

**City of Boston Conservation Commission**  
**Public Hearing Meeting Minutes**  
Boston City Hall, Hearing Room 801  
Boston, Massachusetts, 02201

**October 5, 2011**

**Commissioners Present:** Charles Button - Chairman, Vivien Li, John Lewis, Stephen Kunian, Aldo Ghirin

**Commissioners Not Present:** Jeanne McHallam, John Sullivan

**Staff Present:** Chris Busch, Executive Director

**6:10 PM Notice of Intent from the City of Boston Public Facilities Department for the construction of a public library building, parking lot and driveways, pedestrian walkways, a stormwater infrastructure system, and installation of utilities and landscaping, at 365 Bremen Street, East Boston (Land Subject to Coastal Storm Flowage).**

Owner: City of Boston Public Facilities Department

Representatives: Frank Holmes, Stantec; Maureen Anderson, PFD; Jim Gaffigan, PFD

Documents: Project plans and details as provided in the project Notice of Intent.

C. Button – Any initial comments from staff?

C. Busch – The proponent notes in the project Notice of Intent that the primary resource on the project site is bordering land subject to flooding, however, based upon the FEMA Flood Insurance Rate Map for the area the project site would be inundated by flood water from Boston Harbor; therefore, the resource area should be considered land subject to coastal storm flowage. There are more limited performance standards with LSCSF.

F. Holmes – The project is located at 365 Bremen Street, and was a former electrical substation owned by Nstar. Much of the site currently consists of gravel and some concrete pads. No vegetation on site aside from one tree along the western portion of the property. Drainage on the site sheet flows currently to the north to Bremen Street and to the south to a swale, which does have drainage structures within it that directs stormwater to Boston Water and Sewer infrastructure. The new library will be approximately 50,000 square feet located in the center of the site. There will also be nine parking spaces on the east side with a new curb cut into the site. Other features include paved pedestrian areas providing access to the front of the library, as well as access to the adjacent Bremen Street Park. There will also be new landscaping and installation of site utilities and stormwater infrastructure including four rain gardens.

C. Button – Where will the roof runoff be directed?

F. Holmes – All roof water will be collected in internal roof drains and three-quarters of the water will be directed to a cistern and utilized for irrigation and the rest of the water will be directed to an infiltration system. The project has been designed to meet all of DEP's Stormwater Management Standards. The project is also designed to meet LEED Silver standards. The project is within LSCSF and the base floor elevation of the building will be approximately 1.5 feet above the flood stage. The site will maintain overall the same amount of flood storage up to elevation 15, however, we cannot maintain storage above the level.

C. Button – Is there a basement?

F. Holmes – There is not basement, there are no aspects of the building below the flood elevation. Electrical systems will be pad mounted and elevated above surrounding grades.

C. Button – You may want to consider raising the grade of the building to provide for future protection against flooding.

M. Anderson – We did initially consider raising the base floor elevation of the building, however, that raised issues with adequate grades for ADA access to the building.

J. Lewis – Is there a maintenance schedule for the cleaning of the cisterns and infiltration chambers.

F. Holmes – There is an operation and maintenance plan for scheduled cleaning of those systems.

S. Kunian – Will the building be LEED certified?

F. Holmes – It will be LEED Silver certified.

V. Li – Are the parking spaces for the general public?

M. Anderson – There is one handicap spot and the rest are for the public.

V. Li – Given the project's proximity to public transportation wouldn't it make sense to have less parking and more area for infiltration and landscaping?

J. Gaffigan – We felt that nine spaces was a relatively modest number given the size of the community. There will be two existing libraries closed when the facility opens, so there will be residents traveling from some distance to use the new library.

V. Li – Are you taking into account sea level rise with the first floor elevation of the building?

F. Holmes – The 100-year flood elevation is at 15.45 and the first floor is at elevation 17, so we are over 1.5 feet above flood elevation.

C. Button – Questions or comments from the public? – No public comment

A. Ghirin – Is there any community input on the project?

M. Anderson – We have had a number of meeting with an advisory counsel and have provided community updates during project design. We have also met with and coordinated with Massport.

V. Li – Are there any letters from elected officials?

C. Busch – Nothing was received from electeds or the public.

C. Button – Do we have a motion?

S. Kunian – I move the draft Order of Conditions.

J. Lewis – Second.

- **Motion made by S. Kunian and seconded by J. Lewis to issue an Order of Conditions for the project and close the hearing (voted 4/0/0)**

**6:20 PM Update from the Massachusetts Port Authority on the Green Bus Depot Project, Order of Conditions DEP File No. 006-1260, and ongoing meetings with City agencies and community groups on greenway connection alternatives.**

Owner: Massachusetts Port Authority

Representatives: Lowell Richards, Massport; Richard McGuinness, Boston Redevelopment Authority

L. Richards – Construction of the Green Bus Depot Project has commenced, consistent with the authorizations issued by the Commission. There have been ongoing meetings between Massport and BRA staff. We have been following the lead of the city with regard to meeting with the community on the greenway extension. There is a general consensus regarding the corridor which is along the blue line right of way. There is a substantial overlook at the northern terminus that will allow the public to view the Wood Island Marsh area. There will also be a thoughtful alignment at the southern end of the extension that will allow for the crossing of vehicular roadways which will allow for access to the Bremen Street Park. The next scheduled meeting on the extension will review landscaping and continue discussion regarding safety and security. I believe Mr. McGuinness has attended all meetings to date.

