

# Fell's Point Out of Time



## Bill Struever Interview, February 6, 2004

*Jacque Greff, Interviewer; Kraig Greff, Camera*

### [Jacquie]

Start out by telling who you are and how long you have been involved in Fells Point and how you got here and that kind of thing.

### [Bill]

Bill Struever, Struever Brothers, Eccles and Rouse. Came here 30 years ago after graduating college. Two reasons: One – William Donald Schaefer was selling houses for a dollar in the homesteading program and my college roommate, Cobber Eccles, and I and my brother, Fred, could scrape a dollar up between us and we thought it was pretty cool idea. And secondly, my mom just gotten a job teaching at Johns Hopkins. And, we were able to work out a barter deal for room and board in return for fixing up her new house. So, that's how we got to Baltimore. And of course, once you are in Baltimore, you need a place to go for a beer. And the first Friday we were in town, my mom sent us to the only place that she new which was the Ratskeller at Johns Hopkins, which was Friday night, 9:00, guys with sport jackets and ties on studying, which was not our image of Friday nights – actually made us a little nervous about the decision to move to Baltimore, if that was the hot spot. But very quickly we learned about Fells Point. So, that was our first acquaintanceship – the best place to go for a beer in our fair city and gave us new hope about the excitement and energy of our fair city...

### [Jacquie]

Now the dollar houses, they weren't in Fells Point, were they?

### [Bill]

No, they weren't. Actually, the first big one was Sterling Sheet, the Block, the first consolidated group of dollar houses, up off of Gay Street and Old Town Mall. The second big one was over in Otterbein, which was freed up by the whole road change. So, indirectly the road fight led to the biggest of the homesteading efforts... We never got a dollar house ourselves, we never could get the dollar together, but we did construction work for a lot of the homesteaders, both at Sterling Street and the Otterbein.

But, coming to Baltimore was a return to Baltimore for my family because two of my ancestors came through Baltimore, all ... both the great tradition of American fugitives. One was an Irish fellow named James Hayslet that was a captain in the English Army and was in one of the Irish revolts, failed revolts, as with most of the Irish revolts, and had to flee. So he came to Baltimore in 1795, and had a gun shop over on Water Street and was a Major in the militia in the Battle of North Point.

And then my other Baltimore ancestor was a French doctor from Haiti and when the slaver revolt Toussaint was sweeping through the land killing all the whites, he had ... he was Louis Doonan, saved the life of a young slave girl that had been badly burned. And the mom of the slave girl hid them, the good doctor and his fiancée got to the coast and they came to Baltimore in 1803. And was an expert in yellow fever. And then the daughter of Hayslet married the son of Doonan and eventually they went out west back and through Rochester and now back to Baltimore our home town.

[01:03:58;27]

### **[Jacquie]**

So, you came here at the tail end of the road fight, you said?

### **[Bill]**

Yeah. So that, the first time we really, other than going to Fells Point to drink beer, which we did fairly regularly, was as the road fight was winding down and the houses were being freed up from the road ... the beginning of new energy and the sense a long term future for Fells Point brought us down here, in way beyond beer drinking, to see what the opportunity was here.

And if you think about the things that have really changed the face of Baltimore as we know today, for me there is nothing more important than the road war. It is just an amazing story. And if you look at the devastation to cities across America by the big roads of the '50's and '60's and '70's and the fact that we don't have a road, it truly has created so much of the opportunity today that you see in Baltimore. Not just on the waterfront, but the ability to connect neighborhoods to the waterfront and the growth that comes out of the waterfront that is spreading through large parts of the city because we don't have I95 blasting through Federal Hill Park ... and the Hill was going to be used as fill on the north side of the harbor where the Aquarium and I70 ... it was going to be an elevated road right where the Aquarium is. The three roads, 83, 70 and 95, were going to meet at the worlds largest clover leaf where Pier Six and the Marriott Waterfront are and then head up blasting through the Fells Point and Canton waterfront and on up to New York.

