.

PAMELA WINTERS: I don't know, but I might have misinterpreted this, but I thought I remembered Lesley saying that they planned to move the church right up to the street or right up to the sidewalk, rather, and then have an open space in the rear of the -- or some sort of a little mini park or something in the back of the church, but I could be mistaken there.

Were you saying, Charles, that you wanted the green space to be in the front? Or what was your...

CHARLES STUDEN: I'm not even saying that it should be in that location.

I'm actually suggesting that they explore the opportunity of perhaps developing some form of open space behind the Porter Exchange building between that and the train

line, or the T line, or possibly even -- I've looked at this myself, I wonder about doing it across the street, although it's a little bit disconnected.

PAMELA WINTERS: Where the parking lot is now?

CHARLES STUDEN: Correct. Where those two lots are, to be done in conjunction with some development on those two lots, but would create some kind of public open space that was available both to the campus as well as the neighbors.

PATRICIA SINGER: If I could chime in on this subject, I would like to suggest that Lesley look at what Harvard has done near the Divinity School. I am continually amazed by how successful that park is, and by of example, I looked out my window last night at 11:00 and there was a man mindfully walking the labyrinth at 11:00 at night in the semi-dark. It's really almost literally

used 24 hours a day. It is just a remarkable success and addition to the community.

STEVEN WINTER: Could you help me understand where that is again, Ms. Singer?

PATRICIA SINGER: Yes. There was a parking lot behind Andover Hall adjacent to Rockefeller and sort've in front of the library and next to the greenhouse.

STEVEN WINTER: Part of the Hammond Street edge, so to speak?

PATRICIA SINGER: Pardon?

STEVEN WINTER: Part of the Hammond Street edge?

PATRICIA SINGER: Actually, no, it really fronts onto Museum and then enclosed by buildings including the Cyclotron. So it's just remarkable.

WILLIAM TIBBS, CHAIRMAN: Hugh?

HUGH RUSSELL: Just responding to Pam's question of the plan that they -- kind of a sketch plan they showed us, shows moving

the church to the other side of the lot, up more or less to the front of the lot, and then creating a shell, a plaza, maybe, you know, half to a full width of this room for the entire rest of the lot.

It looks like they're picking up on the line of the Porter Exchange building because the streets bending very slightly at that point, so essentially they keep the line going and the street is bent, so they end up with a space that would be sort of an urban park kinda thing.

But I -- you know, this isn't so much Town Gown, it's more the Lesley zoning hearing, but it does strike me that there is an opportunity to figure out what to do with those two lots across the street.

And maybe in that they're removing the open space at the church, maybe one of those lots should become substantially open space or they should try to create an open

space amenity there because it seems like they're a little uncertain about what they want to do with those lots.

WILLIAM TIBBS, CHAIRMAN: Any other comments?

Go ahead.

STEVEN WINTER: I wanted to make an additional comment about there's no view that we get when we walk down Oxford Street where you can see the Harvard Divinity School across the Hammond Street edge and that view has been gone for 30 years. There used to be a lawn that went all the way from the Divinity School to Oxford Street years, years and years ago.

So, I think it's worth noting that that very interesting perspective that Harvard brought back is that construction is very -- it's a very meaningful perspective and very much appreciated.

I did want to mention a couple of

things about Lesley's presentation that I think is important.

Lesley has a planner on staff now, which is a very good move. I'm real happy to see that. And I think that we see a lot of the benefits in that in the language that we see in the information in a clearly enunciated transfer of development rights and things like that and I think it's paying off and I commend them in doing that.

I also think that there's a mindset that has shifted, and we all need to be aware of that, and that is, Lesley is a multiple-location campus within the City of Cambridge now. It's not just a little place. It's not just a little insignificant partner to larger university partners. It's a big player. It's a major player. And we need to understand that and we need to be mindful of that, and part of that, the responsibility of Lesley depending on Mass Ave as an urban

corridor as a central part of their campus just to define their campus is that we need to see more give-back from Lesley University to the City of Cambridge.

We need to see more participation in looking for the open spaces. We need to see more participation in finding ways to mitigate an institutional presence, and I would like to remain mindful of that as we move into the next review.

And the other thing I wanted to mention was that -- it's a suggestion -- and I would suggest that if it feels appropriate on both ends that this is an interesting time for CCD and MIT to entertain a dialogue about this -- I've forgotten the terminology -- but it's the pedestrian path that has a name that sounds like the Grand Trunk Railroad or something; what is it called?

BETH RUBENSTEIN: Grand Junction multi-use path.

STEVEN WINTER: Thank you very much.

The Grand Junction multi-use path. We've got some terrific perspective coming out of CCD, and I value and respect Sue Clippinger and Beth Rubenstein and all of the staff efforts. This is really topnotch professional services.

And I think we get the same thing from MIT from the real estate planning and the presentation, and I think that to open a dialogue around that would be fruitful for both parties.

WILLIAM TIBBS, CHAIRMAN: I just want to say I think having been around for almost the start of these in terms of, I don't know if it was the start, but things have really progressed, and so that I think the presentations of all three of the institutions have improved and I think we get a good sense.

My only comment is, I would like to

see maybe a little bit of similarity in the issues that we talk about; for instance, Harvard for like several years now has been talking about their sustainability and things that they're doing, and it would be good for the other institutions to mention that as a topic, I think.

Also, I'm finding that we tend to -- just in the course of our business, we tend to look -- when we've asked them, one of the things we asked them to do was to project five years so that we can see trends and see projections and that's actually working out very well.

We tend to focus on the projects that are kinda active around the -- you know, the year or around the time that we do it, and I think that relative to some of the things we've actually said tonight, I think it's helpful for us to maybe have a five-year look backwards just to have one plan that

actually shows all the development that has happened in the last five years or so, so that we can see the new stuff in a context as opposed to just seeing each little peppered project floating around.

