



SOMERVILLE REDEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY

DRAFT MEETING MINUTES

Location: Virtual meeting via GoToWebinar

Date: October 19, 2022

Time: The Chair convened the meeting at 5:32pm.

ATTENDANCE:

SRA Members Present: Iwona Bonney, Phillip Ercolini, Ben Ewen-Campen, William Gage, Patrick McCormick, Christine Stone.

SRA Members Absent: None.

Staff Present: Cathy Salchert (Acting Special Counsel), Rachel Nadkarni (Acting Director of Economic Development), Ted Fields (Senior Planner), Ben Demers (Planner).

AGENDA ITEMS:

Staff presented virtual meeting house rules to the Board.

1. Approval of minutes for the September 21, 2022 meeting:

Mr. Ercolini noted that on page 3, line 6, the word "responded" should be deleted.

Mr. Ercolini also noted that on page 7, in the adjournment paragraph, it should say "Ms. Bonney moved to adjourn" rather than "Ms. Bonney moved to Executive Session."

Mr. Gage noted that on page 6, the line that reads "The feasibility of asks from the community" should remove "of asks."

Ms. Bonney moved approval, as amended. Seconded by Mr. Gage. Approved 5-0-0 (Yes-No-Abstain) by roll call vote. (Mr. McCormick was not in attendance at the previous meeting so did not vote.)

2. Public Comment Period:

Councilor McLaughlin made comment to testify about the item on 90 Washington Street that is being discussed today. He started with the positive, which is that he appreciates the city's plan to use this lot for temporary green space while they figure out how to turn it into a public safety building. However, he is concerned that the site is going to continue to be used for snow removal as it has for the past few years. The snow is filled with chemicals, piles up, spills onto the sidewalks, and is unsightly, so he does not understand how the space can be used for snow removal as well as open space. He also understands that they will be using the space to store City equipment, and he wants to understand how this will impact the community, because residents had serious issues with the previous storage place of this equipment. He is concerned because there are many people, especially in the Cobble Hill Apartments, who are concerned with what is happening, and the Councilor does not want to further erode good will by not addressing this snow removal issue. He asks the SRA to take this into consideration and wants to understand how the snow and equipment being stored here



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will impact the community and green and open space that the City is proposing. (Councilor McLaughlin spoke during public comment period rather than after the presentation on 90 Washington Street because he was not going to be able to stay for the full presentation.)

Ted Fields invited City staff from Public Works to speak to this. Melissa Woods from Infrastructure and Asset Management (IAD) and Eric Weisman from the Department of Public Works (DPW) joined the conversation. Mr. Fields shared the interim plan from the scheduled presentation.

Ms. Woods explained that Capital Projects will be managing construction planning around the public safety building, working closely with Ted Fields and the rest of Economic Development. Last December, they started planning in earnest for the entirety of the site. They have concluded a portion of the community process and will be continuing to work towards redevelopment. In the interim, they are proposing a few next best steps as interim improvements to the 90 Washington Street site. These include a new construction fence to replace the current temporary fence, activation of the northwest corner with a pop-up plaza in partnership with Economic Development, and maintenance of perimeter areas fronting Washington Street that will remain open to the public. Inside the fence line, there will be two different areas. The north side will be used as temporary storage for items serving different City departments, which are currently stored at 10 Poplar Street. The south side will be used for seasonal snow storage this winter if necessary. Ms. Woods stressed that the installation of an adequate site fence, however, will cleanly delineate which areas are open to the public. Some of the issues around snow storage in recent years have been due to the fact that the existing temporary fence isn't secured to the ground. The new fence will be secured. Additionally, the snow storage area will be further away from Washington Street and New Washington Street than it ever has been.

Mr. Weisman reiterated that DPW is reinforcing the fence line with jersey barriers to try to contain the snow better. He also stressed that the temporary use of this property for snow storage is critical to the City's snow operations. If the City wants to clear snow, they need a place to keep it. DPW is also building a brine shed to reduce the use of salt and is looking at other ways to reduce salt use. Mr. Weisman also acknowledged that there are concerns about noise on the property, but that they are committed to being good neighbors and they will follow the options available to them to reduce the impact on residents.

