

**Trolley Square Committee Meeting  
Thursday, February 7, 2002  
6:30 PM, North Cambridge Senior Center**

Committee Members

Tom Buffett (TB)  
Helen Kukuk (HK)  
Leslie Dell'Elce-Grinley (LDG)  
Bill Hubner (BH)  
Cara Cheyette (CC)  
Eric Grunebaum (EG)  
John Danehy (JD)

Staff

Susan Glazer  
Stuart Dash  
Iram Farooq  
Chris Cotter  
Rebecca Sozanski

Staff and committee members introduced themselves. Mr. Dash gave an overview of the evening's agenda and the committee process overall. He stated that the deed restricts this site to uses for public benefit and then discussed the City Manager's letter encouraging the consideration of affordable housing.

When asked about their expectations for this process, committee members stated the following (initials in parentheses indicate speaker):

- Have real-time note-taking (TB)
- Allow people outside the process to observe (TB)
- Minutes should attribute comments to those who said them (HK)
- Include information about what the committee is expected to achieve at each meeting (LDG)
- Members should receive material for upcoming meetings well in advance of those meetings (LDG)
- Provide clear agendas to prevent redundant discussions (LDG)
- Try to achieve clear goals (BH)
- Avoid redundant discussions (BH)
- Provide information about what is allowable under the zoning (JD)
- Members should receive copies of previous applicable studies (EG)

Mr. Dash then acknowledged members of the public, and told the committee that they could consider allowing a period for public comment at the end of the meeting. He said that materials will be mailed to committee members at least one week in advance of meetings. At the end of each meeting the group will recap the discussion in order to decide on next steps.

Ms. Farooq gave a brief overview of the site and the surrounding area. She then asked committee members to list some issues and opportunities associated with the site. These are listed below, grouped by category (initials in parentheses indicate speaker):

Mixed-Use

- Include commercial development to pull people in (CC)
- Create strong focal point (EG)
- Include a café (example: Holyoke Center) (EG)

Provide seasonal activity- tree sales, skating, flea markets, carts (BH)  
Davis Square is an asset, because it creates pedestrian traffic, but would provide competition to Trolley Square as a destination (CC)

### Open Space

It would be a challenge to create a workable open space at this exact location (CC)  
Example of Cambridge Commons as a relief within a crowded space (EG)  
Consider skating area (like Boston's Frog Pond) (EG)  
Acknowledge location next to Linear Park (BH)  
Provide a resting spot (BH)  
Include sculpture (LDG)  
Provide a playground (HK)  
Several members believe there are sufficient tot lots in area  
Include gardens and trees (HK)  
Consider community gardens (like those on Broadway) (CC)  
Provide sitting park with trees (LDG)  
Consider providing fountain (TB)  
The site could be location for outdoor events (LDG)  
Even with nice development, we don't want to miss an opportunity for open space (EG)

### Housing

Members need to understand the range of options for affordable housing across City before making any recommendations (TB)  
Provide housing as portion, not all, of site (EG)  
Can Community Preservation Act create affordable housing in existing buildings? (EG)  
Members need to understand standards for affordability (JD)  
Can private firm develop parcel (leasing from the City)? (JD)  
There are concerns about housing on street level not creating the same liveliness as retail (BH)  
There is the desire for any housing to be aesthetically pleasing (LDG)  
There is a concern about renters being more transient than owners (LDG)  
Affordable ownership units might be preferable to rental (JD)  
Consider the height of the building as an opportunity to balance out 2353 Mass Ave (HK)  
Housing will create a need for more parking (TB)

### Others

Cameron Ave. is in need of traffic calming (CC)  
Certain uses on the site will create a need for more parking (JD)  
New loft development along Linear Park in Somerville could change character of area (CC)  
What type of recommendations might realistically be implemented? (TB)  
It would be frustrating to work on something with no potential for it to happen (LDG)

### Conclusion

Mr. Dash stated that the staff will arrange to provide the following by or at next month's meeting on Thursday, March 7, 2002, 6:30 PM:

- Zoning information
- To-scale site plan
- Housing information
- Green Ribbon Report
- Decision about definition of public benefit
- Information about Community Preservation Act
- Previous Trolley Square/ Sheridan Square Report
- Examples of various types of projects

Public comment

Norm Boucher stated that, as part of the previous Trolley Square Committee, he had spent a great deal of time planning for this site and had not seen any action taken.

Joe Joseph requested information about the preliminary environmental site assessment and copies of the final report.

Michael Brandan described the North Cambridge Stabilization Committee's history of neighborhood involvement since the 1970s, and invited Trolley Square Committee members to attend one of their meetings. He encouraged the committee to weigh the City's role in the process and to open the process more to the public. He believes that some people were deliberately left off the committee because they are community activists. He suggested engaging local businesses more, and to allow interim parking on the site to discourage illegal parking on Dudley Street.