



Roxbury Strategic Master Plan Oversight Committee Meeting
Monday, Sept 13th, 2021
6:00 PM to 7:45pm
Zoom Virtual Meeting

Attendees

RSMPOC Members: Charlotte Nelson, Dortha Jones, Frank Williams, Fred Fairfield, Marisa Luse, Nefertiti Lawrence, Norman Stembridge, Steven Godfrey, Sue Sullivan, Valeda Britton

Not in Attendance: Catherine Hardaway, Lorraine Payne Wheeler, 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: Kelly Sherman, Muge Undemir, Morgan McDaniel, Devin Quirk, Dana Whiteside, and Jamarhl Crawford

City Staff: NA

Link to PowerPoint:

<http://www.bostonplans.org/getattachment/88efe008-9847-461f-af6a-d8c392fbd60a>

Opening

On September 13th, 2021 Co-Chair Norman Stembridge of the Roxbury Strategic Master Plan Oversight Committee called the meeting to order and welcomed everyone. Norman continued to give a brief overview of the meeting agenda. Morgan McDaniel, BPDA Senior Real Estate Development Officer, provided several initial announcements including instructions on the use of the Zoom platform, a detail of the meeting's proceedings, and introduced the Spanish and Haitian Creole interpreters. The interpreters made their initial announcements and instructions to join the interpretation channels. Norman continued to provide a review of RSMPOC history, goals, and responsibilities, and encouraged the public to reach out and seek opportunities to stay engaged.

P3 RFP Update

Morgan McDaniel, Senior Real Estate Development Officer provided updates to the P3 RFP process. She first discussed the history of the PLAN: Nubian Square process, and then further highlighted the engagement dedicated to the P-3 RFP. Morgan then proceeded to explain what the BPDA had taken away from the community and how the community's feedback had shaped the current RFP. Building off the

general guidelines established by the PLAN: Nubian Square process, Morgan explained how the DRAFT P-3 RFP had been strengthened in certain areas, most notably the efforts to reach diverse developers.

Müge Ündemir, Interim Assistant Deputy Director of Downtown and Neighborhood Planning, then proceeded to explain the urban design guidelines listed in the DRAFT RFP. Müge highlighted the desired circulation on site, the suggested heights and massings of buildings, and the layout of different potential uses. She then proceeded to explain the timeline of how P-3 would move forward.

RSMPOC Comments

- An RSMPOC member made a comment highlighting the significance of Connelly's Night Club. They then asked that the BPDA show the height and massing of Northeastern University's proposed building and that they explain how the City will support job training.
 - Müge acknowledged the importance of Connelly's and answered that while the Northeastern building's massing was shown, the height was still yet to be determined. She also noted that while the height of Northeastern's building would be good context, the height suggestions listed in the RFP were derived from the heights of buildings on the Roxbury side of Tremont.
 - Morgan explained that while the City would provide networking/ facilitation for job training opportunities, it would be the responsibility of the developer to fund such a program. The RFP, she explained, did also require that prospective developers would be required to submit job training plans as part of their submission.
- An RSMPOC member expressed their excitement for the development of the site and shared an anecdote of how the area used to be more vibrant.
- Morgan McDaniel opened the comments to anyone in the general public.

Community Questions

- A community member asked that the BPDA change the phrase "wealth creation" to "wealth development". The community member explained that creation implied a single event whereas development implied a process. The community member also suggested that ownership be more clearly listed as a key priority of the RFP.
- A community member requested that reference photos of Connelly's be placed into the RFP, and observed that the City Council was currently reviewing zoning that would prohibit lab in residential areas.
 - Morgan stated that Connelly's photos and studies could be placed in the RFP appendix
 - Müge expressed excitement that thought was being put into Lab regulation, but explained that Labs would likely not be appropriate for areas that were only residential. P-3, Müge noted, was located in an area where there was a mix of uses. Additionally she noted that there were a variety of different lab types, with some being more appropriate in residential areas than others.

- A community member expressed concern that P-3 has been designated multiple times with no actual development. They wanted to know how the BPDA would ensure that development was successful this time.
 - Morgan explained that lessons learned from prior developers, like not moving the sewer line, had been built into the RFP. Additionally environmental remediation was being covered by the BPDA, which is a cost that is no longer a burden for the developer.
 - Norman Stembridge also explained that the PRC's had learned more over time and were better equipped to pick a developer who had the capacity to fulfill their vision.
- An RSMPOC member wanted to know what would happen to the Whittier building currently on site.
 - Müge explained that there is currently no specific language in the RFP that says what needs to be done with it. It will cost money to remediate, and the developers interested in preserving it would need to account for that in their proposal if they wished to save it, which in the long run could impact other community benefits they provide. Müge also explained it is the right of the community to landmark it if they so desire.
 - There were a number of comments put into the chat debating the merits of preserving or demolishing the building, with no consensus reached.
- An RSMPOC member asked that the job training requirements for lab and life science uses also be applied to any manufacturing uses as well.
 - Morgan responded affirmatively that she would add the language into the RFP.
- An RSMPOC asked the community member who raised concerns about the phrases "housing affordability" and "wealth creation" to further explain her concerns.
 - The community member stated the importance of getting the language to be precise, and outlining the job training and housing portions of the RFP clearly.
- A member of the public wanted to know if the streets on P-3 would be public or private.
 - Morgan explained that while the streets would be public, it would be the responsibility of the developers to create them.
- A member of the RSMPOC asked that community benefits be allocated to children as an opportunity for wealth development. They also asked that homeownership also be further emphasized in the RFP for wealth development.
- A member of the RSMPOC agreed with the community member who emphasized the importance of precise language.
- A member of the RSMPOC agreed and asked that the BPDA take a closer look at the homeownership language, and reconsider commercial uses on site because they, of late, have not been financially feasible.
- An RSMPOC member reiterated the importance of homeownership, but then continued on explaining the importance of community benefit money being allocated to ideals rather than individual organizations.
- An RSMPOC member asked the advantage and disadvantage of releasing the RFP at this meeting.

- Müge explained that not much would change other than the topics discussed at this meeting and if any comments came in by the 24th.
- The RSMPOC member emphasized the importance of language as a mechanism for holding developers accountable.

Morgan called on the RSMPOC to take a vote to release RFP, given the amount of time left in the meeting. Norman Stembridge read off the names of the present RSMPOC and recorded their vote. The tallied votes were 6 Yes, 1 No and 3 Abstain. The majority voted to release the RFP on the condition that points raised in the conversation and comments submitted by the 24th were incorporated into the RFP.

A number of members of the RMSPOC discussed the importance of trusting the government.

Kelly Sherman announced that there would be a vote taken for the Crescent Parcel Developer at the following meeting and that the updates to the RFP would be made public. Steven Godfrey and Norman Stembridge, co-chairs of the RSMPOC, stated that they would ensure that the comments received would be added to the P-3 RFP.

Müge underscored the importance of having difficult discussions about the future of the parcel, even when the work was uncomfortable.

Norman Stembridge, Co-Chair of the RSMPOC, closed the meeting. Meeting adjourned at 8 pm.