And just thinking in your minds eye how different the city would be if Judge Ward and Barb Mikulski, who was a social worker at the time, and other valiant souls of the Fells Point Federal Hill Preservation Society that essentially were putting their families and their bodies in front of the bulldozers and doing those house tours, and squatting in those and doing the house tours, to demonstrate what terrific resource these old houses were and are, and what a great neighborhood Fells Point is and essentially defy the bulldozers and ... kill it. It's just such an amazing thing. So we don't have to spend 15 billion dollars like they are spending in Boston on the big dig and we're not stuck like Philadelphia is with I95 dividing them off from their old industrial waterfront, which likely will be there forever and truly diminishes, in a big way, their waterfront opportunity compared to ours.

We have this fantastic geography of our harbor kind of curling up into the bosom of our town, and the intimacy of our waterfront from side to side, and kind of the idiosyncrasies of the curves of the waterfront, makes it so much more fun and interesting than just about any other urban waterfront you can think of anywhere in the world. And of course, Fells Point is right smack in the middle of all that.

[01:07:48;19]

**[Jacquie]**

Can you give me a verbal snap shot of what Fells Point was like when you came here?

**[Bill]**

Well, there were a lot of boarded up houses from the road ... condemnation from the road. Industry was still here, though on its way out. Browns Wharf, the Rukerts were still operating there in a ... lesser way. Miller's Wharf was still standing and still being used. The Bond Street Wharf, which was Terminal Corporation, was still standing and being used. Allied Chemical was going strong in the '70's, and puffing out whatever they were puffing out. And there were a number of smaller businesses – Walbrook Lumber had a millwork shop on Caroline Street that was still going. There was the Dryden Oil guise over where the ice skating rink is today. Atlantic Mill, which was this fantastic old wood frame lumber yard business, which again think wood frame building lumber business fire traveling, of course it did burn, sadly, but had the most incredible collection of molding cutters. They must have had the cutters from every kind of molding known to mankind in there. I don't know whatever happened to them, whether the fire got 'em or what. But they still had a mill shop where you could still get just about any kind of specialty molding you could dream of out of the place.

So there was still what I would call active vestiges of Baltimore's maritime and industrial past cooking in the '70's. And then in next decade they quickly went by the wayside. So by the mid '80's, many were going. Allied Chemical closed shop in the late '80's and by then most of everything else out on Harbor Point peninsula was gone. Constellation had bought the Terminal Warehouse and Barry Levinson had done his movie and had his fake fire for Avalon in the Terminal Warehouse building. Constellation then made the deal with the Preservation Society that if they transfer over the London Coffee House and George Wells House and the Sugar Warehouse which is now the Frederick Douglas Isaac Meyer Maritime Center, trading that for the right to tear down the Bond Street Wharf and Millers Wharf was kind of the deal. All that happened, I guess, in the mid to late '80's, so that by the early '90's, the industrial past was truly a past, and it was hard to think of anything significant left in Fells Point by then. There were still pieces left and are leaving now like E.J. Codd just closed down after Isabelle, sadly. Meyer Seed's still there. The tugboats are still there which is terrific, and I hope they stay forever. Trying to think of what else. The old YMCA was closed, which is now the Inn at the corner of Thames and Broadway.

**[Jacquie]**

Oh right, that was a home for seaman.

**[Bill]**

Yeah, you could walk through, I remember walking through the building. I think the city had bought it for the road and it was vacant, and they were just getting ready to put it out for bid in the early '80's when the road fight was finally ... the nail, the last nail was driven in the road coffin. And I remember walking through, and you could see the tiny little rooms and the little signs and stuff from when the sailors, drunken sailors I guess, stayed at the Y. So there is a little bit of museum past.

[01:12:03;29]

**[Jacquie]**

So, you came here and you got your start basically in Baltimore and you've kind of grown as Baltimore and Fells Point have changed...

**[Bill]**

Our company's history's really been built around the waterfront. We tend to step away from it, but we really began on the waterfront, and today our largest projects remain on the waterfront. The first home we bought, the first project we had was in 1976. By then, we had gotten a little impatient doing work for other people. We were working on the dollar houses and wanted to do our own thing, and borrowed 10,000 from my mom and bought a house on the backside of Federal Hill on Greenhill street, looking out over the Key Highway ship yards in towards Fells Point and fixed it up. And that was our beginning of our real-estate business.

