

MOVE MASSACHUSETTS
17 DECEMBER 2004 MEMBERSHIP MEETING
Notes Recorded for the
ASSOCIATION FOR PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION, INC.
By Barry M. Steinberg

Waterside Place

Proposed Mixed Use Development to be Constructed on Massport Parcels in the South Boston Seaport District near the Boston Convention and Exhibition Center and the World Trade Center Silver Line Station

John Drew, President, John Drew Co. and
Jim Doolin, Acting Director of Economic Planning and Development, Massachusetts Port Authority

Jim Doolin:

We are announcing a new development and there is the ribbon cutting for the Silver Line [Phase II] to South Boston [today]. Without it, you wouldn't see development on the South Boston Waterfront.

Massport has been at it for years: Planning and negotiating with others of you. We have also worked at utilizing our real estate assets with other interests.

The permitting of Commonwealth Flats, the filled land north of State Street. Through the MEPA (Massachusetts Environmental Protection Act) process, we looked at the build-out of that land. Seventy acres of Massport-owned land. About 7 million sq. ft. of mixed use development. There would be traffic and transit development.

The *Green Book* has traffic analysis and the principles of smart growth. The South Boston Waterfront will be part of that. Depending on the Silver Line and public transit. The reverse commute to Downtown. There will be pedestrian improvements and open space.

Al Howard was one of our consultants. He talks about perspective before precision. We must generate revenue for the Port of Boston. Return on investment for important port infrastructure.

Today you can see the Convention Center and Commonwealth Pier. Manulife Financial is quickly being occupied. In September, the first apartments will be ready for occupancy. The focus for this is Waterfront Place. In May of 2003, we issued a request for proposal (RFP). Massport waited to make money on the property, but yet we wanted to make a destination of the waterfront. We talked about mixed use together with shared use of parking.

Drew & Co. is a skilled architectural team. They developed Copley Place. John Drew has been working on the Commonwealth Pier since the 1980's. He is a pioneer and a visionary. He gets results, but yet he is always a gentleman in negotiations.

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John Drew:

We are now working through the approval process. We hope to be through the permitting process by the end of the summer, so it is a fast pace. Proposed is mixed use residential. There is a long-term ground lease with the Port Authority. Planned ground breaking is 2006.



Fig. 1. Waterside Place

Source: John Drew Co.

The core is rentable retail. There will be a 400-room hotel. A visitor center complementary to the Boston Convention and Exhibition Center (BCEC). Waterside Place will be the Massport core block. Transportation access is great. From the Highway to the D Street Bridge.

Today is important because the Silver Line is being built.

It is a large site: Around us is Frank McCourt's land. There are large blocks of land to be developed. It is a great asset for the city to grow into, especially since it is next to the Central Business District (CBD). The only thing missing is shopping and restaurants. We are going to fill that hole.

The transportation network: How easy it is to get out of our area (Fig. 2). Where the ramps are located, and how the Silver Line started. Originally the thought was a monorail system, but it is bad in this climate. Hours and hours went into streets, boulevards and truck routes. The flow in and out is unequalled in Boston.

The core block is in the center of all this. This project is vital to the success of everything that is around it. It will provide services missing for those who are here today.



Fig. 2. Site Access.

Source: John Drew Co.

Across the street, the Westin Hotel is going in. For restaurants, Anthony's and Jimmy's.

When you think what happened with the Prudential Center, this is not so much different, without detracting from what's going on in the Back Bay. Glass: To create something that is inviting, to bring people into the retail side of the project. To populate the building.

What we are attempting to do is on all four sides to have strong sides. There will be no 'back' side.

The reception from both the City and the community has been spectacular. The Boston Redevelopment Authority has been quite responsive, very forthcoming. We are doing interesting things on the condominium side.

The community is interested in a supermarket. There are activists for the rebirth of Broadway.

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Q. What is the value of the project?

A. \$450 million.

Q. What kind of arrangements have been made for taxes or in lieu of taxes?

A. (Doolin) All properties pay real estate taxes to Boston, but developers can negotiate with the City.

Q. Re parking.

A. Retail functions require more parking.

Q. (Curtis Davis) Affordability. How do we keep it from being strangled? Have you looked at this?

A. (Drew) We have a program with the City about this. On-site housing vs. off-site (i.e. South Boston) housing. "Affordable" means \$100,000 to \$200,000. We also priced our condos around \$600,000 based on our construction costs.

Q. In general, will those condos be suited for families?

A. Most will be one or two bedrooms.

Q. What will be the residential density per acre compared to other neighborhoods?

A. I don't know. It is mainly a retail project.

Q. How much of a residential critical mass will there be?

A. (Doolin) On Massport property, one or two other sites would even foresee residential uses in the area.

A. (Drew) 4000 was the number of residential units in the area in discussion with the BRA.

Q. (Barry Steinberg, APT) Years ago at the World's Fair, General Motors had a vision of the city as large buildings with highways, some being thin soaring elevated roadways. With this in mind, how do you have development that is in human scale?

A. (Drew) We are going to address this as we go along. The slides don't go into this detail. It is a good question. It is important we get people to go to the Hotel.

A. (Doolin) The rendering doesn't do it justice. It should be inviting. There should be shops with doors on the streets as well as the interior mall.

A. (Drew) The World Trade Center Silver Line Station will be here also.

Q. What about cultural activities?

A. (Drew) The Visitors Center will have a cultural aspect. On the water side, there will be a pedestrian area. There is a community purpose in that space.