Mr. Ercolini asked if there was a possibility to put a temporary cap on the site where DPW offloads snow, and if that would affect remediation. He also asked what the long-term plans for the city will be when this site isn't available since this is only a short-term solution. Mr. Weisman responded that he cannot speak to the capping, since he is not familiar with it. In terms of long-term snow storage, this is especially tough in Somerville. DPW is looking into procuring snow melters, though these have their own challenges. Mr. Ercolini said the City did a temporary cap in Union Square on a site where a developer had found further contamination on the site. The SRA needs to be concerned with the long-term impact of snow and equipment storage on this site, and thinks it is important to cap the site. Ms. Woods added that the City is already aware of the remediation necessary for the site, and that adding snow storage here would not worsen site conditions. Ms. Woods also added that there is existing stormwater retention on the site. As the site has been developed, the melting and pitch of the site sends melted snow to the drainage that is in place. This drainage will generally not affect lawn areas on the site because they are up 6-8 inches from the pavement level.

Mr. Gage asked where the drains go from the site. Ms. Woods confirmed it is a stormwater system.



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Mr. Gage asked if stormwater is separated from wastewater. Ms. Woods does not know if it is combined or separated in this particular area. Mr. Ercolini asked if it would go to the harbor. Ms. Woods said it does the same as if it melted on the sidewalk. Mr. Ercolini thinks more research into this is needed.

Ms. Bonney commented that storage of equipment has already begun and already does not look appealing. Mr. Weisman will follow up on the tidiness of that area.

Mr. Ewen-Campen expressed that he understands the vision of the City here to remove snow and is sympathetic to this, and that he sympathizes as well with Councilor McLaughlin's concern about parking. He asked if this is the only snow dump site in the City at this point. Mr. Weisman said yes, it is the only snow dump site currently. In the past the City has used other temporary areas, but they have all been developed, so this is the last sliver left.

Mr. Ewen-Campen commented that while IAD and DPW are saying there will not be run-off from the site, concern over run-off has been expressed by residents, and feels that there is a disconnect between what is said in these meetings and what it looks like at construction sites. Mr. Weisman acknowledged that there was a concern about spillover that required cleanup, but there has not been continual seeping. Mr. Ewen-Campen acknowledged that there are many moving pieces around 90 Washington, and that maintaining good relations with neighbors is a top priority. He is not sure he can support this project in its current state, and really encouraged the City to follow through on promises tonight.

Ms. Stone commented that as a fiduciary of the site (as an SRA board member), she has concerns about this use and its impact on neighbors, since the SRA will be looking to redevelop the non-public-building portion of the site and will need to go through a zoning process that will require neighborhood support. She echoed the need to be a respectful neighbor and noted that snow removal is typically conducted at night, so she does not know how this can be done quietly and respectfully to neighbors.

Ms. Stone also noted that she is at the Capuano School often, and she can see that the gate is open and anyone can get into the site. She witnessed the gate being open for a full 1-2 months earlier this year. If this is going to be used by vendors to dump snow and pick up equipment, the City needs to monitor the site to ensure vendors are caring for the site properly. Mr. Weisman agreed that securing the site is critical. He also noted that the bulk of staff on-site are City staff, not vendors, and the equipment on site comprises City vehicles. In terms of overnight noise, the only time snow removal operations have been carried out overnight in the space in the past year was related to the historic blizzard when they needed to get schools open the next morning. They do everything they can to adhere to regular construction hours. Ms. Woods reiterated that it is extremely important to get a permanent fence around this site. The fence for the past few years has been inadequate. The new fence will be better secured and will be locked. Whether this is utilized as storage in the interim or not, they need an adequate fence to secure the site.

Mr. Gage expressed concern over vehicles leaking oil and gasoline and said that in the past there has been no maintenance. Councilor McLaughlin agreed that this has looked like a dumping zone in the past. He stressed that the SRA seized this property because it was a blight and felt that the City has made it even more of a blight. He has lost sympathy for snow removal. He has been



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understanding for the past two years and no change has been made. He expressed that there needs to be a better long-term plan for snow removal. Last year, snow was bulging out of the site even though it wasn't a record year, so he doesn't know how they will use it for snow storage as well as storage of equipment. None of the other temporary uses will work if snow is stored there. Councilor McLaughlin had to leave after this comment.

