



Roxbury Strategic Master Plan Oversight Committee Meeting
Monday, October 5, 2020
6:00 PM to 7:45pm
Zoom Virtual Meeting

Attendees

RSMPOC Members: Valeda Britton, Dorothea Jones, Steven Godfrey, Nefertiti Lawrence, Marisa Luse, Charlotte Nelson, Norman Stenbridge, Lorraine Payne Wheeler, Frederick Fairfield, Susan Sullivan, True-See Allah, Frank Williams,

Not in Attendance: Catherine Hardaway, 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, Morgan McDaniel, Dana Whiteside, and Naoise McDonnell

City Staff: Representatives from Councilor Janey, Mejia, and Wu's offices.

Link to PowerPoint: <http://www.bostonplans.org/getattachment/f4b1233e-6e21-4b63-941a-ec7df24737c7>

Opening

On October 5th, 2020 Co-Chair Norman Stenbridge of the Roxbury Strategic Master Plan Oversight Committee called the meeting to order and welcomed everyone. Norman continued to give a brief review of RSMPOC history, goals, and responsibilities, then introduced Marisa Luse, Co-Chair of the RSMPOC Engagement Subcommittee. Marisa gave a rundown of new RSMPOC rules for engagement, which included: recording all RSMPOC meetings and posting the recordings to their website, making public notices available in local newspapers 4 weeks prior to the meeting, and encouraging attendees to visit their website for more information.

Brief Overview

Kelly Sherman, BPDA Planner, made several announcements including a brief overview of the meeting, which would focus on developer presentations for Nawn Factory. Kelly also provided tips and instructions for using the Zoom platform, including the option for Spanish and Haitian Creole interpretation, made an announcement of the meeting being recorded, and the possibility of a December RSMPOC meeting.

Development Update

Historic Boston, Inc. began their presentation for the redevelopment of the Nawn Factory site. HBI explained they have done several similar historical redevelopment projects throughout the city, including the Eustis Street Fire House, the Alvah Kittredge House, and the Fowler Clark Epstein Farm. For this project, HBI plans to redevelop the building to the original massing, and partner with The Wellness Collaborative to provide mixed-use space. Programming would include office space, educational space, flexible community yoga studio space, and a Roxbury History Interpretive Center and Cafe. HBI continued explaining that the total project cost is \$8.25M, and there is a current need for \$3M in fundraising. HBI also plans to work with the owner of a separate adjacent parcel (Parcel 8) to provide expanded open space along their proposed entrance.

Jonathan Smalls, project lead for Art @ the Nawn Factory, presented his team's proposal. The design concept is to also build out to the original footprint of the building, like HBI. The exterior of the building will feature historical design elements from the T, such as the above-ground T-station staircase, and also a large mural, created by a local artist, selected through a community based competition. The interior programming of the building would include studio exercise space, youth classes, event space, art displays, and rentable space. Jonathan explained the development would create approximately 12 direct jobs, through maintenance, operations, and class instructors, as well as other indirect jobs. He continued that the building would be net-zero carbon, including green roofs with solar panels, water features and sprinkler systems in the frontage, and that they are encouraging the use of nearby public transportation, while also exploring a possible partnership with nearby Tropical Markets related to use of their parking facilities.

RSMPOC and Community Comments

- Norman Stembridge (RSMPOC) asked HBI to clarify if they will use current footprint of Nawn factory or expand it
 - HBI responded they will utilize original footprint of building, which is larger than currently stands, but not expanding past original footprint
- Dorothea Jones (RSMPOC) asked HBI about jobs created with their project and the transfer of ownership of building to The Wellness Collaborative
 - HBI responded once they have Certificate of Occupancy, tax credits used to finance development require the property to be held for 7 years, before it can then be transferred
 - They clarified it would not be a free transfer, but based on assessed value after 7 years and proportion of funds raised by TWC during development
 - They continued explaining that their project creates jobs through office space for TWC staff, and also the encouragement of other small/local businesses/nonprofits to use space
- Fred Fairfield (RSMPOC) asked how long TWC has been around, and how they generate income to manage space