We finished the house, it was a beautiful little spot, it won the House of the Year award from Maryland Contractors Association. We couldn't sell it because all of the houses on that block were vacant, and the banker walked through and he said, "What you've got to do is fix up the whole block." And we said that was a great idea but we'd done spent my mom's 10 grand. And he said, "Well, you could borrow it." And that is where we learned about leverage. The great fuel of the real estate business is borrowing money.

And we bought that block. And then we're hanging out at the Cross Street Market and we bought 40 storefronts around the Market. And then since then, today we have projects all around the Harbor – obviously in Fells Point and Canton and here in Locust Point and South Baltimore. And the waterfront is magic. It's a terrific place. Our biggest project that we're doing is in Fells Point. We have 65 acres that we jointly control with John Paterakis that essentially extends on the west from the Marriott Waterfront Hotel to Bond Street Wharf in Fells Point.

[01:14:21;04]

**[Jacquie]**

You think of that as part of Fells Point?

**[Bill]**

Well actually the original, as we have been corrected many times, the original Fells Points was the Allied Chemical Harbor Point site – that was THE POINT of Fells Point. So we look at that area as kind of part of greater Fells Point – Harbor East, Harbor Point, the original Fells Point and the old Constellation properties, Fells Landing. And those 3 together plus some infield properties that we have comprises 65 acres. We have approvals in place to build 7 million square feet of space on those 65 acres. Which, right now, the plan is to do a mixed use combo of 2500 hotel rooms and 2,000 housing units and 2 million square feet of office space and a million square feet of retail restaurants and entertainment and 8,000 structured parking places. It's about ... 1 and 3/4 billion dollars of investment when it's fully built out. We are about 30% through the build-out right now. Most of it's new construction.

One of the challenges and delights is to knit the density and the largely new construction of the Harbor East, Harbor Point and Fells Landing properties into the delightful and character and spirit of

the oldest part of the city in Fells Point. And doing it in ways like Bond Street Wharf, where we tried to celebrate the spirit of Baltimore's pier buildings and industrial past, and took the kind of scale and character of the old Terminal Warehouse on Bond Street Wharf of the past, and recreated it as a modern office building that works fantastic in the marketplace and is jammed full with important office tenants bringing lots of new jobs back to the neighborhood. And yet at the same time, fitting into that kind of special character of Fells Point.

Also, in our planning, as we look at the public spaces and public infrastructure as we lay out these 65 acres trying to build on the idiosyncrasies of Fells Point, which everything's curving and twisted, and not a lot of square corners in Fells Point ... the tradition of the bigger and more industrial maritime buildings on the water's edge with the smaller buildings set back in the neighborhood, creating delightful, interesting water spaces, interacting with the land, rather than just the boring, flat expanse of Harbor's edge where the promenade were very much into recreating the piers and pier buildings of Fells Point's past. If you look at one of the old prints of Fells Point from the, really back to the early 18th century through the 19th century and most of the 20th century, this was Fells Point interacting with the water with all these little buildings sticking out, creating these nifty spaces between them.

**[Jacquie]**

Yeah, I heard Peter Cavaluzzi's presentation for the Homeowners. In fact, we've been missing each other, but I have an appointment to interview him at some point to get him to give that talk again, 'cause I thought it was really neat. I think the neighborhood has trouble describing itself in ways that an outsider can come in and describe itself.

