



Roxbury Strategic Master Plan Oversight Committee Meeting  
Monday, December 7, 2020  
6:00 PM to 7:45pm  
Zoom Virtual Meeting

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## Attendees

**RSMPOC Members:** Charlotte Nelson, Dorothea Jones, Frank Williams, Fred Fairfield, Marisa Luse, Nefertiti Lawrence, Norman Stembridge, Sue Sullivan, True See- Allah, Valeda Britton

**Not in Attendance:** Catherine Hardaway, Lorraine Payne-Wheeler, Steven Godfrey, 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:** Beverley Estes-Smargiassi, John Feuerbach

**Link to PowerPoint:** <http://www.bostonplans.org/getattachment/dc454f6c-26e7-40b9-a434-1d306acf72f5>

## Opening

On December 7th, 2020 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. Kelly Sherman, BPDA Planner, 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.

## Planning Update

Kelly Sherman, BPDA Planner, provided updates to the PLAN: Nubian process to date, including a review of the recent Virtual Chat with A Planner in November. Topics of this meeting included a review of the Crescent Parcel process, and the solicitation of community feedback on the plan to vote on the approval of the final RFP and release to the public in January 2021. Kelly also announced the upcoming release of

the Parcel 3 (P3) booklet, aimed at providing information and an update on that site. Lastly, Kelly introduced two members of the Project Review Committee (PRC), Dorothea Jones, and Angela Williams.

### **PRC Presentation**

Dorothea Jones described the PLAN Nubian RFP development process for Blair Lot and Nawn Factory throughout 2019. She provided an introduction and brief background on each member of the PRC. Dorothea continued to explain the PRC's role in reviewing the proposed responses to the RFPs for Blair Lot and Nawn Factory. Dorothea then announced the PRC is recommending the Nubian Ascends proposal for Blair Lot, and provided some highlights of that proposal. Angela Williams reiterated the highlights of the proposal as the reason for the PRC's recommendation, but also issued some concern related to the securing of a tenant for the Class A office space. Angela continued moving along to describe the two proposals received for the Nawn Factory. She provided strengths and weaknesses of both Jonathan Small's Art @ the Nawn Factory and the development proposed by Historic Boston, Inc. in partnership with The Wellness Collaborative. Angela then announced the PRC is recommending Art @ the Nawn Factory. Kelly Sherman opened the floor to RSMPOC members for questions.

### **RSMPOC Comments**

- An RSMPOC member asked despite the positives of The Wellness Collaborative and Historic Boston proposal seemingly outweighing the positives of Art @ the Nawn Factory, what led to the PRC's recommendation of Art @ the Factory?
  - Dorothea Jones replied that first and foremost, Art @ the Nawn Factory would be wholly owned and operated by a local black developer with experience in the art industry, and that this serves as a great wealth generating opportunity for both a member, and the community at large. Secondly, the project provides much needed dance studio space in the Roxbury community, where currently many people must travel far outside of the community for the space this project would provide.
- An RSMPOC member commented that similar to the Nubian Ascends proposal, the Madison Tropical development had originally included office space but eventually converted to residential.
  - Dorothea Jones replied that the community space offered by the Nubian Ascends proposal is intended to be very flexible to accommodate different uses. There may also be room, potentially, to accommodate The Wellness Collaborative in the Nubian Ascends development.
  - Dana Whiteside, BPDA Development Review, clarified that it was the co-developer, Madison Park Development Corporation, who proposed the use change for the Madison Tropical development.
- An RSMPOC member commented that relating to the Nawn Factory, the city needs to do a better job and find better ways and opportunities for local black and brown developers to

participate in the development of the city, and that was part of the reason for their recommendation.

- Kelly Sherman read a text comment from an RSMPOC member that read they also support giving more people opportunities.
- Dorothea Jones commented that regardless of outcome of vote, the community process will continue and will include regular meetings with the recommended developers to ensure community input is weighed and included.
- Kelly Sherman opened floor to community members for questions

### Community Questions

- A community member called in and claimed as a local business owner and elder dancer, everyday they must drive to Cambridge for dance space. It has always been wondered in the community, why there was no dance space locally - it is a health issue, and a part of the local culture - and a great opportunity to have dance space in the community at the Nawn Factory.
- A co-founder of TWC made some clarifying announcements. They claimed their local community roots, and understood the need for wealth generating opportunities, which they have partly included in their proposal. They were intentional in partnering with an experienced development team in HBI. They considered other spaces locally, however only lease space was available, and as an affordable wellness space, their business model requires they must own their space. It was also noted that the recommended proposal for Blair Lot does not contain commercial condo space, as was originally part of RFP.
- Kelly Sherman read a community members question related to clarifying concerns between HBI and TWC
  - Dorothea Jones replied that concern was based on the shifting nature of the partnership between HBI and TWC from meeting to meeting. It was felt that the partnership would ultimately be more beneficial to HBI than it would be to TWC. The PRC decided that a better alternative would be for the City to help find TWC ownership opportunities elsewhere.
  - Another PRC member clarified that the PRC was not made comfortable with their requests for clarification of partnership between HBI and TWC
- Morgan McDaniel, BPDA Real Estate, read community members questions and comments from chats.
  - A community member asked if any project proponents have spoken with local universities about the availability of rent space.
- Kelly Sherman read a community member's concern about Nubian Ascends experience providing successful art space.
  - Dorothea Jones expressed their confidence in the demand for local art institutions and space within the community.

- A community member commented that there is such a great need in the community for the kind of programmatic space that both of these recommended projects propose.
- A community member commented that this is a great opportunity for developer with limited experience to gain experience, and again there is a great need specifically for dance space and art space.
- Morgan McDaniel read a community member's comment that HBI and TWC proposal valued wellness over art.
- Kelly Sherman read a community member's comment that proposed a partnership between HBI and Art @ the Nawn Factory, combining development experience with art programming.
- A TWC member commented and claimed their interest in potential partnership to foster entrepreneurial and wealth building opportunities, and that wellness is the cornerstone of all of these programs.
- Kelly read a community member's comments reiterating the need for local community dance space.
- A member of HBI responded that, as a non-profit, they are open to all partnerships and open to supporting any projects any way they can in order to positively impact the community.
  - An RSMPOC member thanked HBI for their professionalism and care as a part of the process and willingness to support the project and the community.
- A member of the RSMPOC reiterated that these decisions were not easy but were important opportunities for the community.

Kelly Sherman, began the vote of the RSMPOC for support of the PRC recommendations. The Nubian Ascends recommendation Blair Lot received a unanimous vote in support from the RSMPOC. The Art @ the Nawn Factory recommendation received 8 out of 10 votes in support of the project. Kelly thanked all for joining and made an announcement for an upcoming City career fair.

Norman Stembridge, Co-Chair of the RSMPOC, closed the meeting with hopes that there can be a potential partnership between the proponents for the Nawn Factory as that may ultimately be best for the community.

Meeting adjourned at 7.45pm.