

Waterfront Development Advisory Committee
Meeting Minutes
May 18, 2006

Member Present: Frank Torr, Steve Brewer, Norm Fracassa, Joyce El Kouarti, Wendy Scribner, Dean Trefethen, Pete Hamblett, Jack Mettee, Earle Goodwin, Art Corte, Brian Gottlub, Jim Schulte, Dave Bamford

Others: Jack Buckley, Beth Thompson, Steve Stancel, Steve Bird, Mike Joyal, Scott Myers, Barry Abramson, Mark Dickinson, Taryn Warren, Ed Shaw, Gar Morse, Gordon Leedy, John Sheskey, and Chris Wyskiel

The meeting was called to order at 5:30 pm

1. EXECUTIVE SESSION

Steve Brewer made the motion to go into executive session per RSA 91-A: 3 II (d). Acquisition, Sale or Lease of Property.

Art Corte seconded the motion.

Vote **U/A** by roll call vote

Joyce El Kouarti made the motion to suppress the minutes

Steve Brewer seconded the motion.

Vote **U/A** by roll call vote.

Steve Brewer made the motion to come out of non-public session.

Frank Torr seconded the motion.

Vote **U/A** by roll call vote.

2. PUBLIC SESSION

1) Approval of the Minutes of March 21, 2006

The minutes were not acted on.

2) Presentation by Dickinson Development of Development Proposal for the waterfront followed by Committee questions

Jack Mettee welcomed Dickinson Development and their team and invited them to make their presentation and tell the committee what has changed since the last meeting.

Mark Dickinson introduced his team. He explained that since the last meeting they have fine tuned the proposal as it concerned the architecture, engineering, and planning elements.

John Sheskey, the architect, felt that this site will be a milestone for the community. There is synergy between the residential and retail and the river enhances this. The retail is placed in close proximity to the vehicular bridge to make it easy for people to get to the site from the downtown. It should be easy to get to and visible. They envision moving the pedestrian bridge so that it would be at the end of Young Street. A hotel does not need a strong connection with the retail but it does need easy access.

Mike Joyal and Scott Myers left the meeting.

The site is designed with an urban edge with the road near the river. This energizes the edge of the river. The residential units along the river would be 4 stories with some parking under. The parking would be 5' underground. The result of this would be that from the outside it would appear to be a high foundation. The rear windows would look over a garden or park like area.

The edge of the river would be cleaned up and treated with perhaps with rip rap and a marina would go on this side of the river, although it would be scaled back from their original proposal.

They would like to move some soil around in the area next to the 5 acre parcel to make it easier to develop.

Gordon Leedy, from VHB, is a landscape architect and planner. He explained that the site had some challenges in the drainage and elevations. Storm water treatment will be an issue. The previous uses of the property are a concern. As there is staff in place that is very knowledgeable about the property, they will help with the environmentally sensitive areas. The water's edge is not entirely stable. They see signs of active erosion which necessitate the reworking of the bank. They would use lower maintenance, native material as stabilizers. They would like to replicate the lighting that already exists on the other areas of Henry Law Park.

They asked if the City would be willing to advocate for relief from the Shoreland Protection Act. This was an industrial area and the relief would give more flexibility in the ultimate design.

Mark Dickinson said that he is truly committed to the commercial development area. They have met with several brokers in the area and have selected CB-Richard Ellis (CBRE) to do their commercial sales and leasing. CBRE has done several successful restaurants and they are excited about this site. Each phase of the project gets people excited about the following stages. Success breeds success.

Dean Trefethen left the meeting.

He felt that residential above the retail doesn't necessarily work on this site.

The riverwalk would be between 40" and 120" wide along the length of the river.

Mark Dickinson said that he is taking the extension of the through road to Maglaras Park off the table.

Jack Mettee thanked Dickinson Development for a fabulous presentation. The committee was invited to ask question and relate their concerns.

Steve Brewer asked if it were feasible to put a hotel in the location where the large residential units were shown. Mark Dickinson said this would not work. The hotel is the hardest part of the entire project. It is not desirable to move the hotel further away from the entrance to the site.

