

Central Square Advisory Committee Meeting Summary

July 21, 2015

5:30 – 7:00 PM

344 Broadway, 4th Floor Conference Room

Attendees:

Committee Members: Joel Altstein, Melissa Greene, Esther Hanig, Michael Monestine, Robert Winters

Absent: Drew Kane, Robin Lapidus, Christopher Sol Gully

Presenters: Melissa Miguel, Department of Public Works

Robert Burnham, Kleinfelder

Eric Leguelaff, MBTA

Ms. Miguel presented discussion on the City of Cambridge's ongoing effort to install a public toilet in the Central Square area. Currently \$320,000 was allocated through the City of Cambridge's Participatory Budget process conducted last fall. The goal is to provide an accessible, safe place for the placement, a location that will have access to water, sewer and electrical service.

The City has selected the Portland Loo that was first installed in Portland, Oregon. The first public toilet is scheduled to be installed in Harvard Square later this fall.

The unit is a stainless steel structure. Louvers at the top and bottom of the wall create an interior environment that offers complete visual privacy, while remaining as connected with the outside as possible. The lower louvers are angled to provide law enforcement the opportunity to observe the number of users within the unit without compromising privacy. The unit's hand-washing station is mounted on the exterior. At night a light will light the exterior until it is occupied, at which time the interior lights activate and the exterior lights dim, to show that it is in use. The Loo is functional year round with all exposed plumbing and toilet bowl wrapped in heated wire for freeze protection. Each Loo is built to fully comply with ADA Standards. <http://theloo.biz/>

The City's next steps in the process are to identify a feasible location in Central Square, including utility connections, visibility, and usability, close to transit and Massachusetts Avenue, and determine how maintenance will be handled.

Committee Members Questions:

- Will paid advertisement be allowed on the structure? Noting that it did have a placement for such, they requested that the City explore allowing Cambridge not-for profit organization use for announcement, and events in the Cambridge community on a rotating basis.
- Noting that it would make sense to place structure close to where people would be willing to use it, place Way Finder signage and Smart Phone Apps directing people to additional public restrooms located throughout the Square (City Hall, Central Square Fire House).

- It was also suggested that the City should partner with some of the establishments in the Square about use of restroom.
- The Committee requested that DPW share possible location sites that would allow them to make recommendations.

Mr. Eric Leguelaff from the MBTA and Mr. Robert Burnham from Kleinfelder presented an update on the renovation of the MBTA Central Square Elevator Inbound. This project is fully funded by the MBTA with federal dollars, a construction budget of \$4million. This project will replace the existing structure, the entrance door will open on the opposite side of the current elevator, which will allow for persons using a wheelchair to enter the car on one side and exit on the opposite side without needing to turn around or back out of the car when exiting. The construction time frame will be two (2) years, and the use of the elevator will be out of service for one (1) year. During that time they are exploring the option of have a bus dedicated to moving passenger that need to be serviced to Kendall Square. The new structure will consist of 5 panels of glass on all three sides with the top two panels being used for advertisement, and granite finishing. The MBTA needs to obtain an additional 8" of land to accommodate the new cab requirements.

Committee Members Questions:

- Can the elevator be relocated entirely which would allow for continuous operation during construction?
- What will be the replacement site for the bike racks located adjacent to the elevator?
- What are the alternatives to having a designated bus to move users that need the elevator service? Will it be a continuous loop? What happens in bad weather? Having users stand out waiting for the bus service doesn't make sense.
- Suggest signage notifying users of the option to cross the street go Outbound to Harvard Square allowing to switch over and take the Inbound train without an additional cost.
- Is there an option where not-for-profit organization will be allowed to advertise?
- Will the advertisement require sign certification each time and what is the material?
- Committee Members requested that the MBTA explore using a rough granite material that would discourage graffiti/stickers allowing for easy cleaning.
- Who will approve the selling of the additional 8" of land that is required for the new installation, will it be the City Council?

Next meeting of the committee will take place on Tuesday September 15, 2015, at 5:30PM, when the committee will walk/tour Massachusetts Avenue.

The meeting was adjourned at 7PM.