



Roxbury Strategic Master Plan Oversight Committee Meeting
Monday, January 18th, 2023
6:00 PM to 8:10 PM
Zoom Virtual Meeting

Attendees

RSMPOC Members: Norm Stenbridge, Charlotte Nelson, Dorothea Jones, Frank Williams, Frederick Fairfield, Lorraine Payne Wheeler, Nefertiti Lawrence, Sue Sullivan, Valeda Britton

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

Link to PowerPoint:

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

Opening

On January 09, 2023, Co-Chair Norman Stenbridge of the Roxbury Strategic Master Plan Oversight Committee (RSMPOC) called the meeting to order and welcomed everyone. Yarisamar (Yari) Cortez, BPDA Planner I, 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. Yari continued with zoom etiquette instructions and an overview of the meeting agenda. Norm 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.

Presentation Notes - Topic: PLAN:Nubian Square Developer Updates Part I

Yari (BPDA) instructs the public and presenters that each Project Team will have a total of 15m to present and for questions and answers.

2147-2163 Washington St. Project Update

Presenter: Greg Minnott, Managing Principal at DREAM Collaborative

Presentation:

1. This site is adjacent to the existing Haley House Cafe.
2. Brief Overview of the Project: 74 units, mixed-income, rental and homeownership project, includes a new cafe for Haley House, maker's space on the ground floor, and ground floor retail.
3. Project focus is serving the artists community in Nubian Square.
4. Approximately 62 rental units which are divided into different AMI tiers including: 30% below AMI set aside for those experiencing homelessness, 30-50% AMI, 60-80% AMI
5. On the homeownership side, there are 12 condominiums. 4 of which are market rate and the rest are income restricted.
6. 32 below-grade parking spaces and 11 surface parking spaces for Haley House's use.
7. There is a total of 4,200 sf of commercial space and 4,100 sf of cultural space.

8. They are projected to create 150 MWBE jobs throughout the life cycle of the project.
9. Construction began in June 2022 and they are expected to complete construction on April 2024.

Questions/Answers:

RSMPOC Member: When did they last submit workforce reports and how are they able to get a copy of the report?

- Greg Minnott: Those have been submitted on a regular basis. RSMPOC Progress Reports have been submitted to the BPDA on a monthly basis.
- RSMPOC Member: Would like to know the breakdown of utilization reports of women, residents, and people of color working on this project?
- Greg Minnott: Did not have the exact numbers available at that time and offered to follow-up.
- RSMPOC Member: Requested to receive 3 weeks of reports for those projects that are under construction on a monthly basis
- BPDA Staff: Confirmed that workforce reports for projects under construction will be provided along with the monthly RSMPOC Progress reports which are also publicly available on the RSMPOC website.

RSMPOC Member: What are you doing to ensure the people of Roxbury that are interested in opening a business in Roxbury get access to this information about the retail spaces offered in this project?

- Greg Minnott: There are 2 retail spaces on Washington Street that are projected below market rate. They have received both soft inquiries and more serious requests from local institutions. The Development Team is focused on uses that are complementary to the intended use of the overall building i.e. creative industry. As they get closer to the completion of the building, they will be marketing those spaces locally.

Member of the Public: Provide more information on units that will be accessible.

- Greg Minnott: 5% of units will be accessible. And this is integrated equitable across all the unit types offered in this project.

Member of the Public: What is the outreach strategy for the affordable units?

- Greg Minnott: The deed income restricted units will be through the Mayor's Office of Housing.
- BPDA Staff Member: Referred to the MOH's website - link also provided in the chat for further information on affordable housing and application process.

Member of the Public: What are the deed restrictions on the homeownership units? And are they eligible for generational eligibility?

- Greg Minnott: Generational eligibility is a policy question for the City of Boston. As far of the AMI ranges, 4 units at 70% AMI and 4 units at 100% AMI, and the other 4 are market rate.

Member of the Public: Have you considered addressing the waitlist list from the Boston Housing Authority? Are they Project Based Units?

- Greg Minnott: There are different vouchers that people can access these vouchers. It is a combination of units that can accept different vouchers.

Member of the Public: Can you clarify if any of the commercial space there is going to be designated or is there a possibility that it will be life or lab science research?

- The retail space is going to be complementary to the residential spaces and the artists focus. This does not include any life of lab science research. They are looking for uses like dance that are complementary.

RSMPOC Member: Emphasis that Black and brown people are working and benefiting from the project. What are the community benefits of this project? Concern that shops in Nubian Square are diminishing.