So to have institutions tell us about "We've completed these projects and this is how we see our campus today," I think that would be very, very helpful. It doesn't need to be an exhaustive thing. But I can see them showing plans of all the various projects just to have one plan that shows, "Okay, we have done this." I don't know what the time frame is because construction is variable and five years might be too small, but just to say "We've done these," because I can literally take my copies of these over the years and just try to compile them all into a document and say, ah ha, you know, Kendall Square is very different now or Main Street, for instance, for MIT is becoming

very, very different. You know, you have the Brain and Science building, you have the Cancer Research building, you now have the real estate project.

So just to hear what the institution's perspective is on their own self based on the -- based on the construction projects that they have done.

Harvard's the same thing, the Mayo building, which we liked a lot, it will be interesting, it's built, it's there.

Just to under -- you know, just to see that and really focus on how to change and just what the institution thinks about that, and I think that would be very helpful for us and also kinda helps us put the new stuff that they're planning in perspective so we'll have a little five-year look and then we'd ask for some projections ahead.

CHARLES STUDEN: Related to that actually it applies to Harvard with the Stem

Cell Institute not going to Allston, at least in the short term, and it would be, I think, helpful next year to get an update from the university on how they're proposing to handle life sciences specifically the Stem Cell Institute in Cambridge, like a combination of buildings and facilities that are going to be used for that purpose and will it involve any new construction, I wasn't clear whether it was going to be accommodated within existing buildings as renovations or whether it would be new construction associated with that.

WILLIAM TIBBS, CHAIRMAN: And I think it's also helpful in that context -- and, again, Beth, it gets back to what we're saying is, that if there are initiatives, like the Grand Junction Railroad that are kinda grander plans that affect the area around, it would be good just to -- if there's a way, I agree, if there's a way that

we could collaborate. For instance, MIT, one of the things they showed this time was the -- or they talked about was the completion of Vassar Street, which is a major -- not only is it a major issue for MIT, it's obviously a major issue for the City and so if there's any joint things like that that we can begin to talk about, so we don't have to do it on a project-by-project basis.

If there's connections to either bike path or walkways or things like that or grand schemes, because even Allston, remember the -- you know, Allston just talked about the Urban Ring in terms of its transportation scheme, the grand Allston plan.

So just as we know about those things, just kinda address them in some way or form, we don't have to -- and hopefully, where we're doing collaborative things together, or there are projects that begin to go there, we can at least talk about that.

CHARLES STUDEN: I agree with you, Bill, in terms of MIT's presentation next year, I think it would be helpful.

I know that Kelley, in his presentation to us on 650 Main Street, talked about some of the difficulties that the University of MIT is facing with the proposed development of that Grand Junction path and the CSX right-of-way as it affects the science laboratories, and in particular, however, to me, how it relates to something that's -- and I'm very much interested in -- which is bicycling, and I can't remember whether MIT's plan has a bicycle plan in it, but what I would like to see is how bicyclists move around the campus and, in particular, how the new Vassar Street project relates to that and to a bicycle path along the Charles River.

In fact, it would also be helpful, and this is something maybe staff could help

us with, bicycling within the City of Cambridge and how Harvard's bicycle system and Lesley's, as well as MIT's are eventually going to interconnect with one another.

I know as a bicyclist, I'm continuously frustrated by the disjointed nature sometimes of trying to move around.

But, again, going back to this right-of-way, I know that MIT really didn't want to see a bicycle path, at least part of the 650 Main project along that corridor, but I'd like to know more about their view of that particular corridor.

WILLIAM TIBBS, CHAIRMAN: Steve?

STEVEN WINTER: I just wanted to close my comments with a perspective, and that perspective is this is addressed to our university partners and to the professional staff at CCD and also to the Planning Board members, but I do see that the university partners and the professional staff are the

permanent members of that.

The Town Gown relationship that we have in Cambridge is remarkable. It's in good shape. It's solid. It has a history. This is not an automatic communication that occurs in every metropolitan area in the United States, believe me. This is a hard one open line of communication.

So, I just want to mark the fact that this takes a tremendous amount of effort on everyone's part, the universities and the CCD staff, to make this dialogue work and to build the respectful relationships that we need.

And I want to ask us to be thoughtful about the fact that what we have is fairly unique in a metropolitan area. We always say in Cambridge, "the devil's in the details, the devil's in the details, the design details." Well, this is one of the structural, the administrative functional

structural details that brings these people altogether that really helps us get the larger product in the end, which is a high quality of life.

WILLIAM TIBBS, CHAIRMAN: Pam?

PAMELA WINTERS: I think that Charles's comments reminded me of, I think, what was brought up about the Town Gown's report about the shuttle buses and perhaps talking a little about Lesley's and Harvard's capacities for the shuttle buses and how many students use the shuttle bus and just a more in-depth look at the shuttle bus services as they go through the City because it really does impact the traffic for the City.

Thanks.

WILLIAM TIBBS, CHAIRMAN: Any other comments? Okay. I think that will do it for the time being.

BETH RUBENSTEIN: Take a break?

WILLIAM TIBBS, CHAIRMAN: Sure. Do

we want a short break or do we want to proceed? I mean, I don't think we -- I mean, unless you...

Okay, and then we'll do the open space plan review.

(Short Recess Taken.)

OPEN SPACE PLAN REVIEW:

STUART DASH, DIRECTOR OF COMMUNITY PLANNING: Last time we presented the open space plan, it's a five-year open space plan and I think folks -- some had a chance to read it, some not.

So I think you have to have some more time to read through it, and you were kind enough to give us permission to send it forward to the State, which we did, and have sort've provisional approval there and they're working out some details, but are back here to take any comments or questions you have on it.

And we worked with the Open Space Committee through the year on that and Jeff has been the principal author of that. This last actually two times, so it's the second one, so it's improved enormously over last year, the two times he's worked on it, so I think anything and everything you like to

comment on, or question on, we're all set.

WILLIAM TIBBS, CHAIRMAN: Steve?

STEVEN WINTER: First of all, I would like to know if you were able to get comments from your regional planning agency, the Metropolitan Planning Council.

