



Roxbury Strategic Master Plan Oversight Committee Meeting
Monday, May 6, 2019
6:00 PM to 7:45PM
Boston Water & Sewer Commission, 980 Harrison Ave, Roxbury

Attendees

RSMPOC Members: True-See Allah, Valeda Britton, Frederick Fairfield, Nefertiti Lawrence, Marisa Luse, Charlotte Nelson, Curtis Rollins (RNC Representative), Norman Stembridge, Susan Sullivan, Lorraine Payne Wheeler, Frank Williams

Not in Attendance: Steven Godfrey, Catherine Hardaway, Dorothea Jones, Jorge Martinez, Kim Napoli, 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: Lillian Mensah, Victoria Phillips, Devin Quirk, Muge Undemir, Viktorija Abolina

City Staff: Chief John Barros, Office of Economic Development; Jessica Boatwright, Department of Neighborhood Development; Chief Shelia Dillion, Department of Neighborhood Development; Pat Hoey, Boston Transportation Department; Chief Chris Osgood, Office of Streets and Infrastructure; Courtney Sharpe, Office of Arts and Culture; Natalia Urtubey, Office of Economic Development – Small Business Center

Link to PowerPoint: <http://www.bostonplans.org/getattachment/eff1d1b6-c8f9-479c-86e1-884e25b530ec>

Opening

On May 6, 2019 Co-Chair Norman Stembridge of the Roxbury Strategic Master Plan Oversight Committee called the meeting to order. The meeting agenda, committee responsibilities, Master Plan's original goals were reviewed, and 2019 RSMPOC public meeting calendar were reviewed. Co-Chairman Stembridge then shared at the June 3rd RSMPOC public meeting, the Project Review Committee (PRC) will make a recommendation to the RSMPOC on 135 Dudley Street, 1247 Washington Street, 40-50 Warren Street, and 75 Dudley Street.

Planning Update

- Muge Undemir, BPDA Senior Planner, reviewed the timeline for the upcoming PLAN: Dudley Square meetings and discussions: May 20th at the Boston Water and Sewer Commission will be a continuation of the PLAN: Dudley process, discussing Blair Lot, Nawn Factory, and Parcel 8. June

3rd at the Bolling Building will be the RSMPOC public meeting where the PRC reviewing the DND parcels (135 Dudley Street, 1247 Washington Street, 40-50 Warren Street, and 75 Dudley Street) will make a presentation and recommendation to the RSMPOC on each parcel. The PRC has been meeting for several months now, reviewing the proposals and public comment which had been received. June 17th will be a PLAN: Dudley public meeting, which will be a continuation of the May 20th meeting. Then July 1st is the RSMPOC public meeting.

Development Project Update

- In lieu of Development Project Updates for Bartlett Place, P-3 Tremont Crossing, Parcel 10 – Madison Tropical, and P9 – Melena Hotel and Residences, City Officials and Staff provided updates on city coordinated initiatives in and around Dudley Square. Representatives from the development teams were in attendance at the meeting to answer any questions.

City Coordinated Initiatives Update

- City Staff from Office of Arts and Culture, the Boston Planning and Development Agency, Office of Economic Development, Boston Transportation Department, and Office of Streets and Infrastructure each provided updates on respective investments in and around Dudley Square. A City Staff member from Office of Public Safety, Public Health, and Recovery Services Interventions was not able to attend; however, an update was still provided and a staff member from the office will attend at later RSMPOC public meeting. The three goals of the presentation is to: 1. Identify the coordinated investments the City is making in the people, places, and infrastructure of Dudley Square 2. Discuss efforts to advance economic empowerment of the existing residents and businesses in Dudley 3. Establish periodic communication with the Oversight Committee and Community.

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RSMPOC Comments

- An RSMPOC member asked, in regards to the 900 affordable units, what are we talking about in regards of AMI? A BPDA staff member responded, the 900 affordable units include private developments required to comply with IDP and future numbers from the PLAN: Dudley RFP process for the DND parcels. The associated AMI depends on the project. The exact numbers are not here at today's meeting but can be provided at a later meeting.
- A RSMPOC member asked, what the Whittier Home Buying Club is. A DND staff member responded, we are working with Boston Housing Authority (BHA) to provide home buyer opportunities for residents of Whittier, Madison Park Village, and the greater Dudley area. The Home Buyer Club is a posted time for folks to get together and learn about the elements of homeownership. Staff from Madison Park and Boston Home Center work with individuals to be ready to take homeownership 101 and credit classes offered by the City. It is a once a month meeting to talk about progress, concerns. A Madison Park staff member followed-up stating,

there is money available through the program. There is \$70,000 in down payment assistance for those in the Whittier Street area, Madison Park offers an additional \$50,000 in assistance for Madison Park residents to purchase property. The Home Buyers Club is a model which has expanded, which is a little more intensive to help individuals to get from renting to home ownership.

