



Date: September 22, 2015
 To: Joseph Fleury, PWD
 From: William McGrath, P.E.
 Subject: North Square – Public Informational Meeting

BETA Project #: 4800

Attendees:

Joseph Fleury	Boston PWD
Bob D’Amico	Boston Transportation Department
Steve Passacantilli	Boston Transportation Department
Allison Pearlman	Boston Parks and Recreation
Randall Collins	BETA Group
William McGrath	BETA Group

A Public Informational Meeting was held at the St. John School at 6:30 PM on September 17, 2015. The following summarizes the meeting:

Joe Fleury from the Boston PWD opened the meeting and gave an overview of the project and the progress to date.

Randy Collins from BETA Group, the PWD’s design consultant, presented the project. The project purpose, existing conditions and comments from the previous public meeting were reviewed. Improved pedestrian accessibility and ADA compliance are main goals of the project. It was noted that three concepts were developed based on input from the previous public meeting. Each concept was presented and the elements of each highlighted. Also, coordination with the Racheal Revere Park design is on-going.

The following is a summary of the comments and concerns noted at the meeting.

1. Traffic/Circulation/Use
 - There was discussion regarding maintaining traffic on Moon Street. Can Moon Street be closed to traffic and simultaneously reverse direction of flow on Sun Court? The difficulty of turning from Sun Court onto Moon Street and emergency vehicle access/response were mentioned as issues if Moon Street were closed to traffic. Bob D’Amico from BTM noted that a petition with 75% in favor is required to change the direction of a street. The general consensus appeared to favor allowing traffic on Moon Street.



- Parking in the Square was discussed. Will parking in front of church change? It was noted that the area in front of the church is currently signed as “no parking”. The only legal parking in the Square is on west side. The design concepts as presented do not take the space in front of the church away.
2. Maritime Chain
- The chain is not from the USS Constitution, but was fabricated in the Charlestown Navy Yard.
 - The concepts do not require fabrication of new chain. The existing chain will be cleaned and painted. New “stanchions” may need to be fabricated.
 - Continuous chain is a problem for access to the Square particularly during church events.
 - Chain is only needed on east side, not on the north or west sides. It should not segregate pedestrian areas.
 - The general consensus appeared to be that the chain should be incorporated into the design in a way that does not limit pedestrian mobility through the Square.
3. Materials/Landscaping
- Accessibility is needed for all pedestrians. Emphasis should be on pedestrians, but Moon Street should not be closed to traffic. Concept #1 is preferable because the entire Square is accessible.
 - There was general discussion about the need and location of the planter, trees and use of tables/benches.
 - The planter is needed to define space in the Square. If you take away planter there is nothing.
 - Provide seating around planter and other areas.
 - Sitting areas are needed in the Square.
 - Tables are good, but promote trash. Consider making furniture fixed rather than movable.
 - The center of the Square should be open to allow its use as a multi-functional space.
 - The trees are needed to provide areas for shade.
 - Perhaps planter could be moved either to the north or south to open up space in the Square.
 - Irrigation of planted areas is important.
 - Concern that Concepts #1 and #2 will look “bleached out” because of the amount of new granite. It was noted that the granite could be provided in darker shades to provide contrast.
 - The existing cobblestones that are reused will be reset on a solid base to provide a smoother surface. However, cobblestones have rough edges and rounded surface so they will not provide an ADA compliant surface.
 - It was noted that New Bedford has done a good job in resetting cobbles.
 - New granite pavers will be easier to clean and maintain. Also, snow removal is facilitated with new granite pavers.
 - Concern that BWSC will dig up for utility work after improvements are completed. It was noted that PWD is coordinating with BWSC to ensure BWSC does work prior to this project.



4. Concept Designs

- Continuity and consistency with existing Square is important to keeping historic perspective. Need to be cautious that design does not lead to overuse of the Square.
- Square should be a gathering place. Accessibility is the No. 1 issue.
- Vendors should not be allowed to use the Square.
- The existing lights should be maintained, but relocated to avoid being hit by trucks. This has happened to lights at the beginning of Square and @at the Paul Revere House.
- Need more/better trash receptacles. The existing receptacle fills up quickly and trash ends up everywhere. Recycling containers should be considered.
- Installation of flagpole been considered for Square.
- The City puts up a Christmas tree in the Square. It was noted that the design concepts do not prevent this.
- It appears that the majority like Concept#3. There is need to balance the ratio of new granite vs. existing cobblestones.

There will be a follow-up public meeting to present further progress on the design. It is likely that this will be combined with presentation of the design for Racheal Revere Park.

The meeting ended at approximately 8:00 PM.

