



Roxbury Strategic Master Plan Oversight Committee Meeting
Monday, September 12, 2022
6:00 PM to 7:45 pm
Zoom Virtual Meeting

Attendees

RSMPOC Members: Norm Stembridge, Valeda Britton, Dorethea Jones, Steven Godfrey, Charlotte Nelson

BPDA Staff: Rebecca Hansen, Jonathan Short, Jamarhl Crawford, Yarisamar Cortez

Link to PowerPoint:

<https://www.bostonplans.org/planning/planning-initiatives/roxbury-strategic-master-plan#past-meetings>

Opening

On September 12, 2022, Co-Chair Norman Stembridge of the Roxbury Strategic Master Plan Oversight Committee (RSMPOC) called the meeting to order and welcomed everyone. Jonathan Short, BPDA Real Estate Development Officer, welcomed all and made initial announcements of meeting recording and Zoom and interpretation channel instructions. The Spanish interpreter gave their introduction and initial instructions followed by the Haitian Creole interpreter and Capeverdean Creole interpreter. Jonathan continued with zoom etiquette instructions and an overview of the meeting agenda. Norman then continued with greetings and reviewed the calendar of upcoming RSMPOC meetings over the year, gave a brief overview of the RSMPOC and its responsibilities and encouraged people to get involved and remain engaged.

Developer Updates: None

Presentation Notes:

Presenters: Melissa Meyer, Director of Cultural Planning for the Mayor's Office of Arts and Culture [MOAC] and Sarah Rodrigo, Senior Public Art Manager at MOAC.

1. Melissa Meyer Introduction
2. Overview of MOAC Office
 - a. Support Organizations and Individuals through programming and funding
 - b. Public Art Team
 - c. Cultural Space and Placekeeping - Focus of Presentation
 - i. This includes themes around artist housing and workspace, creative workers, reviewing development projects, and cultural districts.
3. Presentation Focus - Cultural Space through development project in and around Nubian Square
 - a. MOAC is engaged in development project review through the BPDA processes.
 - i. Design of spaces.
 - ii. Artists live, work, design guidelines > guidance for projects down the pipeline
 - iii. Facilitate Artists Housing Verification Process

- b. Growing Network of Cultural Artist Organizations and individual artists to connect to artist work/live opportunities in the city (existing and down the pipeline).
 - c. Ability to partner through RFI and RFP processes to secure operators and tenants in cultural spaces
 - d. Public Art Team: Assists in call to artists templates, disseminate information about public art opportunities in the city.
- 4. Cultural Space Pipeline for Nubian Space
 - a. List of Projects deliver on cultural, civic life, and public realm as outlined in Roxbury Master Plan. Projects are a mixed or approved by BPDA Article 80, under review, and others outside this process.
 - b. List is up-to-date but some projects are still under review; activities in space are subject to change.
- 5. Coordinate and contribute to existing cultural space assets in the neighborhood.
 - a. Existing spaces that are important cultural anchors in the community (presenting and production side): Hibernian Hall, Nubian Gallery, Black Market, Espas kominotè Branch BPL, DeWitt Center, Bolling Building, Slades Bar & Grill.
 - b. Important to identify existing cultural spaces to inform future development work and create a healthy cultural ecosystem that is not duplicative and responsive to needs expressed by artists and cultural organizations.
- 6. Cultural Space Pipeline
 - a. Washington St. as an important emerging corridor of cultural space assets.
 - b. This map will be continued to be updated as projects enter into construction.
- 7. Brief Overview of Development Projects that have been recently approved or completed with cultural space contributions
 - a. 2147 Washington: beginning construction.
 - i. Housing units with preference for artists with artists verification for housing to ensure space is used by working artists.
 - ii. 4,000 sq. ft shared work space - intended to provide equipment for various types of mediums
 - 1. Membership model
 - b. Nubian Ascends
 - i. Cultural Hall: largest presenting space in the area
 - ii. Homeownership opportunities for artists with artists verification
 - iii. Significant commissioned public art opportunities in the public realm.
 - c. 2085 Washington
 - i. Ground Floor and public realm cultural spaces: gallery space, workspaces, and public art.
 - d. NUBA Residences
 - i. Ground Floor focus: residential units for artists, gallery/exhibition space
 - ii. Art Walk - connection to neighboring art projects.
 - e. Bartlett Place
 - i. Public Realm Programming Opportunity - Still under review
 - f. Nawn Factory: early in the development process
 - i. Need for dance infrastructure in the city. This could meet some of that need.
 - ii. Also office space
 - g. Crescent Parcel: Early in development review process