Mr. Ercolini asked if anyone wanted to make a motion to approve temporary uses at 90 Washington. Mr. McCormick acknowledged concerns but added that snow will not be there for a large portion of the year and that in the grand scheme we need to act and have a better fence up. Mr. McCormick made a motion to approve of the temporary uses, and stressed that if they put this vote off they will perpetuate the problem. There was no second on that motion.

Ms. Stone asked if it was possible to make a motion for a portion of the request and not the request in totality. Ms. Stone would support a better fence being put up and authorizing a pop-up plaza on the corner but does not want the snow. She added that this will also be unsightly for people coming off the Green Line station nearby. Mr. Gage agreed that he would support the fencing and the pop-up plaza, but not the snow and equipment storage. He would feel differently if there was a contact person at DPW who is responsible for the site. Mr. Weisman said DPW can set something up to have a key contact for the site. He also stressed that it is October, and they are potentially looking at having no site to dump snow. Somerville needs a place for its snow, and this is the best option for the time being.

Mr. Ewen-Campen said he would be a "No" vote if put to a vote in totality right now, but acknowledged it was just brought to their attention. If they vote "No," his understanding is that a similar motion cannot be brought forth. The best course of action is likely to table this until the next meeting and indicate that the SRA is supportive of a fence, but that the snow portion will take convincing.

Ms. Nadkarni said there could be a split vote on the motion and then a return to the issue in November to revisit snow, which Ms. Lester Salchert confirmed. Mr. Ercolini asked if people would be interested in this. Board members agreed they would be. Mr. McCormick made a motion to support the installation of a fence and pop-up plaza for temporary uses at 90 Washington Street and to hold the second part of the proposal around snow and equipment storage for the November meeting. Ms. Stone seconded. Approved by a 6-0-0 roll call vote.

Mr. Weisman and Ms. Woods left the meeting.

3. 90 Washington Street Demonstration Project Update

A. Presentation from Economic Development Division

Mr. Fields shared his screen for the presentation. The presentation explained the public engagement process to get as much feedback as possible for the redevelopment of 90 Washington Street as the site of a new public safety building and for other types of desired development.

The project site is about four acres at the intersections of Washington street and New Washington Street, near the Union Square Green Line Station. The City is considering dividing the site into three main development parcels, including a parcel called "the tail" next to Parcel B. New Washington



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Street will be rerouted to line up with Franklin Street, which will make it safer and easier for emergency vehicles to exit onto Washington Street.

The process for far has included a public meeting in December 2021 asking community members what they wanted to see on this site; a February 2022 meeting asking where they should develop on the site; several listening sessions from May through September 2022 (hosted in six languages) to hear the concerns of local residents; an August 2022 interactive workshop in which attendees built an ideal redevelopment scenario with Lego bricks; and then finally an October 2022 meeting that reviewed all of the other feedback received over the past nine months. While this has been happening, the Department of Racial and Social Justice (RSJ) has held a parallel process to reimagine policing in Somerville, which informs the ongoing concept of a public safety building.

Mr. Fields summarized what has been heard from these sessions. The City heard that people want more civic uses, green space, affordable housing, and especially retail spaces. There is potential interest in lab space as well to generate revenue for the city. In terms of development considerations, the City heard concerns about noise impacts, about preservation of existing landscaping features, about site access for cyclists and pedestrians, about limits on new parking, about whether the site is even safe to reuse and redevelop, and about how to compensate abutters for construction impacts. Participants also agreed that they wanted the site to be used to enhance health, safety, and welfare, to create community focuses spaces (with their own separate entrances), and to accomplish other planning goals. There was less agreement about using the site for a public safety building. During engagement, the City also asked for feedback on six different design scenarios, only one of which had a majority of people approve of the design. The City learned that people preferred a public safety building in the middle of the site on Parcel B over C, wanted tree preservation as long as it didn't drive major design decisions, and still wanted parking issues to be better addressed.

