



Date: November 25, 2014  
 To: Joseph Fleury, PWD  
 From: William McGrath, P.E.  
 Subject: North Square – 1<sup>st</sup> Public Informational Meeting

BETA Project #: 4800

Attendees:

- |                     |   |
|---------------------|---|
| Joseph Fleury       | Boston PWD                              |
| Zachery Wassmouth   | Boston PWD                              |
| Steve Passacantilli | Mayor’s Office                          |
| Nicole Leo          | Mayor’s Office of Neighborhood Services |
| Bob D’Amico         | Boston Transportation Department        |
| Allison Perlman     | Parks and Recreation Department         |
| Lori Toscano        | Councilor LaMattina’s Office            |
|                     |   |
| Randall Collins     | BETA Group                              |
| William McGrath     | BETA Group                              |

The first North Square Public Informational Meeting was held at the Nazzaro Center at 6:00 PM on November 19, 2014. The following summarizes the meeting:

Randy Collins from BETA Group, the PWD’s design consultant, presented the project. It was noted that the project is in the information gathering stage and that a design has not been chosen. He reviewed the purpose for the project and noted the existing deficiencies, particularly in regard to accessibility and ADA considerations. He presented some initial thoughts on what could be considered as the design progresses.

The following is a summary of the comments and concerns from the meeting attendees:

1. Project Purpose:

- The Square does not need to be redesigned. Instead there is a need for maintenance of the sidewalks and cobblestones.
- The PWD responded that the impetus for project is accessibility, particularly for pedestrians.
- The PWD noted that the budget for the project is \$2,000,000. Currently construction is scheduled for early 2016.
- It was requested that the next meeting start @ 6:30 PM. Also, please post meeting notes on the website.



2. Traffic/Circulation:

- Vehicle access to the Square is needed. Concern was expressed about increased traffic if the roads are improved. It was noted that the condition of the existing cobblestones act as traffic calming.
- The Square should be for pedestrians first and vehicles second.
- Vehicle access to the Square should be for the School/Church only.
- Bicycle traffic has increased in the North End. Pedestrians need to be protected from bike traffic.
- Consideration should be given to allowing vehicle access in front of Mama Maria's (connect Prince to Sun Court).

3. Amenities:

- The Square should include amenities for sitting and resting.
- The City could consider selling benches.
- The design needs to include more trees. Four trees were planted fairly recently. It was noted that the previous trees that have been planted in the past have died.

4. Rachel Revere Park:

- The North Square and Rachel Revere Park designs should be advanced as one project. There needs to be a collaborative effort between Parks and PWD.
- Elevation issues need to be addressed for access.
- The design needs to be "right" even if it costs more than \$2M.
- The PWD noted that North Square is a PWD controlled asset and Rachel Revere Park is a Parks and Recreation Department controlled asset. The PWD and Parks Department will coordinate the designs for consistency.

5. Utilities:

- Will there be any utility work as part of the project? The water was upgraded 10 years ago. The sewer is old.
- The PWD responded that there will be coordination with all utilities regarding planned work so that utility work can occur prior to the construction for the Square.
- In addition, PWD stated that there will be sewer upgrades taking place prior to the construction of this project. The schedule for this work has yet to be finalized.
- The City has a 5 year moratorium on utility work (except emergencies) after construction is complete.

6. Project Concept:

- North Square is the oldest square in the country.
- The concept is too modern/contemporary.
- The design should reflect the history of the Square and the surrounding buildings. The design concept is not appropriate for the historic nature of the Square. Given the importance of the Square, this cannot be a "routine" process.



- The design needs to be informed by the “Guiding Principles” presented.
- The Square is not currently pedestrian friendly. There is concern about mixing vehicles and pedestrians.
- The concept design has too much brick. The look is too dramatic. The granite walls shown are not consistent with what the design of the Square should be.
- The concept presented informs where the Square is headed. The Square serves multiple needs, but primarily the Square is and needs to be a place for people to sit and relax.
- The process needs to merge the historic properties’ needs with the community’s (resident’s) needs. The Square is “Iconic”.
- Several movie scenes have been filmed in the Square. Wedding pictures are also taken in the Square. The design must be careful not to impact these uses as they bring business to the Square.
- If the Square is turned into a “park” there is concern about students/others hanging out after the restaurants close.
- A water feature should be considered. BETA responded that a water feature could be considered but the City would need an agreement with a neighborhood group to provide maintenance in perpetuity.

7. Materials:

- Many commented that the cobblestones were an important aesthetic for the Square and should be part of the design.

8. Maritime Chain:

- The chain is an important element of the Square.
- It was installed in the 1970’s.
- Its significance as a marine element is connected to the Mariners House.
- It prevents cars from parking in the triangle.
- The chain and associated features around the Square are from the USS Constitution.
- The design should include reuse of the chain. Perhaps it could be incorporated into public art.

The meeting ended at approximately 7:45 PM.