- i. Artist Live Work residential units
 - ii. Public Art and Public Realm programming opportunities
 - iii. Ensure infrastructure is additive to the surrounding projects
- 8. P-3
 - a. Tracking to inform future cultural planning
 - b. Overview of P-3 proposals relative to the arts and cultural space
- 9. Recent resolution supported by the Boston City Council to support the naming of the route that runs through District 7 as the 'ARTery' → Intersect along Washington St.
 - a. Intention to bring visibility to existing cultural assets
 - b. Bring more programming to the corridor with the goal of supporting foot traffic and recognizing existing cultural assets
 - c. MOAC and Clr. Anderson's Office collaboration on this.
- 10. Concentration of Gallery Space
 - a. MOAC Focus: Make sure that spaces can accommodate various uses to make sure there is a variety of artist expression.
- 11. Public Art Work in the Neighborhood (Sarah Rodrigo, Senior Public Art Manager, MOAC)
 - a. 2 categories: Projects that MOAC funded and managed, Community Projects that MOAC might provide some level of support with funding or project managing.
 - b. Tremont and Ruggles: upcoming public art commission
 - c. Ruggles corridor: Artist confirmed
 - d. Washington Street Black Lives Matter Project: Commissioned by Black Market. Community led.
 - i. MOAC provided some funding in the initial project and most recent refresh
 - e. The Legacy of Frederick Douglass: Long-term project. Community initiated.
 - i. Frederick Douglass Sculpture Committee, volunteers
 - ii. MOAC supporting financially
 - f. Gourdin Memorial Park Commission: Community led project.
 - i. Parks Department doing some renovations
 - g. Commission coming this fall in Library entryway.

Jonathan, ends the conclusion of the presentation. Staff were asked to stop sharing their screens and the floor was open to comments, questions, and answers.

RSMPOC Member: how can we ensure Nubian square area residents and surrounding residents are present in the artist development of this area, specifically access to housing?

- MM, MOAC: In terms of artists housing units, MOAC has worked with development teams on projects to emphasize and requests specific marketing plan and approach to reach local artists. A concern that has come up among the artists community is that not enough notice is given to get materials together.
- Artist resource manager from MOAC working on extending these notices.
- Work only spaces in the pipeline: Strategy 1) encourage teams to work in partnership with existing organizations. 2) Spaces that don't have a confirmed tenant that a public process for applications.

Community Member: concern about artists of color that are in need of space.

- Who is this process for? How does the process work? Who is this process supporting Roxbury Artists or outside of the community?

- MM, MOAC: In terms of development projects, development teams are the decision makers of their tenants. MOAC works closely to advocate for specific types of space that artists from the community are requesting. MOAC does not have the power to make an ultimate determination on who the tenant is. MOAC encourages for public process to find tenants. When it comes to housing, there are specific application processes that have to be delivered on. There is extremely targeted marketing.

Community Member (chat comment): what's the update on Malcom X Park artwork?

- SR, MOAC: Artists selection is still in process. Consultants are working on this. Murals will be implemented in the spring. Artist is scheduled to be selected in the fall.

Jonathan (BPDA) shared Melissa's (MAOC) email in the chat.

Community Member (chat comment): is Washington St. going to be reconstructed any time soon and if so what support will be provided to replace the Black Lives Matter mural?

- SR, MOAC: Public Works is going to restore that section of Washington St. in the fall (this needs Public Works confirmation but it has been an on-going conversation). There are on-going conversations with City Department and Community Leaders to discuss what is the next phase of the Black Lives Matter mural project since there is going to be reconfiguration of the street.

Jonathan (BPDA): When developers decide tenants, this is with regards to commercial retail space?

