

Notes from ASG Community Meeting - December 5, 2021

Small Group Discussions - Questions & Answers

Small Group Discussions - Notes on Reports to the Larger Group

- John Doucet - We talked about removing all pavement around Jerry's to improve flood storage and create a more naturalized environment along Rindge Ave. Paul Toner was in the group and worked at WR Grace and is glad things are going smoothly and noted that it might be nice to have a place for people to skate - he is interested in seeing how things move along; Neheet and Rachel concerned about traffic and parking / incentivizing taking transit / bikes; need to get developers together to get a commuter rail stop
- Ann Stewart - group of two, what is the access to the community garden for tools, equipment, etc. Locked storage?; asphalt survey of Jerry's would be great; Shade areas around the pond may not support nature; lives in the quad - grateful for neighborhood expertise
- Tom G - need to press for DOT / city to widen the underpass tunnel; removal of paving from west side of Jerrys; was a sheetmetal plant in NW corner of Jerry's - is the foundation still there?
- Ann - "history group", lots of discussion about the tunnel and getting bikes / peds prioritized if the tunnel can not be widened; appreciation of all that has been accomplished; room for continued work on Jerry's, traffic on Rindge has gotten worse with bus lanes on Mass Ave - how can we push more for commuter rail access and getting people to the site without cars
- Amy - mainly chatted about Jerry's pond, Mackey brought up the sheet metal plant; Amy concerned about traffic; discussed the herons - what wildlife is actually making Jerry's pond their home?

- Sandra - most questions had been answered, talked a lot about the community garden and how it will be run / kept up / used; also talked about options for the area around Jerry's Pond
- Tom Rawson - talked about asbestos abatement and adequacy of mitigation; flooding - are there more places that could be made permeable (e.g. path along rt. 16?), ongoing discussions about how the total system will work in the event of different types of storms;
- Lisa / Mary - noise concerns about the existing situation - db will go down, but how much?; traffic concerns about Mass ave end of Rindge
- Lisa - summing up lots of mention of Jerry's, transportation that is not cars - how can we push on levers to get more of this, concerns about asbestos, flooding, interest in community garden, sustainability interest -> great to see moving beyond just asbestos as the key concern for so many years

Notes on Questions and Answers (from Chat or Q & A part of meeting)

- Tom Rawson - Does IQHQ have the responsibility for any needed cleanup, or does that rest with the prior owner of the site?
 - Eppa - responsibility lives with the current owner
 - David - Tom Rawson: Eppa is correct, IQHQ is now on the hook. But if IQHQ can show that Grace did not disclose pertinent information regarding site contamination prior to the sale, they could sue Grace.
 - Mike - IQHQ is the property owner, and property owners are responsible for clean-up. However, the contamination is largely asbestos, which is very stable in buried soil. Asbestos does NOT [clarified] evaporate, dissolve, or migrate when bound to soil, so the EPA checked the site and determined it is not an immediate health risk as long as the protective cover (top six inches) is in place

- Tom R - “Separate question, there is also long-term climate change related flood risk for the Mystic River and Alewife Brook from sea level rise and storm surge, and the consequent potential of failures / overtopping at the Amelia Earhart dam. This is discussed in Cambridge's climate resilience plan. Is this being taken into account? If so, how?”
 - Mike - I have been a member of the City's Climate Change Preparedness and Resilience Plan Alewife Focus Group and the city's Climate Resiliency Zoning Task Force. The finished floor height is above the future standards that the City is requesting. They have yet to respond to flood compensation above the current 100-year storm (current state requirement) for future flood risk, but the City has been dragging its heels about making such requirements, and they are currently requests.
- Tom R - @Mike thanks. Seems like going beyond 100-year storm standards is important since I'm sure you are aware those are being shown to be inadequate (or the storms more frequent) in many places as climate change impacts amplify. But I'm not sure when the state standards were last updated.
- James Williamson - “Explain the difference in “standard” you’re requesting and why?” [this is tied to air monitoring]
 - David: “The proposed perimeter action level for asbestos is fiber concentrations at or above 0.010 fibers/cc, which is the Massachusetts Department of Labor Standards Clean Air criteria. This criterion appears to be based on section 10 (11) (b) 4. of 454 CMR 28.00 for clearance air monitoring samples collected to assess the adequacy of asbestos removal projects within buildings. Outdoor perimeter monitoring may not be the most appropriate application of this standard. Massachusetts has also published Ambient Air Toxics Guideline for both 24-hour and 365-day average exposures to asbestos (<https://www.mass.gov/service-details/massdep-ambient-air-toxic-guidelines>). These levels, 0.0002 fibers/cc and 0.000004

fibers/cc, respectively, are much lower than 0.01 fibers proposed in the RAM Plan.”