- A RSMPOC member followed-up asking, is the \$50,000 and \$70,000 in funding per family. A Madison Park staff member followed-up stating, the funding is per family.
- A RSMPOC member asked, in earlier meetings about Melnea Cass there was discussion of a dedicated bus lane, is that off the table. A BTD staff member responded, yes, the bus lane was scrapped because it made the corridor cross-section too wide and encroach on personal property too much. There would have been no major route that run through that section and would have whipped out a couple hundred trees. We went back to the drawing board and in hindsight it could have been a mistake and we have the community and the Friends of Melnea Cass and others to thank who had the wisdom of creating more of a complete street. Now there are there will be narrowed crossing down to 40-50 feet instead of 110 feet.

Community Comments

- A community member asked, what are the plans to update and consistently update the sewer system given the influx of construction projects. For the Lenox and Shawmut neighborhood, what is being done for the needles on the streets and in Jim Rice field, what is the consistent clean-up plan beyond the street sweepers which has been consistent since 2015. An Office of Streets staff member responded, the Office of Streets works closely with Boston Water and Sewer so the office can work with BWSC to find out what are the plans for sizing water and sewer capacity. As for street cleaning, the Office of Streets is increasing on the ground services in the Dudley area.
 - Following-up a Tremont Crossing development team representative stated, the sewer line that runs under parcel P-3 will be upgraded. There is 1000 linear feet of the Stony brook interceptor, a combined 54 inch storm water and sewer pipe that is being completely replaced and will have 100 year lifecycle as part of the project.
- A community member followed-up stating, it is also important to ensure those who are facing the issues which result in the needle- and increased litter also receive the support they need as that is also part of the solution. A RSMPOC member responded, just before this meeting staff from the Office of Public Safety, Public Health, and Recovery Services called to inform us their office representatives would not be able to attend today's meeting due to an emergency but they are happy to attend a future RSMPOC meeting to address concerns and questions.
- A community member stated, that issue is a huge issue for our quality of life. We have heard some pretty sad stories from the parents in our building about kids seeing some things they should not have to see at this point in their lives. Just walking from Melnea Cass back to Ball Street your eyes will be opened to what is truly happening and would encourage city staff to do take the walk.
- A RSMPOC member stated, the question about sewer upgrades is a great question. As part of Main Streets, about 20 years ago there were some upgrades to stop flooding in basements every time it rained. I am not sure how far that went but with all this work going on it may be a good idea to follow-up with BWSC on the work.
- A community member asked, there is a really big problem with parking as Dudley is a destination, are the buildings that are being built coming with parking. Also, are you going to

turn street parking into resident parking for those who live there? A BTD staff member responded, on the development, BTD reviews the projects in Roxbury for example P-3 has 1,500 parking spaces, Rio Grande is working to reconcile their parking potentially with an off-site structure, and Melena Hotel and Residences has on-site parking. Generally every project that goes through the BPDA and BTD has on-site parking. As for on-street parking, if you live on a street without on-street parking there is a petition process where you get 51% of the residents to agree to be part of the program. There is also a neighborhood meeting facilitated by Office of Neighborhood Services.

- A community member followed-up stating, the concern is more about visitors to the developments as it is other people utilizing parking spaces. A BTD staff member responded, that is a scenario where on-street resident parking would help protect from commuters and visitors. Following-up, a RSMPOC member stated, there are a lot of small businesses in the area that are concerned that resident only parking discourages people from visiting stores so there is a fine line to balance. A BTD staff member followed-up stating, there is a balance and there are signage options which allows for turnover and short-term visits with resident parking.
- A community member asked, this has been shared with several city councilors already as I pay an excise tax for the entire City of Boston so I do not mind resident parking but to the point of visiting other neighborhoods to go to restaurants and shopping, there should be a citywide residential parking sticker which allows you to park anywhere in the city for two hours. Also, the resident parking signs for lower Roxbury currently read South End and need to be fixed. A BTD staff member responded, we are completely aware of the issue with the Mass Ave boundary. In the meantime, you will not be ticketed in those areas designated at South End if you have a Roxbury resident parking sticker.
 - An Office of Economic Development staff member followed-up asking for an approximate timeline when the signs would be changed. A BTD staff member responded, all the signs have been reissued but there is not a timeline. However, the department knows exactly the streets like Thorndike Street and over in Hammond area by Slades that will ultimately be Roxbury resident parking.
- A community member asked, traffic is already so bad in this area what is the plan to deal with the added traffic from these new projects because I feel trapped in my own community. An Office of Streets staff member responded, step one is getting all of our current streets today to work better. Two of the key investments are Dudley Square and Melnea Cass. The investment in Madison Park has just wrapped up as well as redesigning the Ruggles Street and Whittier Street and also some streets outside of BWSC. Every year about 60 traffic signals are retimed on the main corridors to work more in sync. One of the key corridors we are working with the State in upgrading is Warren Street including signaling.
 - A community member followed-up asking, what signaling has to do with the number of cars. An Office of Streets staff member followed-up stating, if we want to keep growing as a city, lower emissions, and make it easier for everyone to get around our city we have to make it more feasible for more people to take transit, biking, walking, buses, etc. One great thing that is happening in this area is the T is making a significant investment in the orange line. Currently, the orange line runs once every six minutes and over the course of the next few years will be once every four and a half minutes which is essentially a 50% increase in the overall capacity of the orange line. This is also supported by the goal to move more folks more reliably on buses.