Q. Will there be surface vehicular access through Broadway?

A. (Drew) Good question. This was the subject of a community meeting. South Boston has developed a network of one-way streets. This is to impede you from driving through South Boston as a short cut.

To bring people to Waterside Place, at the water is easy. From Andrew Square, it will be hard. The streets are there, but it is difficult to bring people in. The T has been working for a long time on getting people from Andrew Square here for jobs. It is awkward by public transportation.

One of the proposals for the T has been when there are enough Silver Line buses, to have a branch to Andrew Square.

Q. The Prudential Center, the South End and Back Bay meet, but don't connect well. There is lots of comfortable pedestrian activity.

Because of the nature of your land, being cut off. There are a lot of residents of Boston haven't even been in South Boston.

A. (Drew) I think there is a transformation taking place. It will not be a problem. There is development occurring on A Street. Beacon is working on it. Gillette is talking about one of their sites being a park.

With our conversation with South Boston, they want to work with us. That is a dramatic change from what it was fifteen years ago.

Amrhein's Restaurant on Broadway was a local nest, but now they have people coming there from the South End and the Back Bay. This is a healthy change.

South Boston's problem is the population is elderly.

In February or March it is likely we'll be back to the communities.

Q. What about the name 'Waterside Place'?

A. (Drew) There were a few other possibilities, but it is not a novel name.

Q,A 2300 parking spaces. We are looking at how to bring people up to the roof. Also to bring people to the water side. As big as it is, we have no extra room. Without the critical mass, we are not going to bring the people in. How do you bring the people through? It is a wide arc, not a traditional dumbbell shopping center. It is going to be an interesting area.

Q (Curtis Davis) The notion of city-building for the area is a challenge. There is lots of demand for schools, charter schools and cultural institutions. These make a city a livable place. The types of apartments in the area are suited to young people.

A (Drew) What I have attempted to do is have something attractive and appealing. We have used our space to attract civic activity. Look at the Exhibit Hall and the Convention Center. In the late 1980's, we brought people into the area. Weekend activities: Water, kayaking. We have run shuttle buses. I brought the ICA into the area. With low or no rent for certain events.

This is something very important, but beyond my ability to answer.

There is a real challenge here. There is a shortage of dollars. The number of museums that want to be built here is fantastic, but our resources are limited. A school down the road makes a lot of sense, but there is no location worked out. A church on Frank McCourt's property.

If we put a lot of money into housing, we don't have it for a charter school. Private development cannot support all these other activities. You can't squeeze it out of us.

Q. I don't see things inviting me as a pedestrian after hours. Is it safe?

A. (Drew) We are addressing that. Even today, we have activity going on every day. If we put movie theatres and restaurants, they will bring people in. The retail. We want people to walk by, walk past, and walk in as well.

A. (Doolin) From Massport's perspective the main galleria retail experience is a public space. It should not be a rabbit warren of space. It should be a space for four seasons a year, not just a place to spend money.

Q. What about green design?

A. (Doolin) We have had two meetings with the development team and design teams about this. Massport and the developer have taken the approach of green roof technology: Passive heating, materials, etc. We take this seriously. If approached properly, this will make the mall a success.

Q. How many people are you going to bring in?

A. (Drew) I don't have the number on the tip of my tongue, but the number is significant. It should rival Copley Place.

Re parks and safety: It's going to be quite spectacular. The Northern Avenue Bridge is going to be kept. It is a big link to the city. \$16 million from Washington is pending on it. It will quickly turn into a community.

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APPENDIX.

Hub developer sees Place for Seaport: Drew plans mall across from Southie meeting hall

By Scott Van Voorhis

The Boston Herald, Thursday, September 16, 2004

Low-key developer John Drew has been quietly building out the Hub's last development frontier, even as better-known rivals grab the headlines with unending schemes for South Boston's rough-edged Seaport District.

Now Drew, who teamed up with Fidelity Investments to build the giant World Trade Center meeting, office and hotel complex, is rolling out plans for a cutting-edge project.

Drew unveiled a \$400 million proposal yesterday for a Copley Place-style mall and condo complex in the heart of the waterfront district. The land is still pockmarked with sprawling surface parking lots and construction sites.

The developer's Waterside Place will feature a 70-foot-tall, glass-encased grand entryway and would take shape across the street from the city's recently opened convention center. That hall's soaring glass-and-steel design has won architectural raves - something that Drew said his planned mall will echo.

"The front of that building is quite spectacular and the idea is to put something across from it that is also spectacular and interesting," he said.

Driving the plan, Drew said, is an effort to fill a gap in the Seaport's development, heavily tilted toward office and hotel towers.

In a talk before a major Boston-area developers group, Drew said his plan will help fill a shopping and, to some extent, eatery void.

Even as Drew and Fidelity's World Trade Center office high-rises have brought thousands of workers to the Seaport, there are few places to eat, and even fewer to shop, he said.

While there are a few fancy restaurants, such as Anthony's Pier 4, the area lacks the range of retail establishments that cater to workers in the Back Bay or the financial district.

Waterside Place, which Drew hopes to start in 2006, would feature a pair of larger anchor stores, as well as space for 80 smaller shops and eateries.

Drew is also planning a roughly 20-story condo high-rise on the site. Later phases will also include, among other things, a pair of hotels, one on the Waterside Place site, the other on an adjacent lot. There is also the possibility of a grocery store, Drew said.

The proposal comes several months after Drew won a bidding contest to build out an 11-acre site owned by the Massachusetts Port Authority.