



Meeting Notes
July 7, 2008
6:00pm-7:45 PM
Dudley Public Library
65 Warren Street

RSMPOC Members Present: Norman Stenbridge, Donovan Walker, Dan Richardson, Dorothea Jones, Charlotte Nelson, Reggie Jackson, Darnell Williams, Joe Cefalo; RNC: Julio Henriquez, Elected officials: Senator Dianne Wilkerson, Representative Byron Rushing ; BRA: Hugues Monestime, Jonathan Greeley, John Dalzell, Victoria Wolff

Darnell Williams (OC Chair) called the meeting to order.

Parcel 8, 9 and 10 Ownership and Disposition Status

Darnell (OC) noted that the BRA had been asked to address the questions from the June meeting regarding ownership and disposition status of parcels 8, 9 and 10.

John Dalzell (BRA) distributed handouts detailing the ownership of each parcel and summarized the ownership and disposition status. He explained that the state owned portions of parcels 9 and 10 where under a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) to be transferred to the BRA. He also explained that, of the two Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) owned portions of Parcel 8, the portion including the Nawn factory but not the portion along Melnea Cass, was included in the MOA.

John informed the committee that for the BRA to gain control of the remaining land legislation would have to be passed that transfers the land from the DCR. In return, the DCR would likely ask for city land elsewhere that it could use as park land. However, John emphasized that Parcels 8, 9, and 10 are in planning stages and that disposition strategies might be a focus for later.

Darnell (OC) stated that the BRA has not offered a clear explanation of how it expects to control all of Parcel 8.

John (BRA) noted that the master plan emphasizes parcels 9 and 10 more than parcel 8.

Julio Henriquez (RNC) reminded the committee that Senator (Wilkerson) previously stressed that BRA ownership of all of Parcel 8 is not free and clear. Julio asks if the committee had done anything since to settle the situation and expressed concern about spending time on Parcel 8 if it will not fit into their further plans for Parcels 9, and 10.

John (BRA) noted that the BRA has discussed possible legislation to make the site work with the state, senators, and others. He noted that built development of a portion of Parcel 8 can serve as an opportunity to make the Heritage Park also come to fruition on the site. He confirmed that disposition of the Parcel 8 pieces would be complicated.

Joyce Stanley (audience) added that Heritage Park should be seen as a historical site rather than as a wide open green space.

Darnell (OC) said that Ms. Stanley's comment was noted, but that he would like to stick to protocol and address other audience comments at the end of the meeting.

Joe Cefalo (OC) spoke of past experience transferring state property, including the four years that the process took to complete. He explained that the Massachusetts Department of Public Works would have to show that they had a surplus of land and that there would be several steps in the disposition process as described in Chapter 7. Joe urged the BRA to begin working straight away with Senator Wilkerson, Representative Rushing and the DCR on consolidating the land, as this step would be crucial for issuing an RFP for Parcel 8.

Charlotte Nelson (OC) asked if there was a point when the committee should stop working on Parcel 8 and go in another direction.

John (BRA) reiterated that the ownership situation for parcels 9 and 10 is much simpler than the ownership situation for Parcel 8 because all of the state owned parcels for 9 and 10 are included in the MOA. The BRA will control parcels 9 and 10. John also noted that while the DCR land was passed to the DCR for use as a Heritage Park, the DCR understands that redevelopment could be a better use for the majority of the site. This, he argued, would be a good, if complicated, fit.

Darnell (OC) expressed concern that momentum has grown in considering all parcels while the disposition status of Parcel 8 is still up in the air. He was also concerned that the ownership situation had not been fully clarified to the community. He asked whether members thought it prudent to continue planning for all three parcels.

Senator Wilkerson (OC) reminded members that there were a variety of different development interests in Roxbury while people were choosing what parcels to include in the Roxbury Master Plan and that Parcel 8 was one of those. She also noted that RFP's had been issued twice before for parcels 9 and 10 and that Governor Swift had signed an MOA for 14 parcels in the area. She mentioned that she had flagged the ownership issues of Parcel 8 a few months earlier. However, she supported the idea of continuing to include Parcel 8 in a conversation about what the community wants the corridor to look like.

Darnell (OC) asked if the senator was not concerned about planning of Parcel 8 moving forward without the disposition status settled.

