

Meeting Minutes

Project:	1791 Massachusetts Avenue	Project No.:	17.011
Meeting:	Public Community Meeting	Date:	September 12, 2017
Present:	Jason Korb, Capstone Communities (CC) Sean Hope, Esq., Hope Real Estate (HRE) Jason Forney, AIA Bruner/Cott & Associates (BCA) Greg Russell, AIA, (BCA) Karno Widjaja, (BCA) Immediate abutters & members of the neighborhood community (approx. 50 people)		

This meeting was held to present the development team's initial design concepts for the site and to gain input from the neighborhood and community at-large. The following are the notes recorded during the meeting.

1. Introduction

- a. Developers: joint venture between Capstone Communities LLC (www.capstonecommunities.com) and Hope Real Estate Enterprises LLC

2. Presentation

- a. Proposal includes 100% affordable rental housing at 1791 Mass Ave and 1 & 2 Frost Terrace;
- b. BCA introduced goals and objectives for the project:
 - i. High quality affordable apartment community – family friendly units;
 - ii. Be a good urban neighbor – sense of place along Mass Ave, respond to density & materials;
 - iii. Creative reuse & high-quality stewardship of historic resources – neighboring historic buildings;
 - iv. Preserving connection for open space – keeping existing on-site mature trees;
 - v. Sustainable design – promotion of a healthy environment.
- c. BCA elaborated on design proposal:
 - i. Retaining all 3 existing historic houses
 - Rear houses at 1 and 2 Frost Terrace will be preserved and new shed dormers will be added (4 apartments will be constructed in each house);
 - Non-contributing additions to 1791 house will be removed and the historic house will be moved toward Mass Ave and the Lunder Arts Center to restore the site historic positioning along the Avenue (see historic photo in the presentation) (4 apartments will be constructed in the 1791 Mass Ave house).
 - ii. Two new buildings will be constructed:
 - New 4-5 story addition (45'-55' depending on portion, with higher portion towards the Lunder Center) will be attached to the rear of the existing 1791 Mass Ave house (27 apartments), which will be served by an elevator;
 - New 3 story building (35') will be constructed between the 1 and 2 Frost Terrace houses to form a "U" at the rear (4 apartments).
 - iii. No parking is proposed on the site.

- iv. Sustainable design strategies will include LEED certification, installation of solar panels, stormwater management with permeable paving, preserving the site's mature trees, and energy efficient equipment.
- v. Materials will be selected to match the original materials on the houses. The new structures will be modern but will be subtler and respect the historic houses and the adjacent buildings.

3. Discussion with Audience

Questions and comments from the audience include ("c" = question/comment, "a" = developer/design team's response):

Exterior

- c. *Are the proposed rear and side setbacks from the property line, the existing fencing, or to neighboring buildings?*
 - a. The setbacks are from the property lines.
- c. *Asked to review the dialogue between the proposed design and the existing building, appeared to have too much variation and differential.*
 - a. Comment noted and will work on connecting warmth and human scale of materials.
- c. *Will the location of the building's proposed entrance generate noise that will disturb neighbors?*
 - a. The building's entrance is toward the middle of the site and it is not believed that the entrance will create any extraordinary noise since residents tend to not congregate at the entryway.
- c. *Will the existing mature trees on the site, including but not limited to the Chestnut tree on the property line between the Newport Road condominiums and the five-story tree between 1 and 2 Frost Terrace, be retained?*
 - a. The mature trees on the site will be retained as part of the proposal. The development team has hired a landscape architect and will be retaining an arborist to provide specifications to ensure the trees are not damaged during construction and to specify and ongoing operations and maintenance.



Five-story tree between 1 and 2 Frost Terrace



Chestnut tree on property line

- c. *Will the HVAC equipment be visible and how loud will they be? Can you provide a photograph of a similar development?*
- a. The HVAC system will be of residential scale and sized much smaller than a typical commercial building and in general will not be visible from Mass Ave. The HVAC system will most likely be an electric mini-split system that will include individual small compressors for each apartment on the rooftop of the 4-5 story addition and on the ground adjacent to the rear houses. The dimensions of the compressors will be approximately 32”H x 34”W x 13”D and will sit on top of an approximately 18” high platform. There will also be one or two larger rooftop HVAC units on the 4-5 story addition, approximately 55”H x 70”W x 44”D. The individual compressors are rated at approximately 50dbs when operating, which is the equivalent of a residential refrigerator’s noise. An acoustical consultant will be a member of the development team and will ensure adherence to the building code and the City of Cambridge’s noise ordinance: <https://www.cambridgema.gov/Services/noiseordinanceinformation>

At Port Landing (131 Harvard Street, Cambridge), the HVAC equipment (including dunnage) had a height of approximately 5’ above the main roof surface and the elevator head house roof had a height of approximately 5’ above the main roof surface with a fan above it. See photos of 5’-11” tall person with rooftop equipment.



