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EBC discussions on urban development and the environment

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The Environmental Business Council of New England (EBC) brought in NAIOP and MassDEP reps to explain regulations, provide insight and discuss the topic of urban development with programs on the Future Issues for Commercial Real Estate Development in Massachusetts and the Management of Urban Soil in Massachusetts.

Vivien Li of The Boston Harbor Association, kicked off June 18th's evening program with a detailed "tour" of all the development projects going on in the Seaport District through windowed walls of the Nutter McClennen & Fish law firm. Li reviewed the owners of each project and shared insight on how the area would have to incorporate affordable housing among the vast amount of "unaffordable" housing it would feature. David Begelfer, the CEO of NAIOP MA, followed with an update on the Mass. real estate market, Begelfer more specifically reviewed some of the challenges that the city of Boston is likely to face including, traffic and parking, middle income housing, business development and climate adaptation through infrastructure. The program culminated with a panel discussion featuring Li, Begelfer and community activist and board member of NOAH (Neighborhood of Affordable Housing), Anjie Preston.

The EBC Program Management of Urban Soils in Mass. addressed the reality of dealing with the regulations that manage the disposal and reuse of soil excavated at sites of urban development. With the number of active landfills diminishing and no new landfill permitting on the horizon, the availability and capacity of Massachusetts landfills to take urban soil is limited. In addition, there are transportation impacts (noise, traffic, dust, greenhouse gas) and costs, stockpiling and scheduling issues associated with the construction projects, and liability concerns arising out of the characterization, excavation, transportation, and disposal or reuse of urban soils.

Paul Locke and Sarah Weinstein of MassDEP reviewed the agency's efforts in trying to create regulations for soil that are not quite remediation waste. The discussion that was generated showed both the interest in this issue and the great need for action.

To view presentations from these programs and to find out about upcoming EBC events please check out our website www.ebcne.org

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