

**Rose Fitzgerald Kennedy Greenway
Leadership Council Meeting
January 13, 2010
4:00 PM**

MINUTES

Present: Ann Thornburg, Chair; Dawn Chavez, Chris Colbert, Donna Freni, Francine Gannon, Dan Nuzzo, Dave Queeley, Dave Seeley, Rick Sullivan

Staff: Nancy Brennan, Steve Anderson, Jesse Brackenbury, Priscilla Bradley, Lynn Gifford, Linda Jonash, Alexandra Lee, Kate Miller,

Guests: John Romano, Michele Hanss, Tom Palmer, Shirley Kressel, Caitlin Marlotte, Anne Fanton, Matt Conti, Elsie Hermann, Karen C. Taylor, Peter Gori, Neal Sanders -- and others who did not add their names to a sign in sheet

Welcome

Ann Thornburg welcomed everyone to the meeting and asked Nancy Brennan for opening comments. Nancy extended an invitation to everyone to the joint meeting of the Board of Directors and Leadership Council on February 2, at 9:00 AM at 185 Kneeland Street. Two special features will be presented: the 2010 planting plan for the Greenway and the introduction of an expanded volunteer program.

Nancy introduced Jesse Brackenbury who has joined the Conservancy as the Director of Business Operations. He will be taking on the management of park operations, business operations, financial planning and reporting as Nancy devotes more time to fundraising.

She also noted that the Conservancy offices will be moving to 185 Kneeland Street on January 15.

Old Business

Meeting Minutes

On a motion duly made and seconded, the Leadership Council VOTED unanimously to approve the minutes of the October 14 and October 20, 2009 meetings. They will be posted on the Conservancy website under Leadership Council documents.

Conflict of Interest Statement

Ann Thornburg noted that an additional phrase had been added to the statement that was reviewed by the GLC on October 14 and posted on the website for comment by the public.

On a motion duly made and seconded, the Leadership Council VOTED unanimously to approve the Disclosure of Potential Conflicts of Interest Statement as posted on the website and amended with the phrase in the last sentence that reads “and/or participating in discussion”. The revised statement will be posted on the website.

GLC Planning for 2010

Ann Thornburg reviewed the agenda and noted that to the extent there is not ample time to finish discussion of the various topics, they will be placed on the next meeting agenda. Going forward materials will be sent to the Leadership Council five to seven days in advance to preclude the necessity of detailed presentations.

Ann reviewed the terms that each of the Leadership Council members has agreed to serve. She reported that both the Governor's office and the Conservancy are pursuing candidates from Chinatown to fill at least one of the remaining positions.

She noted that the Council will use various forms of technology as well as neighborhood meetings to understand the views of their constituents. She noted that, except for an occasional planning meeting, GLC meetings will be public, with material distributed to the members ahead of time so that substantive discussion can occur during the meetings. There is a general plan for topics that the GLC will discuss during 2010, but a more specific list of agenda items will be developed by the Council. They are soliciting input from the community on what those topics should be. A five minute discussion took place on how Council members interpret the terms "public interest" and "success" of the Council as defined by the Greenway legislation which states, "The Council shall assist the Conservancy by serving as representatives of the public interest in the success of the Greenway." Ann encouraged Council members and the public to send more input by email.

FY10 Greenway Conservancy Budget Update and Benchmarking Presentation

Executive Director Nancy Brennan provided an FY 2010 budget update for the six months of FY10 that included both operating and capital expenses. The presentation will be posted on the Conservancy website with Leadership Council documents.

Expenditures are running behind plan -- a timing matter that will correct itself as snow removal and spring expenses come in for the parks. The Conservancy's fundraising target is \$2 million. This will match funding from the state. Private fundraising is largely dependent on the public contribution, as foundations and corporations are reluctant to commit without the Greenway having the public support. Fundraising is on track but challenging in these times. Another factor in this volatile economic climate is that many donors are still redefining where they will make their contributions.

The operating budget concentrates on the prime mission of keeping the Greenway clean and green; the capital budget addresses most important needs, as well as increasing park use. She noted that an additional seven acres of adjacent specialty sidewalks and street trees will likely be added to the Conservancy's responsibility by the City and State.

Nancy presented a summary of findings of the benchmarking study that compares Greenway costs to those of six other relatively new (within 20 years), transformative public spaces in other cities. These are spaces where communities and governments made conscious decisions to create unique and vibrant places for people to enjoy. They see

significant investment in public programs as an economic development advantage to create vibrant urban destinations.

A major learning from the study is that costs are driven by the functions and design of the park. Form is driven by the function the community wants it to serve. Each of the parks in the study shares a mission to transform the district where it is located; they have vibrant civic missions. The Greenway's mission is also transformative, going back to the Boston 2000 goal of connecting the city to the sea and creating both an open space with programs and activities for city residents and a place that draws tourists and others from the entire metro area and the rest of the Commonwealth. The study showed that the Conservancy expenditures were below the norm in security, horticulture and citywide and regional programming and at the norm in routine operations and maintenance, neighborhood programs, general administration, fundraising, marketing and outreach. The community and the Conservancy need to make conscious decisions about priorities and the role of the Greenway.