JEFF ROBERTS: Well, I understand that the plans were received by MAPC, but we haven't received comments yet, maybe they're in the mail.

STEVEN WINTER: This is a kind've an odd question, but with any park open space is methane still an issue in that open space? And does Cambridge have any particular way that they're dealing with it?

JEFF ROBERTS: To be honest, I don't have the details on how that was resolved, but -- do you have any?

STUART DASH, DIRECTOR OF COMMUNITY PLANNING: It's still an issue. It's something tracked very carefully and

Cambridge has a contract with Camp Dresser and McKee to constantly track the methane production and they have wells that are test wells throughout the perimeter of there and periodically they do make adjustments for that.

STEVEN WINTER: What is the long-term prognosis for methane production from a capped landfill? Does it just keep producing the methane forever and ever?

STUART DASH, DIRECTOR OF COMMUNITY PLANNING: I couldn't say actually, but I don't think it's forever and ever, but I think it's many years, so it's somewhere between there, but I don't think -- it's not a short-term thing. It certainly has been, you know, already 15 years or it's 20 years and it's still active.

STEVEN WINTER: Really the only reason that I bring it up is that I think the City requires assistance with dealing with it

or understanding it or mitigating it, I think that there's a lot of -- there's Federal help out there to help with these things, and I would be happy to talk to you off-line about it, Jeff.

The other question that I had was: Do you feel that you got the input from the Bicycle and Pedestrian Committee that you require that you needed?

JEFF ROBERTS: I'm sorry. From the Bicycle and Pedestrian Committee?

STEVEN WINTER: Yes.

JEFF ROBERTS: We included -- to be honest, we didn't receive specific comments from the Pedestrian and Bicycle Committee on this plan, but much of what we incorporated from -- from the standpoint of pedestrian and bicycle facilities and amenities came directly from our staff and CDD that worked with the Pedestrian and Bicycle Committee on a regular basis.

So we feel that we have a pretty good grasp of those issues, but certainly that's a good suggestion to make that available to those committees.

STEVEN WINTER: It's not a question of a hidden agenda. Their input is generally very thoughtful and productive, and I've always listened very carefully when they talk about it.

JEFF ROBERTS: You are right, it has been. We have worked with them on various projects and studies and their comments have been great.

STEVEN WINTER: The other question I have is: Is the Porter Square issue of the limited open space in Porter Square, does the open space plan address that in some way, if not to solve it, to simply bookmark it?

JEFF ROBERTS: It does.

I pulled out some of the maps that are available in the open space plan,

particularly the one that's shown up there on the top.

It's a map that shows our areas of need and top priorities as identified in the Green Ribbon Open Space Study of 2000, it was completed in 2000, and it has been the guide that we continue to use when we look at priorities for creation of new open space and acquisition.

And you can see, if you have a map in front of you, or you can just look up there, that Porter Square with the bold red and orange lines around it is one of the top priorities for what are classified as "neighborhood parks" and "tot lots."

Basically both which, you know, could -- often are both the same thing, but meaning an open space of some moderate size that draws neighborhoods from -- urban neighborhood residents from a walking area around.

Similarly, some areas around in Inman Square and Central Square and parts of Area Four where one of the more recent developments, 238 Broadway, the Green Road Heritage Park site was similarly noted as a priority for open space.

STEVEN WINTER: I think that the citizen activists who are looking at the Porter Square issues will be grateful to have this kind of documentation and this will be very helpful to them.

And the last comment that I had is: Does the City have a capital acquisition budget that's connected to areas where there's a lack of open space inventory?

Is there some way that -- I'm not saying this is as clearly as I should have. Let me pause for a minute.

(Pause.)

The City has a capital budget. Is there any connectivity or connection or

analysis between this map that shows open space needs and information that feeds into the City's capital acquisition budget?

JEFF ROBERTS: That is -- it's certainly a consideration in the capital budgeting process. In terms of separate -- and I might have to look back to Stuart because this was before I was actually at the City -- but with regard to the 238 Broadway and other Area Four Park acquisition projects, there was a dedicated effort to put -- to reserve capital funding for those areas. Do you have any more?

STUART DASH, DIRECTOR OF COMMUNITY PLANNING: As part of the CPA process that was there was -- open space, a portion of taxes that go to open space that was part of the CPA and those funds are available for acquisition, and as laid out in the Green Ribbon report, the acquisition is based a little bit on a version of affordable housing

based on opportunity and how well it meets needs and things like that as to whether acquisition is looked at, or attempted, or, you know, completed.

So, for instance, in the green -- the example Jeff was just mentioning, that was sort of a process of looking at the opportunity that lends itself to matching up with the Green Ribbon place of need and deciding to go ahead with the purchase. And we have received CPA funding. We have actually sort've acquired some land for -- in the gardens.

At this point CPA funding can be used for natural areas or for acquisitions, so we've acquired at least one or two small community gardens but haven't had an opportunity -- we actually looked at an opportunity in Porter Square last -- about a year and a half ago, and it wasn't quite the right thing. In Cambridge, to match up the

place and the actual opportunity is tough, but that's sort've the process it goes through, that kind of thing, to see what places come on the market and we've worked with trusts for public lands, also, in the last number of years to try to acquire areas in the eastern half of the City.

There's two locations there we tried to look at, the Pacific Street Park, finishing off that park. It has the (inaudible) site and Fulkerson Street down across from Ahern Field, the taxicab site there, we've actually worked with them and pushed that issue for quite awhile as well because part of what we try in -- as we're going through the Green Ribbon is if you can get the synergy of adding new property to existing property, you've often, you know, done better. If you add a quarter acre to an existing half acre, you get that much more.

JEFF ROBERTS: There are also other opportunities that come up in other ways; for instance, on the map, you can see over in East Cambridge where we had the existing Costa Lopez Taylor site, which was added to with a parcel across the street, which was actually also added to by closing a section of the roadway.

STEVEN WINTER: Could you point to it?

