



Roxbury Strategic Master Plan Oversight Committee Meeting
Monday, September 9, 2019
6:00 PM to 7:45pm
Bruce C. Bolling Municipal Building, 2300 Washington St, Roxbury

Attendees

RSMPOC Members: True-See Allah, Valeda Britton, Dorothea Jones, Nefertiti Lawrence, Marisa Luse, Charlotte Nelson, Norman Stenbridge, Susan Sullivan, Lorraine Payne Wheeler, Frank Williams. Curtis Rollins (RNC Representative),

Not in Attendance: Catherine Hardaway, Frederick Fairfield, Steven Godfrey, Kim Napoli, Jorge Martinez, City Councilor Kim Janey (Ex-Officio), Rep. Liz Miranda (Ex-Officio), Rep. Jon Santiago (Ex-Officio), Rep. Chynah Tyler (Ex-officio), State Senator Sonia Chang-Diaz (Ex-Officio)

BPDA Staff: Dana Whiteside, Muge Undemir, Charlotte Ong, Devin Quirk, Morgan McDaniel

DND Staff: Jessica Boatright

Link to PowerPoint: <http://www.bostonplans.org/getattachment/bb42b8fa-7781-467f-ad31-986b20559e87>

Opening

On September 9, 2019 Co-Chair Norman Stenbridge of the Roxbury Strategic Master Plan Oversight Committee called the meeting to order. It was asked if there were any members of the press or individuals recording the meeting. No individuals identified themselves. The meeting agenda, committee responsibilities, and Master Plan's original goals were reviewed, as well as the remaining 2019 RSMPOC public meeting calendar.

Planning Update

Muge Undemir, BPDA Senior Planner, presented the planning update. The update included an overview of the PLAN: Dudley Square process to date, including the latest workshops on May 20th, June 17th and July 22nd. The full process and set of slides are available on the website.

(<http://www.bostonplans.org/planning/planning-initiatives/plan-dudley-square>) The update reviewed the July 22nd PLAN: Dudley meeting for a presentation and update on the Blair Lot, Parcel 8, and Nawn RFPs which were held at Boston Water and Sewer Commission and included a Q&A with the City Archeologist. The comment period on this latest set of updates to the RFP language has been extended to September 20th 2019.

Parcel 8 + Nawn Factory

- Parcel 8 + Nawn Factory are within the Eustis Street Protection Area and underwent a historic review process. The Nawn Factory also has preservation guidelines owing to its historic significance. New language pertaining to the development objectives, urban design guidelines and evaluation criteria has been added to both the Parcel 8 and Nawn Factory RFPs. The latest versions are available on the website. ([Parcel 8](#), [Nawn Factory](#)) There is updated language in the development objectives such as an emphasis on jobs training and urban design guidelines that were made due to community feedback from the workshops and to reflect the citywide goals.

Blair Lot:

- The Blair Lot site will be used for housing and commercial uses especially cultural, art or entertainment uses, with open space provided on the property for community programming and access. New language pertaining to the development objectives, urban design guidelines and evaluation criteria were added to the RFP ([Blair Lot RFP](#)).

To review the changes made to the specific changes to the RFPs, [please review the presentation from the RSMPOC meeting.](#)

Muge Udemir then introduced the evaluation criteria for the RFPs for Parcel 8 and Blair Lot, and changes that were made to the Good Job Standards, which were criteria that the community has emphasized. The upcoming milestones and timeline were reviewed and the RFP comment period will close on September 20th 2019, with the vote on Parcel 8, Nawn Factory and Blair Lot taking place at the October 7th 2019 RSMPOC meeting.

Good Jobs Standards Update

Following the Planning Update, Chuck Turner of the Boston Jobs Coalition, read a statement prepared by the Boston Jobs Coalition on their perspective on the RFP language for these three parcels. The written statement will be sent to the RSMPOC and the BPDA and circulated more widely. The Boston Jobs Coalition launched the Good Jobs Standards in 2014 to protect the workers' financial interests and to prevent them from being economically driven from the community due to development. Chuck Turner emphasized that the Boston Jobs Coalition is not opposed to development but development needs to come with protections for the interests of workers. Given the upcoming projects in the pipeline around Dudley Square, the BJC notes that the income base of the community is likely to change and in the future when these developments are completed, it is all the more critical that the developments need to provide protection for workers of the community to prepare for the incoming surge of market-rate housing and urges for the RFPs for the three lots to include a requirement that the developers adhere to the Good Jobs Standards.

Community Comments

- A community member noted that the units are not for people of the neighborhood so there needs to be additional protection for the community as the market rate will go up so community members should be employed in these new businesses and voiced his support for the Good Jobs Standards to be included as a requirement in the RFPs.

