



Roxbury Strategic Master Plan Oversight Committee Meeting  
Monday, March 2, 2020  
6:00 PM to 7:45pm  
Boston Water and Sewer Commission, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor Training Room, 980  
Harrison Avenue

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## **Attendees**

**RSMPOC Members:** Valeda Britton, Dorothea Jones, Nefertiti Lawrence, Marisa Luse, Charlotte Nelson, Norman Stembridge, Lorraine Payne Wheeler, Frederick Fairfield, Susan Sullivan, Frank Williams,

**Not in Attendance:** Catherine Hardaway, Steven Godfrey, True-See Allah, 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:** Muge Udemir and Naoise McDonnell

**City Staff:** City Councilor Mejia, Representatives from Councilor Janey, Mejia, and Wu's offices.

**Link to PowerPoint:** <http://www.bostonplans.org/getattachment/3fbdfeee-a4d5-4fc1-8adc-0dc79b22e0ec>

## **Opening**

On March 2, 2020 Co-Chair Norman Stembridge of the Roxbury Strategic Master Plan Oversight Committee called the meeting to order. He introduced members of the oversight committee and addressed the goals and mission of the committee. He then introduced, Marisa Lopez, Newmarket Director of Partnerships and Job Placement, who gave an overview of her role in connecting residents with jobs in the Newmarket area.

## **Brief Overview**

Muge Udemir, BPDA Senior Planner, welcomed residents to the meeting and proceeded with the planning update.

## **Planning Update**

Muge Udemir, BPDA Senior Planner, presented the planning update, which included an overview of the PLAN: Nubian Square process to date, including the latest workshop on February 24<sup>th</sup>, a draft RFP review for Crescent Parcel and Malcolm X & Putnam Parcel. The next workshop has been scheduled for March 23<sup>rd</sup>, a second draft RFP review for Crescent Parcel and Malcolm X & Putnam Parcel, which will have incorporated some of the comments received from the community since the first draft RFP review

workshop. The update also included an overview of the upcoming meetings and deadlines. This included Blair Lot and Nawn Factory proposals have been submitted, they will be posted online by next week, with developer presentations to follow thereafter with more details to come. Parcel 8 submissions are due by May 27<sup>th</sup>, 2020. Lastly, 2147 Washington and 75-81 Dudley have received Board Approval, 135 Dudley is undergoing Article 80 Large Project Review, and 40-50 Warren undergoing Article 80 Small Project Review. The next PLAN: Nubian Square Workshop is scheduled for March 23<sup>rd</sup>, and the next RSMPOC meeting on April 6<sup>th</sup>.

- During the update a Community Member asked where the developer presentations for Blair Lot are and Nawn Factory will be held.
  - Muge responded the location is To Be Determined at this time.
- A Community Member also asked when is the end of the comment period for the draft RFP review of Crescent Parcel and Malcolm X & Putnam Parcel.
  - Muge responded that comments will be accepted on an ongoing basis, but March 9<sup>th</sup> is the deadline for comments to be incorporated into the revised draft RFPs, which will then undergo review again at a workshop on March 23<sup>rd</sup>.
- City Councilor Mejia asked who is eligible to submit comments and what does the process of solicitation of comments entail.
  - Muge replied that comments are open to all, while outreach mostly comes in the form of email newsletters, local newspaper advertisements, and word of mouth from local advocacy groups.
- City Councilor Mejia then asked if door knocking is a method that is used for outreach, and what other engagement efforts can be used.
  - Muge responded that door knocking is not currently employed as a method for outreach, but passing out flyers, especially at and around the project site is another form of outreach.
- City Councilor Mejia then asked about language access and if those flyers are translated into other languages.
  - Muge replied that they are generally not translated, but that they can be.
- A Community Member then asked if leaflets can be distributed to immediate abutters and streets of a project site.
  - Muge responded that the BPDA does not usually send letters out to abutters for the RFP process but can do so for these sites.

