

Minutes taken at the Sidney-Pacific Town Hall Meeting regarding the HVAC Renovations
Date and time: February 11, 2015, 7:30pm
Scribe: Sam Elder



HVAC Town Hall Meeting

Wednesday, February 11th
7pm, SP Mark MP Room

- Housing allocation & updates on project status
- Q&A with MIT administration:

Dean Henry Humphreys
Sr. Associate Dean of Residential Life & Dining

Larry Brutti
Parking & Transportation

Peter Cummings
Executive Director for Administration, Division of Student Life

Mike Kearns
MIT Facilities

Jennifer Hapgood-White
Associate Director of Housing Assignments



Humphreys: Good evening, everyone! First we'll review the project and address some questions from the October meeting. We'll talk about parking, housing licenses, and the lottery.

Kearns: (This is all review from the October meeting.) The building has a moisture problem causing drips of water which permeate through the building, due to warm moist air coming in.

To fix this, they've developed a project to change the pressure of the building from negative to positive and dry out the building. This will improve the temperature control. Two half-year phases will take place between August 2015 and August 2016. They'll build a crane on the roof and some structural frames up there.

They will create duct rises through shafts spread throughout the building. The only major concern is that this might reduce the size of the music room, but they're trying to mitigate that.

In each room, they need to repair the bathroom and kitchen exhaust, and repair the insulation between the bedrooms (of doubles). There's a lot of work to be done in every room. Half the building will be repaired in the first semester and the second half will be repaired in the second semester.

Design is 100% done and it's currently out to bid. Bids are due soon, and it'll take a little while to interview the contractors but they'll get that done quickly. They will be bidding to those finish dates, but they're hoping they can do it quicker.

Q: During one particular phase, everyone on that side of the building will no longer be able to live there?

Kearns: Yes, that's correct. The common spaces on the first floor will be available year-round.

Q: How much noise do you expect?

Kearns: The hope is that the noise will be minimal on the side of the building they aren't working on. It'll probably sound like a bus going by. Cutting through the floor will be loud, but will not be an everyday occurrence.

We're working on the hours, probably not starting as early as 7am with the noisy activities, but that hasn't been locked down.

Q: Will there be any attempt to separate the building to protect from unexpected outages?

Kearns: Last time we met, we thought there would be 1-3 outages, with weeks to a month notice. Nothing has been 100% guaranteed, but we'll be working to isolate some things.

Q: Will the garage be open and safe to vehicles?

Kearns: Yes. Speaking of parking...

Brutti: There will be some times when we repair the parking in the building over the summer, but it will be normal during the year. There will be enough space for anyone who has card access to the building, even if you move off campus for this year. You'll be paying the standard rate.

Jennifer Hapgood-White: I oversee the housing assignment process and worked closely with SPEC (HVAC). I wanted to address some of the questions from the last meeting and e-mails.

Here's what I'll tell you: We'll do our best to minimize the number of moves. When we move people from this (north) side to the other, we'll try to keep you in the room you're in. The same thing holds true for moving back to this side, looking forward to August 2016.

For people who have continuing status who want to move out next year, the question has come up as to the latest you can come back without losing continuing status. That date is September 30, 2016. You can terminate as of May 31st, 2015 with no penalty (with 30 days notice, all that normal stuff). If you don't have continuing status, that date is June 30th.

For people moving to other residence halls, the process is the same; you need to terminate your contract and enter the allocation for another building. To do it for the spring, you do the November building-to-building switch process.

For mixed-gender rooms, our current policy is that there are 12 suites which can be mixed-gender, but our department is revising its policy campus-wide anyways, so after we have that policy, we can answer some of those questions better.

Q: For those people in efficiencies on the blue side/South side of the building, can I get kicked out in phase 1?

HW: I don't want to promise it, but the only problem I can see is if you're the only person on your floor.

Q: I have continuing status and am in an efficiency. If I move off and come back in August 2016, can I still get an efficiency?

HW: Yes, probably. We'll have a lot of space to fill, so it shouldn't be a problem.

Q: Can you have preference on your current room itself for August 2016?

HW: Probably, but I don't want to give an absolute.

Humphreys: We don't like to make promises on the spot, because we don't know what might happen. If there's ever a problem with doing things the way they've been done.

On the first and second floor, you'll see some blue tick marks on the carpet, showing which space will be needed for the ventilation ducts. This is most relevant in the music room.

It's the same for all the floors above the second as the second floor. A lot of the space is in closets.

If you have any questions (for Housing specifically), e-mail sidpachvac@mit.edu. With that, I'll turn it over to SPEC.

Jenny: A lot of the work being done here is by the SidPac HVAC committee. We're relying on them since SPEC is pretty busy as-is.

There will be a two-step process: a room type allocation (starting soon), then a room number allocation (in late April). This is a balance to allow us to know how many people we have, since many will decide to move out. Then when we go onto allocate rooms, we'll have an accurate sense of how many people are staying.

More details:

2/16-3/1 Room type allocation

3/9 Room type assignments in round 1 sent out

3/23 Deadline to respond to round 1 assignments

3/23-29 Round 2 room type assignments

4/1-4 Room type assignments in round 2 sent out, doubles waiting list

4/15-17 Deadline to respond to round 2 assignments

Eligible to enter: Current SP residents with continuing status and those who will get it very soon (second-year officers). No one new can come in.

Lottery is based on seniority points everyone in SP has. Check them [here](#). Jenny showed us a plot of the histogram of points and the current distribution of rooms, which will be up on the S-P website after the meeting (see FAQ).

Q: Can you review how seniority points are accrued?

Jenny: One per term you're here (spring, summer, fall). Officers get up to 1 (if service was satisfactory) and up to 1 more for service awards (which are also open to residents who are not officers, for those who volunteer a lot before being officers).