- Gregg Minnott: Opportunities that these projects get to the community. 50,000 \$ available for community benefits, want to work with the community, to see where these benefits are best suited to

be allocated in the community. Currently, there haven't been any official commitments as to where this money will be allocated. And the 50,000 is a one time payment.

2085 Washington St. (Parcel 10)

Presenter: Intiya Ambrogi-Isaza, Director of Real Estate, Madison Park Development Corporation
Trinity Financial, Co-Developer

Presentation:

1. As a reminder Parcel 10 includes the Tropical Foods grocery store and 2101 Washington St. This is the last piece of the Parcel 10 project.
2. They have applied to the City and State for funding and they have received some funding but are seeking more funding to cover the rise in construction costs. Currently they are waiting for feedback on those changes. Once they are a fully funded project they would like to move towards construction.
3. This is both a rental and homeownership project. 5 stories overall. Out of all the units 2 are market, the rest of the units are income-restricted and are meant to be accessible to a range of incomes in the community.
4. 16 units for homeless set-aside in the community. 17 units for 30-50% AMI and 44 units for 60-80% AMI these units are a mix of studios, 1-bedroom, 2-bedroom, and 3-bedroom.
5. 24 parking spaces available underground.
6. 4,400 square feet of combined artists and amenity space. This includes individual and shared working spaces.
7. Currently they do not have a construction manager and did not feel comfortable providing projected MWBE job numbers. They are looking to hire a construction manager this month.
8. Zoning Board of Appeals waiting to get on the agenda.

Questions/Answers:

Public Member: Clarify the # of units? Why not more 3-bedroom units, especially in the homeownership component? How do you determine who's an artist?

- Intiya: There are 64 rental units and 32 homeownership units. There are (3) 3-bedroom units set-aside for the homeless for rental. At this point, the number of units are baked into the project because the funding applications require that level of detail which has been submitted already. Realistically for this project, the bedroom sizes won't change.
- Intiya: The Mayor's Office of Arts and Culture has an artist verification form to determine artist eligibility.

RSMPOC Member: When is the general contractor going to be awarded? What is the overall timeline of the project?

- Intiya: Currently in the process of evaluating the bids for the general contractor. In terms of timeline, currently waiting for approval of financing request. The Mayor's Office of Housing application cleared in September and they have announced they are sending decisions out in January. The application for the State (the department of housing and community development) for funding is due January 19, 2023. Their decision could take months. Once both things are confirmed the hope is to get construction started.

RSMPOC Member: 24 parking spaces is that sufficient for the number of people that are going to be living in the property?

- Intiya: We hope this number of spaces strikes a balance between transit oriented development given the proximity to the public transportation available to this site. There is a bluebike station right outside as well. Accessible parking spaces will also be available
- RSMPOC Member: Concern about the density in the area and concern about congestion. Will residents be paying for parking spots?
- Intiya: Residents in the rental portion will not be paying for their parking spot. Residents are not allowed to use the tropical foods parking when the store is closed - currently not in the parking agreement with Tropical Foods.

Public Member: Define homeownership under your program? Does the home get transferred to the beneficiary?

- Intiya: There are 2 sources of funding for the homeownership component that carry a deed restriction. That means yes you own the deed to the property and it will have something called a deed rider attached to it. The Deed Rider attachment has requirements regarding the long-term affordability of the unit. There's a City Policy change coming underway about the ability for homeowners to be able to pass down their property.

RSMPOC Member: Are there any commercial spaces going to be designated to lab or life sciences?

- Intiya: This project has no commitments programming for lab or life sciences spaces.

Public Member: Homeowners and renters in the community need more family sized units like 3-bedroom units. Is it possible for architects to reevaluate putting 3-bedroom units.

- Intiya: The intention is to be clear and transparent. This project has been approved by the Article 80 process with the current unit count mix.
- BPDA: If there were to be modifications like changing the unit mix count it would reset the Article 80 process through a notice of project change. As mentioned, this project has been reviewed for several years. To restart the process would set this project back.

Councilor Anderson: In terms of timeline, in past community meetings, the community gave approval as is with the presented unit mixed count?