JEFF ROBERTS: *(Indicating.)*

That also contributed an opportunity to expand open space in an area of need and create some new uses, including community gardens and add some more path of use, sitting area to complement the active playground and basketball uses that were there.

STEVEN WINTER: And my final question is about -- it's a track that I don't know the name of it, so I may be

getting it totally wrong, but this is near the Facest (phonetic) property and it's called the Silver Forest or Silver Woods or a different name?

IRAM FAROOQ: Silver Maple Forest.

STEVEN WINTER: Silver Maple Forest.

Does that show up in the Cambridge Open Space Plan at all?

JEFF ROBERTS: It doesn't show up in the plan that --

IRAM FAROOQ: It's not in Cambridge.

STEVEN WINTER: It's not in Cambridge.

JEFF ROBERTS: That was my understanding as well.

STUART DASH, DIRECTOR OF COMMUNITY PLANNING: Mostly Belmont.

STEVEN WINTER: It was my understanding it was a tri-municipal piece that was Arlington, Belmont, Cambridge, but I could have it wrong.

LES BARBER, DIRECTOR OF ZONING: It is adjacent to portions of the Discovery Park Development, which are required to be forever open space, unbuilt upon, so it's a continuation of that across the municipal boundary.

STEVEN WINTER: So, it is, in fact, adjacent as opposed to inclusive?

JEFF ROBERTS: And a good portion of that is also a part of the area controlled by the state is the Alewife Preservation, so that is the part that Cambridge looks specifically at.

PAMELA WINTERS: So I just had a quick question: So -- and maybe Stuart can answer this, I don't know. For example, I know that the car wash near next to the church on Beach Street and Mass Ave, is going to be closed.

So, for example, if that came up for sale, how would the City -- would the City

look at that as a place for a little park area if they were to demolish the car wash and, you know, put in a little park there? What would the process be for that?

STUART DASH, DIRECTOR OF COMMUNITY

PLANNING: Well, actually, I think it's already my sense that it's under -- more agreement than for sale.

PAMELA WINTERS: It is. But I'm just saying if the City got to it first.

STUART DASH, DIRECTOR OF COMMUNITY

PLANNING: We would, that's right, and I think we've looked at the assessment on the location and the shape of the site, the size and shape and location and adjacencies and think is this a good location for a park because sometimes you've got some space and then you have to decide is this actually a good location for a park or a good, you know, layout for a park and sometimes you sort've wish it was and sometimes it's just not the

kinda thing, but sometimes it's a toss-up, you know, you have to figure out is it something that you can be part of.

PAMELA WINTERS: But if it were, then what would you do?

WILLIAM TIBBS, CHAIRMAN: Same question. What are the processes for acquisition? I understand that you want to match your particular locations to its best use, but I really don't have a good sense of how the City goes about acquiring open space when obviously a lot of our citizenry is saying that we should be having more.

STUART DASH, DIRECTOR OF COMMUNITY PLANNING: One of the things they bring to the Open Space Committee, and the Open Space Committee is City Staff from all of the departments that deal open spaces in the City. So representatives meet monthly from Public Works, Human Services, Community Development, Disability Commission,

Conservation Commission, Water Commission all sit down together to discuss each month in which they talk through some of the issues about the parcel, and if it looks like it was a good parcel, then we should bring it forward to the City Manager's office and suggest that here's a parcel that bears looking into it, they sort've work with the assessor and find out what the assessed value is and they're looking for what financial ramifications would be of going ahead with a purchase. Looking if CPA funds can be used for it.

So it's really a multi-step process like that. So we have done that on a few different parcels over the years.

PAMELA WINTERS: Okay. He's answered the question. Okay. Thanks.

WILLIAM TIBBS, CHAIRMAN: Again, I kinda look at this because I think it's a very good report and it does all the things

it needs to do, you know, it talks about soils, and it talks about, you know, what we do and how we do it, and all that great stuff.

But I do tend to go back to this core problem that we hear a lot, which is a lot, particularly in East Cambridge, and actually if I look at your top diagram, it looks like East Cambridge is the place where you seem to have good coverage in terms of open space whereas what we hear most all the time is people complaining about the fact that East Cambridge doesn't have good open space.

So, I just wondered if you could talk about that dichotomy somewhat. It might be that we have a few tot lots there, but they're too localized or too focused.

Are there any neighborhoods where those purple circles get bigger or smaller because of the intensity of the neighborhood

or the issues around it?

I'm guess I'm trying to get a sense how they're used and what is our sense of --

STUART DASH, DIRECTOR OF COMMUNITY PLANNING: On the top left here, this is from the Green Ribbon report, and I don't recall how much we brought this before the Planning Board when this came out, the Green Ribbon report, but this is where we mapped out some of the things that we used a lot in the open space, which is we mapped all the tot lots and did a quarter mile radius of every tot lot, and then looked in the neighborhood parks in a half mile radius in that neighborhood park. It's the kind of park you might expect to walk through after dinner and play frisbee or something.

And then two community parks in a half mile radius to also bus lines, kind of things where there are facilities where kids would go play in fields and things.

Then we did a map that I sort've called "Competition for Open Space," which is if you step out your door, how many people are competing for how much open space and you are within a quarter mile of where you are as you step out your door.

WILLIAM TIBBS, CHAIRMAN: It's almost like a population density of people who potentially use the space.

STUART DASH, DIRECTOR OF COMMUNITY PLANNING: That's right. And the darker the color, the fewer acres of open space you have for people. And these are done by census block radius, in a quarter mile radius. You could see what you expect around Fresh Pond and Danehy Park, the most -- the highest acres per thousand people and mid Cambridge. And he can tell you, it's very tough to find a playing field up in there in the outline. And East Cambridge varies a little bit and actually we did some sort've -- it's a little

skewed because part of what you have is very little population over here and you're along the Charles River. So, in a way, if you think of where the neighborhood is, it's probably good to see the actual -- or that kind of thing. It doesn't take into account actually the railroad as a blockage.

