

Expansion Group Meeting

March 1, 2017, 12:00pm – 1:00pm

Maine Medical Center

East Tower Class Room 3



Minutes

Attendees:

Tuck O'Brien
Tim MacNamara
Jeff Sanders
Walter Pochebit
Anne Pringle
Garry Bowcott
Penelope St. Louis
Emma Holder
Ian Jacob
Lin Parsons
Dennis Morelli

I. Greeting and Introduction

Jeff Sanders extended a welcome to the attendees and acknowledged the groups concern with his suggestion to cancel today's meeting. Jeff explained that MMC has committed to bringing issues to the Group in advance of public dialogue for input and feedback, and at the time of this meeting MMC did not have updates and other agenda items had not been submitted. Given that the participants felt they had new issues to discuss, MMC is always willing to meet.

Jeff communicated that the needs of the neighborhood are important considerations which MMC is taking into account. However, patient needs are paramount given the needs for timely, lifesaving healthcare and the capacity constraints being experienced at MMC.

Emma requested an opportunity to communicate different ideas and suggested that MMC should use the neighbors as resource when developing its plans.

Tim hopes that the neighbors will have input or a say in either the design of the building, the scope of the project, or the impacts to the neighborhoods and he worries when he believes questions are unanswered or remain outstanding.

Jeff acknowledged that the big item of concern in this project is parking. MMC has heard the neighbors' concerns around this issue especially relating to St. John and Parkside. Jeff communicated that MMC is looking at alternatives regarding parking

and he is unable to speak further as the alternatives are not finalized and are still under review. One thing is certain: there will need to be parking on the Gilman block. The question still to be answered is the number of required parking spaces there. MMC consultants are still working the numbers for required parking which will obviously inform parking structure development and location, as will the TDM efforts to be taken by MMC.

- II. City Update – Tuck O'Brien provided an update on the City process and specifically discussed the IOZ text. He acknowledged the Planning Board did have questions at the last workshop about the IOZ and the City Staff has provided a 2/28/17 memo to the Board. This has been posted on the City's website. The Planning Board may be presented with the IOZ at a public meeting on 3/14/17 but Tuck continues to evaluate timing. MMC may provide the Planning Board with an update on its IDP development at the March 28 Planning Board workshop but this will depend on the completion of the analysis by its consultants.

In addition, Tuck informed that the City is holding a final meeting on March 16 at King Middle School to discuss the City's Comprehensive Plan. A public Hearing on the Comp Plan is scheduled for March 23, 2017.

Tim was concerned that the Planning Board members are confused about the IOZ/IDP. Tuck admitted the last workshop could have gone better but the City is working to better explain the zoning to the Board. He recognized that this is a complicated zoning process.

Jeff's goal throughout this process is to have issues from the neighbors be vetted at the Expansion Group before proceeding to the City. To that end MMC may be scheduling an off-cycle meeting share with the Group information as it becomes available before it is sent to the City. Neighborhood feedback is welcomed with the recognition that there may not be agreement on all issues. Emma requested any such meeting be held mid-day to accommodate her schedule.

- III. Closing of Gilman Street? Tim asked about this issue because it was raised as a possibility early in the process and he hasn't heard anything further on the topic. Walter Pochebit indicated that it is unlikely that MMC will be seeking to discontinue the lower portion of Gilman as its delivery trucks access the hospital up Gilman. Any alternative course would be problematic for truck turning radius needs. Tuck also indicated that there is a difference between a public street discontinuance and a street vacation and recognized other measures that may be taken by the City to prevent traffic cut through. Metro has already been informed that they cannot cut through the St. John/Valley neighborhood to avoid traffic lights.

Tim suggested that consideration be given to building a deck over Gilman, allowing for delivery trucks to travel though and to provide additional parking spaces on the

upper floors. Tim is concerned that the location to the Gilman parking structure off Valley Street only will be a disturbance for the neighbors. He feels multiple entrances to the garage could alleviate traffic congestion.

Jeff indicated that the plans for the garage are not final and all issues continue to be analyzed. Emma inquired as to the number of “urgent care employees” to be accommodated in the Gilman garage. Jeff indicated those numbers are still being defined. Presently MMC provides parking garage spots based upon seniority.

Tuck noted that TDMs are not an overnight success and that small but incremental impacts from TDM are huge successes. However, he also recognized that reducing car dependency is not the responsibility of one but of many and it will take everyone in the City and surrounding communities to work together for change. Emma and Ian felt that the MMC project could be used as a first step.

Ann believes it is a mistake for MMC to build a parking garage on the Gilman block. Basak stated that, given the choice, MMC would rather spend its money on patient care and has zero incentive to overbuild parking capacity. VHB is hired to assist in arriving at the right number of parking spaces need to meet demand after successful TDM measures have been taken into consideration.

- IV. Union Station Plaza being considered by MMC? MMC currently parks cars at this location. Jeff Sanders indicated he cannot make any more of a statement other than that MMC is looking at alternative locations to handle parking needs.
- V. Soil Samples Update? This issue was requested to be addressed by Trevor Watson. Walter Pochebit indicated that a draft soil report was generated and presented to MMC last week. MMC’s engineers have been provided the report for evaluation and analysis.
- VI. TDM MMC will be holding a neighborhood Meeting on March 21, 2017 for the larger neighborhood group. VHB will be present current data as it relates to the baseline parking data and to explain an approach to TDM. Emma believes that the whole conversation is too car centric and suggests that the Expansion group commit to going car free for some time to make a leadership statement. Jeff is waiting for the expert opinions from VHB regarding what incentives would assist in changing behavior and he will share the results of the MMC transportation survey with the expansion group.

Ian suggested everyone read the book “The High Cost of Free Parking.”

Jeff indicated an off-cycle meeting will be held to share additional information. .

VII. Adjournment