



Meeting Notes
March 4, 2013
6:00 PM – 7:45 PM
Dudley Square Public Library
65 Warren Street

RSMPOC Members Present: Darnell Williams, Jorge Martinez, Kevin Cherry, Charlotte Nelson, Frank Williams; New Members: Valeda Britton, Deejo Jibril, Nicole Flynt Thomas, and Bing Broderick; Elected: Councilor Tito Jackson, Representative Carlos Henriquez; BRA: Hugues Monestime; Notes: Kijana Rose

Darnell Williams calls the meeting to order at 6:14 PM. He welcomes newly appointed committee members, and asks those that are in the audience to join them at the table.

Councilor Jackson welcomes new members to the committee and states that he disagrees with the decision to move forward with bio-lab on behalf of Boston University, as some of the new committee members are from BU. He explains that it is a disappointment that such a hazardous lab will be operating in the community, and that it is scary that it happened over the objection of many people in and out of the room.

Charlette Nelson welcomes the new members, but echoes what Councilor Jackson says about the bio-lab. States for the record: that just because someone is sitting on the committee from BU, the committee in no way supports the decision to move forward with the lab.

Valeda Britton states that she hears and appreciates what is being said.

Darnell Williams then motions to move to the agenda items. He states that there is a slight change in order: Melnea Partners, LLC will be presenting first.

Kamran Zehedi states that for the past month Melnea Partners, LLC has been successful in getting the go-ahead from the BRA for the project design. Regarding the issue of the 20 foot encroachment, he states that this is now the fourth time the design has been modified. The last design was the one with the 20 foot hangover, and the BRA felt that was not right, so they brought it down to somewhere closer to 7 feet and were granted approval. He explains that they've lost square footage in commercial space, and initially lost around five units, but they were still able to

maintain the 145 hotel rooms. They didn't want to start completely over, which is why they worked so hard to maintain that number, but the main issue they faced was successfully coordinating the construction face, and making it so that the parking extends 20 feet from the sidewalk, and that the second floor is now 7 feet above the sidewalk. The consultant has made significant progress, though that was postponed because of the 20 foot encroachment. KZ states that next week is the pre-scoping meeting. They have sent their application to various development agencies, and now the BTD and the consultant for Melnea Cass have promised that there will be no more changes made to the design. KZ met with the consultant privately to ask for assurance that there would be no change, and now feels confident that Melnea Partners can move forward with the business plan and the filing of article 80. The architects have been very patient with all the changes, although they have been faced with the other issue of competition for the Aloft project that is currently taking place in South Boston. He states that this is one of their biggest worries. Roxbury should be a place where they are creating affordable but high quality projects, and in South Boston they are currently creating subsidies for mid level hotels. Previous documents have made this deal seem much bigger, and when discussed with the project planners they stated that Roxbury is a completely different market from South Boston, and there would be no Aloft in either location. Additionally, the convention center is subsidizing a large amount of money for a hotel to be built there. They are listing it at \$120,000 per year, for nine years, for a 500-room hotel. This is making life much more difficult for Roxbury to be developed at a faster pace because they are not creating a market for middle income customers at affordable prices. Still, they are excited to move forward at the end of this month.

Darnell Williams opens up the floor for questions to Melnea Partners, LLC from the RSMPOC.

Representative Henriquez asks KZ if the BRA promised no more changes to the design.

Kamran Zehedi clarifies that it was not the BRA who made that promise, but the project consultants.

Representative Henriquez states that he doesn't believe they will be able to make good on such a promise, as several residents, himself included, do not agree with the widening of Melnea Cass Blvd.

Kamran Zehedi confirms that he is trying to make sure that it is not widened anymore.

Representative Henriquez asks how prepared they are to take input from the residents within the Article 80 filing process?

Kamran Zehedi states that the architects are good at working with the community and the city, and it is the nature of the organization to respond positively to the community.

Councilor Jackson points out that in Governor Patrick's 1.9 billion dollar fund for public development, the Urban Ring is not included. He says that the committee wouldn't want Roxbury to build a center lane that doesn't end up connecting to anything, because that would be a travesty.

Darnell Williams asks Charlotte Nelson whether the funding for the Urban Ring was lined up to come from federal or state dollars?