- A community member followed-up stating, how about moving some of the projects out of Dudley. An Office of Streets staff member stated, I realize some of this question is about the growing density in the area but strictly from a transportation perspective these are the tools and city coordinated initiatives to make transit more reliable. A BTM staff member followed-up stating, more than half of the congestion the City sees is from commuters and is not related to the local development. Additionally any projects over 50,000 square feet contribute to transit improvements to offset impacts.
- A community member stated, they have been to many of these meetings where developers are thinking about what they want and not what the community wants. They have attended so many of these meetings where there have been comments and suggestions which were shutdown. Though they appreciate what is being shared it is not going to cut it, the development pressure is too much.
- A community member stated, there have been promises from the time Madison Park really had a park there and all that has happened in the past 50 years is the community has been displaced. Now there is this issue of affordable housing, not low-income housing, is it affordable for whom. There are all these buildings going up and people are scrambling. The T is a miserable experience. For parking spaces in the winter, somebody is going to be killed over a parking spot. This is Boston, Boston has always had neighborhoods and these neighborhood are being taken over by developers and you all are hiding it.
- A community member stated, who the community goes to when everything is not under control and going well. An Office of Economic Development staff member stated, the issues that are being faced are real. There is no way to shut our borders so we have to figure out how our city can accommodate growth. The problem with withholding housing development is the increase in housing cost. All the right questions are being asked. It is a balance to advocate for the State to increase and expand the T as these developments happen to support these changes.
 - A community member stated, they are not against development, they are against displacement and breaking neighborhoods up with big buildings and ensuring everyone can live here and not placing multi- multi- units in neighborhoods which it does not fit. An Office of Economic Development staff member responded, it is really important for the community to remain engaged. Resident leadership introduced language for all city land disposition RFPs to ask developers to state whether the project directly displaces individuals from a site or creates development so there is an analysis to be part of the conversation.
- A community member stated, attending so many meetings for decades there seems to be no solution as the developments keep coming but gentrification is alive and well. The City coming here and telling community what is happening like the community does not already know needs to stop. Developers need to come to the table before their plans are made. The City needs to rethink the plan.
- A community member asked, can the boundaries of how neighborhoods are defined be aligned with each other, there currently is no consistency so the Roxbury community is losing its voice and neighborhood. The ZBA is also passing projects that require a dozen or more variances. Developers are lying about what they are building. Historic buildings are being torn down. The City does not talk to each other about which neighborhood is which. An Office of Economic Development staff member responded, everything just shared cannot be disagreed upon. The resident parking signs which read South End but are in Roxbury are being corrected. There

needs to be greater coordination between us and the Federal government on the zip codes. When it comes to tracking down development which is honoring what it was approved to do, residents need to call the Office of Economic Development. The City is not here to represent developers, the City is here to represent residents. The City wants to crackdown on developers not following through and to do so we need residents to call us to let us know.