## **Development Update**

Muge Undemir also presented the development update. This was brief, as it was mentioned there had not been much progress on developments at this time, except for three projects. Bartlett Place has been designated and will be holding a meeting to update the project review committee in March. Madison Tropical Commercial Development has also been designated and will have a meeting with the PRC scheduled for April 9<sup>th</sup>. Lastly, 2147 Washington received its final designation on February 13, 2020,

and will be present at the meetings moving forward in order to update residents on the progress of the development.

### **RSMPOC and Community Questions and Comments**

- A RSMPOC member commented that at the last Bartlett PRC meeting on December 5<sup>th</sup>, 2019, only 2-3 members of the committee were present. Also she, and the PRC, had not received any notification that the next meeting for the PRC was scheduled for March 9<sup>th</sup>, and that it is very important that the PRC receive notification of when and where they are to convene much sooner than the short notice they are being given now. She ended by stating that getting the runaround from the developer was unacceptable and that the PRC should have much more advanced notice on their meetings.
  - A developer responded that they are not responsible for convening PRC meetings, and that they received information late as well, in regards to their subsequent responsibilities.
  - A RSMPOC member replied that PRC notifications should be published online and that PRC oversight needs to be improved.
  - Muge commented that if commitment level of the PRC members decreases over time, the PRC can and will be reassembled. Also, if the PRC is not ready to convene or receives notification too late to have significant participation, their meeting can and will be rescheduled. Due to the delayed notification and lack of meeting location, the PRC meeting scheduled for March 9<sup>th</sup> will be rescheduled.
- City Councilor Mejia followed up with a comment that there is room for improvement if people are receiving notifications too late, and asked several questions such as what processes are in place for relaying information to PRC members, who is accountable for relaying information, how can this process be monitored and improved, how is the RSMPOC appointed, and what opportunity is there for non RSMPOC members to be heard.
  - Muge explained that the process involves postponing meetings if notifications and information are not relayed in time. Information to PRC members is relayed through the project managers at the BPDA.
  - RSMPOC members are appointed by the Mayor, with recommendations solicited from elected officials and community members. Interested residents are also encouraged to self-nominate. PRC members are also nominated by elected officials, community members, and through self-nomination.
  - There are many opportunities for non-PRC and RSMPOC members to be heard. This can happen at any public meeting through comments, or submission of comments online. Engagement and input is also coordinated from the start – writing the RFP to selecting developer to Article 80, until the development is built.
  - The PRC is responsible for reviewing proposals, which includes hearing community comments, then recommending what they deem to be the most advantageous proposal to the RSMPOC.

- A Community Member asked how is PRC selected.
  - Muge responded that after nominees' names are submitted, the planning staff and project managers reach out to the Mayor's Office on Neighborhood Services, and other offices throughout the City, in order to receive recommendations for members. Final selection and approvals are designated by the BPDA, if the parcels are owned by the BPDA, and by the City, if the parcels are owned by DND.
- A RSMPOC member mentioned that this process is included and explained in the Roxbury Strategic Master Plan, and that being on a PRC is a large commitment.
  - Muge reiterated that if PRC member numbers or commitment level drops, the PRC is to be reconstituted and nominations are open to everyone.
  - An RSMPOC member commented that a list of all PRC and IAG (Impact Advisory Group) members for each individual project should be provided or posted online.
- A RSMPOC member reiterated Councilor Mejia's point that engagement and language access is very important, and that leafletting abutters is a good start. Also that community members should have some input on selection of PRC members. Lastly, the important notes that community members would like to consistently hear are: when are the meetings, what happened at the meetings, and how can I voice my opinion or become more involved in the process.
  - Muge responded that the website can be updated to share information on those important questions.
  - A RSMPOC member responded that the PRC is supposed to work closely with developers at these meetings, so that this can be brought to RSMPOC to make better representation of community. There should be no new information from developers at the last minute.
  - City Councilor Mejia suggested identifying barriers to engagement, as well as assessing community member engagement numbers as a measurable metric, with an emphasis on engaging immediately local residents and abutters.
- An RSMPOC member recommended that the website be updated to be made more accessible, specifically outlining the rules of engagement and how people can participate, what to expect at a meeting, how to prepare for a meeting, and list of organizations.
- A Community Member asked is there a standard protocol for time period requirements [for PRC and RSMPOC members]. Also that members of the committees should be re-vetted every so often to ensure they are still able to commit to the process.
  - Muge replied that most of the RSMPOC has been reassembled within the past year, and that PRC members are re-vetted if participation is lacking.
- City Councilor Mejia and a Community Member both inquired how RSMPOC members can be contacted by members of the community.
  - Muge responded that community members are able to and should contact RSMPOC members directly by any means they have available. Also when RSMPOC members are unable to be present at a meeting they are presented with notes of the meeting.