- Intiya: Yes, we went through an extensive community process with complete redesign of the project.
- Councilor Anderson: Request for list of civic associations that attended the community meetings. If you restart the Article80 process, does that set you back in terms of funding?
- Intiya: Yes, changing the unit mix would require starting over with funding as well.
- Councilor Anderson: Madison Park has close to 300m in the bank. We looked up your records. Why aren't you doing more in terms of homeownership given that you have so much money?
- Intiya: I am not part of accounting or audit expert. I don't want to comment on financials and liquidity. We have heard loud and clear on the importance of homeownership on all projects. We are doing the best that we can to make that possible. We are not putting out projects that are only rental.
- Councilor Anderson: Request to sit down and talk to lower the AMI thresholds. Opportunity for Madison Park to create opportunities in Roxbury. Acknowledgement that it is complex and nuanced but there is an opportunity to talk and build equity in the community.

Nubian Ascends (Blair Lot)

Presenter: Richard Taylor

Presentation:

- All of the units are homeownership and designed for artists because what we've heard is there is a lack of economic activity.

- We wanted to add another layer on top of the City verification process. We discovered over the years they came in as artists and after 2 or 3 years they weren't producing artists to have active participation by artists.
- The issues of who can stay, legacy is not controlled by developers. It is controlled by the funding sources MOH, CPA, and MassHousing.
- Make some residential parking available for commercial activity.
- Our 334 parking spaces is not enough for people to come shop and engage.
- Our goal is to have local businesses set up kiosks. Something like the timeout market in Fenway and as these businesses mature to moved to fix spaces in the square.
- We have been working with BFIT, Roxbury Community College, Northeastern, MassBio ED to conduct training for young people and adults in the life science space. It is by far the largest segment of real estate in Boston today. We have been focused on life science training to get youth trained for this new economy.
- 35,000 sq of life science training.
- Cultural Hall, Tinisha Layer from New York Symphony leader in running cultural halls. This is needed to feed restaurants. Activities will bring in people to stop shop at stores and restaurants.

Questions/Answers

- Public Member: When does the zoom meeting end? When do we start meeting in-person? The outreach of these meetings are not getting to alot of people. People aren't aware of these meetings? I would like to see the information beforehand. There should be more preparedness, can we improve this. Are there community construction agreements that can be worked on? Life Science training - how many jobs have come out of the construction.
- Richard Taylor: In terms of life sciences, right now, there is a demand for 40,000 new jobs over the next 3 years. We want these jobs to be filled from our schools. Our job is to train our people.

75-81 Dudley Street

Presenter: Intiya Ambrogi-Isaza, Director of Real Estate, Madison Park Development Corporation

- 100% homeownership. It is a mix of one and two bedrooms.
- Total of 15 units.
- It will not have parking. It does have open space 4,462 sq ft.
- Further along on this project. We are assuming it will create 70 construction jobs. We are hoping for 40% MBE and 12% WBE. We are waiting to hear back about funding from the city. Once we have a fully funded project, we will work to hire a contractor and move towards construction.
- Less certain on a construction date.
- This project needs to go back to the Article 80 Small Project Review process due to the change in unit count from 20 to 15.
- Given that several elements are up in the air, construction will most likely begin in 2024.

RSMPOC Member: How many labs are you proposing to be built and at what level?

- Richard Taylor: Not on the call. Was not able to answer.

RSMPOC Member: 100% AMI homeownership, nothing lower than that?

- Norm: Up to 100% AMI

Councilor Anderson: How do you reassure people with lower AMI's are getting these? And can we add more 3-bedrooms given community input?

- 8 units are 80% AMI, 7 units are 100% AMI these are limits. People below that income can apply as long as they are able to access a mortgage. Unit numbers is a balance to address the housing crisis and homeownership opportunities. In order to make the building financially viable, 15 units is the minimum to make the building work.
- Megan Reagon (Madison Park): The redesign came in from a community request to preserve the 6 street trees along Dudley. Building had to be moved back.

Councilor Anderson: This is a good project overall. Thank you for ad

Public Member: Understanding that the BPDA design, who came up with the idea that 2 bedrooms was adequate for families.

- Norm: No one from the BPDA that came up from this restriction.
- Intiya: The BPDA did not say take 3 bedrooms of housing out of the project, but they direct to make the building smaller.

Councilor Anderson: For the record, can the slides be updated to reflect all levels of AMI discussed.

- BPDA Staff Member: Yes, slides can be amended to reflect what was said on the call.

Meeting Adjourned:

Yari (BPDA) starts wrapping up the meeting at 8:10 and invites people to leave comments in the chat for follow-up correspondence. Attendees and presenters are thanked for their time. Yari turns it over to Norm. Norm starts a motion to adjourn the meeting. Valeda seconds motions. Meeting adjourns.