**[Bill]**

One thing that they had picked up that just hadn't occurred to me was the plans, the Notter Plan for Fells Point that was later adapted into Urban Renewal Plan established this concept of the low buildings on waters edge and higher building further away. And Stan Eckstut and Peter said, "What's this all about. Let's look at what's here. The biggest buildings are on the water's edge, these fantastic pier buildings." And at the time the City had a policy no pier buildings. They wanted just to have a flat edge of vast land, and you might be able to have little marinas out there but no buildings... This is not at all the tradition of Baltimore's Harbor. What it is is the biggest building sticking out in the water kind of defining the interaction, this marvelous interaction between water, water activity and the land. Whether it's the Continental Can, Canton Cove, Tindeco, Tindeco Wharf, Henderson's Wharf, the Rec Pier, the old Terminal Warehouse, the Bond Street Wharf, Domino Sugar, Tide Point. The biggest buildings in those neighborhoods were the ones in the water so to speak. It was really a refreshing perspective... Like the light bulb went on.

[01:20:11;10]

**[Jacquie]**

This is maybe a way to get into another topic that I was hoping you'd talk a little bit about ... 'cause I know various people that worked on that Urban Renewal Plan had a personal investment in it and bought into this concept of low buildings by the water. And you probably got a number of scars, and at least put a fair amount of resources into working with the neighborhood trying to work all

these things through. As a developer, what's it like working with the Preservation Society and these neighborhoods, especially Fells Point.

**[Bill]**

Well you have to love Fells Point. It's kind of a little bit like New Hampshire's "Live free or die." It's this effervescent spirit and curmudgenly energy of people like Ed Kane and Bob Keith and the China Sea, Steve Bunker, that aren't always the easiest people to deal with at times, as you talk about plans and new development ... that truly love their neighborhoods and feel in their hearts that what's so important and precious about this kind of ... idiosyncratic funkiness, little odd shapes and different kinds of people.

And if you talk about Jane Jacobs that I think it's one the best stories of urban neighborhoods, "The Life and Death of Great American Cities." Her whole thing was density and diversity, and loved telling the stories of these kind of weird mixings and matching of peoples and uses together – and Fells Point really celebrates the best of that. That urban spirit that Jane Jacobs talks about. Where you do have the old tugboat guys operating right next to some kind of fancy home furnishing boutique and restaurant and a pub where all the locals hang out ... All that kind of ... And you have Morgan Stanley and Brown Investment Advisors and a ton of Johns Hopkins people sitting in Bond Street Wharf, coming there just because their delight in being a part of such an interesting neighborhood.

So working with Fells Point is always... is never a boring moment but you have to love it to do it.

**[Kraig]**

That was nice.

**[Bill]**

You have to... If you don't like it, you shouldn't be in Fells Point – my perspective. I have never, even thought from time to time I've been pilloried as being a fat-cat evil developer, I've always respected and appreciated the perspective that those sometimes cranky folks bring to the table, because that's what makes Fells Point that. I think we've done fairly well in working with them over the years because I would like to think that we've developed the respect back and fourth because because, while we may disagree on specific issues like this issue of height, where should height be, should it be low on the water, high on the water, low behind, high behind ... hopefully a sense that we're approaching what we think really fits with Fells Point. They may think a little differently. We argue it out and, I think, by and large have done pretty well in coming up by the end with a better plan that we thought of and a better plan than maybe the community might have thought of.

Harbor Point's a terrific example – when the neighborhood starting sitting down with Allied Chemical we were brought in by Jim Rouse, who had been invited in by Allied Chemical to look at this site, which we do. The plant had closed down. They just had done the consent decree with the Maryland Department of Environment and the EPA, and were going to spending 90 million dollars cleaning it up. And the folks at Allied were saying, "What should we do with this?" The easy thing to do, and what a lot of these big multinational companies do, is just put a fence around these sites. And you don't have to worry about liability – just be done with it. And Allied had a little bit of inkling

that this was too important a site to just put a fence around, and that's why they went to Jim Rouse, "Is there something, you know... some higher and better use that we should be thinking about? This incredible peninsula that sticks into Baltimore's Harbor, the original Fells Point." So that's how I came into a little bit of trepidation – what can we do with this thing? The neighborhood came in and said, "Well this should just be... You can't really do anything... We don't want anything out there.... There should not be any buildings out there... If we do anything at all, it should just be a park – the whole thing."