- MM (MOAC): Correct. There are a couple of development projects that still need operators or users of the space. These are spaces that MOAC wants to work with development teams to establish what the process will be to prioritize artists that already work and live in the neighborhood. These types of projects are part of the minority that are in the pipeline.

Jonathan (BPDA): in terms of live work space, this will fall under the City guidelines in order for tenants to be approved.

- MM (MOAC): Like the rest of income restricted units. MOAC is ensuring that the actual units themselves can support artists and creative work. They will be allocated through the lottery system like other MOH affordable housing.

RSMPOC Member: Desire for more intimate conversation to include artists of color in conversation and prioritize their needs. There is an opportunity to come up with creative solutions. Encouragement of MOAC for taking initiative at this time to bring forth interdisciplinary conversation of art, housing, and affordability - this sounds ambitious. Request: make it public who has been part of these conversations. It looks like that the MOAC is a great space to be creative and actually include brown and Black artists reaping the benefits of artist affordable housing.

- MM (MOAC): Recognition of where the Office can do better. Desire from MOAC to work in partnership with the community to deliver on RSMPOC envisions and past planning work in Roxbury. Roxbury Cultural district, key leader and vision setter guiding process.

RSMPOC Member: cultural variety in nubian square area needs some sort of regulation? Why focus on Nubian square area?

1. Q: How racially diverse is the "committee" (MOAC office), especially African American staff member leading the Nubian projects and/or in leadership position.

2. Q: Concern about BIPOC Roxbury artists not being guaranteed affordable housing through the lottery system
3. Q: Is there a Roxbury community member that is part of MOAC to inform this work?
 - MM (MOAC): Housing Lottery - All income restricted housing created by the city need to go through Lottery this is legislation that need to followed. Artists Verification, to ensure that artists actually use these live work units. Limitations on how to specifically allocate units, there is more room on the marketing end to inform community members about these opportunities. Committee - MOAC is not a committee structure. It functions as a resource. The office itself cannot approve projects. Neighborhood Work - Track the arts ecosystem in different parts of the city. Ethnic/racial diversity of MOAC staff - leadership roles have more representation from Latinx communities, not so much African American community. Office is acutely aware of this gap and is a priority in hiring an expanding team

Community Member: Concern about surplus of gallery space in this area? Suggestion: Gallery space should have more than one function. All of these developments need to be thought of more. Right now they look like lobbies. Maybe we need more live work space than gallery space. Nuances of defining a working artist, it is a complicated area, how is the office defining a working artist? Concern that it doesn't cover everyone. Also, concern about defining artist preference.

- MM (MOAC): Gallery Concern - Shared sentiment with development space. Encouraged developers to make these spaces have more than one use during the design review process. Housing Certification & Working artist definition - you do not need to have a certain level of income. Definition has evolved in the past 3 year to recognize different disciplines and ways of working. This certification is only relevant to housing units; it does not disqualify anyone from applying for other city programs. It does not need to be a full time job or receive your majority of income from this means.

RSMPOC Member: Appreciate presentation because it allows oversight in this area of planning. Equity concerns. Oversight of how units are allocated should be people from the community, especially Nubian Community.

- Jonathan (BPDA): Quick clarification that MOAC is not a part a department of the BPDA. It is a department within the City of Boston. The oversight aspect, BPDA and MOAC work closely together when releasing RFPs.

RSMPOC Member: How much weight does MOAC have on the final decision as to who gets these live work spaces?

- MM (MOAC): Space projects that are development projects - MOAC does not have any powers of determination or vote. MOAC is more of a resource. A location of engagement for artists to connect to for funding and resources. MOAC can be part of the development review process that the BPDA runs, can submit comment letters like the public can do. MOAC can provide recommendations of design, but MOAC does not have designation powers or approval. MOAC keeps a close eye on how development impacts the cultural fabric of the city.

Meeting Adjourned:

Jonathan (BPDA) starts wrapping up the meeting at 7:44. Invites people to leave comments in the chat for follow-up correspondence. Attendees and presenters are thanked for their time. Jonathan turns it over to Norm. Norm starts a motion to adjourn the meeting. Valeda seconds motions. Meeting adjourns.