Charlette Nelson responds that when she served on the committee she was surprised to see the funding come through from the city.

Darnell Williams asks CN to clarify which department the money was drawn from.

Charlotte Nelson confirms that it was not federal money, and if it were, the committee was never informed as such. She then offers that there is an upcoming meeting where this question will be answered.

Hugues Monestime clarifies that money was made available from the city to redesign Melnea Cass.

Darnell Williams asks where the money will come from.

Hugues Monestime reaffirms that it was from the BTDF.

Darnell Williams explains that the Urban Ring design also includes the harbor-walk and transportation to connect other cities to Boston, Longwood Medical Center, and the Emerald Necklace.

Councilor Jackson notes that in collaboration with the BRA, there is a great deal of resources being put into the innovation district to ensure their success, and the committee should be looking to ensure the success of Roxbury as well. He claims that the committee must make sure that whatever is necessary should happen, as Roxbury is a highly coveted area because it was the first place in the city. He urges the BRA to consider the timing on this issue, and includes that the redesign of Melnea Cass affects both sides of the street, so the magnitude of all projects

should be brought into consideration on this issue, and not just the one Melnea Partners, LLC is presenting.

Darnell Williams offers that the committee should also look into the funding sources of other comparable nature of the linkage of dollars that comes from the other projects. He then opens up the floor for questions from the community.

Reggie Jackson (community) tells the committee that he is not sure he understands the funding piece as it relates to the widening of Melnea Cass Blvd. He restates that there was money coming from the BRA for the planning portion, but wants to know about the funding for construction?

Darnell Williams attempts to restate the comments on behalf of the committee: HM stated that there was money from the City for the design; CN stated that the oversight committee was not informed of any specific amount, but is fairly certain that it wasn't federal dollars; Councilor Jackson believes there was money in the Governor's 1.9 billion dollar budget for Melnea Cass Blvd, but not the Urban Ring.

Charlotte Nelson clarifies that she doesn't remember the exact amount for the design and expansion of Melnea Cass, but she does know that the money is not from the federal money for the Urban Ring project, as it is largely under the umbrella of transportation. She says that Pat Hoey and his group (BTD) have been looking at the project from a transportation perspective and tying it in with the original Urban Ring plan. She again asks that the community join her for the meeting next Wednesday (3/13/13) to ask questions, particularly about funding.

Darnell Williams thanks CN for her comments, and thanks KZ for his time. He then introduces the representatives from the Bartlett Place Development.

Arnold Johnson lets the committee know that things are finally moving. He is happy to announce that through their long months of hard work with the oversight committee and the BRA and the community, they've finally filed their expanded PNF (Article 80) on March 1st. In addition to this they filed a public notice with the BRA requesting a hearing for the public comment period for the remediation. LSPS has a draft community relations plan, and he explains that on March 12th there will be a public meeting from 6-8pm at B-2 station to respond to any questions the community might have regarding the impact of the project.

Marcia Thornhill clarifies that they will present a set of alternatives that LSPS has created at said meeting.

Darnell Williams asks the representatives for more information on the 8.3 acre site to be remediated.

Marcia Thornhill responds by saying it is actually 8.5 acres of land, but not all of it has to be remediated. She explains that if one is facing the site, it is the first building on the left where the majority of remediation is.

Darnell Williams asks if everyone is clear which building it is that MT is referring to?

Arnold Johnson offers that they are holding another public meeting on March 13th where the Project Review Committee will present the project again and answer any questions the community may have about the design. The meeting will also be from 6-8pm at B-2 station.

Darnell Williams asks if the PRC was not supposed to be present this evening.

Marcia Thornhill explains that they gave an informal presentation last week, but on the 13th it will be a formal presentation that the BRA is hosting as part of the Article 80 filing.

Arnold Johnson elaborates that the informal meeting was to let the PRC know about some of the preliminary concerns and to listen to any comments, as they didn't want to file Article 80 only to be contested with major objections on behalf of the committee and/or the community.

Darnell Williams confirms that he attended the meeting, and it was very informative. He states that the PRC was very receptive of all comments. He then asks the presenters to continue.

Marcia Thornhill signals that their presentation has concluded.