So, in fact, when you get a close look, you see that the people here (*indicating*) are -- here is Donnelly Field and these guys seem to be in good shape because they have access to Donnelly and Ahern, but they'd actually have to run across the railroad tracks to get to Ahern but that's the weakness of the JF modeling.

The very dark areas are areas where there's actually no acres for open space if you step out your door within a quarter mile. That's what you heard about Porter Square. This actually an area factored in Harvard, sorta of deep into the Agassiz and that's

probably -- that's the only public open space, it does not reflect private open space. So the Green Ribbon Committee worked on that.

We also tended to count more carefully areas where income was low. We counted areas where private open space was rare.

So, for instance, in West Cambridge they may not have access to public open space, but much bigger backyards and if you're in a higher economic strata, you have access to a car, and if you have access to a car, you have access to different kinds of open space outside the City, or elsewhere in the City, that you don't have if you are one of the 25 percent of the people that doesn't have a car or households that don't have car.

So it gave us concern of the kind of focus you see here, and Jeff's work that we've been sort've pushing out for the last

probably ten years, eight years, since that report has come out.

STEVEN WINTER: Jeff, so the Northants Woods, for instance, wouldn't show up as open space?

JEFF ROBERTS: That's right, because it's private.

STEVEN WINTER: It's private open space.

JEFF ROBERTS: Yes. That's an important fact that we looked at and you noted in the -- if you noted, there is a map in the open space plans, as we're required to do by the state, we do note significant private open spaces in that plan as well as public open spaces and many of the private open spaces, like the Northants Woods, either by just general agreement with the owner, just by use, by the nature of the use, or in some cases by special permit requirements from the Planning Board or Zoning

requirements, some of those are private open spaces do have important public benefits.

STEVEN WINTER: Scott Harshbarger was one of the people on the committee that negotiated the access of the community to that open space.

WILLIAM TIBBS, CHAIRMAN: I think that's very interesting. I was thinking about ways that we can just keep these things kinda in front of us, I guess, and I guess one way to do it would be to, as we do acquire new open spaces, or as projects, particularly when we're doing these land swap deals or development right swaps, as we talk about those kinds of open spaces, it would be good to have like a blowup of the area that here is what we have now and here is how it changes because of that, because it keeps -- I think you have some very interesting tools there which you were using to make the things. I want to make sure we keep that

same focus because I think, particularly in our deliberations, and as we're dealing with stuff, it's nice to know that if we -- if an Alewife, or an East Cambridge, or whatever, this will result in a change or new acquisition of open space that "Aha, look, our circles have changed, our colors have changed," I think you have them there and you have the base there, that would be very helpful.

JEFF ROBERTS: One thing I would --

WILLIAM TIBBS, CHAIRMAN: You have done a lot of good solid work and what's clear is those purple circles are a reflection of a lot of analysis and need assessment that you did before, and I think that says --

JEFF ROBERTS: I was going to say that one thing to add to that that I like to keep in mind is that the information used in the Green Ribbon study was census 2000

information, and 2010 there will be another census coming up which will give us a whole new set of data to work with. Of course, that won't be able for maybe a year or so after the survey or the census is conducted, but that will shed some new light on the issues as well.

WILLIAM TIBBS, CHAIRMAN: So keep it less static. You know, you did it, it's great and, it looks good, but as we move through our projects, just bringing some of the stuff to refresh our memory to show us how this works that would be great.

Go ahead, Steve.

STEVEN WINTER: I thought a little bit about what the Chairman just said about this is interesting information, it's good to have it out there. Well, we have it and you have shown it to us and presented it to us and I think that's great. But I also think that the fact that Open Space Committee, I'm

sure, reviews these and has access to this.

So that means there's departments heads all across the City who really are vested in this and understand this that can walk through this and can speak this language and I think that's -- to me, that's the coverage that you need.

If those people really understand this, and I think that you got your market, it's great information for citizens to have, and it certainly empowers citizen participation, but, frankly, I -- this needs to be in the hands of our decision-makers and the people who are spending the money.

WILLIAM TIBBS, CHAIRMAN: I agree with that, but I do think it needs to be -- I mean, the citizenry needs to know about it, too. And I don't know if you routinely like for those neighborhoods that do have planning groups or whatever, if you just present those kinds of things to them.

JEFF ROBERTS: The reason why Stuart had such a polished description of the maps that we had there is actually we took this map here from a neighborhood meeting that we had done a couple of weeks ago where Stuart did a similar demonstration.

Yeah. And also it makes sense to note, which probably is known to everyone, that all of our reports and materials are available on our website so, including the Green Ribbon report that's available and featured prominently as part our open space section.

CHARLES STUDEN: And, Jeff, I'm curious about the issue of multi-use open space, specifically as it applies to the institutions in Cambridge, not just the colleges and universities, but even the public schools, I don't know whether you can just help me understand, is it impossible to look at some kind of arrangement with some of

these entities where their open space could become open space, it's available to the community at large, or maybe it already happened and I'm just not aware of it either, again, public schools or the universities themselves?

JEFF ROBERTS: Generally speaking, public school facilities are available for public use during non-school times.

CHARLES STUDEN: Like on weekends, for example?

JEFF ROBERTS: Right, exactly.

And many are very well used. In fact, as you start to look at it, if you look at our inventory of spaces, the distinction between school parks and playgrounds and neighborhood parks and playgrounds tends to get very blurry.

We did a project near the Baldwin School, one, it's several years back, renovation of the playground there where one

of the major issues was that it is a playground used heavily by the school during recess time, it's also a playground that's used heavily by the community during evenings and weekends.

So, we had find ways in the design with our landscape architect, who worked on that project, to balance those two different needs.

And the design of parks that are specifically for schools tends to have that same sense of balance where we're looking at how are they going to be used as a recess use where there's a lot of heavy use kinda all at once by a lot of kids where supervision is particularly important, but also to make sure that smaller groups of kids or parents bringing their kids in at different times of day, that that's providing a good kind of play experience for them.