Steve Brewer also wanted to know if the big building could be designed with more flexibility so that perhaps some retail would eventually go in there. Mark Dickinson was amenable to looking at that option.

Wendy Scribner wanted to know where the public plaza was and questioned the high end homes near the river. Would these homes invite people down to the river? What is the public access to the water itself? Mark Dickinson said that they would maintain the public spaces and there would be public slips for the public to get down to the water. He would offer unfettered access in the daytime.

He had a discussion about defensible space, what it is and how it relates to his plan.

Brian Gottlob felt that the role of the CWDAC was to maximize public benefits – monetary as well as others. Sometimes this plan does not maximize value. Could Dickinson minimize the private benefits and maximize the public?

Frank Torr wanted to know what they intend to do with the non-developable land. Mark Dickinson explained that there are a lot of wetlands and environmentally challenged areas near the dredge cell. Quite frankly they did not know what to do with it. He did say that the elevated portion behind Paul Street would be a future residential site.

Frank Torr also asked if they had considered working with the private owner of the 5-acre parcel. Dickinson has not approached the owner yet. Their project stands alone. Once they get control of the land they will involve that property owner. Dickinson realizes that there is some potential historic information that may make that a difficult site to develop as far as permitting with the state as was recently experienced by Liberty Mutual.

Norm Fracassa wanted to see vibrancy and energy in the site and the synergy between the residential and the commercial areas. What are visitors and tourists going to experience? What will there be going on at night?

Dave Bamford was very impressed but he is still concerned with the parking. Parking lots are not beautiful and he is concerned with having them along the river. He'd also like to see fewer units with larger square footage in some of them. Dickinson was willing to look at that aspect and would tweak that aspect one they got control of the site.

Steve Stancel commented about public meeting space and that it could be inside space as well as outside. He noted that lack of conference and meeting space in Dover. Dickinson said that would be part of the hotel part of the project.

Art Corte said that this proposal has a very linear feel to it and the walkway goes to nowhere. He is looking for a plaza where people could stop for coffee and shop. Dickinson will consider having such a plaza. Art Corte also wanted to know if there would be public restrooms. Also what would happen to the big granite retaining wall that is along the river as this is part of Dover's heritage? Dickinson intends to keep it.

Jack Mettee summarized that some of the committee would like to leave the site as a park and others would like to see maximum development. We need to strike a balance. He asked if Dickinson would be willing to do a public outreach campaign to discuss the decided direction the site would take. Dickinson agreed to do this once they had a contract. He recognized that the devil is in the detail and that there is still a lot of work ahead of everyone until we get to the point of having a contract.

Barry Abramson asked of the 40' – 120' of the waterfront park, how much of that is the slope that goes to the water?

Regarding night time parking, Dickinson would only limit parking along the river but not access. If someone wanted to be walking along the river, no one would stop them.

When asked what type of retailers they envision, they see the upper levels with lawyers and doctors and the first floor would have maybe some boutiques, insurance companies, art galleries, perhaps a Curves type operation, and other destination retailers.

Norm Fracassa asked about public art.

Barry Abramson said we need to be more comfortable with the cost of environmental remediation.

Dickinson also felt he needs more information on the cost and other details of the odor remediation

Pete Hamblett and Joyce El Kouarti left the meeting.

Frank Torr made the motion to go back into non-public session per RSA RSA 91-A: 3 II (d). Acquisition, Sale or Lease of Property.

Jim Schulte seconded the motion.

Vote **U/A** by roll call vote.

Frank Torr made the motion to suppress the minutes of this non-public session.

Art Corte seconded the motion.

Vote **U/A** by roll call vote.

Frank Torr made the motion to come out of the non-public session

Art Corte seconded the motion.

Vote **U/A** by roll call vote.

Steve Brewer made the motion to adjourn.

Norm Fracassa seconded the motion.

Vote **U/A**

The meeting was adjourned at 10:05 pm