Arnold Johnson adds that the expanded PNF has a 45 day comment period, and that they'll be filing the PDA within the next week. That document has a 30 day comment period, so they are expecting both to conclude around the same time.

Darnell Williams asks for questions or comments from the committee.

Representative Henriquez says that while he is not sure of the exact radius for notifying the community of the filing, he would like raise a point that he doesn't believe it is far enough, as a large part of the population doesn't have internet access and isn't getting their news from traditional sources anymore. He asks if

anyone will go above and beyond the standard requirements and flyer around the community.

Marcia Thornhill explains that they intend to flyer for the meetings on the 12th and 13th and introduces www.bartlettplace.net as a new resource for all information on the project.

Councilor Jackson states that he is happy that this project is moving forward and that there is an official document in front of the committee. He thanks the representatives for keeping him up to date throughout the process, and warns that there are important negotiations still to occur.

Charlotte Nelson requests that the website named please be listed on the BRA website, and subsequently sent to the oversight committee. She also suggests that they then do an e-blast to broaden the social network of who is receiving this information.

Nicole Flynt Thomas asks what is going on with the mediation process. She states that she wasn't at the last meeting, but she heard that they were planning on having events in one building that could potentially be harmful to the community.

Marcia Thornhill defers the events portion to Mark Matel. She offers that the mediation process will be furthered at the meeting on the 12th, when LSPS gives more details with a map to show the identified hot spots. She explains that there were chemicals used to maintain buses, and underground lifts of the buses may have leaked, so those are the chemicals that need to be remediated. The buildings themselves were also made with hazardous, outdated materials, so they must come down, but in a special way that adheres to public health/safety guidelines.

Arnold Johnson clarifies that most of the contamination is inside the buildings, and they are secure.

Jorge Martinez confirms that they will flyer the immediate abutters?

Marcia Thornhill and Arnold Johnson say yes.

Jorge Martinez points out that the last report is dated 2/1/13. He then asks for an update of the market piece, as they representatives have continuously mentioned an anchor, but he hasn't seen anything else come forward.

Arnold Johnson explains that they are still working on a grocer that would be conducive to the site. They're looking at Harvest Co-op and Foodies to start.

Jean Alonso (community) says that they've talked about grocery stores before and it occurred to her that the former offer for Trader Joes to come to Dorchester to offer second hand food should maybe be offered to Roxbury instead.

Arnold Johnson says that in order to attract that type of grocer, there needs to be a ground swell. Trader Joe's has stated that they aren't looking for urban markets. AJ believes they need choices in the neighborhood, not day or two old foods that people don't want. The community should be served in an equitable way, with a nice restaurant and grocery store and healthy food offerings.

Councilor Jackson responds by saying that the BRA should take note of this when doing zoning approvals, as that would be a good time to have a conversation with Trader Joe's about not having an urban mandate. People should have the opportunity to buy good food. Given the fact that Roxbury is an urban village and so many assets are being built into it, it might be worth it to impress this fact upon the people from Trader Joe's at that time.

John Walsh (community) describes this as zip code discrimination. He stresses that the BRA should be taking note of this type of situation, as some grocers won't even consider certain zip codes.

Darnell Williams thanks the committee and community for their comments. He then introduces the representatives from P-3 Partners, LLC.

Barry Gaither begins by giving a brief history of the partnership between P-3 Partners and Feldco, which developed into the Tremont Crossing project. This is a mixed-use project that they've been working on for a long time, and they appreciate the eagerness of the community to see it to completion. Last year, and at the turn of this year, they were asked to provide much more insight regarding that completion. At the last meeting they committed to an iteration of intermediate review discussions. They've scheduled those meetings for March 18th and April 15th. That will be a good time to talk in greater detail about the issue of capital blend and tenancy. The submitted text offers a good description of the progress they've made on the project.

Jeffrey Feldman follows up by sharing some of the work they've done on urban design and architecture. They've been doing a lot of work in being responsive to the needs of tenants and how they can be proactive in responding to their needs. They've begun working with a new architecture team, Cambridge Associates, who will be helping with the commercial aspects of the project. They've considered how to be inclusive and responsive to the surrounding community, particularly those on Tremont and Whittier Street. He introduces that there are exciting

redevelopments potentially being planned for the Whittier Street Apartments, so they are trying to remain as open minded as possible throughout this process.

