

Harbor Place Transportation Study Work Group

Minutes of the Meeting of February 15, 2018. The meeting took place in the training room of the Public Safety Facility at 4 Fairgrounds Road, Nantucket MA 02554. Workgroup Members Present: Dawn Hill Holdgate, James R. Kelly, Linda Williams, Barry Rector, Paula Leary, Andrew Vorce, Andy Hill (DESMAN), Norm Goldman (DESMAN) (phone), John Twohig (New England Development), Dave Fredericks (Owners Group).

Staff present: Mike Burns (Planning), Leslie Snell (Planning), Greg O'Brien (Owners Group), Bill Fair, (DESMAN), Janet Schulte (Town's Project Representative). Zaina Afandi, DESMAN Intern

Also attending: Cormac Collier, Rick Atherton, Matt Fee

CALL TO ORDER: Mr. Kelly called the meeting to order at 10:33 a.m. He reviewed the agenda with the Work Group members. He explained that the goal for this meeting is to determine the number of spaces to include in the design for the facility. The focus of today's meeting is on the technical memorandum prepared by Andy Hill, DESMAN (attached to these minutes). One item will be added by the Board of Selectmen – to evaluate the option of no structure at all.

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES FROM DECEMBER 19, 2017 MEETING The minutes of the meeting of December 19, 2017 were unanimously approved.

ANNOUNCEMENTS Ms. Schulte, on behalf of Town Manager Libby Gibson, announced that the name of this group has been changed to "Harbor Place Transportation Study Work Group" with the focus to facilitate the job of evaluating the feasibility study and helping to formulate recommendations on viability and design.

DISCUSSION OF POINTS IN DESMAN TECHNICAL MEMORANDUM (FEBRUARY 8, 2018)

Mike Burns, Transportation Planner, presented a forecast on the parking needs downtown. The current supply is 1,000 spaces and the need is approximately 1,400. Mr. Fredericks asked if the figures related to the summer peak season. Mr. Burns affirmed that and noted that the calculations were done in August, 2009. He explained the methodology in which the number was determined. Mr. Hill, DESMAN, further explained the methodology behind the calculation including clarification on the 15% and 85% figures used to help determine the number of parking spaces needed in a parking garage. The ratios were developed by empirical observations and scientific processes to render a projection of need.

Ms. Hill Holdgate asked if the current grocery store parking lot and the valet services were included in Mr. Burns' calculations. Mr. Burns responded that it did not include either. Mr. Hill indicated that he could provide a statistic of the use of the valet service. The calculation does include the municipal parking lot on Washington Street. Mr. Hill commented that parking demand is elastic, while supply is concrete. The supply design needs to cover most but not every possible condition.

Mr. Rector arrived at 10:46 a.m.

Mr. Fee asked Mr. Hill if the 110% capacity determined by the consultants includes the 15% calculation. Mr. Hill noted that the 15% is an add-on on top of the 110% figure. Mr. Atherton suggested that the source of the numbers presented on Mr. Burns chart be included in future presentations.

Several members noted that parking is difficult downtown at this time of year.

Ms. Hill Holdgate expressed concern about using the average to determine parking need because of the disparity in the two "spaces needed" numbers: 77 and 671. She also felt the need to include the valet numbers. Mr. Frederick noted that the valet park was an experiment to see how much people valued parking. Ms. Hill Holdgate clarified that she did not mean valet parking would remain on the National Grid site.

Mr. Fredericks reported that for the number of spaces in the grocery store lot, he counted 119 spaces, although others used the number 150.

Ms. Hill Holdgate referred to a BOS Strategic Planning discussion earlier in the week that included a discussion of shuttles and expanded satellite parking.

Mr. Hill noted that we need to come at the design process from two approaches: 1) What do we need? and 2) What can be provided? He indicated that we need to get the process of "what can be provided" moving. The first question is how much space is available? He noted that when he first began this work there were assumptions about the amount of space available. Those assumptions were challenged at the December 19th meeting. DESMAN has looked at re-orienting the facility, but Chapter 91 requirements limit that approach. He also noted the issue of the historic building on the site. Once the envelope is determined, the design work can begin.

Mr. Hill noted several constraints on the site. National Grid needs to maintain access to the site because of infrastructure on site. A roadway could be on the site, but not a structure. There are concerns about the existing building and its historic nature. Prior studies showed that any

movement of the intermodal facility to the north could impact the developers' larger plan. As a result, the site is limited to 62 feet of width. Speed ramps means giving up additional parking spaces on those ramps. The minimum length is 160 feet. DESMAN can get a design on the site with the historic building with a corkscrew ramp. If it is all sloped, it will not be the most comfortable place to park in. The most constricted design could achieve 55 cars per floor plate. Another consideration is that the historic building would need to be buttressed so it wasn't harmed during construction.

If the building can be re-located, the plan would allow 92 spaces per floor plate because it would allow parking on the turns.

