



STONYBROOK NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION

jamaica plain, massachusetts

September 27, 2011

Stonybrook Neighborhood Association
Washington/Burnett/McBride Street Subcommittee
C/O 31 Plainfield St.
Jamaica Plain, MA 02130

Mr. Harry R. Collings
The Exclusive Real Estate Company
Ten Derne Street
Boston, MA 02114

RE: September 20, 2011 Meeting Follow-up

Dear Harry -

Thank you again for assembling the team to meet last Tuesday. It was a productive meeting and we appreciate your openness to collaboration with the community on a development that has many potential benefits for all involved.

We are writing as a follow up to the meeting, to reiterate key points discussed, clarify a few points and share more of the SNA neighborhood survey results.

- 1) **Residential Configuration:** As depicted on our suggested site plan, the neighborhood stands firmly behind additional housing along Burnett Street North. And as suggested, exchanging the locations of the two three-families and the apartment building is a better configuration of building massing and greatly improves the green/landscaped buffer.
- 2) **MBTA Parcel Usage (Bike/Walking Path and Green Space):** Use of the MBTA parcel along the tracks for a bike/walk path will improve pedestrian and bicycle circulation and provide additional green space. A path supports the mixed-use intent of the project and is critical to the overall value and success of the project.
- 3) **Storage Facility Changes:** The reorientation of the storage building so that its length runs East-West allows for a less abrupt transition from the residential component to the commercial component as well as a multitude of other benefits mentioned and depicted on our site plan.
- 4) **Residential Over Retail Mixed-Use Building On Washington/McBride:** Include residential units in the retail component to create a true mixed-use development. Additional local residents and customers will make for a lively street with an active and stronger pedestrian environment, and a more sustainable commercial base.

- 5) **Automobile Parking:** The neighborhood strongly supports the parking ratio of 1 space per residential unit, but cannot support the commercial parking ratio proposed in your PNF. We believe that greater value for all parties can be realized, as depicted in our site plan, by leveraging all transportation resources in the area and reducing the proposed automobile parking footprint. Remove all parking visible from Washington Street to allow for continuous development frontage and park space. Additional 2-hour on-street parking on Washington and McBride, exclusive to retail, would offset a smaller parking lot. We will think through with you automobile parking for residential units in the mixed-use retail segment.
- 6) **Total Residential Units and Density:** As indicated above, the neighborhood wants residential units included in a mixed-use retail development and additional residential units along North Burnett St. However, in order to keep the neighborhood feel, an associated reduction in the total number of units in the apartment building may be warranted.
- 7) **Signalized Intersection:** A signalized intersection for both automobiles and pedestrians at South Burnett and Washington Streets is now favored by the community as a more elegant solution to easing traffic on Burnett St., rather than the previously discussed parking lot cut-through.
- 8) **Survey Results:** Our survey asked if a storage facility was an acceptable use of the parcel. While some are opposed to a storage facility outright, others indicate that a storage facility may be a conditionally acceptable trade-off in exchange for a quality residential, retail and office development. Please see the attachment for some comments reflecting that sentiment.

In summary, the neighborhood encourages your team to think urban. Build a development with a creative, sustainable eye toward the future; with a design that makes the greatest use of existing transportation resources; and that maximizes the value for existing and future residents of the community.

The neighborhood would like to move beyond the conceptual aspects of the proposal into a review of greater detail such as exterior appearances, surface materials, lighting and ancillary improvements. When appropriate we desire another meeting to provide feedback on those design details.

Sincerely,

Carl Lowenberg
Co-Chair, Stonybrook Neighborhood Association

cc: City Councilor Matt O'Malley
State Representative Liz Malia
John Fitzgerald, BRA Project Manager

SNA Survey Results Selected Storage Facility Comments

If it is surrounded by the types of retail shops that would benefit the neighborhood [...] and artfully designed pedestrian walks to enhance the area along Washington Street.

I answer yes with hesitation. We do not need a cookie cutter box of a building with no character. We do not need a dead space. With that said, the other parts of the development will hopefully make the area lively.

A storage facility is not ideal, but if it includes commercial space and something that will promote a positive active community, I'm OK with that.

Very very very reluctantly I have said yes given the current distress to the neighborhood. Nevertheless, I appreciate all the community work so far and [...] that you do all you can to get the best architecture design and greenery you can. Any way to put more underground parking for the retail? That would accommodate some of the heavier uses (such as grocery, movies, etc.) that you have listed. Yes, expensive but this could be price of the [trade-off].

But if we do have to have one in order to get the rest of the development, I would at least like to push for a) hidden, off-street parking and b) no video/surveillance cameras facing the street.

Only if the rest of the project offers ample benefits to the neighborhood and community

IF IF IF they come up with an outstanding design for the building (so far, NOT), come up with a sufficient way to screen/interestingly design the building wall that faces the neighborhood (so far, NOT), if they add lots of green space, control the hours during which noisy activity takes place...we need to make a lot of demands...or suggest that more retail go in there instead, something that the neighborhood might be happier with. Is it the end of the world if this lot sits for a bit until a better proposal comes in? Not really.

This side of JP needs social businesses not industrial businesses. I want to be able to walk up and down Washington Street the way I do Tremont in the South End, this proposal doesn't feel like that direction.

If sited properly and designed properly. Current proposal is weak in many aspects.

Acceptable depending on the design and how it fits with the rest of the area