

INSIDE BU

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Work Group Focuses on Housing Options

By Karen Fennie

Students, University administrators, faculty and architects from the Dormitory Authority of the State of New York (DASNY) met and even took a tour last week to focus on new housing.

The meetings and tour looked at two potential sites: one between College-in-the-Woods and Hinman College and the other near Clearview. The new housing is needed to accommodate students who will be displaced by renovation of older housing and also gradual enrollment growth.

Since a plan to add a residential hall at Newing College was abandoned last spring, the University has been considering potential new sites with a housing work group that includes administrators, students and the Dormitory Authority. Last spring, the group asked DASNY to conduct a feasibility study looking at land between College-in-the-Woods and Hinman College. The state was also asked to look at the pros and cons of building housing near Clearview.

The DASNY feasibility study of the CIW/Hinman site suggested a phased development with either “H” shaped buildings or long, linear buildings. In the first phase, two buildings would be constructed, housing 200 to 400 students in suite-style housing with 100 to 200 parking spaces.

A housing study by Brailsford & Dunlavey last year concluded this same area was the most viable, flexible and financially feasible option.

“Since 1972 the space between College-in-the-Woods and Hinman College has been identified as a future area of expansion,” said Larry Roma, assistant vice president for physical facilities.

Pros and cons of potential development at Clearview were also discussed. A NYSEG right-of-way, the steep grade of the site and close proximity to off-campus neighbors were listed as cons.

“It would cost more to build there because more site work would be needed,” said Robert Fraser, an architect with DASNY. “That would mean less money would go into the building itself.”

Because the site is somewhat remote from dining, apartment style housing would be most viable at that site. “Pros” for the site included its natural beauty and minimal disruption to existing utilities. Some of the same pros and cons apply to the Hinman/CIW site.

The overall Hinman/CIW plan calls for five buildings housing a little more than 1,000 students, a collegiate center, space for 500 cars as well as playing fields. There is funding for most of the first phase of the development.

Students were curious about how the first two buildings would meld with Hinman or whether they should be independent. University administrators said it is a complicated matter that needs more student input. Concern was expressed about how the development might affect the Nature Preserve. The plan is flexible, allowing the University to fully develop the site or stop after two buildings as other campus development issues are resolved.

Growth in general was a topic of discussion. Some students asked why the University is intent on increasing enrollment. Rodger Summers, vice president for student affairs, explained that to a certain extent, the University is following directives from SUNY.

“In the next decade the number of high school graduates will grow and peak and there is a need for public institutions like BU to accommodate the demand since we’re here to serve the public,” Summers said. Students suggested the housing policy be changed to remove the promise of guaranteed housing for four years. Results of the Brailsford & Dunlavey survey indicated that students are strongly opposed to any change in housing policy.

Students also asked about developing off-campus housing. Skip Howe, assistant vice president for student affairs, said the University wants to maintain a 50/50 split between on- and off-campus housing.

“We’ve found that to be a healthy mix and we would like to maintain it as the University gradually increases enrollment,” Howe said.

Vice President Michael Scullard said the University is working with private developers on ideas for student housing off-campus.