

Roxbury Strategic Master Plan Oversight Committee Meeting

Monday, February 1, 2016

6:00 PM to 7:45 PM

Dudley Branch Library, 65 Warren Street, Roxbury

Attendees

RSMPOC Members: Norman Stembridge, Tony Hernandez, Bing Broderick, Valeda Britton, True-See Allah, Frederick Fairfield, Felicia Jacques, Michael Curry, Beverly Adams, Susan Sullivan, Charlotte Nelson, and Dorothea Jones

Ex-Officio: Councilor Tito Jackson

Not in Attendance: Frank Williams, Marzuq Muhammad, Rep. Gloria Fox (Ex-officio), Senator Sonia Chang-Diaz (Ex-Officio), Evandro C. Carvalho, Rep. Byron Rushing (Ex-Officio)

BRA Staff: Lara Merida, Hugues Monestime, Dana Whiteside, Helmsley Alphonse, Ronette Seeney

City of Boston Staff: Chief of Economic Development John Barros, Tom McDonough, Steven Rumpler

Committee Scope and Responsibilities

- City of Boston staff spoke of the City's commitment to the RSMPOC and gave a summary of the last meeting.
- The Committee's Scope and Responsibilities were reiterated.
A committee member clarified Strategic Planning Area (SPA) implications for Roxbury.

BRA Economic Development Update

- No updates

Update from Developers

- No updates

Planning Update

- BRA staff presented a PowerPoint presentation, which introduced the Plan Dudley Square Strategic Planning Area (SPA) that outlined the need to assess existing conditions, update the vision, and assess impacts of existing economic and housing feasibility. This also included a summary of the comments at the January 4, 2016 meeting, the SPA, and meeting formats going forward.
- Link to PowerPoint- <http://www.bostonredevelopmentauthority.org/getattachment/397c17ba-2b6b-421a-81e9-afd30d7c4dc8>

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RSMPOC Questions and Comments

- Discussion of community benefits, value of each project, and calculating what the expected return should be in order for the community to know what benefits to ask for.
- Would like RFPs to be crafted with the help of the community and include language to ensure that there will be community benefits.
 - BRA staff replied affirmatively and stated that a consultant will be brought in to help figure out and explain both land cost and construction costs.
- Would like developers who have updates and info on community benefits to be present at next public meeting.

Community input

RFP and process questions:

- A community member asked if there can be a suggestion box for community benefits and will this process use different modes of outreach?
- Are benefits going to be outlined for Project Review Committee (PRC) members to use for drafting the RFPs and what authority the RSMPOC will have?
- Importance of understanding how various initiatives (the RSMPOC, Dudley Vision, Project Review Committees, and Councilor Jackson's Reclaim Roxbury initiative) fit together and overlap. Communication needs to be forthcoming.

A City of Boston Staff member made clarifying points:

- Stated the process of the upcoming community workshops would be held during working sessions. That they would use that time to address questions about area, development feasibility and community goals.
- The primary goal of the RSMPOC is to negotiate on behalf of the community.
- Moving forward, the City will be asking the Department of Neighborhood Development to use this process instead of creating their own. This would include the requirement that every parcel that is publicly-owned, as well as all privately-owned land with projects greater than 50,000 square feet in size will be reviewed by the RSMPOC.
- The City is coordinating efforts and will be clear about upcoming projects and community process.

Comments on PRC:

- A PRC member wanted to know when developers will be presenting project to the RSMPOC, and what is the makeup of the PRC.
- A City of Boston Staff member replied that PRCs will continue to be an important component. Projects will not come to the RSMPOC meetings for presentation unless there is a significant update or a specific need to report back to the Committee.

- The PRC is made up of five RSMPOC members and ten people from the wider public and they meet regularly to move projects forward.
- An RSMPOC member stated that the PRCs need to be updated so that there are 15 members. In regards to the Boston Residents Job Policy and the historical numbers stated, she hopes the new numbers 51%/51%/15% (representing 51% Residents / 51% MBEs / 15% WBEs) are the ones being used. It is important to have elected officials recommend Committee members.

Comments on the Master Plan:

- What will be done with the old document after the new one is created?
- A BRA staff member stated that they cannot currently state what updates will be included because it will be shaped based on comments and feedback from residents at PLAN: Dudley Square workshops - this type of work will be covered during working sessions time slots to avoid adding additional meetings to the schedule.
- The final document will be presented to the Oversight Committee and public at a full committee meeting. The final document will most likely take the form of an amendment to the existing Roxbury Strategic Master Plan since the document currently is a living document.
- All members of the RSMPOC are appointed by the Mayor. Appointees typically come from a running list on nominees, and from local elected officials.
- Development cannot happen if there is no coordination and looking at development as not parcel by parcel but how the parcels fit into the larger plan.
- A community member expressed the need for community input beyond the RSMPOC and expressed a need for meeting notes.
- A community member praised the new process and noted that it would be a major overhaul.
- Another community member stated that it would be helpful to have a copy of the original Master Plan for context and information (Link to Master Plan: <http://www.bostonredevelopmentauthority.org/getattachment/14118b82-9fa2-4e4d-b80d-3fc91bd6ef7d>)

Interest in long-term economic development:

- A resident stated that they were interested in attracting permanent jobs, like those offered with General Electric.
- A community member would like to see support for small businesses, since construction is pushing businesses out and increasing the number of vacancies.
- Another community member acknowledged the work of Peoples Academy - Peoples should get support since it is a local effort. Raised the concern of CORI preventing people from getting a well-paying job.

- A City of Boston Staff member stated that GE toured Dudley Square as a possible relocation site and that the brochure featured Dudley as one of the possible sites.

Discussion on gentrification:

- A resident stated that the group needs to talk frankly about race and culture, and whether development will increase gentrification or slow it down.
- Another resident expressed their view that millennials should be represented on the Committee because they believe that millennials will be affected the most by gentrification.
- What will the RSMPOC do to make sure that companies that are from the community are represented in the development process?
- Need to select contractors that hire locally because local employment is a form of a community benefit.
- Comment that Boston Residents Jobs Policy Program (BRJP) is not being enforced - those who go to the Boston Employment Commission (BEC) are also aware of this.
- A City of Boston Staff member responded that the best way to implement local hiring is through the BRJP – and that while it is not enough, the City is working on improving local hiring. Community should inform City Staff about sites that are not following the policy moving forward.
- Need for Minority-Owned Business Enterprises (MBEs) standards to be enforced.
- A disparity study will soon be conducted.
- Discussion on CDCs, MBEs and WBEs, and paying a living wage - CDCs need to be held accountable.
- Suggestion that the City establish a position that serves as a minority/employee advocate to get people a part of development.

RSMPOC Comments:

- RSMPOC and the community need to respect each other – the Committee is an extension of the community. If the developers are not trying to do well for the community, the RSMPOC is not going to approve their projects.
- RSMPOC is fighting for Roxbury every day, and they want to learn as much as they can to make the right decisions. The community should share their opinions and not assume that the RSMPOC are out to sell the community.
- The Committee’s intention is to represent the opinions of the community.

Meeting adjourned: 7:50 PM