R. McGuinness – We still have the community process. On June 23<sup>rd</sup> Massport and the BRA presented to the East Boston Greenway Counsel a number of alternatives for the greenway extension. There is a June 30<sup>th</sup> letter from the Council expressing supporting an at-grade airport link. The Mayor also appointed an advisory group to guide the BRA and Massport from preliminary to final design. There will be meetings every other Tuesday and the advisory group has already walked the route. We will be meeting up until mid November and should have a final design in the spring.

V. Li – Who is on the advisory group?

R. McGuinness – Representatives from Air Inc., East Boston Greenway Council, abutters and some residents, as well as members of the Chelsea Creek Action Group.

V. Li – How long will it take to complete the Greenbus Depot?

L. Richards – It is intended to be able to accept buses by May of 2012.

V. Li – Will the mitigation be in place by then?

L. Richards – The mutual goal is to have the corridor open by 2013. We need to make sure the corridor can coexist with the bus routes. There are some tight spaces on the site.

V. Li – When in 2013?

L. Richards – The goal would be for the spring or summer of 2013; if it can be done in coordination with the bus limo pool transfer.

C. Button – Anyone in the audience with a comment?

Gail Miller (Air Inc.) – We would like to thank the Commission for pushing this matter forward, as well as the Mayor and the BRA. We have been working for this for a very long time. There have been two advisory group meetings and we felt we didn't have a lot of input, but we understand the constraints moving forward. There has been good dialogue and coordination, but we would like more planning input. We still feel nervous as to what exactly is

happening. We are comfortable going forward that this is all to the communities benefit. I believe at the last meeting the community made suggestions to preserve waterfront access. So, any potential we can realize to capture the waterfront we would like to have that part of the design. Our first desire was for a Harborwalk and we realize we cannot get there, however, we would like to make the most of point access to the waterfront with expansive views of the Wood Isle Marsh. The strongest point of view from the community is waterfront access and reclaiming what was there before. This may be our last opportunity for gaining a greater point of access.

V. Li – Is the DCR involved?

R. McGuinness – The DCR is not on the committee. The next meeting is next Tuesday and we are looking at landscape design and making sure areas are easy to maintain and salt tolerant. Various landscape architects are reviewing the plan and making design suggestions. The next piece, the narrow gauge right-of-way which is a link between the overlook and Constitution Beach; we are going to meet with the MBTA, DCR, DOT and Massport to talk about the link.

S. Kunian – I think I can say on behalf of the Conservation Commission that we have a great deal of confidence in Mr. McGuinness' dealing with the public and receptivity to the community's concerns, and hearing of the success of the Bremen Street Park that there be efforts to replicate open space of that quality.

C. Button – I would like to suggest we have another update in 6 months in April.

V. Li – Could I suggest we meet in January given there are a number of meetings and a lot happening at this time.

C. Button – Yes, let's plan on a January meeting then.

**6:45 PM Request for Certificate of Compliance for Order of Conditions DEP File No. 006-1271 from the Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation for the installation of a temporary float dock at Georges Island involving the demolition of portions of existing timber piers, removal of timber pile clusters, construction of a new timber deck and installation of steel mooring piles, Boston Harbor.**

Staff noted that a completed Request for Certificate of Compliance was submitted with an engineer's attestation that the project area is stable and the work complete. One caveat noted is the project was framed as temporary, where the float dock from Lovejoy Wharf was to be returned upon installation of a yet to be permitted permanent dock structure at Georges Island. The DCR now would like to maintain the Lovejoy dock in place for the foreseeable future. The DCR is planning on filing a new Notice of Intent to address the status of the Lovejoy dock and additional work at Georges Island. I would recommend deferring approval of the Certificate of Compliance until the commission has reviewed the new NOI.

V. Li – It does not appear they have met the conditions of the Order which allowed for use of the Lovejoy dock only for this season. They have not complied with the Order. The Commission only granted them an eighteen month permit due to the temporary use of the dock so this is more a matter of compliance with the permit which must be addressed before the commission considers a certification of compliance. I have concerns the DCR is changing what was proposed and this action has consequences for harbor water transportation. I would like the DCR to come in to address this matter.

S. Kunian – I vote we continue the matter and have the DCR in to discuss compliance.

V. Li – Second the motion.

- **Motion made by S. Kunian and seconded by V. Li to continue review of the Certificate of Compliance (voted 5/0/0)**
- **Motion made by V. Li and seconded by S. Kunian to approve of the June 1, 2011 meeting minutes as amended (voted 5/0/0).**