And, we went through this whole 2 year-long process, meeting after meeting, one, getting people comfortable that there was a way, once the remediation was done, to safely and responsibly put the site back into productive use and not just let it sit there. And that total buy-in by everybody that this was THE fantastic site of Baltimore of the east coast and if there was ever going to be a Sydney Opera House type icon for Baltimore that people would see and say all around the world, "Oh that's Baltimore, the coolest place ever." The place to put that, whether it was the Sydney Opera House, or if you're looking for a place to put the Statue of Liberty, would be on Harbor Point. Everything bought into that, and the give and take back and forth, it ended up almost half the land was going to be park. That was the deal that was made – 11 acres out of the 20-some acres at Harbor Point will be forever park, promenade and public use space. And at the same token, that it was too important a site to leave it at that, and the community bought into 1.8 million square feet of buildings, including buildings as tall potentially as 180 feet in the center of the site, because if we are going to be able attract, you know, world head quarters buildings to Baltimore, which Baltimore desperately needs to rebuild its economy and its job base, what better place to attract them to this fantastic site, the original Fells Point at Harbor Point.

So that to me is a wonderful story of kind of the coming together, starting at very different points and perspectives between the community, developer, property owner and coming together with what I would like to think that everyone involved and the press would agree was a much better plan than anybody had ever started with.

[01:27:46;13]

### **[Jacquie]**

Going back to your comment about Fells Point ... having all these interesting types and diversity, and people being drawn there because of it, I think one of the fears of the people that we've interviewed is that, as the value of the property goes up, you have the potential to drive some of these people out, like Steve Bunker. He says the reason he left is that he could afford the prices here anymore. Is there a realistic concern about that? You're more of an optimist and you're more of a visionary than some of the people we've interviewed. How do areas like Fells Point deal with that, how can they maintain their individuality?

### **[Bill]**

How boring it would be if we had nothing but Home Depot and Staples and boring old national retailers and a bunch of fancy people living in condos and stuff like that, which would truly be a huge loss because I think one of the reasons why people like Morgan Stanley, Brown Investment Advisors and Johns Hopkins love moving their businesses into Baltimore and having it on the Harborfront is because of that very diversity and authenticity ... of Fells Point and that very essential sense its

people is. So I would talk about the concern about people being pushed out, forced out or encouraged out into a couple of different groups. One is the merchants, because I think the great definer of urban America downtowns, urban neighborhoods like Fells Point, is the fact that isn't the same old gang of Gap, Banana Republic ... that's in every mall across America. That you do have home-grown local places that are very special and different. And certainly rents do go up over time. You spend a lot of money fixing up a building, building a new building, you can't make it work at \$8 rents – you need \$18 rents.

It's certainly our belief, and I think the evident is there is many cases to show that these established local Fells Point, Canton neighborhood merchants need new business to be able to grow because their old business is gone. The hundreds of jobs that used to be at Allied Chemical, and when Ruckert Terminals was done here – they're all gone. Population is generally lower, and they need new bodies around them, whether it's people living in the neighborhood to shop, people coming to visit to shop, or people that work there, to come and shop or have a beer after work or to eat lunch or buy a cup of coffee in the morning... That those that really want to stay and want to adapt, the apple is only bigger. And that there's enough more business for them so that if rents go, over a ten year period, from \$8 to \$18, they can make more money at the \$18 because there is twice or three times the number of people, the number of customers around. There is more of a critical mass of quality merchants around for them to support each other to make it worth people to come down. So I do think that those merchants ... and I think Steve Bunker could have stayed. He and I disagree ... but his shop's one that could do even better as time went on with more people around, more foot traffic, just more density of activity around.

I think the same thing with the bar scene. The nature of the bar scene may change. The bar scene used to be sailors – not sailors off sailboats but sailors off ships. They're gone, by and large, and then it was college kids. Now the nature of the bar business is changing, and I think its not necessarily a bad change to be made...

For the residents, there is a whole 'nother kind dimension to the gentrification issue.

**[Jacquie]**

What's gentrification?

