

City OKs most of \$1B BC plan

Kenmore project gets nod

By THOMAS GRILLO

The Boston Redevelopment Authority partially approved Boston College's \$1 billion expansion plan last night, remaining undecided on the school's controversial bid to build dorms on the former archdiocese property.

Brighton residents packed an overflow City Hall hearing room as neighbors were divided over BC's campus expansion proposals for the next decade. The plan, filed in December 2007, calls for four academic buildings, a university center, a recreation center, 1,130 dorm beds, a fine arts district and athletic facilities.

While neighbors were united in lauding the college's goal of housing 100 percent of its students on campus, some strongly opposed certain aspects of the plan, particularly adding 560 beds at an off-campus apartment building at 2000 Commonwealth Ave. and new ballfields near a residential neighborhood.

The BRA backed all but a 150-bed dorm plan for the 65-acre site that BC bought from the Catholic Archdiocese for about \$172 million in a series of deals.

"We would have preferred to have our plan approved (in total), but we're pleased and appreciative that the BRA approved all the other aspects of the plan," BC spokesman Jack Dunn said after the board's vote.

BC still needs zoning approval and must go back to the BRA for each project in the master plan.

Earlier during the hearing, Bruce Kline of Brighton Neighbors United said his group opposes BC's use of the Commonwealth Avenue property as a dorm.

"Taking students who rent apartments in the neighborhood and concentrating them in a high-rise building a half-mile away from campus is a recipe for disaster," he said. "I'm sure BC can control the students while they are in the building, but our fear is when

they leave the building and travel through our neighborhood to bars in Cleveland Circle."

But John Hoffman, a longtime Brighton resident who grew up in public housing, spoke for dozens of supporters who back BC's plan.

"I like the fact that BC will house all of its students on campus and they've finally devised a plan to do it," he said.

In other business, the BRA backed Fenway Center, the \$475 million project that promises creation of 1 million square feet in five buildings over the Massachusetts Turnpike in Kenmore Square. The project will also include a new \$12 million Yawkey MBTA commuter rail station.

The BRA also approved Suffolk University's \$68 million New England School of Art and Design academic building at 20 Somerset St. The 10-story building will include about 450 seats for art school classes and another 400 for general classroom use.

Officials OK One Kenmore complex

Boston officials yesterday approved a \$475 million residential, office, and retail project along the Massachusetts Turnpike near Fenway Park. The One Kenmore complex calls for development of five buildings and an MBTA station between Brookline Avenue and Beacon Street. The project, proposed by developer

John Rosenthal, has been planned for more than a decade. Rosenthal expects to start construction in 2010.

Also, the Boston Redevelopment Authority approved a \$68 million, 10-story academic building at Suffolk University at 20 Somerset St.

CASEY ROSS



HIGH OVER FENWAY: The city yesterday approved the \$475 million Fenway Center project over the Mass. Turnpike near Kenmore Square. COURTESY RENDERING