- A RSMPOC member commented that there should be better/more communication between all stakeholders.
  - Muge responded that developers will continue to provide updates and any changes at RSMPOC meetings.
- A Reclaim Roxbury organizer offered up the official requests of the organization, Reclaim Roxbury in regards to Parcel 3. Requests included announcing all PRC members at meetings regarding their specific project, announce all meetings to the community and not just workshops, allow community members to have more input and involvement in economic development discussions, and providing community members with the same access to information that the RSMPOC receives, among other requests. Also extended an invitation to RSMPOC to attend the next Reclaim Roxbury meeting on March 21<sup>st</sup>. More information can be found on their website at [reclaimroxbury.org](http://reclaimroxbury.org)
  - A RSMPOC member replied that at community meetings, a select few of the same people show up, and that there should be one large conversation where all stakeholders come together. Also framing letters at strategic locations to inform the community of these conversations.
- A Community Member asked what is being done to make retail spaces in new development more affordable/accessible to local entrepreneurs, what consideration goes into the physical sizes of housing units of new developments, and how will the changes and comments discussed today be addressed.
  - Muge responded that changes will be addressed by BPDA staff and reviewed at the next community meeting. Unit sizes can be requested by community members through the RFP comment process. Lastly, that anyone interested in starting a business should connect with Small Business Development department at the Mayor's Office of Economic Development who have specific programs that work to increase access of commercial space for local business owners. She state that the office works closely with the BPDA and is happy to connect residents to vacant commercial spaces.
  - City Councilor Mejia commented that it is important to have a definition of affordable within the context of this neighborhood, including commercial space. She would like to be invited to review a project in the early stages of the development process to gain a better understanding of the process.
- A Community Member voiced that he is not in support of any marijuana dispensaries located in Nubian Square.
- A Community Member asked does Northeastern University come under the purview of RSMPOC, and if not, why not, because they should.
  - Muge replied that they are not under the purview of the RSMPOC.
  - A Community Member stated that public land should not be going to a private institution, especially when they do not pay their share of taxes.
  - Former City Councilor Tito Jackson commented that DND parcels have been included in the development process of Northeastern, yet Northeastern has not been involved in

any community process, and that their Institutional Master Plan and development has not hit the goals that have been laid out in the Roxbury Strategic Master Plan.

- Muge responded that we will reach out their Community Engagement and Affairs department and ask Northeastern to attend our meetings going forward.
- A Community Member commented that Northeastern used to attend RSMPOC meetings in years passed and suggested that Northeastern should cease their development until they become involved with the RSMPOC again.
- A RSMPOC member stated we need research on why, when, and how Northeastern stopped attending RSMPOC meetings.
- Muge reiterated that we will ask Northeastern to join and bring information on their Institutional Master Plan, and at the next BCDC (Boston Civic Design Commission) meeting on March 3<sup>rd</sup>, Northeastern will be present and we will restate these requests.

Norman Stembridge, Co-Chair of the RSMPOC closed the meeting and reminded everyone that the PRC meeting on March 9<sup>th</sup> is to be postponed and the next workshop would be on March 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2020 to review the Crescent Parcel and Malcolm X & Putnam Parcels.

Meeting adjourned at 7:55pm.