- Lee Farris - “Is there any danger that stormwater will be contaminated with asbestos?”
 - David - Lee Farris: As long as the existing 6” clean cover (or new 12-18” clean cover placed by IQHQ where soil is disturbed) is intact, stormwater draining from the surface of the site will not come in contact with asbestos.
- Michael Zody - It looked like the area designated as community garden was inside the untouched area, but presumably significant mediation will be needed for that area. Am I just reading the maps wrong?
 - Eppa - the community garden will be designed in a way that does not utilize the existing soil but rather sits on top of the existing conditions, e.g. elevated beds and pathways.
- Kathy Johnson - Are there any groups working to stop this project completely?
 - Mike - @kathyjohnson I don't know of any groups that want to completely stop the project, and it would be hard to do so, as they property owners are building under current zoning laws ("as of right") with no special requests, have agreed to follow all laws and regulations, and have been very responsive to community concerns over the past many months (50 community meetings by their count).
- Lee Farris - Why is IQHQ acting better than other developers? Why are they staying within the current zoning, unlike other developers? Any lessons we can learn to apply to other developments going forward? Also, I want to thank all the residents who are doing all this work to improve the plans and keep residents informed!!
 - Mike - I think IQHQ got the land relatively cheaply for the size, because of all the uncertainties regarding the clean-up. And when they saw they could work with the neighborhood, they have been more willing to work with the community to get buy-in for their permits.

- Lewis - developed grasped what is going on and the high stakes of this site; we are not done yet - was ASG and now FOJP - Rindge Ave is really our most important potential area of benefit and we owe the most to that part of the community, we don't feel that Rindge ave proposal is "world class" yet & we have a different vision
 - Diane - we appreciate the work that FOJP is doing
- Kathy - @mike nakagawa....thanks for your response.... I am very concerned about the risk still and always in the removal of asbestos.....I do believe that it is the City's responsibility to protect citizens..... and would support that effort
 - Mike (presented) - they have been responsive and are following all rules and regulations related to the development of the site, "haven't heard any strong objections such as totally shutting it down, but we continue to work with IQHQ to make it better"
- Lee Farris - Have city staff been helpful to the community in negotiating with IQHQ?
 - Mike [in presentation] - yes ConnComm has been involved in discussions and has taken feedback from the community
 - Eppa - Lee - we have also had city staff such as Joe Barr or other experts on particular topics join in for discussions between ASG, IQHQ, and other community groups; their involvement has been helpful and supportive of the community so far
- James Williamson - What is the status of the Jerry's Pond portion of this? Timeline? Will there be an opportunity to refine and revise the plans for along the Rindge Avenue edge of the Pond, and how will that process be handled?
 - Joel [in presentation] - not decided yet and ASG is committed to continuing an inclusive process on these parts; project involves a two stage process starting with the development area first, giving us time to form a consensus on the Rindge Ave plans.
 - Lisa - James, ASG Rindge Working Group will be reaching out to the Rindge side of the neighborhood.
- James - we hear different things about the plan at city council meetings and other things, we talk about "the city" meaning

administrative staff, but WE are really the city and they should be working on behalf of us

- Judith Robertson - Are they going to charge employees for parking?
 - Mike - IQHQ is willing to follow the guidance from the City staff about parking fees. That has gone back and forth a little lately, so we are still working on that
 - Neheet [in presentation] - we are aware that there is discussion on this and different parties have different preferences, IQHQ has referenced different strategies, enforcement will likely be challenging - continuing to talk to IQHQ about this and pushing for something more bulletproof to avoid people parking on neighborhood streets
- Freedom Baird - Thanks for all the research and advocacy by ASG and others. What will be the impact of the development on low income people and renters who live in the neighborhood over 10, 20, 30 and 50 years?
 - Mike - we are not sure what will happen, higher paid jobs coming in will raise demand for local housing by people with higher incomes. There are community benefits for lower income individuals - training, internships, scholarships. We do have a lot of affordable housing in the area, highest density by census block in the city. Hopefully the community will be supportive of everyone.
- Ann - will we be seeing detailed construction schedules / timelines?
 - Joel - yes, can follow the IQHQ website and also we will be sharing out information via our newsletter