**[Bill]**

Gentrification is the gentry coming in and chasing out the non-gentry, I guess. It's the slogan for rising values and people either choosing to leave that have been there, or being forced to leave because of rising prices. Those that own can stay. The city has a 4% cap on property taxes, so if you live in Fells Point in 1985 and own your home and it was assessed at \$50,000, the most your taxes could go up is \$4 a month, because that's 4% ... that is the way the state property taxes lid works. So that homeowners really ... I think there's a lot of misperception around rising values ... and there's a lot of benefits to the city of rising values because if values don't go up, tax rates are never going to down in the city. And city suffers mightily from a tax rate that's double any other jurisdiction in the state of Maryland. And the city desperately needs new revenues to pay for schools and police, fire and libraries and all those services that make for a great city. So values going up is a good thing. People are concerned about the downside of that and impact on low and moderate

income families. If you own your home, it shouldn't be a big deal. If you rent, it's a much bigger problem with raising rents. And luckily there is continuing efforts to do affordable rental housing – not necessarily in Fells Point itself but not far away. Projects like Broadway Homes up the old Church Home Hospital Flag House... Perkins is going to stay affordable... So there are nearby a substantial amount of housing that is affordable to very low income families.

The whole issue of artists, you know artists and those interesting folks that kind of the pioneers of the neighborhoods like Fells Points, you know, Eastern Avenue, Highland Town and different parts of Baltimore and different cities around the country... We are eager to find ways so that they don't end up getting tossed out as soon as the neighborhood gets better. They go into these tough neighborhoods, help making it an exciting and attractive neighborhood, and all these other people move in and the cost go up and they move out. So we are excited about things like the Greater Baltimore Cultural Alliance, the Patterson Theater where they are creating permanently through cooperative ownership space that will always be affordable to artists. We are doing that up at Clipper Mill, in the Jones Falls Valley. We're doing an artisan's co-op of 50,000 square feet, we are doing it in Providence with my daughter and a bunch of her friends, where we are creating affordable live-work space using historic texture and stuff where they will control it forever, as long as they want to and can pay their rent which is a very modest rent.

**[Jacquie]**

What's in it for you as a developer to do that?

**[Bill]**

What's in it is the value created – density and diversity is what makes these neighborhoods so special, and having a vibrant arts community and having a really cool locally owned merchants, like Steve Bunker, or Su Casa, who is another local guy ... makes it a better and more attractive, to me, a much more exciting neighborhood, whether we're trying to market office space or for sale housing, rental housing – that's what's in it for us. Is that having the Patterson up there, not that we've done anything to help them, they've really done that by themselves with a whole host of other people... Barbara Mikulski and others that got them funding... It's a wonderful amenity for the community.  
[01:36:46;03]

**[Jacquie]**

Lets talk a little bit about development generically. Speaking as a developer, I think you have a different perspective but I'd like you to take yourself out of the picture, because from what you said and from what everyone has told me, people like you guys, you're not the "bad guys" most of the time... But there are other developers that people are not so friendly about and I have heard some of our interviewers talk about...

[Cut; 5 min to end of tape; quick break, 01:37:13;12]

**[Bill]**

Well the evils of development and the perils of planning... I would agree that the city in the past has suffered from a sense of desperation perhaps, about the need of investments. So that anybody that came along with a plan and a promise to do something, the city perhaps more so than it should, was kind of a reactionary kind of position where ... what can we do to make it happen, rather than

thinking big picture and kind of highest best use and what's the larger view, best interest of the community and the city as a whole.

One of the best example of this to me – lack of confidence and aspiration of a city... The biggest issue the city faces is its crisis of spirit, of self confidence. And it's about what we can become because if we truly believe that our city can be a great American city once again... I believe that if we all come together in a collaborative effort, we can do anything... As a broad community, we can solve any of the challenges that face us. But it really begins with self-confidence and of a spirit “we can go out and do it.” I think that's one thing that Schaefer was great at. I think O'Malley is hard at work reinvigorate that self-confidence.