Barry Gaither clarifies that while Jeffrey mentioned Cambridge Associates, the other team members that were already there will still remain.

Jeffrey Feldman agrees that Cambridge Associates is an addition, not a replacement by any means.

Darnell Williams addresses the issue of funding, which the representatives mentioned at the last meeting that they were going after a few funding opportunities. He asks for any update on the progress of this issue?

Jeffrey Feldman states that they've begun the process of scheduling conversations with the city relative to the 121A agreement. He explains that that process has begun by way of the Partners giving the city a download and some information they needed to vet the program. The negotiations will continue.

Darnell Williams concludes that there is nothing to report.

Councilor Jackson notes that it is important that this project be pushed forward. This is a huge parcel of land, and while he is happy to see that there are some new potential sources of funding, he points out that some of the named programs are very competitive as they offer funding to very high profile projects. He offers the Vortex construction on the waterfront as an example, citing that its development created thousands of high paying jobs.

Darnell Williams points out that they committee originally raised the questions being addressed months ago.

Jeffrey Feldman states that there was initially one allocation created for the city of Boston last summer, but that has now been increased to two.

Councilor Jackson offers that an added pressure arises in considering the budget cuts the city has been facing. He reminds the representatives that 121A is also a citywide source, and those aren't easy to obtain either. Those are granted on behalf of the city with great discretion, and the projects must make sense. Much of this project has to be funded with private money, and CJ was happy to see that they've connected to the various programs out there. He stresses that 320 million dollars is something that needs to be lined up, and the committee would like to see movement with who they're planning to market to as potential tenants. Before they can gain confidence with the Article 80 process, there is urgency to moving the Parcel P-3 project forward and getting people to work in the community. He

finally urges the representatives to think further about where the money will come from, and to not depend on the government programs they have named.

Jeffrey Feldman assures the Councilor and the committee that they wanted to wait until there was actually gravity behind the proposed projects. He reminds the audience that they've been doing hard work on the progress of this for over 18 months, and since they've had the I-Cubed filed for 14 months now, he is confident that they are at the head of the queue. He is aware that they are competing against other development projects all over the state, but at the head of the queue, they have a priority in securing those dollars.

Councilor Jackson says that his understanding was not that the program was sequentially based, but more focused on the quality of the application. He understands that there are several rounds, but reminds P-3 that they are being graded against other very qualified applications.

Jeffrey Feldman agrees with the Councilor and says that he believes their cursory conversations with the state have been very positive. The state has encouraged them to move forward and begin conversations with the city, which is important since the city will be applying as the applicant.

Charlotte Nelson then asks what the next step will be after the meeting on April 15th.

Jeffrey Feldman explains that the last designation was for 90 days, and that will expire on April 30th. They're operating on the understanding that after the two PRC meetings, they will be granted another extension, and they will file the EPR soon thereafter.

Barry Gaither states that they have an expectation that the committee will be satisfied with what has been accomplished, which is the significance of the intensity of the upcoming meetings.

Jorge Martinez asks for a clarification of dates on the PRC meetings, specifically one on the 11th of March.

Darnell Williams explains that there are two separate meetings scheduled for the 18th of March.

Hugues Monestime states that the BRA has only announced one of those meetings thus far.

Darnell Williams states that P-3 Partners, LLC is not on the agenda for the session on March 18th.

Jeffrey Feldman says that they had received some correspondence about said date, but can certainly accommodate any necessary rescheduling.

Alwyn Mcleod (community) asks the Chair to repeat location of said PRC meetings?

Darnell Williams explains that the meeting just mentioned has not been given a location, but the one announced by the BRA will be held at 88 Warren Street.

John Walsh (community) raises a point about the “Job Creation Update” noted on page 5 of the Status Update Packet, and asks for information on that.

Jeffrey Feldman offers that BG might want to expand upon a potential partnership with the Office of Neighborhood Collaboration, as it is an intricate part of the development program.

