

Central Square Advisory Committee Meeting

September 15, 2015

5:30 – 7:00 PM

344 Broadway, 4th Floor Conference Room

Attendees:

Committee Members: Drew Kane, Robin Lapidus, Esther Hanig, Christopher Sol Gully Robert Winters

Absent: Joel Altstein, Melissa Greene, Michael Monestine,

Staff: Stuart Dash, Elaine Thorne

Committee Members Questions and Concerns:

- City Hall lawn is a meeting place, only green space in Central Square, but lacks being able to accommodate events, such as concerts because of the configuration of the hill/berm.
- Need to explore some form of edging/screening along the street curb line to establish a comfort zone from the traffic on Massachusetts Avenue at appropriate locations.
- Inman to Temple Street brick portion of sidewalk underutilized, street furniture (benches, bike racks, boxes) need to be re-assigned in order to make the space more inviting and functional for planned activities, street performers, vendors.
- The Common Room, (currently the only one is located at Eastern Bank) is too small, room should be able to accommodate 20-30 people at a time. It was suggested that the committee could help define what the quality and character of the space should be in future development proposals.
- Revisit the Sign Ordinance, Walgreen, CVS windows current allowed in the ordinance, should be open, bringing life to the street.
- Essex Street corner (TD Bank) is a great location for signage/wayfinding directory.
- Morris Naggar's building at Essex Street corner needs to be addressed. This site was to be included in the proposed new housing. It continues to be an eyesore. This was the site of a Banksy Mural that was removed. Graffiti on upper floors is a continuing problem here and at other locations in Central Square.
- Hubway snow clearing (Essex Street at Mass location) in winter is problematic for passage on sidewalks, needs to be addressed. (Referred this to Cara Seiderman, CDD)

- Projecting sign at the former Blockbuster Store should be addressed (corner of Norfolk and Mass).
- The Chipotle building could use additional height, example maybe following the cornice from Holmes block.
- There is current discussion about Target coming to Central Square to occupy the Cort Furniture site located at Pearl Street and Massachusetts Avenue, this would be an as-of-right proposal. The Central Square Advisory Committee could serve as facilitator for meetings to gather neighborhood input for this as-of-right project.
- There was a suggestion to hold a design competition to create an overall Central Square concept.
- It was noted that the Master Plan process will be studying all commercial corridors.
- Bike parking placement throughout the square should be revisited with a better placement plan.
- Brick sidewalks in very bad condition, maintenance issues with spacing, missing, and loose bricks.
- Temporary patches of asphalt have been in place for many years should be addressed immediately.
- Trees in bad shape or empty tree wells, should be addressed by City Arborist, many of the Sycamores that were planted in the 90's are dead or dying. Tree pits dangerous and trip hazards.
- Concrete sidewalks cracked, dirty, with many trip hazards.
- Public toilet placement discussion, two locations were noted: H&R Block Plaza and in front of H Mart just to the right of the T entrance.
- Sidewalk Cafes a welcome addition to the Square but there should be design standards.

Update: All of the light fixtures in Central Square (pedestrian and roadway) will be retrofitted with LED lighting, new fixtures are on order and expected in 8 weeks, weather permitting they will be replaced this Fall, the new heads are black, poles will be cleaned and painted black at the same time or in the Spring of 2016.

General conversation about too much underutilized space on the sidewalks, need to have large areas where events could take place, areas need to be readdressed as currently designed. Maintenance and enforcement of City regulations, and standards is needed.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:15PM