One of the best examples of the lack of self-confidence is how we deal with parking. Parking ... cars are one of the great evils of the city, and it because huge issues with urban America, really cities around the world. And Baltimore in its desperation to accommodate cars, rather than what some other cities have done, look much more bigger at transit, where the business community, the planning community, the community community come together and said “we need to do something about transit” ... Baltimore just didn't do that until very recently, with the regional rail plan and instead kind of took the short-sided view: “We need parking... We need cheaper parking... How can we subsidize parking...” and ended up with a lot of really ugly, poorly-situated above-ground garages. We're building a parking garage right on the Harbor. I mean, what city in the world what put a parking garage right on the waterfront like we're are doing.

**[Kraig]**

Cleveland?

**[Bill]**

Cleveland?? OK.

And some of these garages that are poorly situated are ones that I'm embarrassed to say we built. We built ... every time I come down Pratt Street, I see the garage that we built ... we don't own it ... for somebody else right at Little Italy there. That should not be a garage there. So I think that's an example or reflection of the frustration of what we heard from the Fells Point community ... that the city, in the past at least, was too willing to take what ever it could get on the basis that they're so desperate for investments, so desperate in this case for parking, that they compromise the standards of urban design and put a garage where it shouldn't be.

On the garage end, we're trying to show that there is a better way to do it. In Fells Point, we just finished a 750-car garage. Our goal is to make it invisible. We are going to totally surround it on all sides by housing – some of it fixing up that old stuff like the George Wells and London Coffee House, which we bought from the Preservation Society – some of it with condos or town houses. So other than the big “P” sign and the little hole that you can drive through into the garage, you don't know the garage is there, which to me is a reflection of the larger view towards development that, I think, the city is beginning to move down that path. The interest in having a larger vision reflected and having the Cooper-Roberts master plan that was just completed for the city is another example of kind of that larger view.

In terms of advice for... you know, speaking as an “evil developer” to the neighborhood, how to work with us “evil developers,” I’ve always been a great believer that the best approach is an open collaborative process that’s focused and disciplined. There’s times, money for everybody. And money has choices to where it goes. The city desperately needs... Hopefully there is a starting point where there is universal agreement – the city needs reinvestment. It needs new jobs. It needs new population. It continues to lose jobs and population. Losing tax base, the future is a desolate one indeed because tax rates will only go up and more people would keep leaving and we’ll never be able to provide great schools, libraries and all the wonderful services that we want. So if we agree that the starting point is the need for investment, then hopefully people will come together in a way of saying, “I’m not just against development, any development, no matter what the development is, forever, but I’m willing to sit down and work through, come up with a plan that makes sense.” And do it in a way ... as an incredibly diverse community that Fells Point represents with a dozen different organizations for its different fashions of businesses and residents, that the force itself, which the Fells Points Task Force is all about, which is terrific, to convene in one place the leadership of all those organizations and create a communication mechanism. So that as issues come up, as plans work to move forward, the community can engage in a way that a developer, a city agency person, doesn’t have to ... every time they go to a meeting have to deal with a group of folks going over the same issues for the fifth time. And every time you think you’ve worked out an agreement as to a plan, a height of a building, density, a use... They have to retread that ground because somebody new came in and said, “Even though those guys agreed to it, I don’t like it and we’re going to start over again...”

It’s hugely important for the community as a whole to create a process that’s rational, disciplined and focused so that doesn’t happen. And I think the Task Force is a long way to do it. The process we went through at Allied Chemical, where you had the same group sitting down week after week, working step by step through all the issues of a big complicated project like that worked well. We did the same thing with Fells Landing, did the same thing... beginning to do the same thing around the public spaces at Harbor Point in terms of how we engage with the community on that.

So it’s our hope that Fells Point can continue doing what it is doing – keep its very special spirit, its crankiness, and individualism, and yet at the same time, balance that with the big picture and a sense of obligation to the city as a whole in terms of what Fells Point and its waterfront can contribute to the city as a whole. It’s the front gate to its biggest employer – 10 blocks up the street at Hopkins Medical Campus – that’s a big responsibility for Fells Point in terms of the role it plays for everybody in our fair town. For that matter, for our state, since Baltimore is so hugely important to the vitality and prosperity of our region and state. I hope and expect Fells Pointers to continue and let this evolving tradition of cranky collaboration that, I think has been effective, where people are always free to speak and say their mind and are willing to stick to a deal, are willing to move forward, are willing to compromise, are willing to listen to fresh perspectives like the one Peter Cavaluzzi and Stan Eckstut said about maybe the waters edge should have buildings on piers – that’s the history of Fells Point. Maybe those buildings should be bigger than some of the buildings behind them because that’s the history of Fells Point. So I hope that that kind of listening goes...