Q: Will we still need to enter the lottery if we have a room currently?

Ahmed: You will be allocated a room type for both phases independently. If you fill out the lottery application, you will be guaranteed an assignment in the building. *It's important that anyone who wants to stay fill it out completely.*

Once round 1 closes, you have two weeks to make a decision about what to do. For each phase you entered, you can either accept the room, decline it and ask for a different type in round 2, or decline entirely. The same thing happens in round 2, except your second option is to enter the Doubles Waiting List if your assignment is a quad. On the Doubles Waiting List, de-quadding will happen based on seniority points.

In late April, there will be a room number allocation, similar to the usual internal lottery that is run every year.

All this information will be on the SP website. E-mail sp-hvac-committee@mit.edu to reach the student committee and sidpachvac@mit.edu to reach Housing.

Q: Special room types (2-bed, 2-bath) -- what happens?

Ahmed: That will count as a double in the room type lottery.

Q: Room sniping for people with lots of seniority points?

Ahmed: It's a balance between housing everyone and minimizing displacements. In the south side, this is unlikely as there are a lot of rooms but unclear on the north side. Can't make promises until we see how the allocation looks.

Q: Can roommates try to get the same room type assignment (bundling)?

Ahmed: No, room type assignments are based on seniority points. This could potentially split up roommates if one is assigned a quad and the other a double, for instance.

Q: Could someone with an efficiency be forced to move to a double?

Ahmed: Yes, since there are only 10 efficiencies on the north side.

Q: What about Phase I?

Jenny: It's looking quite likely that you'll be fine in the first phase. They want some leeway in case this splits up roommates and a bunch of people end up wanting efficiencies.

Q: If enough people move out, could some of the doubles even become singles, especially in Phase 1?

HW: If we happen to have some extra spaces we can offer to new grad students, we'd look to do that. We wouldn't leave you in a room by yourself. From fairness considerations, we'll prefer to have two people in one double and an empty room than two people by themselves in two doubles.

Q: (Lots of confusing questions about quads)

HW/Humphreys: We will prioritize minimizing quads before allowing new residents to come in.

Q: How many people are currently in the lottery?

Ahmed: A max of 288 people can apply. There are currently only 224 beds in the north side without quads.

Q: If I don't like my room in Phase II, can I move out?

Humphreys: Yes, as long as you move back by September 30th (to keep your continuing status).

Q: Can there be a wider discussion as to the priority rankings (to give more preference to staying in the same room)?

Jenny: There has been some publicity about that, but we'll try to make sure people can move back into their original room, and there might be some small exceptions, but we'll try to avoid those.

Q: If you don't like your assignment, when can you move out?

Ahmed: You can move out any time without penalty.

Humphreys: Maybe you find the noise is too much.

Q: Will a quad have twice as much furniture?

Humphreys: Yes.

Q: For assigning rooms, the priority is room type, then same rooms, then seniority?

Jenny: Seniority determines your room type, more than room number.

Q: For people moving into doubles or quads, will there be any help in providing storage for things that won't fit?

Humphreys: We'll take those issues as they come up.

Q: What about current first-year officers?

Ahmed: That's a current discussion with housing. We have guaranteed housing for officers for next year, but we don't have any guarantee yet that those won't be quads. Once they look at the actual numbers, this will be decided and they'll take a certain number of spots out of the lottery before the room type allocation.

Q: How does staying in your same room fit in?

Jenny: You have to get your room type, but for Phase I that shouldn't be much of an issue.

Q: What's the price?

Humphreys: We were waiting for someone to ask that! The rate will rise as usual since all prices are growing. Regular rooms get a 15% discount, and quads get a 20% discount (off of next year's rent).

Q: In August 2016, if most people want to stay in their current room, will most new residents end up in the south side of the building?

Jenny: We haven't figured that out yet.

Humphreys: We'll discuss this with input from the community. That could be problematic.

Q: The 288 people with continuing status -- does that include people who might graduate?

Ahmed: Yes, and people who might move out. That's why we're doing this so early.

Humphreys: This won't be our last meeting. We'll have future discussions about storage, the timing of room switches, and so on. The next round of answering questions will probably come in April, and there will probably be another one after that to continue to clarify dates. There's a lot of logistics that we need to coordinate. Continue talking to your student leadership, who have put a lot of time in, as have your housemasters. There's an ongoing dialogue.

Q: Are we guaranteeing that Phase II will start on time?

Humphreys: We don't give 100% guarantees, but Mike is pretty awesome.

Kearns: We worked with one of the bidding companies to come up with the plan.

Q: Are there penalties for accepting before you get your room number?

Humphreys: You can always back out without penalty, at any time.

Q: With room numbers assigned in late April, is that realistically early enough to find housing, especially with more people on the market?

Jenny: The main concern people said in the survey was the room type, not the number.

Ahmed: There will be a landlord fair of sorts in early May. From information obtained from the off campus housing expert @ MIT Housing, most leases are released 60 days before they happen, so early May is just fine for finding housing. Of course, you'll start finding some things now, but most won't be available until May.

Q: What does May 31 signify again?

Humphreys: The earliest you can move out without penalty if you have continuing status.

Q: Can I terminate in the summer but come back in the fall?

HW: Typically we'd tell you to sublet / sublicense your apartment. Once we have firm move dates, we'll be better able to address what happens if you don't want it.

Q: When will the moves happen? What if we're on an internship?

Humphreys: August and January. We'll need to talk about that and different arrangements that we still need to work out, but we need to know the room assignments to have those conversations.

Q: Can these slides be posted?

Ahmed: There will be a document on the website with even more details than the slides.

Humphreys: There has been some issues with the hot water recently, and someone from Facilities is here to discuss those if you want. Thanks everyone!

End: 8:09pm