Similarly, with playing fields,

there is program uses for playing fields and then there's sort've the more free informal use that tends to occur at different times. That's the public schools.

You're also wondering about the private institutions?

CHARLES STUDEN: Like MIT or Harvard, for example.

STUART DASH, DIRECTOR OF COMMUNITY PLANNING: We're planning on taking them over.

(Laughter.)

JEFF ROBERTS: In many cases -- in many cases that's an arrangement sort've like the Northants Woods example that that Steven Winter just brought up.

The arrangements are often made between the community and the institution. In some cases they're formal, some cases are informal. Sometimes it's the university, for instance, MIT often opens its athletic

facilities, like its track for use by different clubs, recreational clubs in the community, and in other cases, the open spaces are simply free for people to access either limited times or all the time.

It's a little bit of a -- it's not always a clear picture, but, as I mentioned before, in many cases, such as with Harvard's development in the Hammond/Gorham areas, there were very deliberate attempts to ensure that there would be public access to the open spaces, and that's encoded in the -- in their permits and in the zoning.

STUART DASH, DIRECTOR OF COMMUNITY PLANNING: And over the years, the City has had formal agreements with the schools, mostly Harvard, MIT, to use their fields for school facilities kinda sports, when the school facilities have been out of use or been in repair, so for a number of years, the football team, or soccer teams would use

Harvard fields under specific agreements, or MIT fields under specific agreements, not forever, but for an extended year sometimes while things were being shifted around.

CHARLES STUDEN: For example, even including Harvard's athletic fields in Allston not necessarily just in Cambridge?

STUART DASH, DIRECTOR OF COMMUNITY PLANNING: I think so.

CHARLES STUDEN: Yeah. Well, this is good, I didn't realize this, because I think in a city like Cambridge, which is so urbanized and where the opportunities for creating additional open space are so limited, and expensive, to me, how do you use the existing open space in the most effective way might also open up a lot of opportunities, and so on, and it sounds like you have already done a lot in that regard and I don't know, I may be stating the

obvious, but suggesting that that would be something that maybe could have even more attention, maybe there's even more room for creativity around multi-use agreements. So that's good, though.

WILLIAM TIBBS, CHAIRMAN: Patricia?

PATRICIA SINGER: I have a comment and a question: The question is: Can you give me an update on what is happening with Shady Hill? Several months ago that was quite controversial and, frankly, I've lost track of what was happening at the BZA.

JEFF ROBERTS: Well, in the plan -- what we note in the open space plan is that there was a decision made by the CPA, Community Preservation Act fund, which Stuart mentioned before, to try to acquire that site for not under the historical preservation portion of that fund and in terms of latest news, do you have any?

STUART DASH, DIRECTOR OF COMMUNITY

PLANNING: I don't have any.

JEFF ROBERTS: I don't think I know anything more recent than that.

PATRICIA SINGER: Nothing has past that point, okay. So that was in the form of a question, and in the form of a comment, I wanted to just remark how incredibly lucky we have to you all as our staff working on this because not only is this a remarkable resource for the City and its employees and the citizens, but it also serves as a basis to community with other governments, for example, the state of the Federal Government and in these very difficult times, it's a lovely piece of documentation to go forward and impress their funding and have this on-hand, I think is just -- it might be the wrong -- but it's a remarkable luxury for all of us and I just think you should be commended on what a really wonderful job this is, and frankly, just about everything that

comes out of your department, so I think that should go into the record.

WILLIAM TIBBS, CHAIRMAN: Thank you. Hear, hear.

CHARLES STUDEN: Yes, I agree that the report itself is really quite handsome, the drawings and so on. It's very good.

JEFF ROBERTS: As I like to do, point out that Brendan Monroe, who you probably don't see at the Planning Board, is the individual behind our maps and does a tremendous job of doing that for you, for the Board, for particular projects and for neighborhood meetings and just about anything that anyone in the department asks of him.

WILLIAM TIBBS, CHAIRMAN: I just want to say that the GIS system is one of the wisest investment we've made. It has been extremely helpful from our perspective for all sorts of things.

STEVEN WINTER: This is a

suggestion. It may be interesting to take that public open space per thousand persons and do some kind of time delineation, look at it and see if Brendan can see a pattern where we're were we're gaining, we're losing some kind of population pattern.

I'm not sure that it would show anything interesting in the analysis, but it might. It might show a pattern that could help you assign scarce resources.

WILLIAM TIBBS, CHAIRMAN: Any other comments? Hugh, nothing? Thank you.

I think we don't have, unless you know of something, we don't have any other items.

LES BARBER, DIRECTOR OF ZONING: I have one.

WILLIAM TIBBS, CHAIRMAN: I have an item I would like to at least bring up and get the Board's comments on it.

I know we all want to go since we

have an opportunity to go drink some Irish something or other, but go ahead.

LES BARBER, DIRECTOR OF ZONING:

Just a little administrative matter. 303 Third Street is nearing completion and they're seeking occupancy permits on the southern half of the building and we've actually granted occupancy permits for, I think five or six of the eight floors, and you may recall that when that project --

WILLIAM TIBBS, CHAIRMAN: A big huge complex.

LES BARBER, DIRECTOR OF ZONING:

Yes, on Third Street.

You may recall when initially approved, it was approved for 527 units and then there was the hope that they would have this agreement with affiliated -- a group affiliated with institutions to develop a condominium on that southern building, and they came back to you and I can't quite

remember why we asked them to do this, but they came back and said, "Well, by combining, we want bigger units for this alternate use," and the Board approved a modification of the plans for 460 units rather than 527. That project has mostly failed and as they're building out, they're sort've coming in between -- I think the number anticipated now was about 482 units in the complex. I sort've treated the 460 and 527 as sort've of a bracket where they can build out as they chose, but the permit actually isn't quite -- doesn't quite say that, and it sort've says 460 is the maximum.

So I was just -- just to clear this up, as they come to the end, I was going to suggest they write a letter to the Board saying, "We're near the end and this is our final unit count" and just have the Board bless that as the number of units that you're approving.