[01:46:38;28]

With that comes the issue of density and how you deal with density and congestion. And one of the ironies is, is the greatest believers in smart growth in our city also often become the greatest opponents of density, and yet density is the name of the game... density and diversity is what cities are all about. And to some extent, some congestion is a good thing – it reflects that there is people – there is people working – people living – people wanted to be there. And not that you like being stuck in traffic, but if you could get right through the middle of town and drive around the harbor in 2 minutes without hitting any traffic, that'd be pretty spooky. Because that would mean you might as well turn the lights off on Baltimore. And the fact that it's a little bit harder to get around is, I think to some extent, goes with the territory.

Congestion is an issue. One of the biggest challenges for Baltimore is transit. I think the cities that are going to prosper in the next 20 years in America will be those with viable rail-based transit systems. Baltimore doesn't have one, has a couple little fragments... It now has a plan for a regional rail system. Unfortunately it's a little late and, given the environment in Annapolis and in Washington, it's much more difficult to see how the billions of dollars that are going to be needed to graduate our fragmented rail system to an effective rail system is tough.

But the plan's there. The red line that would connect east to west from Camden Yards, across the top of the Harbor into Fells Point, connecting up to Hopkin's Medical Campus, is all there. And I think, to me, as we look at traffic congestion, we should working even harder on transit. And that's coming up with things like Harbor Tran, Bob Embry's little scheme for a kind of nifty little trolley system on the north side of the harbor. The Water Taxi should be transit. We have the best opportunity for Water Taxi truly being the convenient, fun way to get around, not just a tourist thing, of any waterfront community in the country, because its so compact. It's not like London – there's no tunnels or bridges underneath that you have to go all the way around. And the quickest way to get to Fells Point from Dock Point is to go right across the Harbor. And that's why we are partnering and subsidizing with the Water Taxi the service back and forth. That's why we have the Canon Kayak Club so you can paddle back and forth.

So that would be my pitch on the density issue is not to blindly say that density is bad. Density is a good thing. Density is what creates the market that's going to support the merchants, that's going to support amenities that desperately need to make all this work. Density is what's going to create the tax base that we need to pay for the service. Density in the end is really kind of the essence of cities. So let's not try to kill projects just for the sake of killing density. Let's look at density in a creative way and how we can mitigate the downside of density, whether it's... Lets mitigate the buildings that are totally out of whack and scale to little 2 and 3 historic buildings. Lets try to do things that are more in context with what's around them, and let's try to figure out how to make the traffic work and get transit to get people out of their cars, so this all can hang together.

And actually, one of the best ways to get around is walking. That was Schaefer's genius to give them, you know, credit the old Jim Rouse, when you have lemons, you make lemonade, when you got killed on the road, what am I going to do? You know, I've got a defunct industrial maritime waterfront and some where, some how came up with the idea that this waterfront is an incredible, magical resource and launched the idea the 7 and a half mile promenade as forever being reserved for the public. And this incredible notion that the waterfront should be the great meeting place in our society. And it is to this day. I mean, anybody and everybody is comfortable in our Harbor – rich

people, poor people, black people, white people, city people, suburb people. That's the great meeting place. Schaefer had the idea. Everybody in the world's now come and seen our promenade and gone back and done it in their waterfront cities. And it's high time to get our promenade, after almost 30 years since Schaefer launched the idea, get the dawg on thing done. I think it will actually in fact get done.

So that's more ... Schools ... we could talk about schools forever, but that's another thing... I gotta run, unfortunately.

[Cut – minor closing conversation. 01:52:01;07]