



Roxbury Strategic Master Plan Oversight Committee Meeting
Monday, July 12, 2021
6:00 PM to 7:45pm
Zoom Virtual Meeting

Attendees

RSMPOC Members: Valeda Britton, Dorothea Jones, Nefertiti Lawrence, Charlotte Nelson, Susan Sullivan, Frank Williams, Lorraine Payne Wheeler, Norman Stembridge

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

City Staff:

Link to PowerPoint: <http://www.bostonplans.org/getattachment/d90920a2-4be8-4872-b617-3703fed8fa92>

Opening

On July 12, 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 their introduction and initial instructions, the Haitian Creole interpreter followed. Kelly continued with zoom etiquette instructions and an overview of the meeting agenda, to include a brief review of the planning process and the allotted time slots for developer presentations. 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, which started in February 2016. These updates included a recap of the most recent meeting, workshop #4 for P3, which discussed the pros and cons of potential desired uses, as well as highlights of the results of the diverse developer survey. It was announced that the next P3 workshop #5 would be held in August and discuss a draft version of the P3 RFP. It was stated that a Chat with a Planner would be held later in the

month of August for community conversation, and the goal is to bring the RFP to the RSMPOC for a final approval vote in September. Kelly then began the Developer update presentations.

Development Update

- 135 Dudley Street began with their updates. The project was designated in July 2019, with substantial updates to the design since then. One example presented was the rental apartment building having switched locations with the condominium building. There are now 170 units total, 110 condos and 60 rentals. After a contamination issue caused the elimination of some of the original proposed parking spaces, there are now 142 covered parking spaces on the site. Community benefits from the project include: free space to NAACP for 10 years, partnership with YouthBuild Boston for construction jobs, at least \$50,000 in scholarships over the next 10 years, and requirement for any commercial tenants to pay “living wage.”
- Kelly opened the floor for RSMPOC then community questions and comments.
 - A RSMPOC member asked if there were any changes to the project besides the parking changes.
 - Developer responded that the affordability levels for the residential units have decreased. This was due to construction costs increasing, while there has also been a decrease in funding and subsidies available for homeownership projects, as opposed to rental projects. However, they remain committed to work with the local community to ensure as many people as possible can find housing.
 - A RSMPOC member asked to receive all documents for review, and then stated her appreciation for a developer of color to build in Roxbury and one that has done well with their community benefits program and her hope that they continue to work with the community.
 - Another RSMPOC member asked for a closer commitment to Madison Park and other local schools and mentioned concerns about density and parking.
 - A community member asked why we continue to use current AMI levels despite different income levels in the local neighborhood.
 - Developer responded that there are opportunities for people as low as the 30% AMI levels in their project.
 - A community member asked what is the “living wage” that is being committed to
 - Developer responded at least roughly \$17/hour.
 - A RSMPOC member reiterated their appreciation for the homeownership aspect of the project and asked for continued outreach to the community about this opportunity
 - A community member asked why the developer has not engaged Tommy Rock neighborhood association and reiterated that affordability levels are not representative

of Roxbury and also how the parking, as it is situated off of Warren st will impact the neighborhood.

- Developer responded that the City defines affordability and units start at as low as \$23,000/yr. Also the development team hosted 8-9 community meetings that all are welcome to attend. Parking has been vetted by private consultants, BPDA, DND and others
- Nubian Square Ascends was introduced next to begin their updates presentation. The project was designated in December 2020 and designed to complement the arts and culture in the area. Community benefits of the project include an equity crowdfunding platform, the creation of investment accounts for youth of local communities, and parking that is accessible to the public.
- Kelly opened the floor for RSMPOC then community questions and comments.
 - A RSMPOC member asked for clarification on the artists' units.
 - Developer responded that there will be 15 ownership units for artists, with 5 at market rate and 10 as affordable units. There will also be dedicated exhibit space for artists to present and showcase their work.
 - A RSMPOC member extended appreciation for the public parking but asked for more details regarding the youth investment accounts.
 - Developer responded that the current plan is to issue an RFP to local money management firms and banks to design the program and to also seek investment in the form of matching funds.
 - A RSMPOC member advised the developer to include financial literacy education as a part of the programming.
 - A community member extended appreciation for the artists' space, but asked for more residential space within the project.
 - Developer responded that their thought process took into consideration that other neighboring development projects in the area are largely residential.
 - A community member commented to ensure the inclusion of more local youths in investment program
 - A community member asked how the commercial space of the project will be financed.
 - Developer responded that commercial space will be focused on the incubation of smaller businesses.
- 2147 Washington Street was introduced next to begin their updates presentation. The project was designated in 2019. It consists of 62 rental units, 12 homeownership units - all at a variety of income affordability levels - as well as retail space, including space for the Haley House. A woman owned business enterprise has been selected as the contractor and construction is expected to begin in Fall 2021.