- An ACE representative voiced her support for the Good Jobs Standards and sustainability and asked why the language for the 30% AMI requirement was taken out of the criteria. She also asked how the Good Jobs Standards could be enforced after the completion of the development. Devin Quirk, BPDA Director of Real Estate responded that there is a mechanism of compliance for Boston jobs reporting in the construction process and noted that there have been ongoing conversations with the Boston Jobs Coalition on enforcement and monitoring of the permanent jobs created though the details on how this will work out have not been fully worked out. The Blair Lot will likely be a long-term lease and in the lease there could also be language that includes enforcement of the Good Jobs Standards and these details can still be refined before the developer begins any construction.
 - The community member followed-up and responded that community oversight and transparency in the whole process is critical. Devin Quirk (BPDA) agreed and encouraged more community members to join the PRC and be part of this process. He emphasized that developers have to set aside 10% for very low income households and that this is a firm commitment as any affordable housing is going to require housing at the deepest level in particular if they are seeking funding from the Department of Neighborhood Development.
- A community member asked about ownership and affordability and AMI and how they are connected. Muge Udemir (BPDA) responded that ownership has the same affordability breakdowns as rental has, meaning that ownership levels should reflect 1/3, 1/3, 1/3 as it would for rentals, adding that Blair Lot will have an ownership requirement.
- A community member asked about affordable housing and if the City put aside sufficient finances for the affordable housing goals it has. Devin Quirk (BPDA) responded that the City has put aside a \$20 million commitment recently of direct city subsidy for creating affordable housing in neighborhoods. With the City's commitment and the state's commitment as well as federal subsidies there could be sufficient funds.
 - The community member followed-up and noted that these funds are only for rental but his question was on affordable ownership. Jessica Boatright, Deputy Directory Neighborhood Housing Development noted that the City has previously been the sole funder of affordable ownership but recently the state has set aside funds for affordable home ownership which makes the City more confident in being able to fund these projects.
- A community member asked about the Eustis Burying Ground which is one of America's oldest cemetery and noted the historical significance that could be damaged if there are new developments directly adjacent to the cemetery, particularly as it relates to shadows. Muge Udemir (BPDA) responded that there are restrictions placed on the use and development of the adjacent parcels and that these parcels will undergo the same review process that are applicable to historic areas through the Boston Landmarks Commission and the Massachusetts Historic Commission. These restrictions are published through state law.

- A Boston Jobs Coalition member noted that the agenda of the Monitoring Committee are extremely full and that the standards for the projects are much higher and that there is a need for careful oversight of the development of the parcels.
- A community member asked about Melnea Cass Boulevard and noted that it was part of a boulevard planning district and what this indicated. Muge Udemir (BPDA) responded that it was part of the boulevard planning district and this language is included in the RFP, and that this would have an effect on the ground floor uses, zoning and public realm setbacks etc. with this information included in the recap of the meeting.
 - Another community member followed-up and noted that the latest beautification project to cut down the trees and install new lighting was not helpful and not environmentally-friendly.
- A community member voiced her concerns that the developers will be included in the process of discussing good jobs standards without significant community inputs. Devin Quirk (BPDA) responded that the Agency hopes to take steps to improve and assuage these concerns in future and that the RFPs are only just the start of the process, and community members' inputs are highly valued in the entire process and that the City will strive to maintain inclusivity in the entire process.

Development Project Update

Following this discussion on the RFP language, Dana Whiteside, BPDA Deputy Director for Community Economic Development gave a high level description of the following development projects. Each development team was present to answer RSMPOC member questions and then audience questions.

Bartlett Place: <http://www.bostonplans.org/projects/development-projects/bartlett-station-lot-d>

- Bartlett is a multi-phased project proposed/managed by Nuestra CDC and Windale Development Company, which has been designated to Bartlett Place LLC. It consists of commercial, residential, and office/commercial. There are a number of components divided by building type and is a multi-phased project.
- There are five phases to this development and the development team will be submitting Article 80 and for the planned development area Lot F parcels which will both have public meetings attached to them. There will be a project review update discussion on October 3rd.

P-3 Tremont Crossing Project:

[http://www.bostonredevelopmentauthority.org/projects/development-projects/tremont-crossing-\(p-3\)](http://www.bostonredevelopmentauthority.org/projects/development-projects/tremont-crossing-(p-3))

- The project is a partnership between Feldco Development Corporation and the National Center for African-American Artists. It hosts the NCAAA museum as its cornerstone but also the creation of upwards of 700 residential units and other commercial uses. The project received final designation in April 2019. Tremont Crossing is approximately a \$500 million project.

- There is a project review discussion proposed for October 16th, 2019.

Parcel 10 - Madison Tropical:

<http://www.bostonredevelopmentauthority.org/projects/development-projects/madison-tropical-parcel-10>

- The development is designated. This is an approximant \$57 million project and is proposed by Madison CDC and Tropical Foods. The Tropical Foods in operational and the next components of the project, is 2101 Washington, now 9 Williams which is completed and fully occupied. 2085 Washington is under design review and proposed for commercial/ office.
- The third phase is now proposed to include affordable housing (rental / ownership or combination of both) and the development team will submit for PRC approval. There may be an inclusion of consideration for Roxbury residents as part of this development.
- The next project update discussion is on October 10th, 2019.