The third option, but potentially disturbing the development to the north, allows 106 vehicles per floor plate with only one ramp per side. This is an easier design for those parking in the facility.

The group discussed the need to get clarity from the owners about whether relocating the facility to the north would be allowed. And, National Grid will need to meet with the Historic District Commission to determine if the brick building could be moved. Mr. Fredericks will discuss with National Grid. For initial design purposes, it should be assumed that National Grid will allow the relocation of the brick building. Mr. Twohig noted that there was a need to know the desired number of parking spaces before they would return to the owners to inquire about the impact on the development. He asked Mr. Hill to identify all known constraints at this point.

Mr. Hill cited Chapter 91 limitation on an east-west orientation, limitations on moving to the South because of National Grid's need to maintain its infrastructure, and the prior master designs for the development that show proposed buildings to the north. Mr. Hill affirmed Mr. Twohig's questions that an alternative footprint to the north for the facility would accommodate all the other elements desired in the intermodal transportation facility.

The designers also need a determination on the possible height of the building. For the purposes of the design work, the group determined that a maximum height of 40 feet should be used. There could be some parts of the structure that are over 40 feet such as stair wells and elevator shafts.

Mr. Rector noted that the current roadway system in the area needs to be re-tuned. Mr. Vorce encouraged the group to think beyond a grid-like street system for the area. The topic will be discussed by the Planning Department.

A discussion regarding retail space on the ground level was raised. Group members indicated that the suggested retail space was not "commercial retail space" but smaller places for carts and pop-up shops to incubate new businesses and services for visitors.

Mr. Hill explained the basic process for designing the facility. The designers will start with a standard parking garage design then work backwards to include other amenities and determine the cost of those amenities in terms of lost spaces. He noted that it will be a challenge to make “need” align with what can be “provided.”

The primary design client is the Town of Nantucket. The work group needs to establish a hierarchy of amenities to determine if the facility will be an Intermodal Transportation Center with parking (designed to maximize parking after addressing all other intermodal requirements) or, is it a parking facility with Intermodal Transportation assets – then the firm will design to the maximum parking number.

NRTA has indicated that it does not want to have the buses running underneath the facility. The preference is to queue buses in a lane outside the facility to enhance efficient operations. The relocation of dedicated spaces around downtown for buses, taxis, and tour vans would free up around two dozen spaces.

A consensus was reached that the designers should start with designing a parking facility with intermodal assets. Ms. Hill Holdgate agreed, but suggested that the process would end up with an Intermodal Center that included parking. Mr. Hill explained that this will be an iterative process moving forward.

The group agreed to abandon the suggestion of accommodating oversized vehicles in the garage and that space in a surface lot should be identified for them. The additional cost and loss of parking spaces to allow this accommodation is cost prohibitive.

The group agree to abandon the suggestion to incorporate an Automated Transport System. They are generally used in private parking garages, not public ones.

The group discussed the idea of designing the space so that it could have other uses such as receptions or small events. The designers noted issues that would result with expansion joints, a broom finish on the floor, and public bathrooms. Mr. Rector suggested that for the initial stages of the design process, the prospect of including event space should be dropped now.

Mr. Kelly repeated a report he gave at the Board of Selectmen’s meeting the previous evening. A response to that report requested that DESMAN also produce a design for the site that did not have a structure, but would have some type of surface program – parking lot, or valet parking. DESMAN agreed to provide that information.

Linda Williams joined the meeting at 12:00 pm.

Mr. Hill summarized the determinations made at the meeting. Mr. Twohig will approach the owners and take a measure of the question of a more northerly footprint and the impact it would have on the overall proposed development. The current assumption is to use option 2 for design purposes. If a larger option becomes available, street changes will be examined. There is a hard stop at 40 feet for building height. DESMAN will do a supply/demand analysis to provide a number of parking spaces that is reasonable. The current target is 233 spaces.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Matt Fee stated that he was glad that DESMAN's work included a cost-benefit analysis and inquired if that work would include information about parking charges. Mr. Hill noted that would come later and would be tied to debt service and operating expenses of the facility.

Mr. Fee noted that the current parking deficiency numbers are based on not charging for street parking and no enforcement outside the peak season. He asked what will no paid parking do to demand numbers. Mr. Hill indicated that that type of analysis was outside the scope of the current project. However, unofficially, as a parking professional he explained that changing mode use through paid parking is effective when people have access to other transportation choices. He did not think that paid parking downtown would limit parking downtown in August. Mr. Fee agreed and stated the revenue from paid parking could allow for developing other modes of transportation.

Mr. Atherton noted that presenting this project as an Intermodal Transportation Center is critical to getting broad community support.

The next meeting of the Harbor Place Transportation Study Group is scheduled for Thursday, March 22nd at 10:30 a.m.

ADJOURNMENT: The meeting adjourned at 12:11 p.m.