- Kelly opened the floor for RSMPOC then community questions and comments.
 - A RSMPOC member asked about the sizes of the residential units.
 - Developer responded that there is a range from studios to 3 bedrooms, at a variety of AMI levels.
 - A RSMPOC member asked for clarification on the definition of a commitment of financing.
 - Developer responded that the contracts are drawn and in the process of being closed.
 - A RSMPOC member asked about previous issues with the selected contractor and the need to ensure that specific requirements are met for construction jobs.
 - Developer responded that they have made it explicitly clear that the awarded contract is based on meeting construction job requirements.
 - A community member asked if the artists space is still included in the project on the ground floor level.
 - Developer responded yes, the artist space remains and will be available to residents and some members of the public. The process for including members of the public in artist space is still being determined.
 - A community member asked if the PIC (Public Improvement Commission) review will be this summer.
 - Developer responded yes, the goal is to have PIC review this summer.
- 75 Dudley Street was introduced next to begin their updates presentation. The project has been redesigned to preserve street trees along Dudley Street. The redesign has caused some delay and the need to repeat some of the permitting process. The project now includes 15 homeownership condo units, a reduction from previous iterations of the project. The originally proposed retail space also had to be eliminated due to the redesign.
- Kelly opened the floor for RSMPOC then community questions and comments.
 - A RSMPOC member asked if it is possible to replace the permanent jobs lost with the loss of retail space, with jobs for students from Madison Park.
 - Developer responded that it is a new idea and the creative approach will be considered.
- 40-50 Warren Street was introduced next to begin their updates presentation. No members of the development team were present or available.

- John Feuerbach, Senior Development Officer for the Department of Neighborhood Development (DND) reported that the 40-50 Warren Street development team had been seeking an additional partner and may be better suited if they present updates next time.

- Kelly opened the floor for community conversation. ‘
- A RSMPOC member gave appreciation for 135 Dudley Street displaying their income limits and breakdown for residential units, and moving forward all developments should provide this information.
- A RSMPOC member asked if the Haley House would own their space at 2147 Washington Street.
 - Developer responded yes, they will be able to own their space.
 - A follow up question came regarding if this project can produce a similar community benefit to the youth investment accounts of the Nubian Square Ascends project.
 - Developer responded yes, they would be open to having that conversation.

- A community member asked how people can get on waitlist for residential units of these apartments
 - There will be follow up on specific steps for signing up for each projects residential units

- A community member asked Nubian Ascends what is the difference between the Cultural Hall of their project and the local Hibernian Hall.
 - Nubian Square Ascends representation was no longer available but the question will be forwarded to the team.

- A community member asked if any of the projects address senior housing.
 - Kelly responded that none of the projects tonight spoke to senior housing, however the Bartlett Yards development does provide space for senior housing.

- A community member asked about housing for parents with children
 - Kelly responded that some projects do include 3 bedroom units

- A community member also spoke to housing accessibility for those with disabilities.
 - Kelly responded that the Office of Fair Housing is a resource in this area and that a connection can be made to contact there.

- Norman thanked all for attending and closed out the meeting.

Meeting adjourned at 7.45pm.