

Dear Harbor Garage Email List:

On behalf of the Garage Committee (on whose behalf Marianne typically sends emails), please note the following message from Tom Palmer, media and public affairs adviser to the Harbor Towers Garage Committee:

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Start of Message:

Dear Harbor Towers Harbor Garage list,

As you may have heard, it was a historic moment on Thursday night when the Boston Redevelopment Authority firmly committed itself to reasonable and thoughtful height and density guidelines for the neighborhood around the Rose Kennedy Greenway. The Greenway District Study, done by the outstanding consultants Ken Greenberg of (Boston and) Toronto, and Tim Love and Matthew Littell of Utile, Inc. of Boston, took about 18 months, featured seven public meetings, and concluded that it makes a lot of sense -- while taking care to activate the Greenway with people -- to protect the Greenway parks on both sides from "Manhattanization" by limiting height on the Harbor side to 200 feet or less. More height and massing would be allowed, appropriately, on the downtown side of the Greenway, away from its edges.

These guidelines, which will be turned into zoning law, protect the Greenway from canyonization and the effects of excessive shadow and wind. (That is especially important on days like we have had so many of recently, where the sun is warm but the air and wind are very cool.)

You can see the full slide presentation on the BRA's web site at:

<http://www.bostonredevelopmentauthority.org/pdf/PlanningPublications/GDPS%20Public%20Meeting%207%20PowerPoint%20Presentation%209-10-09.pdf>

(If this link doesn't work when you click on it: go to www.bostonredevelopmentauthority.org, and under "quick links" click "planning," and under "planning initiatives" choose No. 29 Greenway District Planning study, and under that choose "No. 7," which is at the top of the list. Whew.)

The City, which is often somewhat fairly criticized for not doing enough big-picture planning (but rather considering projects only on a one-off, ad hoc basis), has really done the right thing here, and should be publicly commended for it.

The Boston Globe, on the other hand, I'm sorry to say, continues to take a narrow, rather irrelevant, and frankly misleading view of the situation. We found out yesterday morning that, after not even covering the Thursday night meeting (they claimed the substance had all been in the paper before, and some of it had, though several important points had not been published) the Globe plans to do yet another profile piece on Don Chiofaro in tomorrow's (Sunday's) paper.

(The Globe editorial page, which "gets it," unlike some of the Globe's reporters and columnists, did carry a thoughtful editorial on the subject in today's paper.)

I could speculate all day, having worked there 32 years, on what drove this decision to focus yet again on Don in the news pages. Animosity for the Mayor, who has been in office more than four terms? The image of rough and tough Don Chiofaro as an underdog? His undeniable (at times) charisma? His nonstop persistence? The Globe editors' lack of imagination? A desire to sell

papers, as the circulation continues to drop like rock (23 percent in the last six-month period compared to a year ago!)? I don't know, but they're doing it.

Yanni Tsipis, your real estate consultant (who by the way made an eloquent comment in support of the BRA and its planning and conclusions at the meeting, which drew applause not just from Harbor Towers residents), and I spent a long time on the phone with the Globe reporter, Casey Ross, yesterday, telling him how misguided this seems out in the real world, this relentless and unending focus on Don. But the Globe does what the Globe does, and so we at least got a promise from him not to do (another) puff piece, but to also tell something of the negative side of Don, of which there is much. Don is talented in many ways, but he does not play by the same rules as other people. There are some people out there who love scrappy fighters of City Hall, but Don has many, many enemies in this city, and it is not for no good reason that he feels alienated from City Hall. He has himself to blame for that.

So, we will read the profile (and other future stories, no doubt), and we should comment. "Commenting" -- that is, writing in comments at the end of the electronic (web) versions of articles in the media -- as many of you know has become an important and even necessary way to influence opinion. The media are much more democratic than ever in the past. (They don't like it, and some of them are even considering getting rid of the "comment" feature, because it clearly weakens their power. But for now, we may comment and comment and comment -- just as Don's supporters do.)

Here's how to comment, in case you don't know. It doesn't take much time, and it's kind of fun. We encourage you to put your two cents' worth in:

Go to the story (Globe tomorrow, but the Herald and other publications do this too) on line, and at the bottom it will say how many "comments" there are on the story, if any. You can click on that, and then read others' comments. At the bottom of that list of comments, if you are already "signed up," you can comment. (Sometimes comments running into the hundreds on controversial articles, and they are added chronologically as they come in, so if you are going to comment it's important to do it early; then your comments appear near the top of the list.)

Most of you probably are not signed up. So, sign up. It is COMPLETELY ANONYMOUS. That is, your email address does not appear with your comment.

What you do is choose some clever little moniker for yourself (most people make them non-self-identifying), and then comment under that name. It's all free. (Which is another reason the mainstream media are collapsing, but that's another matter.)

If you are not already registered, it does not take long to do. Just follow the steps where it says to register to comment. You may use your regular, everyday email address -- or if you don't want to do that you can easily open another email account with gmail (Google) or Yahoo or your provider (Verizon, Comcast, whatever). They will send you a "confirmation" email to that account, and you have to open that email to confirm that you opened a "comment" account, and then you're on your way.

Do that, and make our voices heard!

The City needs support on this issue, and it has done the right thing in this study for us, the neighborhood, and the rest of Boston. In addition to the public support letters we will be asking for you to send to the BRA in the coming months about the Greenway Study, these issues more and more get fought out in the "court of public opinion" in the comments sections at the end of Globe and Herald stories. Let's be heard!

Thank you,

Tom Palmer

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End of message