

MCINTYRE PROJECT  
STAGE 1 MEETING 2  
MEETING MINUTES

DATE: 02.08.2018, 6:30 pm to 8:30 pm

LOCATION: City Hall Chambers, Portsmouth City Hall  
1 Junkins Avenue, Portsmouth, NH 03801

PRESENTERS: Councilor Chris Dwyer, Chair, McIntyre Public Input Blue Ribbon Steering Committee  
Gene Bolinger | Weston & Sampson  
Cheri Ruane | Weston & Sampson

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PRESENTATION:

- Councilor Dwyer opened the meeting with general comments about the public input process and W&S's role in the process. She explained the high-level nature of the Stage 1 process and gave a general outline of the Stage 2 and the Stage 3 process. Councilor Dwyer noted that comments are always welcome via the project's website and introduced members of the Steering Committee, City, and Weston & Sampson team.
- Gene Bolinger of Weston & Sampson described how residents can continue to offer input throughout this process, and described the City goals, the GSA application process, the property itself and its context, and the project's history to date. Gene also summarized what comments have been received by the City to date.
- Cheri Ruane of Weston & Sampson discussed the City-wide amenities within a 15-minute walking radius and the site's immediate neighborhood character. She offered thoughts on what could make the McIntyre a special place and an asset to the downtown's vitality. Cheri also introduced the format of the breakout sessions and shared the three key questions that each group was the answer in the allotted time period.
- A short 5-minute question and answer session followed the Weston & Sampson presentation.
- Attendees broke out into three groups of +/- 15 people each to discuss the three questions in detail. The goal was to summarize each group's input at the end of the meeting.
- All attendees reconvened and representatives from each group presented a summary of the key ideas their group agreed upon per question.

## GENERAL COMMENTS:

### **Real Estate Transfer from GSA**

- As early as 2004, the City articulated to the federal government that it is interested in acquiring the site. The opportunity for the City to acquire the property came once the GSA deemed the building as surplus. Since it is listed in the National Register, the City can acquire the property at no cost through the Historic Monument Program. The GSA will put a preservation covenant on any type of transfer to anyone, not just the City.
- Under the Historic Monument Program, most of the transfers go to a State entity; however, there are a few that have a 'revenue-producing activity with a private partner' lease. One example a multi-tenanted site just like the McIntyre in Asheville, South Carolina. A former federal building in Charleston, South Carolina, is very similar in design to the McIntyre and was reused as a hotel (although it was not subject to the Historic Monument Program in its transfer).
- A lease term of 99 years is possible, but is subject to review by the NPS. Any income produced beyond operation costs, maintenance costs, and a reasonable profit comes back to the City and can be used for historic preservation, open space and recreation purposes. This excludes taxes, which come to the City as they ordinarily would.

### **Environmental Concerns**

- The City has much of the documentation that the GSA provided as to environmental assessments and any associated remediation implemented. The City Council has discussed how critical it is that the City does not take on the burden of a multimillion dollar cleanup on site; this is one of the reasons that the City sought a private partner to redevelop on site and do the environmental cleanup on behalf of the City.

### **Character-Defining Features**

- Refer to the McIntyre Fact Sheet to understand what may and may not be done on the site. When the National Park Service (NPS) reviews the redevelopment proposal, it considers the site as whole rather than each site feature individually. The walls are clearly characteristic of the Federal presence on the site, but they are a barrier to the McIntyre's integration into the rest of the downtown. Although the walls are characteristic features, their future will be discussed in great detail with the NPS.
- Look of the windows must be preserved, but efficiency measures can be put in place to modernize the space.

### **Public-Private Partnership**

- What would happen if the private developer files for bankruptcy or merges with another entity? Is there a successor entity in place that would take over? The City does not have an answer to such a detailed question at this time. As an aside, the private partner will be paying the City for a ground lease on the site.
- We've heard a clear preference (although some disagree) to keep the Post Office on site, but it does not necessarily need to stay in its current location. The Post Office has expressed a preference to stay.

BREAKOUT SESSION SUMMARY COMMENTS:

<b>Questions</b>			
	<b>A. What are your thoughts on the City's goals for this project?</b>	<b>B. These goals have been summarized previously in the phrase "make the McIntyre a vibrant part of downtown". What will it take to achieve this goal?</b>	<b>C. What else do you think the City should consider as McIntyre Project opportunities are explored?</b>
Group 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Agreed with City goals</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Indoor public market (much like Reading Terminal Market)</li> <li>If not a public market, then ensure that there will be public access and a lot of activity/ interaction in McIntyre first floor</li> <li>Public access to the roof where people could enjoy views</li> <li>Prefer Post Office to stay on site in some form</li> <li>Prefer smaller scale housing units, whether new construction or within McIntyre building itself</li> </ul>	
Group 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Need more information on the economic goals of the City; the redevelopment of this block should be solidly grounded in the local economy of this City rather than bringing in large national chains</li> <li>Agreed that both City and developer should be fiscally prudent in the redevelopment of the site</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>24/7, year-round life within the building</li> <li>Public realm that is flexible</li> <li>Flexibility in economic uses to adapt to new and changing retail/ needs of the community in the long-term</li> <li>Want a vibrant and active ground floor, on all exposures along Daniel, Penhallow and Bow Streets</li> <li>Transform the monolith/fortress-like presence of the federal building into democratic and permeable spaces into and through the building and block</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>City needs to balance solutions that are economically- and programmatically-driven with design decisions that are architecture and historic preservation-specific</li> </ul>
Group 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Agreed with City goals</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Maintain views of the water, especially across Bow Street</li> <li>Ensure that there is an allocation of public open space</li> <li>Create an indoor public market space that attracts local residents (like a co-op or small grocer), not just tourists</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Make sure that the historic preservation of the property is not an obligation, but a preference</li> </ul>

End of Notes. CB