

Harvard Square Kiosk and Plaza Public Meeting: Notes

Wednesday, April 25th, 2018

- Staff and consultant attendees:
 - Staff: Iram Farooq, Daniel Wolf, Kathy Watkins, Charlie Sullivan, Stuart Dash, Melissa Miguel
 - Project for Public Spaces: Meg Walker
 - Halvorson Design Partnership: Bryan Jereb and Cynthia Smith
 - Touloukian Touloukian: Ted Touloukian, Jared Ramsdell, and Grisnette Colon
- Intro (Iram Farooq and Daniel Wolf)
 - Welcome and overview of process to date
- Presentation (Project for Public Spaces)
 - Overview of Working Group's discussions on use and programming in the Kiosk and Plaza
 - Community engagement efforts and how it informed Working Group's thinking
- Presentation (Halvorson Design Partnership)
 - Design approach for Plaza
- Presentation (Touloukian Touloukian)
 - Historic restoration / design approach for Kiosk and case studies of activities as they relate to the design of the Kiosk interior and envelope
- Public comment
 - Confused about the news portion of the Kiosk – people don't get their news there anymore. Reserving Kiosk space for magazines and newspapers seems pointless. Like it's a museum and symbolic. Wasting a big piece of the project trying to capture that.
 - Lots of people get the New York Times print version from Out of Town News. Tourists are badly served by the current set up. First questions were always "Where is Harvard?" "Do you have an informational brochure?" People are coming to learn about history of Cambridge and Harvard.
 - Any opportunity to shift trees proposed for east side of the Point (northern tip of Plaza) to the west side? Coming from Porter, the trees would hide the Kiosk. Kiosk is so pretty, seems a shame to hide it with trees.
 - Secondary heart of Harvard square – this was originally a transportation hub. Ad hoc entrepreneurial flavor seems to be missing from the iterations presented here. Harvard needs to have a presence in the Plaza.
 - Needs to be a space where people are comfortable but it's also critical that the Kiosk communicates how different Cambridge is from other areas. Must make people want to be here to learn about Cambridge, not just Harvard. Folks staffing need to have knowledge of the area and history. Absolutely an international destination, need to have access for those visitors.
 - Trying to be too many things to too many people. Simplify – can't make this into a conglomerate endeavor. Did you study the homeless people who will take up residence in the area? What about traffic? How will you study the traffic that

goes through? The space seems lively to the commenter when she leaves her office.

- Person stated that the City is ignoring the issue of homelessness.
- Clarify the levels in the Plaza. How many chairs can fit inside storage and tables?
 - Team will examine what the sweet spot for the amount of furniture and storage space.
- If it's something that can be done anywhere else, it shouldn't be done here. We need more statues and monuments to important Cambridge residents like John Elliot, Ann Hutchinson, Ann Harvard etc.
- The square should not be commercial. If products disappear from one place they will appear in another place if there's sufficient market demand. Bike parking on the side, should move the sidewalk to accommodate a bike lane. Bumping out the western portion of the Tip into the street would add space for trees. Homeless people have the right to be in the space.
 - Space allows for drop off and loading.
- Refinement on the current plan of the site and pedestrian flows through the site. What's the craziest thing you thought of?
 - If it could be completely flat, would consider making it all one level to be more flexible and open – too much level change up to Mass Ave though.
- Shouldn't be too wedded to the idea of programming. Plaza can program itself. Likes some of the existing variation in elevation. Roughly same grade, enclosed space idea. Preservation of the intimate spaces. Lighting at night and other commercial activity. CVS and Starbucks are always loading and unloading stuff. Digital media works well facing away from the Harvard coop. How much money are people making on news?
- Likes print news. Likes the half wall of the Kiosk – helps define the building. Escalators from old images added depth. Historical standpoint Kiosk still needs to be defined as a gem. Losing the significance of the building itself wrapped up in programming.
- With the tourist information in the Kiosk, would they take out the tourism booth? Will there be water? Fountain or water feature to animate Plaza. Seating on the Point is very uncomfortable, green wall or screening would be nice.
 - Yes – current tourism booth would be removed.