Rather than adding a screening system which would increase the overall appearance of mass of the building, the intent is to locate the units such that they are not visible from the ground. This system was used at Port Landing and we encourage you to visit the site and rooftop. See below photo of Port Landing rooftop with solar panels and rooftop equipment.



- c. *A community member requested that the windows in the new building be large and provide for fenestration similar to those at Newport Road. How much area of the building's exterior will be windows?*
 - a. Noted by the development team. There will be one or two windows per bedroom/common space, typically 35-40% of the wall area will be glazing (windows) in residential buildings.

- c. *Will the development proposal include garden plots for residents on the roof or ground levels?*
 - a. Roof garden plots are not feasible due to commitments to our abutters to not have active roof space and due to the complexity of making the roof accessible to all residents. The development team will explore adding garden plots on the ground level and assisting with residents to grow their own food.

- c. *Electrical transformers in new developments in Porter Square have been placed in conspicuous locations and have reduced visible green space and are unattractive.*
 - a. The development team will be retaining a utility consultant to work with Eversource in advance of construction to work with them to locate the transformer in an inconspicuous location. Ultimately Eversource will have sole and final discretion over the transformer's location.

- c. *A community member asked if the 1791 historic house and rear addition could move closer to the Lunder Arts Center in the proposal.*
 - a. If the 1791 historic house moves closer to the Lunder Center then the house will impede the historic site lines of the church's corner boards. Per the building code, the 4-5 story new addition could move 1'-2' closer to the Lunder Center, but then Lesley University may not be able to have vehicular service access to the Lunder Center.

- c. *A resident of Newport Road condominiums expressed concern that the existing 1791 house may be dwarfed by the proposed design and issue of scale.*
 - a. The design team will continue to work on issues of scale and connection to the historic house.

Transportation

- c. *The proposal includes no onsite parking, will tenants have cars and where will they park? Would you be open to working with Lesley University to rent spaces in its lots?*
 - a. We estimate that our residents will have approximately 20 vehicles. No onsite parking is proposed for the following reasons:
 - i. Adding at-grade parking to the site will significantly reduce the number of apartments that can be constructed on the site since the parking spaces would occupy the areas currently slated for apartments;
 - ii. Adding below-grade parking would (1) be very inefficient (the ramp and drive aisles would take up significant space leaving reduced room for parking spaces), (2) it would be aesthetically unappealing since the ramp and garage door would be facing onto Mass Ave, and (3) it is uneconomical (garage parking spaces range in cost between \$100,000 - \$150,000 per parking space, depending on conditions).

We are proposing traffic demand measures (TDM) that may include subsidizing MBTA passes, Hubway memberships, and Zipcar memberships; providing covered and accessible bike parking; providing live information on transit services on a screen in the lobby; matching residents who desire to carpool with other residents; and, providing at move-in information to all residents on all public transportation options within a short distance of the site.

The development team is interested in meeting with Lesley to rent spots in its lots and will follow-up with Lesley. A community member also noted that there is ample on-street parking across Massachusetts Avenue.

- c. *Will bicycle parking be provided?*
- a. Covered and accessible bike parking will be provided, the locations of which are being finalized.

Interior

- c. *Will an elevator be provided?*
- a. One elevator will be provided in the 4-5 story addition that will serve all the apartments in the addition along with apartments in the 1791 house (a total of 31 apartments). The 12 apartments in the rear historic houses and rear new building will not contain an elevator.

Management and Ownership

- c. *How are residents selected? Do current Cambridge residents have any priority? Is it possible to give displaced Cambridge residents any priority?*
- a. If approved by the City and state, current Cambridge residents and certain others will have priority to apply to 70% of the apartments.

Resident screening will follow all federal and state fair housing laws in addition to the requirements specified by the Cambridge Community Development Department and the Massachusetts Department of Housing and Community Development. Prior to construction completion, the lottery application period, which is at least 60 days, will be opened so that applicants can submit his or her application to live in the community. Applications will be available online, in the Community Development office, in the libraries, by mail via phone and email requests, and at other locations throughout the City. The lottery application period will also be advertised in various publications, both English speaking and non-English speaking. There will also be at least one meeting run by Trinity Management Company, the development's third-party property manager, that will provide information on the development. Every applicant will receive a letter with a number in the mail. After the application period closes a public lottery will be held and a representative from Trinity will pick each number, which will determine an applicant's place on the waitlist. After the lottery, the first group of applicants will be screened by Trinity to ensure they income qualify and meet the development's credit and criminal background requirements. Applicants who apply after the lottery will be placed at the end the waitlist. For more information on resident selection visit: <http://www.mass.gov/hed/docs/dhcd/hd/fair/afhmp.pdf>

