

Union Square Neighborhood Council - Meeting September 11, 2018

Attendance

USNC Voting Members:

Ben Baldwin, Bill Cavellini, Ben Bradlow, Ann Camara, Pennie Taylor, Rachel Weil, Jacob Kramer, Michele Hansen, Joanne Berry, Tori Antonino

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Neighborhood Resident Members: 7

Co-Facilitators: Rachel Weil, Bill Cavellini

Agenda

1. Welcome and Introductions
 - a. Bill chaired the meeting and led off introductions
2. Approval of 8/30/18 minutes
 - a. Postponed until quorum achieved
 - b. Pennie motion to approve
 - i. Rachel- seconded
 - ii. Vote 9 yes, 0 no, 0 abstain
3. Public Comment
 - a. Simon- DRC is Thursday this week at Visiting Nurses Association. They will probably look at civic and open space.
 - i. Wig- They would have had to have a notice up by now or they can't hold the meeting.
 - b. Wig- With the denial of the phase 1 waiver, it seems their putting the cart before the horse diving into details on the design. Design was the source of many comments in MEPA process.
 - i. Joanne- They will have to address every comment from original filing of draft EIR(Environmental Impact Report)
 - c. Gary- DRC has a policy of no formal public comments, yet they are accepting comments. We should think about taking advantage of that fact.
 - i. Next DRC meeting will be on the 27th
4. Discussion & decision on response to MEPA decision to deny waiver for Phase 1 and scope of EIR
 - a. Joanne-Many people participated in the comments. I will go through them, but a lot of both positive and negative feedback on presentation. Overall will guide US2 to the expectations they need to meet for draft EIR. Continuing to work on design review will assist in this process.
 - b. Jacob- I think this outcome reflects the will of this body. Thanks to Joanne for taking the lead and Wig for his expertise. MEPA secretary said that US2 design team should look to USNC to incorporate community input
 - c. Tori- Impressed by response. 36 pages of response and 300 pages of commentary. MBTA, Sec. Galvin supported this waiver. Many others, Chamber of commerce, Somerville local first, YIMBYs. Thanks to Joanne and her letter.
 - i. Does this mean US2 needs to step back and reevaluate the whole thing?
 - ii. Bill- They have to do an environmental impact report for the whole project, not just D2. This slows things down.

- iii. Ben Bradlow- US2 said this could at 6-7 months to carrying period. Up to 9 months until construction start.
- iv. Tori- So it would be foolish to go in front of the planning board to try and get a permit?
 - 1. Michele- They can waste their time if they feel like it.
- d. Joanne- Because they need alternative plans spelled out in draft EIR, it would be in their best interest to present alternatives to the DRC.
 - i. Many supporters of the waiver were state level, although some were community members. The majority of community members we engaged did not express support for the waiver so that is the reason USNC took the position we did.
 - ii. Bill- The supportive letters did not mention any environmental concerns
- e. Jacob- What is next to try to get them to incorporate our concerns into their design. Some may involve working with architectural group. BEC may also have a place there.
 - i. Joanne- Tori has been working with community members. We should get community input on alternative designs. Supposedly the D2 block remediation plan is prepared, we should push them to publish it publicly. We have the means to do this effectively with our membership and local universities.
 - 1. Pennie- Any sense of time frame for a draft EIR?
 - 2. Wig- 2 important parts- the decision which is short. 2 or 3 reasons, which were probably known quite well by MEPA beforehand. They may or may not file a draft EIR, they may do it in one stage. The ENF was light in terms of what they should have covered. Design issues will be a challenge if they move forward with them.
 - a. Community always has a chance to look at processes that may offer up things that are better for the community. Read the decision! that's where MEPA sets up what the shortfalls were. the Scope is what MEPA expects developers and community to focus on in next stage
 - ii. Jacob- Once they submit an EIR addressing the scope, that's it right?
 - 1. Bill- There may be a public meeting, if there is enough feedback that they have not fulfilled the scope that the MEPA secretary laid out.
 - iii. Ben Bradlow- How can we get US2 to engage on alternate design proposals? We do have some time but we want to remain ahead of the ball.
 - 1. Jacob- We should reach out to US2 in context of design review, MEPA waiver and alternative design committee. Saying, "Basically everybody is advising you to revise your designs, let's talk about it"
 - a. This could be separate from CBA negotiations
 - b. Could BEC arrange this meeting?
 - c. Ben Bradlow- the key is for the alt designs to be considered. What is the best way to get them considered?

- i. Joanne- We need the local experts to lead this discussion. Ultimately this is something that we need to have an effective meeting
 - ii. Erik- SCC is looking at design options for a center in Allen St neighborhood. This is an opportunity and impetus for them to have a discussion about this.
 - d. Ben Bradlow- I propose the BEC discuss and return to the board with a proposal
 - i. Bill- I'd like to add that you should speak to Phil Parsons before devising a proposal. He has talked to US2 after the alternative designs went public
 - ii. Pennie- We presented these plans to the mayor and asked him to apply pressure to US2
5. Report on progress of negotiations for a CBA
 - a. Jacob- We have met 6 times now and covered: arts & creative economy, sustainability, housing, and a little into jobs. Jobs is split into new job creation, concern for existing small businesses, and construction phase jobs. Our general scope involves the same angle- wherever possible, try to hire locally and have good wages, and keep open access to collective bargaining.
 - i. Mostly it has been presentations from our side with a few proposals coming back. Nothing is set.
 - b. Ben Bradlow- We haven't come to any agreements so it's hard to report more than general information. I want to assure membership that conversations have been cooperative and in search of creative solutions.
 - c. Michele Hansen- They are taking information that we propose and look into them.
 - d. Tori- Who has been attending the meetings?
 - i. Bill- Paul Scapicchio, alternated between Paul's assistants from NOVUS, Greg Kushefsky (president), Emma Rothkar (attorney). Emma will be taking another job. Justin (architect, property manager).
 - ii. Ben- All Neg. Com. members have been attending with occasional absences.
 - e. Bill- There is a general tone that they aren't going to take too many risks. We're bound by joint statements and forbidden from commenting on specific statements
 - f. Rachel- Did MEPA denial come up?
 - i. Bill- no
 - ii. Ben Bradlow- they alluded to it in passing
6. Decision on strategy for BOA Finance Committee Meeting 9/12
 - a. Bill- Finance Committee met in July and decided they would not transfer city owned land that US2 needs for D2 development until they had further discussion. We have asked them not to transfer the land until we are further along with negotiations. The specific ask we put out in the summer was that we wanted a public hearing. This is public land and contaminated public land. There are organizations mobilizing for tomorrow night to put pressure on the board to call a public hearing.