Senator Wilkerson (OC) shared that at least one other development group is interested in the land and, the disposition status of the land is unlikely to change in the near future.

John (BRA) suggested that including Parcel 8 in the discussion and planning of the corridor is a good idea because the parcels guide each other.

Joe (OC) asked why they don't initiate the process to clear the title under the BRA immediately.

Senator Wilkerson (OC) stated that disposition and development ideas for Parcel 8 are moving faster than the OC is. She declared that she had never understood that the three RFP's should be released at the same time.

Joe (OC) expressed amazement that there was movement on Parcel 8 that they had not been informed of.

Senator Wilkerson (OC) replied that Parcel 8 had never really been on the OC's plate.

Norman Stembridge (OC) expressed concern that the OC's ability to plan parcels 8, 9, and 10 would be weakened by a lack of information about what other options are out there. He asked which RFP's were to be created when. He also shared his support of outside plans to develop the parcel if those plans were moving faster than the OC.

Charlotte (OC) expressed concern that there has been momentum to plan these parcels while much of the community, including abutters, may be under the impression that all three parcels are set to be developed through this planning process.

John (BRA) repeated that there is value in the parcels being envisioned together.

Darnell (OC) agreed with Charlotte that they should be concerned about advertising something to the community which is not reflective of reality. He clarified that there is traction being gained on Parcel 8 unbeknownst to the OC, and asks the committee members if they think the focus should shift to include only parcels 9 and 10.

John (BRA) reminded the committee that some of the Parcel 8 land actually belongs to the city, and suggested that it might be appropriate for those who have expressed interest in Parcel 8 to present at the next OC meeting. He also noted that there are contiguous abutters with large land holdings, including Harrison Supply and Tropical Foods, which should be brought into the conversation.

Donovan Walker (OC) warned that the community process for Parcels 8, 9 and 10 should not be used just to ease the way for abutters or others to come in and take over. He suggested that the BRA had been in conversation with Harrison Supply about Parcel 8, citing the community charette that Harrison Supply organized around the site 3 years earlier.

John (BRA) Stated that the BRA had not yet talked with Harrison Supply about Parcel 8.

Hugues Monestime (BRA) clarified that members of the BRA had sat through that presentation, but had not been responsible for or involved in organizing it.

Darnell (OC) asked committee members what direction they want to go in light of this debate.

Dan (OC) said that he strongly believed that Parcel 8 should not be treated like parcels 9 and 10, with the expectation of writing an RFP. His reasons included the lack of clear ownership lines and the other development interests for the parcel that may be moving faster than the OC. However, he imagined that the 3 parcels might still be planned together.

Dorothea (OC) told the Senator that she believed if interested parties were doing walkthroughs of the site that it would be in the public interest for people to know about that. She also expressed concern over how much control the abutters would have.

Senator Wilkerson (OC) repeated that there is no MOA for turnover of state ownership on the Melnea Cass portion of Parcel 8.

John (BRA) clarified that the smaller of the state properties on Parcel 8 is in the MOA.

Senator Wilkerson (OC.) asked the committee if they still really want to have control over the RFP process for Parcel 8.

John (BRA) reminded the committee that approximately 1/3 of P-8 is under city control and expressed his belief that this justifies seeking community guidance for use of the land.

Dan (OC) clarified that he thinks that Parcel 8 should be kept in the process somehow, but not as part of the RFP's for Parcels 9 and 10. He lamented having spent a lot of time so far including Parcel 8.

Joe (OC) agreed with the BRA's suggestion to keep Parcel 8 in the planning process but he suggested that they publicly clarify that Parcel 8 is not available at this time to create an RFP.

Reggie (OC) agreed that there should be a second RFP process for Parcel 8.

Donovan (OC) said that he had no problem with taking Parcel 8 out of the process and, again, expressed concern about the public process happening for Parcel 8 being used as a screen by others later.

Charlotte (OC) suggested that the BRA should explain the status of Parcel 8 to the community and that the committee should proceed with RFP discussions only on parcels 9 and 10.

Darnell (OC) **started a motion to have the BRA explain and clarify the ownership and disposition status of Parcel 8 while the OC and BRA continue the RFP process only for parcels 9 and 10.** The committee agreed that such a clarification should happen on or before the next community workshop on July 23rd.