Or maybe simply say that they can be flexible within that range, but just so it's administratively clear for the record when we finally issue the last certificate of occupancy.

HUGH RUSSELL: Yes.

WILLIAM TIBBS, CHAIRMAN: Hugh, go ahead.

HUGH RUSSELL: You say this has failed. Do you mean it's not going to be a condominium?

LES BARBER, DIRECTOR OF ZONING: It isn't completely settled yet, but our understanding is that it will be a rental building completely. You know, those -- the core group who was advancing the proposal still hopes something will transpire which will make it possible at least in a more reduced scale, but...

WILLIAM TIBBS, CHAIRMAN: That was, I believe, that affiliated MIT group and

Harvard?

LES BARBER, DIRECTOR OF ZONING:

Yeah, yeah.

CHARLES STUDEN: A retirement kinda thing?

LES BARBER, DIRECTOR OF ZONING: Or where affiliates who would come back to the City and be close to the institutions they grew up with or worked with. But it would appear that in the end, the project, at least in the short term, will be a rental project, so administered by Extel (phonetic).

HUGH RUSSELL: So it's architectural character and landscape is all being done?

LES BARBER, DIRECTOR OF ZONING: This is all changes within the interior of the building.

HUGH RUSSELL: Okay. So we should have no problem with that.

LES BARBER, DIRECTOR OF ZONING: Thank you.

BOARD GENERAL DISCUSSION

WILLIAM TIBBS, CHAIRMAN: Thank you.

The issue I wanted to bring up is one of deliberation. In our deliberation -- and, Hugh, I really want you to help me with this one because if you have some historical perspective and I'm off just let me know, but I think we have two situations recently where permits came to us and we had a certain amount of time to deliberate and the proponents requested -- the proponents, you know, they have a public hearing, they go off and do things, sometimes they'd be scheduled tentatively to come back to us and then we'd hear that they're not ready yet, but can we come back, and then when they do come up, and when they do come in, we didn't seem to have time for us to deliberate ourselves per se. We did, I mean, in most cases we did that, but I wonder -- I just bring up the issue as

-- for some odd reason, I don't remember an awful lot of that happening in the past at least to the point that it bothered me.

So, I was wondering, should we at least be thinking about our need to deliberate regardless of whether the proponent is ready to respond to issues we have? Sometimes we give them stuff and we like to see that stuff before we deliberate, but I really was feeling squeezed for time on some of these things where, you know, the deadlines are coming up, we only have one meeting or two meetings to do something, and I think a lot of us spend a lot of time thinking about it in the interim, so it's not like we're all at twiddling our thumbs.

But I just wanted to talk to the Board on that and get some perspective on that, and in my mind, I can see us at least talking about an issue, even if the proponent is off doing something that we ask, so that

we at least understand our own issues.

I think would eliminate at least tensions that I felt when I felt the need to talk more to get a sense of the Board and felt that there was a real time pressure and a push.

A lot of times that I've asked whenever we had that pressure, we always got extensions from the proponent to do that, but I was -- I was feeling a little pinched a couple times this year, so I just wanted to bring that up as an issue and ask what you think about that.

STEVEN WINTER: Well, actually, I would like to help get to the heart of the issue, and that is, give me some real-time examples of what -- when this happened, so that I can place myself there. And also in your perspective, what is the detriment to the process that happened? What is the detriment to the integrity of our process so

I can understand that, too?

WILLIAM TIBBS, CHAIRMAN: Well, I wasn't at the MIT one, but I assume you only had one meeting to really resolve that one, and that was one where MIT actually did -- we were scheduled to talk -- they said they were coming back and then they asked for -- go ahead.

SUSAN GLAZER, DEPUTY DIRECTOR: I think with the MIT one, because the Board was also dealing with Alexandria at the same time that caused -- we didn't want to put two of those items on at the same time.

WILLIAM TIBBS, CHAIRMAN: So I was angry as the other one. Where I really feel strongly about Alexandria is that a lot of time went by, they were doing an awful lot of churning and public meeting and stuff like that and we were kinda waiting in the wings.

And relative to your question about the process, I'm not sure, I guess that's

your -- I always feel better when I felt we've just had an opportunity to talk amongst ourselves. I think --

STEVEN WINTER: I want to hear your perspective.

WILLIAM TIBBS, CHAIRMAN: That's my perspective. I think we manage always to get through these things and we do a decision. I don't feel the decisions are necessarily -- I'm not sure, but I -- I just feel much better, regardless whether I'm chair or just on the Board if I feel we've had a full discourse and were not pressured for time for that. But go ahead. But those are the two projects.

SUSAN GLAZER, DEPUTY DIRECTOR: It's usually that we have two projects of that immense nature at the same time.

Certainly Board can discuss any project that's before it at any point, but we try to bring projects to you when there's new

information or when there's something for you really to deliberate on, we try to manage the agendas as carefully as we can.

WILLIAM TIBBS, CHAIRMAN: I guess I just want --

SUSAN GLAZER, DEPUTY DIRECTOR:
That's the only point I wanted to raise.

WILLIAM TIBBS, CHAIRMAN: I think the issue of what a proponent needs to go back and come back change is one, but I guess what I'm asking the Board is: Are there opportunities for us just to deliberate on what they have shown us and what was happening at a public hearing, I would have no problem having a discussion that says "Well, here's some comments and concerns I have," they're going to be bringing us back some issues on that one, but at least we heard each other, and if somebody says, "Oh, Bill, I don't have any problem, or I think it's good for us to do that," but we rarely

do that.

We rarely -- I don't think I've ever seen a case where we deliberated something prior to the proponent coming back and presented us with things we asked them to change or --

CHARLES STUDEN: Can you, in fact, do that if the proponent isn't there? I mean, you're suggesting that we would actually have a deliberation.

WILLIAM TIBBS, CHAIRMAN: I'm asking --

HUGH RUSSELL: We can schedule a deliberation.