Leadership Council members had many questions about how the other spaces were chosen, numbers of people who use the parks, whether or not they are seasonal, how the parks and programs are funded, however, discussion was limited by time to about five minutes.

Parks Report

Director of Planning and Design Linda Jonash stated that the Conservancy is looking at where along the Greenway the greatest impact and public benefit can be achieved with limited funding. Providing shade and park furniture where they are most needed seems to meet this criteria. The two priority projects that are likely fundable by private donors are in Chinatown and in the section of the Wharf District Parks where there is a lovely plaza and some benches, but no shade. For the Wharf District the Conservancy is considering configurations of tables and chairs and umbrellas. For Chinatown Park where shade is most important, we are looking at a combination of different types of tables, anchored umbrellas, moveable chairs that can be chained at night, and an overhead canopy.

The Leadership Council found the presentation interesting and had many questions and comments. However, only a brief amount of time remained. Linda Jonash reminded the group that the shade and seating projects are dependent on donations and that a typical fundraising cycle is about six months. We are seeking some general consensus as we begin fundraising, so there was some urgency to have the presentation on today's agenda.

Nancy Brennan noted that the Conservancy will continue to have many public discussions about the Dewey Square Parks. Below grade there are drainage and compaction problems. What replaces what is there now should be park-like, four seasons of color, worked out through careful planning. In this current budget we will be doing more work with research and recommendations for remediation. The Conservancy will discuss these findings with the public in a series of public meetings over the next few months.

Public Programs

Director of Public Programs Alexandra Lee stated that the Conservancy is seeking input on the kinds of public programs for the Greenway in the 2010 season. The only large-scale event the Conservancy has held was the Inaugural Event in October 2008 that attracted more than 50,000 people from a wide geographic area. Last season, smaller weekly and monthly programs were held, ranging from story hours, family game nights, movie nights, Yo Chi classes and the farmers' market that were attractive mainly to nearby residents or workers. All of the programs are privately funded. The Conservancy asked what the Leadership Council considers success with public programming.

In a broad ranging discussion, some members questioned the need for additional programming, suggesting that we put resources where they are needed most in maintenance, capital projects or improvements. Because the economic climate is so bad right now, programming might not be our highest priority. By contrast, some members think that it is our responsibility to embrace higher levels of activation to attract families from around the metro region and beyond, believing that low utilization means low funding. They believe that we need to build things – both structural and programmatic - that will increase the Greenway's constituency. One member sees the best model as the Public Garden, suggesting that if we have a beautiful park, people will come. Still others want the basic horticulture to be in place, and then build the programming that will drive everything else. Some offered that making enhancements such as tables and chairs, shade, and better lighting will bring people to the parks naturally.

Some suggestions that were offered for 2010 programs were:

- Collateral participation in other efforts such as First Night, Sail Boston, other nearby events, events in which we can participate without spending a huge amount of time organizing;
- Would like to see other organizations generating programs to take place on the Greenway, rather than only the Conservancy;
- Sustainable events where once people are aware of them, they continue to grow over time;
- Something for the whole season rather than one-day special events;
- Ice Sculptures;
- Public art like Botanica;
- Musical events;
- Competitions: Lego, Double Dutch;
- Model Airplanes

- Volunteer Cleanup;
- Dog-related events;
- Activities that draw people over time like the Farmers Market, tying them to other ways for people to become involved;
- Performances;
- Events that don't cost a fortune;

- Passive events like lights and sculpture;
- We should have events that draw people who work around the Greenway because this group represents thousands of people.

Leadership Council General Comments

The Leadership Council requested more materials in advance and to plan the agendas so that there are few presentations and much more time for questions and discussions. They want to be mindful of participants' time for meetings, but to spend the actual meeting time in active discussion. Members generally do not see their roles as providing input through emails but participating in dialogue and discussion. Nancy Brennan committed to providing the meeting materials in advance in the future, with much less time in the meetings devoted to presentations.

Some members doubt that the GLC can accomplish discussions of all of the topics in six meetings a year, given that they believe that they need to have a sense of everything that is going on and discussions of each area.

Public Comments and Questions

Could you put the neighborhood-specific meetings on the website also?

The horticultural community really wants to hear more than they heard today about what the plans are for Dewey Square.

You need a horticulture expert on the Leadership Council.

Are there plans for an ice skating rink?

Can you open the blog up for comments?

You need to publish all of the slides on the blog and website.

Will you post the budget detail that you submitted to the state online?

What has to be done with fountain specialists?

Do you have a plan for something that is not a garden on the Dewey Square parcels?

Rumors have been occurring that have not been addressed.

You could do yourself a world of good if you just said up front and publicly that you are not planning to do some of the things that it's been said you are going to do.

There are statutory requirements that the final use of the Dewey Square parcels is public.

What is transparency? What does it mean? It should be clear what it means. I don't know how the Leadership Council is going to do its job without budget detail.

Shirley Kressel distributed copies of a letter sent to Secretaries Mullan and Bowles to the members of the Greenway Leadership Council.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:10 PM.