

## **Roxbury Strategic Master Plan Oversight Committee Meeting**

Monday, March 7, 2016

6:00 PM to 7:45 PM

Dudley Branch Library, 65 Warren Street, Roxbury

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### **Attendees**

**RSMPOC Members:** Norman Stembridge, Tony Hernandez, Bing Broderick, Valeda Britton, True-See Allah, Felicia Jacques, Michael Curry, Beverly Adams, Susan Sullivan, Charlotte Nelson, and Dorothea Jones, Frank Williams, Marzuq Muhammad

**Ex-Officio:** Councilor Tito Jackson

**Not in Attendance:** Frederick Fairfield, Rep. Gloria Fox (Ex-officio), Senator Sonia Chang-Diaz (Ex-Officio), Evandro C. Carvalho, Rep. Byron Rushing (Ex-Officio)

**BRA Staff:** Lara Merida, Hugues Monestime, Lauren Shurtleff, Dana Whiteside, Helmsley Alphonse, Ronette Seeney

**City of Boston Staff:** John Barros, Chief of Economic Development; Donald Wright, Deputy Director of Real Estate Management and Sales, Department of Neighborhood Development

The meeting started at approximately 6:10 PM.

### **Committee Scope and Responsibilities**

- The RSMPOC Chair opened the meeting and welcomed the public. He explained the agenda for the meeting and reiterated the roles and responsibilities of the Roxbury Strategic Master Plan Oversight Committee and its tasks related to the scope of the PLAN: Dudley Square Strategic Planning Area.

### **Planning Update**

BRA staff gave update on the PLAN: Dudley Square Strategic Planning Area:

- On Monday, February 22, 2016, the Boston Redevelopment Authority held an Open House for PLAN: Dudley Square at the Bruce C. Bolling Municipal Building. Information boards were presented that sought to elicit responses from participating members of the public. Topics covered included the study's goals, updating the vision for Dudley Square, neighborhood enhancement, past plans, neighborhood demographics, transportation, and arts and culture.
- The public is invited to the neighborhood walking tour on March 16<sup>th</sup> and a community visioning workshop on March 21<sup>st</sup>.

- Concerns raised included the inclusion of City-owned parcels in the Roxbury Strategic Master Plan and the BRA review process; clarity about the process; and the nomination process for Oversight Committee members.
- Why is there so much development in downtown and on the waterfront, and why is this not occurring in Roxbury?
- BRA staff explained that the BRA had met with the RSMPOC in January and answered questions from the Committee about beneficial development deals and the parcel disposition process. At this meeting, an overview of the Committee's function was also provided, and it was agreed that the Committee accepts the task of overseeing the vision for PLAN: Dudley Square.
- The BRA seeks to entice new development with the current planning study in Roxbury.

Questions on DND Parcels and the RSMPOC roles discussed during the meeting in January included:

- BRA staff confirmed that the RSMPOC was informed of their roles and responsibilities for revisiting the vision for Dudley Square and Roxbury with their oversight of 11 publicly-owned parcels in the area, including BRA and DND parcels.
- Projects that are 20,000 square feet or larger are subject to Article 80 Small Project Review, and projects that are 50,000 square feet or larger are subject to Article 80 Large Project Review. Whether the land is public or private. Article 80 projects in the PLAN: Dudley-Roxbury Strategic Planning Area are subject to Article 80 Design Review with recommendations for the RSMPOC.
- Mayor Walsh added five (5) new members to the RSMPOC to fill recent vacancies. Project Review Committees (PRCs) are made up of five (5) members from the RSMPOC and ten (10) from the community.
- Audience member wants the Mayor to consider including more young people to the RSMPOC next time there are vacancies.

## **BRA Economic Development Update**

**Bartlett Place project and P-3 Tremont Crossing project are at important decision points:**

- BRA staff explained that the Bartlett Yard project had received Article 80 approval but later requested a Planned Development Area, with changes to their initial proposal which included adding 16 units of housing and a charter school. Any change to a proposed project has to be recommended by the PRC and the RSMPOC before it is approved by the BRA.
- Audience member asked when will the PRC follow up with the RSMPOC.
- BRA staff explained that BRA has invited the PRC and RSMPOC to meetings with Bartlett Place developers. Audience member followed up by stating that the PRC members have repeatedly disapproved of the current proposal for the site, and they feel undermined by the developer.
- BRA staff responded that the BRA is still searching for a time in which all the PRC members are available to further discuss the project.
- A City of Boston staff member stated that the City recommends that the RSMPOC allow the current Bartlett Yard PRC to continue as they are because the public comment period for the project ends March 15. Going forward, the RSMPOC should continue working together with the PRC to reviews the plans with the developers.
- A member of the audience asked if there was a moratorium on the Bartlett Yard project or if plans were already finalized.