- TWC responds 4 years but only incorporated within past 1.5 years, and they generate income through the list of services they offer and the space they offer for lease
- Marisa Luse (RSMPOC) asked how will TWC recruit clients, and do they offer free/affordable services
 - TWC responds yes, affordable services are definitely offered. TWC receives grants and accepts insurance, and offers flexible payment plans. Most of their outreach will come from current clients and word of mouth
- Steven Godfrey (RSMPOC) asked HBI if Parcel 8 is part of frontage of this property
 - HBI replied Parcel 8 is not part of site, but they will work with developer on design and to ensure frontage remains open space, and due to its RFP, it must remain open space
- Nefertiti Lawrence (RSMPOC) asked HBI about how parking will be addressed, because on street parking will not suffice with the amount of programming proposed for the space
 - HBI responds that adjacent sites, Parcel 8 and Ben Franklin Institute of Technology (BFIT) have access to parking and there is none on the Nawn Factory site. Therefore they will work with those two owners to develop a plan for parking for the entire site
- Norman Stembridge (RSMPOC) commented the Art @ Nawn Factory concept fits well with Nubian Square
- Steven Godfrey (RSMPOC) asked Johnathan Smalls about the financial stability plan beyond development
 - Johnathan replied they are targeting morning exercise classes, youth programs, event programs, and rentable space to generate income. They are anticipating profitability after one year and they can provide written financial support of project cost and programming
- Lorraine Wheeler (RSMPOC) asked Johnathan what work has been done previously in Roxbury
 - Johnathan offered no previous developments, but that he is a lifelong resident of Roxbury and has always had to travel to Kendall Square for art space
- Dorothea Jones (RSMPOC) commended the incorporation of T-station design elements into the design of the building, but she is concerned about the number of jobs created by Art @ Nawn Factory
 - Jonathan replied that their jobs created estimate is based off their current best projections, but it is a conservative, minimum estimate
 - Dorothea followed up asking about any potential use of basement area
 - Johnathan responded that if the space is usable, it would absolutely be used

Community Questions

- A community member asked Johnathan about parking and the possibility of a shuttle, and also funding of this project and what past projects have been completed

- Johnathan responded that they will not directly operate a shuttle but would rely more on public transportation and lots of development in the area that may also provide additional parking
- Also has not directly completed any projects but have worked with many contractors on similar projects, and the plan for funding is primarily through grants and small business loans, and they currently have one commitment
- A community member asked Johnathan if the local community will be able to afford to use Art @ Nawn Factory services and how the building mural would be decided upon.
 - Jonathan claimed the mural process would be open to the community and input would be asked from the local community. Also their goal is not to price out local residents, also looking into subsidize youth programs
- A community member asked if there are any age restrictions for youth programs at Art @ Nawn Factory.
 - Jonathan replied yes for youth programs the age limit will be 16-18 years old. This group will be encouraged to join young adult programs
- An RSMPOC member asked where food trucks and small vendors would be located on the site.
 - Jonathan responded food trucks would be depending on any open space programming, so for special events on open space they likely would be out front all day. On days with no events, trucks and vendors would likely just be there for lunch.
- A community member asked Jonathan would there be adult programs and when would they be.
 - Jonathan responded yes there would be adult programming and the goal is to have programs available everyday, morning and evening.
- An RSMPOC member asked what would be the minimum age for any youth programs
 - Jonathan answered the minimum age is 3 years old, and young adults (16-18 years old) may be segmented if there is enough community demand, otherwise they will likely be grouped within adult programming.
- A community member asked whether programming would be membership based.
 - Jonathan responded that a certain amount of capacity would be reserved for roxbury/local residents, remaining capacity would be offered on a first come first serve basis. If local residents have any trouble joining, reserving certain capacity would be accommodated.
- A community member asked if there would be family memberships available.
 - Jonathan replied yes.
- A community member asked both developers if they have any Covid-like contingency plan.
 - Jonathan replied that Art @ Nawn Factory will consider reduced capacity standards, new HVAC systems, and full time building staff
 - HBI answered they will use the same methods, including certain ultra-violet lighting to reduce the spread of viruses.
- A community member asked if there is a discount for elderly people and is there space available for rent.

- The Wealth Collaborative answered yes they envision using a sliding scale and offering space available for rent.
- Jonathan explained that they will offer discounts specifically targeted for seniors and also make space available for rent.

Kelly Sherman, BPDA Planner, opened up the chat to all attendees and made note that chats will be a part of the meeting recording.

Norman Stembridge, Co-Chair of the RSMPOC closed the meeting and reminded everyone that the next RSMPOC meeting would be Monday, November 2, 2020.

Meeting adjourned at 7.45pm.