



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

Attendees

RSMPOC Members: Valeda Britton, Dorothea Jones, Norman Stembridge , Nefertiti Lawrence, Charlotte Nelson, Susan Sullivan, True-See Allah,

Not in Attendance: Catherine Hardaway, Steven Godfrey, Marisa Luse, Frederick Fairfield, Frank Williams 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, Ocean Luo, Dana Whiteside, and Naoise McDonnell

City Staff: Representatives from Councilor Mejia's office.

Link to PowerPoint: <http://www.bostonplans.org/getattachment/2a8c1bff-3e8f-46d3-aca8-93663d617157>

Opening

On June 7, 2021 Co-Chair Norman Stembridge of the Roxbury Strategic Master Plan Oversight Committee called the meeting to order and welcomed everyone. Kelly Sherman, BPDA Planner, welcomed all and made initial announcements of meeting recording and Zoom and interpretation channel instructions. The Spanish interpreter gave an introduction and initial instructions, while the Haitian Creole interpreter had not yet arrived. Kelly continued with zoom etiquette instructions and a brief overview of the meeting agenda. Kelly then announced the arrival of the Haitian Creole interpreter. Norman then continued with greetings and introductions of the rest of the RSMPOC members and gave a brief overview of the RSMPOC and its responsibilities.

Planning Update

Kelly Sherman, BPDA Planner, provided several updates on the PLAN: Nubian process to date. These updates included the release of the diverse developer survey on May 26th, and an overview of the upcoming P3 workshop on June 28th. This workshop is set to cover results from the diverse developer survey, the demographics of Roxbury, and the challenges and opportunities of potential land uses.

Development Update

Morgan McDaniel, BPDA Real Estate, introduced herself as the Project Manager for the Crescent parcel and gave each developer 15 minutes to present their proposals to the community. Morgan announced that there will be time for questions and comments after each presentation.

- Madison Park Development Corporation began their presentation by speaking to the history of the Crescent parcel and their recently completed development projects. Their presentation continued to describe two new buildings and open space for the Crescent parcel, as well as space for a youth development program and \$1m seed funding for local Real Estate/wealth building program. The buildings would consist of 173 rental units and 4 homeownership units with ⅓ of the units targeted towards 0-50% AMI households.
- Chat opened for community comment period.
 - A Community member asked if there was any additional information about the real estate/wealth building program.
 - Development partner provided details such as there being physical space for people to go who are seeking to become homeowners or business owners. \$1m funding would be for staff and educational programming.
 - A Community member asked about the adjacent St. Catherine-Drexel church and potential partnership with their programming such as with ABCD.
 - Developer responded that there remains opportunity for future partnership, however as of now their site plan is designed to make the church more accessible.
 - Community member responded that the church is in active use and not just a historic site.
 - A Community member asked how will the carbon footprint be reduced in buildings.
 - Developer responded that they have completed passive house development in the past. The buildings of their site will also follow passive house design models using different techniques such as energy efficient ventilators that are critical in urban development and help save money.
 - An RSMPOC member asked two questions: why are only 4 units marked for homeownership out of the proposed 177 units; and what would prohibit Northeastern University students from occupying the majority of the units?
 - Developer team responded that the 4 homeownership units will be family sized and there simply is not enough funding resources to build more homeownership units. The team wants to emphasize other support systems to build

homeownership opportunities. Lastly, their financing plan specifically prohibits student housing, such as the Low Income Housing Tax Credit, for example.