SUSAN GLAZER, DEPUTY DIRECTOR: If it was on the agenda, we certainly would let the proponent know that we might --

CHARLES STUDEN: It would be on the agenda we were going to deliberate.

SUSAN GLAZER, DEPUTY DIRECTOR: Right. It would come under general

business.

WILLIAM TIBBS, CHAIRMAN: I would call it deliberation without a -- knowing we're deliberating without a decision because we're waiting for their information for the decision, but at least...

But go ahead. I'm sorry, Hugh, because I really would like your perspective.

HUGH RUSSELL: I'm not -- this is my perception of the way things were ten or 15 years ago was things moved more slowly and that extensions were routine. We took a lot of time and we were very careful and it's -- we've been more recently trying to stick to deadlines, trying to work expeditiously and not -- I think that may be a function of actually getting better at it and more sophisticated.

I think having the staff be more confident and doing a lot of the, say, peer design review, you know, not in front of us,

but with staff work, so that may be part of it. I think part of it's just kinda of the attitude of the Board that we try to be decisive.

I think the two cases that you -- the two, one is a case, the other is not a case. We're curious -- Sue is, of course, correct that there are conflicting time schedules, but at some point the council took over, as it should, the rezoning, and at that point, you know, they actually pulled us all in for -- invited us in for private meetings to explain what they were -- where they were headed, and perhaps that should've been done in the public forum, but it wasn't. But they were in charge of the process. So I wasn't too concerned about that because I think I -- that maybe because I agreed with what was going on. And when I had that review, I kept saying, "Yeah, that's good, that's great, yeah, those are the right issues. Are you

getting that much? That's terrific."

On the MIT one, we had this curious thing where the council says, "We don't want you to decide." The neighborhood comes and says, "We don't want you to do your job." And MIT is sitting there saying, "We can't go out and look for tenants until we, you know, have a permit." So they want to move forward. That's kinda gotten my cause anyway, right? Take charge, push through.

Could we have marked it up for discussion? Should we have discussed it a couple of times when they first came to us? I think we just had one discussion, we had some issues raised. We may not have covered as thoroughly as we might have at that point in time, and we marked it up again for a second discussion to dig in enough and we past with, you know, we had a meeting on open space pieces or -- and it's just a building, a big building. It's just a building.

So I think you're very wise to bring us up and talk about it because I think should any new buildings get built in the next five years -- I would be astonished if any major housing proposals come forward this year.

STEVEN WINTER: Bill, I always appreciate your thoughtfulness in terms of the thought process because I think it's important.

What then can we, as a Board do, to make sure that we're not running too fast? What is your perspective.

WILLIAM TIBBS, CHAIRMAN: I guess not necessarily running fast per se. I agree, Hugh, I think we do tend -- we are moving faster and I think maybe we need to, too. I just value -- I value us conversing with each other and talking.

Many times I've been against something and actually listening to the Board

members, I've changed my mind, so I just don't want us to get to point where it's just us individually saying "Well, I feel this, I feel this, I feel this," and then it becomes almost like a vote more than it is some discourse back and forth about the issues at hand and stuff like that.

And so I think as long as we all either value that or think that's important, I think we don't need to do anything in particular, but just keep that in mind.

PATRICIA SINGER: Without disagreeing with anything that's been said, because I think it's all important and valid, and I think we should be thinking and studying before we come in the room and discussing it when we come in the room, I think we also need to be mindful of something else, which is that we're public servants and that time is money, and so that when we have the information on-hand to make a reasonable

decision, I think we are charged with the responsibility of making that decision and not -- I don't want to overstate -- but not dragging our feet, because the people who are coming to us, this is their livelihood, and when we hold them up, it's probably for a very good reason, but it's costing them money.

And in any environment, especially a tough environment like this, that can kill a project that could help our community.

LES BARBER, DIRECTOR OF ZONING: It would probably be important to, you know, if you think you need more time -- one of the reasons we have trouble scheduling really big things is if there's a lot of big things in the pipeline is when you are getting a presentation, you are getting testimony from the public that uses up a lot of time, but if you simply wanted to talk and it was clear that no one else was going to participate,

but just the Board discussing what they've heard and formulating questions and so forth, that's something that could be scheduled on an agenda with another big item because you can do that in a fairly efficient and discrete kinda way.

So, if that's something that you want to do at some point, it's well to express that and we can think about scheduling an appropriate time on the agenda. If we were anticipating a presentation back and forth with the general public, we couldn't possibly do it.

WILLIAM TIBBS, CHAIRMAN: Thanks.

STEVEN WINTER: First I want to reiterate that I agree with you.

I value the process that we have as a Board, and it has been good since I've got to this Board. It was good before I got here, and my assumption is it will be just fine after everything we do because, we're

doing something right. I value you that.
And I'll do anything I can to keep it. So
let me make sure I said that loud and clear.

WILLIAM TIBBS, CHAIRMAN: As Hugh so
rightly said, it will probably be -- it will
be awhile before we're stuck with this
dilemma again, but if we are, we can just
bring it up at the time and see what people
think.

I just wanted to at least do that.
And I guess my concern was making sure that
we have the opportunity to do what we as a
Board need to do, and it wasn't too tied to
the proponent's timing in such a way that we
just didn't have an opportunity to do that.
All right. Any other issues.

Then I think we're adjourned.

*(Whereupon, the meeting adjourned
at 9:00 p.m.)*

CERTIFICATE.

COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS.
NORFOLK, ss.

I, Jill Kourafas, a Certified
Shorthand Reporter, the undersigned Notary
Public, certify that:

I am not related to any of the
parties in this matter by blood or marriage
and that I am in no way interested in the
outcome of these matters.

I further certify that the
proceedings hereinbefore set forth is a true
and accurate transcription of my stenographic
notes to the best of my knowledge, skill and
ability.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto
set my hand this 19th day of March 2009.

Jill Kourafas
Certified Shorthand Reporter No. 149308
Notary Public

My Commission Expires:
February 26, 2010

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