Barry Gaither explains that from the beginning, P-3 Partners, LLC were of the view that a project of this scale should have a continuing positive impact in several arenas, but especially job creation. Given the number of tenants, he expects that there will be a great amount of opportunity. To guarantee that the community capitalizes on this opportunity, they have created a partnership to ensure that the jobs created on their developments are successfully matched with small corporations. They intend to have a staff and an office open on an ongoing basis to assist the community members in their search.

John Walsh (community) follows up by asking if there is any piece in their contract regarding the construction jobs.

Barry Gaither confirms that they are committed to meeting the obligations of the city far beyond the requirement.

John Walsh (community) points out that they have BRJP listed.

Darnell Williams interjects to explain that the group clearly has the concept in their minds, but this part of the project will be more significant at a later point in project development. He reaffirms Mr. Walsh that his points will not be lost in future conversations.

Representative Henriquez tells the representatives from P-3 that it would be nice if the meetings regarding job creation could start well in advance of the actual

development. He recommends that they create a pipeline of information so that they can exceed the numbers and avoid the mistakes they've seen at other sites, which many community members are complaining about.

Barry Gaither says that they have been meeting with the Builders Guild and other groups in Roxbury who have the same concerns. He assures the Representative and the audience that these conversations are already underway.

Representative Henriquez requests that the Leadership Forum also be included in these conversations.

Councilor Jackson points out the BHA recently came out with a RFP for a federal program that looks at work force development, housing, and education. He asks where P-3 Partners, LLC stand in that situation, and have they filed a RFP, considering that they are a direct abutter?

Jeffrey Feldman states that they do not intend to submit a RFP application for that project, but they are well aware of its importance. They've seen potential applicants reach out to P-3, but they have responded with the same message to all: They will embrace whoever is selected to work with them and they support successful job creation for the community.

Councilor Jackson says that he asked particularly because the Whittier Street Apartments is one of the last developments in the city that hasn't been redeveloped, so he assumed there would be some connection with the site.

Jeffrey Feldman says that there certainly will be, but they can only be put into progress when the BRA selects who their partner will be.

Greg Janey (community) asks about early involvement supported by ownership, and if the representatives can please speak to diversity strategies in contracting?

Jeffrey Feldman says that they are certainly aware of the importance of the issue, but they haven't yet put a program into place. He states that it's a few months ahead of schedule, but they will surely be working on it in the future.

Darnell Williams clarifies that business opportunities are not being lost. He explains that during the procurement process, if the owner encourages the general contractor early on then it will eventually trickle down to neighborhood contractors.

Priscilla Flint (community) asks if they are going totally union.

Jeffrey Feldman explains that that is an issue to be addressed by the general contractor. He states that they are working with Suffolk, and he will leave it up to them to navigate the process.

Jorge Martinez points out that the issue is being raised because it is important to incorporate the knowledge from past experiences upfront so that this process will actually work.

Darnell Williams says that he believes what is being said is that there is a formula in place and the committee and community would prefer that process to start sooner rather than later, which he believes is well understood by the P-3 representatives.

Janet Jones (community) interjects to state that Suffolk is usually union based, in response to Priscilla Flint's question.

Darnell Williams thanks her for her comment and invites Madison Tropical LLC to make their presentation.

Russ Tanner starts by stating that he is here to talk about Parcel 10, Madison Park and Tropical Foods, which is a joint venture team selected by the BRA. He welcomes the new members to the committee and offers a short summary of the Parcel 10 proposal, which consists of 3 elements. The first is a new supermarket for Tropical Foods, to be about 40,000 square feet. It will be on the corner of Melnea Cass Blvd and Shawmut Avenue. The second phase is a new construction building that will be used as commercial and retail space, located near Dudley Square and the South End. Phase 3 is the renovation of the current Tropical Foods supermarket, which will be transformed into mostly housing units, with some retail on the ground floor. All phases are quite doable, and Madison Tropical LLC is moving ahead with the master planning process, and can hopefully move forward on the construction of Phase 1 by early Fall of 2013.

Darnell Williams asks RT to expand further on Phase 3, which he previously stated involves housing, though his Status Update packet stated that the residential program has been eliminated.

Russ Tanner explains that the residential component of the new building on Melnea Cass Blvd and Washington Street is what has been eliminated.

Darnell Williams asks what type of housing they are proposing for Phase 3.