Senator Wilkerson (OC) reminded the community that because the city has partial ownership in the land that makes up P-8, the city will be involved in whatever happens on the site. She suggested that the BRA is including Parcel 8 in the planning stage of the Melnea Cass parcels so that the OC can be involved. She continued by suggesting that this piece of land was no different than many other pieces of state owned land in Roxbury, and that the committee should be briefed on all of the state land activities, if they so choose.

Charlotte (OC) said that she would like to know what has transpired on Parcel 8 thus far.

Darnell (OC) asked the committee to focus on the motion at hand, and the motion was passed.

Work Plan for Next Community Workshop on Parcels 8, 9 and 10

John (BRA) distributed and reviewed the proposed work-plan for the July 23rd meeting.

Darnell (OC) reminded the BRA that the committee had asked for aggressive outreach for attendance to this meeting.

Julio (RNC) noted that any discussion of job zones and job training at the meeting should be Roxbury specific.

June 2nd Meeting Notes

Darnell (OC) asked for the committee to review the June notes but decided that since one voting member has left, they may not have a quorum, and would postpone the vote.

Dudley Vision Meeting Overview

Norman (OC) offered a brief summary of the recent Dudley Vision Advisory Council meetings. He noted that the first task to advice on was the move of the B-2 police station. Money, he said, has been budgeted for moving the station and for cleaning up the Modern Electroplating site, but no plans have been decided on. He said that the B-4 Police Station would be considered as a model. He also confirmed that the old children's services building on Washington St. would come down.

Julio (OC) inquired about the land use committee and whether they had issued a report.

Darnell (OC) clarified that the committee was looking at “language” use and not at land use.

RSMPOC Progress Update

Hugues (BRA) mentioned that the BRA had been working on a Progress Update and he distributed a draft outline of the document to the committee members...

Torrey Wolff (BRA) explained that the purpose of the Progress Update was to share the OC’s work and accomplishments with the broader Roxbury community. She presented the outline to the committee and asked the committee whether they had any immediate suggestions or additions.

Darnell (OC) recommended that the document highlight community workshops around Bartlett Yard and other community involvement in parcel planning.

Joe (OC) suggested that, while in the process of going through the OC’s accomplishments, the BRA also makes a list of those suggestions, or projects which had been recommended in OC meetings but not followed up on, such as tax credits, committees, etc.

Torrey (BRA) agreed that these tasks were complementary but asked for confirmation that such a list would be just for use by the OC and not a part of the Progress Update.

Joe (OC) confirmed that such a list was intended for internal OC use.

Darnell (OC) recommended that the Update focus on what the OC has delivered to the community.

Joe (OC) noted that one of the suggestions previously made was for the OC to have its own consultant.

Jonathan Greeley (BRA) offered that Torrey would e-mail members of the OC to solicit further input on the outline, as this document was largely for the OC to show the community their work.

Darnell (OC) mentioned that he had years of notes that he could draw from to make suggestions, and he recommended that other committee members might want to look through their notes to do the same.

Audience Comments

John Spears (Aud.) noted that the other parcels could benefit the development of Parcel 8 citing use of parking on the Blair Lot as an example. He recommended that the BRA

provide alternate visions for the area including one vision in which parcels 9 and 10 were seen as a single, split parcel.

Kerrick Johnson (Aud.) reminded the committee of his presentation in May concerning minority union-participation. He reported that he had talked with MPCDC and Nuestra since then as well as the 10 pt. Coalition and the Black Ministerial Alliance. He noted that he was not yet able to deliver all of the names previously requested by the committee, and asked the committee if they could let him know when they would respond to his request.

Darnell (OC) assured him that the OC would get back to him, but could not offer a specific time.

Ken Guscott (Aud.) commended the OC for its work. He expressed a concern for the need to train young developers and entrepreneurs in Roxbury, and suggested the creation of a subcommittee that would seek out local interest in developing in Roxbury.

Senator Wilkerson (OC) said that since the last meeting, there had been two big developments concerning jobs training. She noted that a bill had been past in Massachusetts to allot \$2 billion dollars to development of the life sciences, and suggested that Roxbury residents should be serious about pursuing bio-tech, bio-med and bio-science fields. She explained that Massachusetts lead in this venture while also recommending consideration for green jobs initiatives.

The meeting adjourned.