- BRA staff responded that there is no moratorium and that developers would have to respond to the proposal with the PRC and with the RSMPOC, and no decisions would be made tonight.

### **P-3 Tremont Crossing project:**

- BRA staff gave context about the Parcel P-3 project and process of disposition to Elma Lewis Partners and FeldCo, together known as P3 Partners. He spoke about the 1.9 million square feet of proposed housing, retail, hotel, parking, and museum. He added that a PRC would be announced.

### **Community Input**

- A community member asked that notes be made readily available to the community.
- BRA staff responded that notes were being taken and will be made available online.
- Audience member stated that RSMPOC should have a monitoring committee to oversee the construction of Tremont Crossing and all other projects in the area and report back to the public at the next RSMPOC meeting.
- A BRA staff member answered that the developer had been granted a MassWorks grant for the Bartlett Place project and that construction is slated to start in the spring of this year. P3 Partners provided an overview of the 1.9 million square feet of proposed housing, retail, hotel, parking, and museum.
- **Questions asked about status of P-3 and height:**
- BRA staff clarified that the Tremont Crossing the project proposed for Parcel P-3 is being developed by P-3 Partners is still under review by the BRA. The proposal was initially slated to have BJ's Wholesale as the main anchor tenant for the development and there is additionally a proposal for 700 units of multi-family housing.
- Regarding housing affordability in P-3 apartments, when developers build projects with a housing component of 10 units or more, they are subject to the City's IDP (Inclusionary Development Policy), which means that developers must designate 15% (105) of their units as "affordable".
- The project is still under review by the BRA. The development team will take what the BRA and the BCDC (Boston Civic Design Commission) has advised and create a revised proposal.
- The developer of Parcel P-3 spoke about the project. He stated that they proposed one residential tower with 300 units at about 23 stories in height and another residential tower with 400 units at about 25 stories in height.
- A representative from the Carpenters' Union stated that the developer specified that they would be hiring local contractors in their Letter of Intent, and noted this was the first time a developer engaged with the community for career opportunities, adding finally that they are supportive of the developer.
- A resident expressed that some residents are not looking for low-income and affordable housing in Roxbury and that the neighborhood needed a change. He noted that FeldCo (P3 Partners) had met with him and his peers.
- Another resident expressed their opinion that the community should not feel grateful that developers plan on developing their neighborhood.
- A community member said that they support the developer of P-3, because they were the first developers to speak personally with members of the community, and spoke out against CDC's.

- Another community member stated that talk is not enough – and expressed a desire for the developer to speak about minimum wages in the project.
- An owner of a welding and engineering business commented jobs are going to out of state iron workers in Rhode Island. He stated that if businesses want to build in Roxbury, they should hire Roxbury residents, and therefore build wealth, and pay workers with local contracts or else there would be no progress.

## **RSMPOC Comments**

- A committee member expressed concern for local contractors, and asked if the City would consider monitoring the construction of projects. Since January, the RSMPOC meetings have had a different format in which there have not been any developer presentations. They should present even if the project is not ready. Hopes Mayor Walsh’s new executive order for business owned by minorities and women is more than just talk, hopes for a comprehensive meeting with the Mayor.
- City Staff member clarified that the Mayor’s executive order is the first time in 30 years that the city is addressing race and gender procurement percentages. Stated that there was going to be a new disparity study and that DND would be holding a joint-venture workshop.
- DND staff member spoke further about the proposed joint-venture workshop. He stated that the issues that would be discussed included opportunities in RFPs and that the workshop would have two parts: process and insight as to how to respond to an RFP. The tentative dates were April 2<sup>nd</sup> and April 9<sup>th</sup>.
- A community member stated that they would like to see more contractors of color and would like for them to be paid more.
- A resident stated that the Mayor’s executive order should include local residents in addition to minority and women-owned businesses. She strongly suggested that new developers in the neighborhood hire local contractors.
- Another resident added that they would like to thank FeldCo and Elma Lewis for working so closely with the community and setting a good example for developers.

Meeting adjourned at approx. 7:50 PM