Russ Tanner states that the current Tropical Foods building will be mainly housing units with some retail on the ground floor. They expect 30 units of one

and two bedroom housing, and they've agreed that it will be a mixed income building.

Darnell Williams states that the committee has made a very strong declaratory statement about the fact that Roxbury has a disproportionate share of affordable housing homes. [Most of] The committee believes that Roxbury has a disparate share; He hasn't seen any affordable condos going up in South Boston or the Fenway. It seems as if Roxbury always has to be the reservoir for affordable housing, and that is something that we, as a committee, have been focused on changing.

Nicole Flynt Thomas interjects at several points to disagree with the point being made on behalf of the Chair and the Committee about affordable housing, as she does not agree with such comments.

Councilor Jackson says that he is encouraged by the change in program of the building, as it is about time that more office space is built in and around that area. So, the change for 42,000 square feet of office space is a good change in the program. However, he agrees that the committee would like to see more market rate housing, especially given the positive response they are getting about the real estate in that area.

Russ Tanner explains that this has been an ongoing dialogue and will continue on. Their emphasis is on getting started with construction for new the supermarket, and they have made some progress on that. Similar to Parcel 9, they've been meeting regularly with the BRA, and have made enough progress to move forward with Article 80 proposition. More importantly, the financing committee isn't actually in place at this time, but it is very straightforward. They have an operating 3rd generation business and they are relocating it. There has been a proposal from Bank of America for construction and continued financing, which means that they will not be competing with Parcel 9 for tax credits. It was a good proposal from Bank of America, and they are trying to move ahead to start construction by September. In order for that to happen they have to finalize the design, obtain permits, and finance this project. One area they're concerned about is to get into a detailed lease agreement with BRA. Similar to the concerns of other developers, they need to know where the Melnea Cass Blvd lot line is going to be. He echoes everything Kamran said. They have accepted an 8.5 foot taking, and incorporated it into the design. They are not thrilled about it; if it gets wider that is a problem and if it gets narrower that's great. The most important thing is that this is fixed and resolved, so that the construction of the new building can begin by next year. He restates that his major concerns are the design, permitting, financing, lease negotiations and settling Melnea Cass Blvd lot lines.

Jorge Martinez asks when the BRA might have a final answer for both developers regarding the encroachment piece.

Hugues Monestime states that the city has been very patiently working with both developers on the Cass design, and they have a great relationship the teams. Both teams know that, they've agreed and settled on the width that the city requires for the road. It is been stated that no more land will be taken on either side. They use the same consultants as the city, and are well aware that not another inch will be taken from either side.

Russ Tanner thanks HM for his comments. He explains that the issue is that they need confirmation from two key agencies, the city and the state, before they can reach a point where a lease boundary can be drafted and signed.

Representative Henriquez points out that they mentioned lease fees, and was wondering if the developers would support the BRA using those lease fees to help generate economic development in Roxbury. He would really like to have a conversation with the BRA about what they're doing with the lease fees. He believes that residents should have a say in what happens with land and should also benefit from its use at all times. Again he asks if developers would support this proposal. He states that Tropical Foods is a long time resident, so he wonders again if that would be something they would want to support?

Russ Tanner explains that he doesn't believe it is in the position of Madison Tropical LLC to tell the BRA what they should be doing with their money, but yes, they would support such a program.

Kevin Cherry asks in regards to affordable housing, particularly of the lower income tax credit that is in the proposal, which program they are planning on using? He asks if they've looked at market rate development, and asks what it would take to get the development to be 100% market rate housing.

Russ Tanner states that they expect to use low income tax credits, specifically 60-40, which is the higher of the two programs. They have done some studying of market rates and they have an advisor on rental evaluation. The rental market in Boston is extremely high and rising. They haven't looked at making the whole building all market rate because their proposal all along has been to build a significant affordable piece. They have committed to the BRA that there will be affordable housing. They're comfortable that there will be a market component.

Charlotte Nelson reminds the community that there will be a discussion about the other parcels at the other meetings, and she would like those other parcels to be put back on the agenda, as well as a conversation about community benefits.

Darnell Williams thanks the committee and the community for their participation.
The meeting is adjourned at 7:41 PM.