- A community member stated, developments are being pushed down residents' throats and are not being listened too but disrespected. There has to be plans and back-up plans. An Office of Economic Development staff member responded, this message is going to personally be delivered to the Mayor that Roxbury residents feel development is being pushed down their throats and am going to use that exact quote and bring that back because if it is felt that concerns or pushback on development are falling on deaf ears that is a problem. If other neighborhood folks are supporting it, it makes it difficult not to support it, but if the neighborhood is pushing back it is important to get to the bottom of it. It is also important to hear from folks which specific developments need attention. Following-up, an Department of Neighborhood Development staff member stated, on the four DND parcels which the PRC is reviewing that is the start of the process, at least 2/3 of the units will be affordable, and there is a want for the development to fit in and be the right development for Dudley, making sure the City is working with the community to create buildings the neighborhood feels good about. City officials will be at those meetings. The PRC is off to a great start, the PRC is from the community and really engaged, they will stay engaged and bring a lot more people into the conversation.
- A community member stated, these issues being raised are tremendously important. It is good to see the community be able to raise concerns to the City. In the past PRC meetings were public and the community was invited to share their thoughts, is the public involved with the PRC, when were the announcements for the PRC meetings, and when will the announcements for the May PRC meetings be shared. A Department of Neighborhood Development staff member responded, the PRC began meeting in January. During that time a public comment period was opened, the four proposals are available on the City website, each development team being considered gave a public presentation at the Bolling Building on a Saturday. At those public presentations the questions really came from the community as the PRC really stepped back to hear the questions their neighbors had about the proposals. There have been updates at the RSMPOC meetings about the PRC process. 2-3 file boxes of materials from each development team including financials about the proposals were submitted so a public comment process was used and PRC sessions have been working sessions for that group.
 - A community member followed-up stating, DND has put out comprehensive materials online, however, the community is an oral community and the exchange between the community and stakeholders is very important to the process. During the developer presentations there was very little time for community questions. Yet on June 3rd there will be a recommendation. There is a need for an opportunity for the community to have greater oral interaction with each developer before a decision is made. The process at this point has not met that goal. An Office of Economic Development staff member responded, this point has been heard and taken in by the City and the RSMPOC. The PRC recommends a proposal to the RSMPOC, then once the RSMPOC selects a proposal that is when the project really gets unpacked. It is important to keep to a process that says "right process, right team" then let's really dig into it. There is still a long journey to go to develop a project to the degree which we would under Article 80.

- A community member followed-up asking, will the RSMPOC have a process where those with opposing perspectives be heard and involved in the decision of the proposal. An Office of Economic Development staff member responded, looking at nodding heads from the RSMPOC there will be space for public comment after the PRC makes their recommendation and ensuring there is time for public comment.
- A community member stated, when you are taking back a message to the Mayor, the concern personally heard was about the type of development that is taking place. Please take back that the agencies of the City of Boston are not listening to our concerns thoroughly, that there are agencies like the ZBA, BPDA, ISD that are saying a project is as-of-right because the zoning has changed and there is no longer public process that is the issue. The City is not following its own rules. While we can inform the City, the City has to listen. For example, when you remove Carter Playground and there is no public notice or legislative action, the community cannot be forced to say let's work this out because the City did not do it properly in the first place. The Mayor needs to hold his leadership accountable for following their policies, laws, and procedures.
- A community member asked, when there are developers who bid over and over again but are unable to satisfy what was promised, that is something for the Office of Economic Development to look into. All these projects were meant to bring job and economic development and if all the projects bring is housing like have been spoken about tonight, what does that mean especially if the housing is not affordable to Roxbury residents. An Office of Economic Development staff member responded, Madison Park did a feasibility study on that site and recognized the rent which would have to be collected were more expensive than for the types of businesses they can attract, in fact Dudley is already displacing some businesses. One of the issues is there is not subsidy money for commercial uses like we have for housing to do for small businesses. It is going to need legislation. There is not a clear answer but in addition to a survey of what other cities are doing, we are going to convene a national summit because government does not subsidize private businesses but we have to create subsidies to create the communities we want with the desired businesses and amenities.
- A RSMPOC member stated, there has to be an incentive in the neighborhoods for companies to come in that are going to hire from the neighborhood and be held accountable. If we are looking to subsidize businesses it is important that the subsidy be tied to hiring. An Office of Economic Development team member responded, provided an example of subsidy through property taxes and how it is important to expand the way in which subsidy can be created.
- A community member stated, process is everything as it is where you build relationships and form trust. The issue is not development but the process from which the development is happening. That is impacting the relationship people currently have or will have with Roxbury. It is unacceptable how City departments talk with one another. The conversation about public safety and drug abuse that is happening throughout Roxbury, where else will the current solution of the needle disposable kiosks be placed as right now one is very visible in front of Orchard Park. An Office of Economic Development staff member responded, we will get you the answers as to upcoming process. As for the needle kiosks, the Chief of Public Safety was not able to be here with us tonight but will be out at an upcoming RSMPOC meeting to respond to concerns.
- A RSMPOC asked, AMI seems to be a reoccurring concerns and issue in the Roxbury community, is there support through funding or otherwise which can help get AMI from 50-80 percent down to the 20-30 percent AMI. A Department of Neighborhood Development staff member responded, with the DND parcels part of the conversation is what should the affordability look

like for the projects. There have been meetings with Dudley Square business owners that are saying the opposite around AMIs. What more important to talk about than AMI is the real incomes and individuals who are going to live there.

- A community member stated, as buildings are invested in the stores which occupy those spaces will grow and change.
- A community member asked, who is taking notes for this meetings. A BPDA staff member responded, there are two note takers this evening.
- A community member stated, in regards to subsidizing businesses, there are multi-billion dollar non-profits who own 60 percent of the City, why doesn't the City squeeze them.

Meeting adjourned 7:50 PM