

859 Mass Ave Public Meeting

November 15, 2017

12:00 pm – 1:30 pm

Sophie Room, Cambridge City Hall

Attendees (City Staff): Lisa Peterson, Michael Black, Brendon Roy, John Logiudice, Evan Benson, Andrea Boyer, Dan Riviello

Attendees (Public): Alex Steinbergh, 3 Clinton St.

The following are paraphrased notes from the meeting.

Alex voiced his concerns as well as concerns on behalf of residents at 3 Clinton St:

- Something that was supposed to take 1-2 weeks now at 7-8. People in building at 3 Clinton have suffered damages related to the noise.
- Everyone has acted in good faith, but constrained lot and geothermal wells have screwed up the process.
- We have no peace, have to leave the building, and can't work from home.
- Asked about geothermal well information, process, cost, etc.

CDM Smith/City staff explained what has happened with the geothermal well drilling:

- Our drill rod broke in the well and we tried to retrieve it.
- In May, we had a contractor sub out the geothermal well work and they abandoned the project.
- In October, we began again and were at depth and the drill rod broke when trying to retrieve it and we now have to start a new well.
- New well expected to take 7-9 working days to complete.
- We had information about the ground we were drilling into but we test as we go along and we hit more difficult sub-surface conditions than we thought.
- We had success with wells at the MLK School, we're also having success at the King Open School, but we ran into issues in spots at both of those locations as well.
- The City does not bear the cost of the added drilling as the contract with CDM Smith is fixed-price.
- We are confident in the work on this new well.

Alex asked for more information about the functionality of the geothermal system and other energy options:

- What is the temperature at depth?
- Will the well be fueling hot water, heating, and cooling in the building?
- Some of this will come from solar? Why isn't this all done with solar rather than the geothermal well?
- You could've come to us at 3 Clinton and asked to use our roof space.

CDM Smith/City staff responded:

- The temperature of the well will depend on the temperature needs of the building. The HVAC contractor develops a model for heating and cooling needs of the building.
- Solar is part of this project, but there is not enough roof space on the building to use to cover the energy use and asking 3 Clinton to use their roof space for additional photovoltaic cells would be very complicated.

Alex asked about remaining work, schedule, and communications:

- How is work going inside?
- With communications, they have been decent but not good enough. You need to look at the big plan at the beginning.
- You have to get good contractors, even if you need to pay more.

CDM Smith/City staff responded:

- The project schedule is 265 days from the start of the contract, which would bring us to January 1, 2018.
- Right now, their schedule is showing an end date of January 19.
- Have a meeting next week to review the schedule with the contractor.
- We've had the rough inspections and they should be starting on drywall and finishes inside the building in the next week.
- In the spring, we'll be back to pour new sidewalks, pave the roadway, and do landscaping on site.

Alex asked about Net Zero process, necessity, effects on abutters, and compensation for damages:

- Asked the City to recognize there are risks to residents and abutters when using geothermal to meet Net Zero, especially on a tight site like this, and what the payback on a system like this is vs. a regular energy system.
- City needs to look at the Net Zero process in the future and figure out a way to compensate abutters.
- With Net Zero, the City should put into the calculations the time and disruption that go into this for abutters. This should be part of the contract and include compensations for abutters.
- Abutters didn't sign up for this, and it wasn't done with malice, but it's about a lack of knowledge more than anything else and we need to learn from this.
- The City took the risk and the abutters are being damaged. People have trust in the City, and it's well founded, but this is making people question it.
- Is there any mechanism in place for abutters to seek damages?

CDM Smith/City staff responded:

- Unknown what the payback is at this time as the system is not complete and working with the real-world demands of a functioning building.

- Mentioned that a resident at 14 Clinton had 3 geothermal wells installed on their property several years ago.
- Informed Alex he would need to contact the City Solicitors Office with questions about compensation, damages, etc.