- c. *What are the maximum adjusted gross incomes that a resident can earn in order to qualify to live in the community's apartments?*
- a. Affordable housing typically includes apartments that limit household income to at or below 30%, 50% and 60% of the area median income (AMI). For 2017, the adjust gross income limits in Cambridge for a family of four are \$31,020, \$51,700, and \$62,040 respectively. For 2017, three-bedroom monthly rents (including all utilities) would be \$806, \$1,344 and \$1,613 respectively, and two-bedroom monthly rents would be and \$698, \$1,163, and \$1,396, respectively.
- c. *Who will manage the community once it opens and for how long will you own the building?*
- a. Capstone and Hope will be hiring a professional property management company that specializes in multi-family affordable housing. Capstone and Hope recently opened the 100% affordable Port Landing apartment community in The Port (Cambridge). Port Landing is currently managed by Trinity Management Company, a highly respected management company that currently manages over 6,000 market rate and affordable apartments and over 538,500 square feet of commercial space. Under the various affordable housing subsidy programs, Capstone and Hope are required to own 1791 Mass Ave for a period of no less than 10-15 years after the development is completed. This long-term ownership requirement ensures that we have a vested interest in constructing a high quality and sustainable apartment community.

Permitting and Proposed Schedule

- c. *What is the proposed zoning approval process?*
- a. The development team plans to submit a comprehensive permit application to the Cambridge Board of Zoning Appeals (BZA). A comprehensive permit is also commonly known as a Chapter 40B permit. A

comprehensive permit is only available to proposed developments that include at least 20-25% affordable units and allows the proposed development to apply for all local permits through the BZA. The City of Cambridge has met its obligations under Chapter 40B, so in order for the development to apply for a comprehensive permit, the BZA will need to accept the application. Many recent affordable housing developments in Cambridge have been permitted through the comprehensive permit process.

- c. *What is the estimated timeline for the development?*
- a. The development team plans to submit a comprehensive permit application to the BZA and site eligibility letter to the Massachusetts Department of Housing and Community Development (required in order to open a comprehensive permit hearing) in early October 2017. We anticipate the first public BZA hearing will occur in late November. If the BZA approves the development, then the development team will apply for state financing from the Department of Housing and Community Development in the winter/spring 2018 funding round. If the development is awarded funding in the winter/spring 2018 funding round, the construction could start in early 2019 and last approximately 16 months.
- c. *When are future opportunities to hear more about the development proposal and provide input?*
- a. The development team will be presenting the proposal at the next Agassiz Neighborhood Council meeting on October 10 at 7:30pm at Maud Morgan Arts, second floor 2D studio at the rear of the building, 20A Sacramento Street. In addition, the development team will be presenting on October 19 at 7pm at the Porter Square Neighborhood Association meeting. The public will also have an opportunity to comment on the proposal if and when the BZA holds a public hearing.

Miscellaneous

- c. *The rendering appears deceptive in that the new five story building looks smaller than the four-story Newport Road condominiums and Church.*
- a. It was explained that the new addition is set back from Mass Ave 60', while the Newport Road condominiums have no setbacks from Mass Ave and therefore the new addition would look smaller due to proximity. The rendering was generated by a computer and is accurate. Agreed to provide renderings from different angles.
- c. *Matt Brownell from Lesley University commented on liking the design proposal and that Lesley supports the proposal.*
- a. Noted by the development team.
- c. *A resident of Newport Road condominiums asked about how the development team derived the proposed number of apartments.*
- a. The development team balanced financial considerations and based the proposed density and Floor to Area Ratio (FAR) on adjacent properties, including the Newport Road condominiums to the south (45'), Lesley University to the north (55'), and 1-7 Arlington Street condominiums to the northwest (60'). The 1791 Mass Ave proposal is similar in density and scale to these neighboring properties.
- c. *The proposal is family oriented (74% two and three-bedroom apartments); however, the proposal does not include outdoor play areas. Where will children play?*
- a. Due to the site's massing and the need to provide quality affordable family housing (two and three-bedroom apartments), the site does not have enough room to provide for a usable outdoor play area. An indoor play area with interactive programming for various ages is included in the proposal. In addition, there are a number of parks and outdoor playgrounds within walking distance of 1791 Mass Ave, including:
 - i. Alden Play Area (0.4 miles/8 minutes)
 - ii. Corcoran Playground (0.6 miles/11 minutes)
 - iii. Conway Park (0.7 miles/15 minutes)