P 9 – Melnea Hotel and Residences:

<http://www.bostonredevelopmentauthority.org/projects/development-projects/melnea-hotel-and-residences>

- 137 million square feet project, approximately \$50 million dollar development cost. Now the focus is starting construction on the residential component with construction on the hotel underway.

RSMPOC Comments

- A RSMPOC asked where we are currently at with Tremont Crossing. Dana Whiteside clarified that the lease has not been signed yet though the developer has final designation.
 - RSMPOC member followed-up and asked when the lease will be finalized. Dana Whiteside replied that the hope is for the lease to be finalized before the end of next month.
- A RSMPOC member asked as of Aug 30 2019 the Melnea hotel is still waiting for Eversource permitting. An Urbanica representative replied that after 6-7 months of waiting they are starting to bring gas to the site now.
- A RSMPOC member asked about Madison Tropical and the change of the use and noted that the building will go towards the goal of affordable housing in Roxbury and asked for more explanation on the changes that will be made since the City has talked a lot about buildings that have mixed uses and if there were any alternatives to only developing housing. Dana Whiteside responded that the development team has researched extensively and attempted to find tenants that can go into that built space but were not able to find tenants that could find sufficient funding to build appropriately. Given this the development team decided to go with housing based on market drivers. A Madison representative replied that the difference between the cost of building office space and the market rent of office space in Roxbury was too large as the rent was too low and they were not able to find interest even after many marketing outreach over 4 years in their tenant search. The tenants that they were able to find included charter schools that were not appropriate for the site. Nonprofits were interested in the site but

were unable to have rents above market rate approved by their boards and noted that in response to this challenge the team decided to adopt affordable housing as the alternative use.

Community Comments

- A community member asked about the 59,000 sq ft commercial space listed on the Tropical-Madison site and if it was new, not inclusive of Tropical Foods. Dana Whiteside confirmed that it was new commercial space.
 - A community member followed-up asked about the comment about being “above market rate” and said that it was good that the housing would go towards the community and residents and hopes that the development would actually be affordable and that the community needs more affordable housing and that this was a better solution than office space.
- A community member asked about the designation process when a developer gets designated to do a commercial or retail space and for economic reasons has to change the use and what the public process would be and also asked when the lease for Tremont Crossing will be finalized. A BPDA staff member responded that the designation came through the Article 80 process and the development team discussed with the PRC on its latest thinking and project change. The review documents will be shared with the PRC and the public. The Tremont Crossing lease will hopefully be finalized by the end of Oct.
- A community member asked about the Tropical Foods site and the changes to the building and if the October 10th meeting is the best time to ask questions, emphasizing that they support home ownership but has concerns on the public process and requested for inclusion of community input on the proposed change in the use and that there could be mixed use on the site with some commercial. A BPDA staff member responded that there still is time for public inputs and that the development team’s proposal will say more about the mixed use proposal.
- A community member said that he was excited about changes to make Roxbury more affordable and whether this can be used in upcoming developments to help people who have been displaced to return to the community and also asked if there were any information on the number of units. A BPDA staff member responded that the unit counts and breakdown have been reflected on the RSMPOC presentation and can be found on the website. A BPDA staff member also responded that there are proposals for Roxbury resident preference to be included in future developments such as the Tropical Madison site. The Madison developer representative responded that other sites like 75 Dudley will likely also include Roxbury preference in the lottery.
- A community member said that she understands the conundrum on what is happening on the Madison-Tropical lot and if perhaps there have been different outreach besides looking to hospitals to fill the space and whether the developer can develop that site and offer it as commercial space since Roxbury used to be a shopping destination and there is a need to grow the economic and commercial base of Roxbury instead of just turning it into affordable housing and to find a way to allow the community to keep growing instead of only being tall residential

towers and to make Roxbury as a destination. Dana Whiteside responded that with regards to the proposal of Parcel 10 Phase 3 to change from commercial to mixed use, the designated developer cannot be changed without good reason. The development team has done due diligence by doing their market research and good track record of developing mixed affordability, the mixed use development could still address some of these concerns raised by the community member and that for the economic viability of commercial and retail parcels, there also needs to be sufficient residential base to support these retail options so the BPDA and RSMPOC will keep a close eye on these developments and balance between housing and commercial.

- A community member asked about the final analysis on the condition of the soil and what will be released from the soil and requested that the information be made public so that the community can understand what the allowable level of pollution will be and other environmental concerns. A BPDA staff member answered that this information and the clean-up plan will be made available on the website.

A RSMPOC member closed the meeting and announced that the next meeting is on October 7th 2019 and there will be a vote on the RFPs for Parcel 8, Nawn Factory and Blair Lot.

Meeting adjourned at 7.43pm.