All of this engagement generated a lot of great feedback, but also left the City with important questions around what can be built on the property. These include, for instance: Can a new safety building be part of a larger commercial development built by a private development partner? Can safety building functions be split up and located on different parts of the site? Can a public safety building and other uses be built at the same time? These questions need to be answered before the City can select a development partner. To get answers, the City proposes using a Request for Information (RFI) process to solicit information from the development community. Then, once the City has more information, they will use it to inform a Request for Proposals (RFP) process. The RFI process will be released later this month, with answers expected by mid-December. An RFP will then be released in March 2023, with development proposals due by June 2023. A development partner would then be selected by October 2023.

The City is also organizing a Citizen Advisory Committee (CAC) for this project. This CAC will represent and involve the public in every step of redevelopment, advise City staff in developer selection processes, and make redevelopment open and transparent. Members will include residents, local businesses, non-profit organizations, and city councilors, and will start meeting in January 2023.

Mr. Fields talked through site conditions, as discussed earlier in public comment. He shared the SomerVoice site for 90 Washington.



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Mr. Gage expressed that he feels strongly that a few CAC members should be from the SRA, since it's an SRA site and they should be kept abreast of what is coming out of the process. Ms. Nadkarni explained that the CAC structure was set up through a memorandum of agreement (MOA) between the City Council and SRA, and is meant to advise the SRA rather than include membership from the SRA. If the SRA were to change this, they would likely need to change it for all CAC's across the city. Mr. Gage felt it should be changed. Mr. Ercolini added that Councilor Ewen-Campen would be a part of the 90 Washington CAC, and thus could inform people of the SRA's perspective since he serves on both. Ms. Nadkarni corrected that the stipulations around Councilors on these CACs are specific, based on the MOA; it is the local ward Councilor for the location, and then a Councilor recommended by the Council President, so it may not be Councilor Ewen-Campen. Mr. Ercolini expressed that the SRA should therefore endorse Councilor Ewen-Campen as the Councilor appointed to the CAC for 90 Washington. Mr. Gage however felt that a more formal structure should be in place in case Councilor Ewen-Campen is not on both the SRA and the CAC in the future. Ms. Nadkarni re-explained the structure of the CAC and added that because SRA members are formal decision-makers, they need to be careful to balance this role with sitting on a CAC. Mr. Ercolini expressed that the SRA should be better informed about what the City Council is doing. Mr. McCormick added that CAC meetings are public and stressed that SRA members can still attend without being members, which may be more appropriate. Mr. Ercolini and Mr. Gage would still like to recommend Councilor Ewen-Campen for membership. Ms. Nadkarni said she and Mr. Fields can express this interest to Councilor McLaughlin, who is the Council President and will appoint the other Councilor on the CAC.

Mr. McCormick thanked Mr. Fields for the presentation and the work on the project. He then asked about the feasibility of moving some trees on this site and expressed that he would like to include something about this in the RFI.

Mr. McCormick also reiterated that many neighbors have expressed concern about the noise that comes from a public safety building, and that there is a misperception that the area where safety vehicles leave is the loudest. He felt Mr. Fields explained well that there would not be higher noise levels, and thought that it could be useful to have residents who live next to other public safety buildings explain this to neighbors of 90 Washington St.

Ms. Stone expressed that some of the design schemes shared suggest that the public safety building could go anywhere on this site, but the last time she attended a meeting about this site, it seemed like the public safety building had been well studied and it has already been decided where it would be placed. Mr. Fields explained that the siting of the building is more of an open question than it was before and explained some of the questions about siting.