- i. Ben Bradlow- There are at least two aldermen who have told me that they will support a public hearing
 - ii. Rachel- How does MEPA waiver denial play into land transfer?
 - 1. Ben- it creates a time buffer.
 - iii. Jacob- \$5 million needed to pay land owner and US2 has offered to pay it. It needs to be paid by Dec 31
 - b. Tori- I spoke with Alderman Neidergang who thinks this could blow up the deal with US2.
 - i. Bill- Union United met with Alderman Neidergang last week. He is on board for a public hearing
 - c. Tori- Conveyance of the parcel is as-is. City is not responsible for clean up
 - i. Joanne US2 has been conducting analysis on the site and developed plan for remediation
 - ii. Jacob- At last Finance Comimittee meeting they allowed me to speak as rep of USNC. We should be prepared to talk
7. Discussion and vote on amendment to interim bylaws, section 3.3.9 - separation of permanent bylaws vote from board election vote
- a. Bill- Attendees are in possession of the proposed amendment to the bylaws. The wording of the original interim bylaws are contradctory. We can't vote for board and bylaws at the same time. The second election, of the permanent board, will be operating under new bylaws.
 - b. Ben Bradlow- "If no permanent bylaws are approved in this manner after the year, the interim bylaws, in whatever form that they have been amended as per article 15, shall hold and a new Interim Board will be elected for a period of one year.
 - i. Wig- "Shall remain in effect" instead of "shall hold"
 - ii. Ben Bradlow- Move that we change the language
 - 1. Michele- seconded
 - iii. Jacob- We are the founding board, I think whoever is elected next should be just "the board" instead of an "interim board"
 - 1. Pennie- I move to remove the word "interim"
 - a. Ann - Seconded
 - iv. Ben Bradlow- I move that we vote on the amendment, as amended
 - 1. Pennie- second
 - 2. Bill- vote will be taken by membership that is present. Membership can also comment
 - 3. Vote- 14 yes, 0 opposed, 0 abstentions
 - v. Bill- If new bylaws are not passed, election will happen according to rules of interim bylaws
 - c. Erik- This change is not to the new bylaws. Bylaws committee is working on that. This is a temporary change that will be replaced by the permanent bylaws.
8. Bylaws Committee report
- a. Erik- We are making more progress than expected.
 - i. Jacob- Do we need more participation?
 - ii. Bill- Gary, Myself, Erik, Phil Parsons, Andy Greenspon, Simon Hill, Michele. Anybody else that wants to participate please reach out. We are encouraging participation.
 - b. Bylaw committee proposal must come to the board to decide on whether

it goes to a vote. Membership must support in $\frac{2}{3}$ majority.

9. Public Comment

- a. Joanne- Chris Dwin, who came to us to protect Somerville trees, has posted information about the removed trees. Want to commend the board for helping to save a few trees.
- b. Tori- After 2 years of pushing, the urban forestry committee is being reconstituted. They are accepting applications until the 28th of september. Want to include it in the public newsletter. Thanks to JT Scott for being a champion of this cause.
- c. Dominique- I want to say that we are following what you're doing in my household and others that we talk to. I am impressed by the amount of luggage you have accumulated. It is moving to witness and I want to thank you.
- d. Wig- One historic footnote- today was the annual legal hearing on the Green Line at DEP.
- e. Wig- What is needed is for people to think that they are designing a district for millions of square feet of mixed use.
- f. Joe- A lot of other things happening in the city that could affect USNC. Pilot conversation with Tufts. MIT has offered to help us. If the transfer fee passes, the question about the 2-4 million sq feet is how much will be sold. This could mean a lot of money if much of it will be sold. The librarian conversation is shifting. There has been a lot of conversation about a library in the neighborhood.
 - i. What is being dug up on D2? Congressman Capuano put a lot of money into the site.
 1. Joanne- Site is cleaner. There are still pollutants. There are residences on Allen St that have not been tested and are not being tested for aerosolized contaminants in their basements. Should be included in remediation plan.
 - ii. Does Somerville Home fall within district boundaries
 1. No.
 2. There will be controversy about closing. It could be useful because one option for it is that if they sale it, it could be a land trust opportunity.
- g. Jessica- USNC will be represented at the Full Festival 9/22. Please post them around.
- h. Simon- MEPA waivers are normally denied. It was expected.
- i. Rachel- We have received an official resignation letter from Andrea. She is in college in Western Mass. Next steps are to review nominations at any of the next two meetings.
 - i. Simon- Seat "may" be filled, so it does not need to be filled

10. Executive Session - to discuss strategy and tactics for further negotiations