- Morgan recognized there were questions unable to be answered but they will be shared with developers and answered later.
- Drexel Village development team began their presentation by introducing their partnership with the adjacent St. Catherine-Drexel church, which will allow them to produce more units and more open space than any of the other current proposals. Their plan is to provide 217 units, roughly 1.5 acres of open space, and programming in partnership with the church focused on child care, wealth building, and artist space. The site plan also includes space for approximately 94 off street parking spaces, and a rooftop garden.
- Chat opened for community comment period.
 - A Community member asked, does the proposal address eligible homeless persons in the area?
 - Developers responded that ⅓ of the units will be made available to people making 50% AMI or less, and that the majority of those units will be for homeless people.
 - A Community member asked what the proposed parish center will cost and how will it be paid?
 - Development team responded that it will include 2400-2600 sq. ft. of space, and while the cost is still to be determined, it will be funded in part with proceeds from development.
 - A Community member asked how flexible is the development team in working with new partners, since some main street businesses have their own ideas about the new area.
 - Development team responded that they are fully open to partnership and that they see this as only the beginning of preliminary conversations. Currently the team consists of approximately 70% minority or women owned business enterprises and are seeking to improve this number.
 - A Community member asked why was the rent doubled by the developer at another local housing development Grant Manor?
 - Member of the development team intended to clarify that there was collaboration with the Homeowner's Association to increase the rent for some tenants, up to 10% and through a payment plan, in order to pay for renovations.
 - Councilor Julia Mejia announced there were discrepancies with tenants at Grant Manor and that a community centered approach should continue during and after development accountability begins and should remain for 3, 6, 9 months after completion of development.

- A Community member asked how many construction jobs and permanent jobs will be created from this project.
 - Development team answered there will be a minimum of 25 permanent jobs and a focus on hiring local residents for trades and stem related jobs.
- A Community member asked will there be handicap accessible units?
 - Developers responded affirmatively that there will be accessibility features in all units and some units will have extra accessibility features.
- Cass Crossing development team began their presentation by detailing the local roots of their cofounders. Both women believe in the affordable housing model as a pathway to education and other financial literacy resources, and it is in that belief and honor of Melnea Cass that they present their project. Highlights include approximately 164 units, below grade parking, glass and green space incorporated within the building and rooftop, and commercial space for local residents.
- Chat opened for community comment period.
 - A Community member asked what are the percentages for affordable housing?
 - Developer responded that a minimum of ⅓ of the total units will be affordable.
 - A Community member asked are there any affordable homeownership units?
 - The response indicated there would be none, but the team emphasized their commercial space.
 - A Community member asked for more details on their proposed commercial space.
 - Development team responded that the space will be targeted for local residents. They are currently targeting market rate rent for the commercial space, however they are offering a discount on the cost of building out and positioning of the interior space. The team also emphasized the remaining possibility for a lease to own the restaurant space.
 - A Community member asked for a highlight of the proposed community benefits.
 - Developer indicated these will include homebuyer workshops, financial literacy, and wellness programs.
 - A Community member for more homeownership opportunities within the proposed project, and if that is not possible, for more education on moving into homeownership.
 - Development team responded that their focus was on wealth development through their proposed commercial space but without access to the adjacent church space they could not build more. They do however, have plans to build more units if they are designated and can partner with the adjacent church.

- A Community member asked what is the team’s plan for funding and financing the project?
 - Development team responded that they are fully utilizing the Low Income Housing Tax Credit and they are also waiving their developer fee and using that as equity to secure additional coverage debt.
- A Community member asked what is the team’s plan for parking?
 - The team responded that they are seeking to create 200 parking spaces underground, however one floor of parking can be as expensive as an above grade structure, so they are continuing to seek financing opportunities.
- Councilor Julia Mejia asked about any opportunities to engage with Madison Park high school students and commented on the decision to target market rate rent for the commercial space.
 - The development team responded that they have received a letter of partnership from Madison Park to work with their students and educate them on the development process. The team also reiterated its point to focus on discounting the cost of building out the interior space, and that there are also lots of grants available which their team can help secure.
- A Community member asked can some of the rental units be reduced in size to add space for homeownership units?
 - The development team responded that their finances would not allow for that, but they have plans ready to build more space if they have the opportunity to partner with the adjacent church site.
- An RSMPOC member asked about estimated jobs resulting from this project.
 - The development team claimed 600 construction jobs and 100 permanent jobs would be created from their project.
- An RSMPOC member asked about the diversity of the development team and the design team.
 - The team responded that they consist of approximately 65% minority or women owned business enterprises and they are committed to growing this number.

Morgan closed the conversation but reiterated that the project comment period will remain open for 2 more weeks. The next step is for the RSMPOC to review each proposal and make their recommendation but community input and feedback is still welcomed. Norman thanked all and closed the meeting.

Meeting adjourned at 7.45pm.