Ms. Stone also expressed that she is more familiar with RFPs than RFIs but wonders if in the RFI the city needs to define what success means at the site. Without that, they may get very different responses. Ted stressed that this is something being considered with OSPCD's planning consultant partners. Ms. Nadkarni added that part of the idea is to get a large range and understand the breadth of what is possible. Mr. Gage asked if the Board would see the RFI and RFP before they go out. Mr. Fields said the City can send a draft of the RFI as soon as possible over email, but that they are planning to release it publicly before the next SRA meeting. Ms. Nadkarni stressed that our consulting partner, HR&A, said we need at least six weeks and need to have it done before the holiday season. Ms. Stone asked what urgency is to start the process now versus getting responses in



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February, because the market is very turbulent right now. Many developers will take the rest of this year to finish existing business instead of exploring new business, and the main reason to respond to an RFI would be to get the RFP later. Mr. Fields explained that the goal is to select a developer in 2023, which is why they are pushing ahead on an RFI now. Mr. McCormick expressed having experience creating RFIs for large government projects, and that it is not a large commitment so they should still expect engagement from developers. Additionally, if the City does not learn enough from the RFI, they can issue it again, so there is no risk in issuing it now. Ms. Nadkarni asked Ms. Stone if the turbulence will slow down by January/February. Ms. Stone explained that it is difficult to tell. She said that if it were her, she would wait.

Daniel Wong made public comment and expressed being disappointed in the presentation on 90 Washington. They felt that the online survey Mr. Fields referenced was flawed because it compressed votes that were made online, since many people from Cobble Hill were watching on the same computer but only got one vote for the computer. Additionally, although the team added to the counts by walking around the neighborhood, it is unclear how this impacted overall numbers. Daniel Wong had also heard negative feedback at every presentation they had been to, and was disappointed that the presentation did not summarize this feedback. Mr. Fields responded that the project team received 150-160 responses when they went out in the neighborhood to ensure as many people were engaged as possible.

B. Approval of proposed temporary use program for 90 Washington Street

The Board voted for proposed temporary uses during the first public comment period as noted above.

4. Boynton Yards

A. Presentation from DLJ and Leggat McCall on Boynton South Master Plan Special Permit application

John Fenton, Nick Barker, and Matthew Snell joined the presentation on behalf of the DLJ and Leggat McCall teams. (Matthew Snell is the team's counsel from Nutter McClennen & Fish LLP.)

Mr. Fenton began the presentation; he is co-managing partner of DLJ and explained that the team was here to provide an update on the approved master plan at Boynton Yards. He explained that the plan is dedicated to fulfilling the City's revitalization plans for Boynton Yards, including the goals of the SRA, the Union Square Neighborhood Plan, and the Public Realm Implementation Strategy for Boynton Yards (PRISBY). Mr. Fenton explained that they need the SRA's collaboration and approval to proceed, because a portion of the development site in the Boynton South Expansion is owned by the SRA. They will need a Property Ownership Authorization to file alongside their Master Plan Special Permit to proceed. Ultimately this land will be contributed back to the city as green space or thoroughfare space. They need to come to an agreement to support an LDA for this process as was done for the Master Plan Special Permit initially.

Mr. Barker, a member of the development team, then walked through existing conditions on the site. He added that the site transfer and development will specifically help achieve two major goals of the



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Union Square Neighborhood Plan, the Somerville Zoning Ordinance, and the PRISBY: (1) the widening and straightening of South Street, and (2) the addition of a 52,000 sf civic space in the center of Boynton Yards. There will be over three total acres of public civic space in Boynton Yards. The area conveyed to DLJ by the SRA will be further developed as a civic space adjacent to a greater civic space in the center of the plan. DLJ have worked with many OSPCD departments, the neighborhood, and the City Council on this upcoming plan, and are very excited for how it complements the master plan.

Mr. Barker then reviewed Master Plan criteria and phasing. Phase 1 will be demolition of existing buildings on the Nissenbaum site, and then construction of Building A. Phase 2 will incorporate Buildings B and C, as well as the eastern civic space and larger civic space. Mr. Ercolini asked the use and size of each building. Building A will be a lab building (14 stories). Building B will be residential (16 stories). And Building C will be a lab building (9 stories), based on the application. Mr. Barker also reviewed the master plan concept.

