

# Blessed Sacrament

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ng.  
The property is currently about halfway through a 90-day period that the archdiocese called a "minimum time frame" for marketing the properties.

"We want to see affordable housing. We really want to keep the [church] building the way that it is, and we want to see small-scale retail and parking," said Hyde/Jackson Business Association President Fernando Mercedes.

Many of those who spoke touched on the issue of preserving diversity, both in the business and residential communities, citing affordability and scale as key issues to doing so.

Aileen Duggan of Hyde/Jackson Square Main Streets pointed out the importance of keeping the diversity of the business community, and noted that the organization has worked diligently to determine the needs of the district.

"Diversity doesn't just happen. Enough gentrification already," said Ken Tangvik of Hyde Square Task Force to a round of applause. Tangvik pleaded for "as much af-

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Local resident

fordable housing as possible," and some benefit for the youth community.

The pleas for affordable housing came from residents, former resi-

dents and organizations alike. Several former residents complained they cannot afford to live here any longer, and current residents bemoaned the loss of friends who have been forced to move due to rising housing costs.

"The bottom line is to defend housing that is... affordable to the people that live here in the community," said Steve Meacham of City Life/Vida Urbana.

One 35-year resident of JP, speaking in Spanish, said she felt that Blessed Sacrament was taken away from parishioners. The community should take it back, she said.

Richard Thal of the Jamaica Plain Neighborhood Development Corporation, which has launched its own bid to redevelop the site, said the organization "would like to see a very vibrant mixed-use development." He cited housing, small scale business uses, community space and educational uses as priorities.

Speaker after speaker reiterated the theme of affordable housing, small independent retail and educational use, but one Day Street

resident questioned the wisdom of "packing the property with affordable housing."

"I understand the need for affordable housing, but I don't think we should pack it into that site... At some point, enough is enough. We need to have some balance," Marcus

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Ken Tangvik  
Hyde Square Task Force

DeFlornomonte said.

"JP needs more luxury housing like it needs a hole in the head. If you want a Starbucks, if you want a Bank of America, then go to Beacon Hill," said a young woman who spoke directly following DeFlornomonte. Her comments drew loud applause.

The Task force will host a second meeting on March 2 [See What's Happening p. 15] to present its findings and begin creating a document to submit to the archdiocese stating the community's vision and priorities for the 3.1-acre site.

In addition to JPNDQ, Pine Street Inn and The Planning Office of Urban Affairs (POUA), an archdiocese-affiliated nonprofit developer have expressed interest in redeveloping the site or a part of it.

The archdiocese has hired the downtown real estate firm of Meredith & Crew to handle the sale. Once the 90-day marketing period is up, offers will be reviewed for financial terms and social considerations by the chancellor of the archdiocese, according to information on the archdiocese web site.

"Each decision will be based on the many factors including proposed property used, price and contingencies," said Chancellor David Smith in a statement on the site. "It is our hope to maximize the financial consideration consistent with the needs of the communities we serve."

# Crowd wants community use for church land

By MICHAEL PERRY  
GAZETTE STAFF

**HYDE SQ.**—Affordable housing, small-scale retail space, parking, preservation of church buildings, youth benefits and a continuation of the COMPASS School—those are the major components envisioned at a community meeting to discuss the future of the shuttered Blessed Sacrament Church on Centre Street.

Those visions came from residents, business owners, elected officials and community organizations, in English and in Spanish. Speakers ranged from teens to octogenarians.

The meeting, sponsored by a special task force of the Jamaica Plain Neighborhood Council (JPNC), drew more than 100 people to the John F. Kennedy School on Wednesday night, in spite of the fact that it competed with a meeting considering the fate of trolley restoration in JP.

"The goal is to seek input from the community," said JPNC chair Nelson Arroyo as he opened the meeting. Arroyo said that the council hopes to ultimately synthesize that input into a document it can submit to the Boston Archdiocese.

The archdiocese told the Gazette in January that it is "interested in community input but not in holding planning meetings." No archdiocese officials spoke or identified themselves at the Wednesday evening meet-

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