The team plan to submit their Master Plan Special Permit application to the City during the first week of November. As a courtesy they will also send this to the SRA and include a side letter that will outline the terms of the proposed LDA. They will also submit the Property Owner Authorization Form. They are seeking the ability to continue their permitting process as the LDA is finalized. Mr. Snell added that the complication with this Master Plan is that one of the key parts is to relocate South Street and to finish off the large required civic space in the former South Street right-of-way and part of the Nissenbaum property. The complicating factor is that no single developer or the city owns all of the property needed to do this. Because of this, there's a dilemma because they cannot develop the Nissenbaum properties and work on South Street without working with the SRA who owns the parcels, so they suggested to the City that they move forward with an application while also consolidating ownership of the lots so that they can then be subdivided. After that, the Master Plan would hopefully be approved and the developer can permit each part of the project as they have with the existing Master Plan, and then build the thoroughfare and civic spaces out and donate them back to the city. They need to figure out a path forward, because under State law, they cannot file an application on a property they do not own without an authorization of the property owner. They are providing the application to the City staff and the SRA for them to review it. The hope is that at the November meeting of the SRA they will be approved to move forward. At the same time, they suggest entering a letter agreement or negotiating an LDA in which the land owned by the SRA is transferred to the development team. The agreement would be similar to what was done for the initial Master Plan, with requirements to comply with zoning, develop a project similar to what is in the application, and then return the land.

Mr. Ercolini deferred to Ms. Salchert. He also asked if Mr. Ewen-Campen had given any comments since this is his ward. Mr. Fenton clarified that this is Councilor Scott's ward (Ward 2), and that they have received a positive response to the project in engagement in Ward 2.

Mr. Gage asked the timing on the relocation of South Street. Mr. Fenton answered that the plan is to begin that work soon after the approval of the Master Plan, and that each of these projects would be subject to site plan approval. The idea would be to advance the road work probably quicker than the building work. Eventually, the old South Street would be abandoned, and they could think about the relocation of groundwork.



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Mr. Gage also asked if DLJ has a community benefits agreement with the Union Square Neighborhood Council. Mr. Fenton answered that they do. Mr. Gage asked it is for both the Boynton South Master Plan and the Northern Master Plan. Mr. Fenton explained it is for the existing master plan, and they anticipate engaging again after they submit their application towards the end of this month.

Ms. Nadkarni asked to confirm that sign-off on the discussed letter will be voted on at the November SRA meeting. Mr. Sutter confirmed that this timeline is correct. They will provide a draft of the application earlier so it can be reviewed by the SRA and by Council if necessary.

5. Citation for Eileen McGettigan

Mr. Demers shared screen to show the citation. Mr. Ercolini asked if the wording met everyone's expectations, and everyone agreed it did. Mr. Gage made a motion to approve the citation for Eileen McGettigan. Ms. Bonney seconded. Approved by a 5-0-0 vote (Mr. Ewen-Campen had to leave the meeting before this vote.) Ms. Stone asked to make sure the "X's" on the citation would be filled in with the actual number of years.

Mr. Ercolini asked if this would be presented to the City Council. Ms. Lester Salchert said this had not been discussed. Mr. Ercolini asked if OSPCD did anything as it relates to Ms. McGettigan, or if anything had been formally done through the City Council. Ms. Lester Salchert said she did not think there was a citation, no. Mr. Ercolini wants this to be more public, such as by having Mr. Ewen-Campen present it at the next City Council meeting. Mr. Gage asked if this would be framed. Mr. Ercolini asked Ms. Nadkarni to coordinate this. Ms. Nadkarni confirmed that they will work with the Mayor's team to get this framed.

6. Public Comment Period:

There was no additional public comment at this time.

7. Other Business Not Reasonably Anticipated by the Chair

Ms. Stone mentioned that she needs to recuse herself from voting on Boynton Yards since she works for Leggat McCall. If they plan to vote on this in November, we cannot count her. Ben Demers will ensure that we are meeting quorum without Ms. Stone's presence.

8. Next meeting: November 16th, on Annual Reports 2018-2021

The Chair confirmed that the next meeting will be held on November 16th, 2022. That meeting will focus on annual reports. Mr. Ercolini asked if we would get annual reports by then. Ms. Nadkarni said yes, we would try to.

Adjournment:



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The Chair requested a motion to adjourn. Iwona moved to adjourn. Ms. Stone seconded. The motion was unanimously approved 5-0-0 by roll call vote at 7:45pm and the meeting ended.