



SOMERVILLE REDEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY

MEETING MINUTES

Location: Virtual meeting via GoToWebinar

<https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/rt/3796719632098260057>

Date: May 17th, 2023.

Time: The Chair convened the meeting at 5:31pm.

ATTENDANCE:

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

SRA Members Absent: None.

Staff Present: Thomas Galligani (Executive Director of OSPCD), Catherine Lester Salchert (Acting Special Counsel), Luis Quizhpe (Equity Manager), Ben Demers (Planner).

AGENDA ITEMS:

Staff presented virtual meeting house rules to the Board.

1: Approval of minutes for the April 19, 2023 meeting:

No changes to the minutes were recommended.

Iwona Bonney moved to approve the minutes. Seconded by Christine Stone. Approved 6-0-0 (Yes-No-Abstain) by roll call vote.

2: Public Comment:

No public comment was made.

3. 90 Washington Street .

a. Review of snow removal operations at 90 Washington Street.

DPW Commissioner Jill Lathan and DPW Director of Operations Eric Weisman provided an update to the Board about snow storage and removal operations at 90 Washington this past winter, as requested at the November 2022 meeting of the SRA.

Commissioner Lathan noted that fortunately that the City did not need to use 90 Washington as a snow farm this season, since there was not much snow, but they have paid close attention to keeping the site clean.

Ms. Stone commented that she goes by often, and the fencing and scrim look much better than last year. Ms. Stone also asked if DPW had plans for whether 90 Washington would be needed for snow storage for next winter, or if another location had been found. Ms. Lathan answered that DPW is still



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looking for an additional location, since areas are still sparse within the City. Mr. Weisman added that DPW will also be working with the City's Procurement Department to see if there are other feasible off-site storage spaces nearby.

b. Update regarding 90 Washington Request for Qualifications (RFQ)

Mr. Demers summarized updates from Ted Fields, Senior Economic Development Planner with the City, regarding the Request for Qualifications (RFQ) process for 90 Washington Street:

- HR&A, the City's real estate consultant for the 90 Washington Street project, has confirmed that all three respondents to the RFQ meet the minimum qualification requirements set out in the solicitation.
- HR&A has also cataloged all the answers submitted by the respondents to the development questions asked in the RFQ solicitation.
- Mr. Fields has contacted all three RFQ respondents to confirm that the City is analyzing their submissions over the next few weeks.
- City staff are reviewing the submissions provided by the respondents with the 90 Washington Street Civic Advisory Committee (CAC). This review process started last Wednesday (May 10th) and will be completed by the SRA's scheduled June meeting.

Ms. Stone asked if the Board could hear the opinions of the CAC in June regarding the project, as well as other next steps.

c. Follow up discussion regarding ownership of 220 Washington Street.

Mr. Galligani confirmed that the City owns 220 Washington Street. In a past meeting, there had been confusion whether Union Square Station Associates (US2) owned the site.

4. Review of draft of the 2022 SRA Annual Report.

Mr. Demers presented a draft of the 2022 SRA Annual Report to the Board. Mr. McCormick commented that he felt this was a very positive report, and found it very readable which helps the SRA be more accountable to the public.

Mr. Gage requested that a few additional maps be added, related specifically to:

- The 500 unit apartment building referenced in Assembly Square;
- Block 7A in Assembly Square;
- The plan for 90 Washington Street.

Mr. Demers will incorporate the requested edits and represent to the Board at a future meeting.

5. Commonwealth Compact

Mr. Quizhpe presented to the Board about the Commonwealth Compact that Mayor Ballantyne



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recently signed. This is a multi-municipal Compact between Boston, Cambridge, Salem, Lynn, and Somerville.

The Compact created a partnership with the Civic Action Project (CAP), Builders of Color Coalition (BCC), and Boston Society for Architecture (BSA), along with Eastern Bank. The goal is to encourage a more diverse representation of developers in the City's work, in both the private and public sectors. The reason for approaching it this way is because the industry as a whole creates the conditions that people live in, and the industry is overwhelmingly white and does not include extensive representation from disadvantaged groups. This Compact aims to avoid a situation in which cities must just accept the social environment that comes from these development industry issues. If something is allowed as-of-right in zoning, then there is little the City can do to stop it from being built, and even if a special permit is required, conditions attached to the permit are limited in how much they can encourage equitable outcomes. Altogether, this shapes an inequitable relationship between developers and the places where they develop and continues racial disparity.

The Compact is working to achieve more equitable outcomes by first looking at public disposition processes and permitting processes of the cities involved, so that they can have data ready to show trends of disparity. This involves including data gathering points for DEI metrics in development projects and proposals, which the Compact is developing with the Builders of Color Coalition. Regarding public disposition, cities are also looking to MassPort, which considers equity in the proposals to develop on public land, and will work to include equity more pointedly in the proposal grading criteria. This will encourage innovation and gives the city more power to shape equitable outcomes. Even though this is currently limited to public land, it can help create a model to allow the Compact to advocate to the State for more requirements in private development. Lastly, the Compact is also proposing ways to empower socially disadvantaged individuals to enter and grow in the development industry.

Mr. Quizhpe then summarized short term goals and long term goals of the Compact. Short term goals include signing the compact, collecting data, modifying permitting processes, modifying disposition processes, and sharing back trends and lessons learned. Long term goals include synthesizing regional data, developing state-wide policies, and passing state-wide requirements.

Mr. Gage noted that this is a timely presentation, since the Board just received a report from US2 about development progress in Union Square, and asked if US2 had provided any of this data. Mr. Quizhpe noted that the City is still determining where to collect this data and which data points to collect, so this has not been implemented for projects that have gone through permitting processes. He also again noted that all of this information will be voluntary.

Mr. McCormick asked if the Compact had received any lessons learned from MassPort. Mr. Quizhpe will try to get more data on this, but believes they have had some initial success.

Mr. McCormick also asked if Mr. Quizhpe would be able to share the DEI criteria that the Compact is considering implementing. Mr. Quizhpe said that he could share this once the Compact determines when they will collect the data during the development process.

Mr. Ercolini asked if a scoring metric had already been developed. Mr. Quizhpe said it had not yet, but the City is coordinating with the other cities on this.



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6. Items not reasonably anticipated by the Chair.

Mr. Demers asked when the Board would like US2 to return to present about development progress in Union Square, since they provided a report over email. Board members asked that US2 return to present in June. Mr. Demers will coordinate this with US2.

7. Next Meeting: Wednesday, June 21st, from 5:30-7pm

The Board confirmed that the next meeting will be held on June 21st.

Adjournment:

Iwona Bonney moved to adjourn. Seconded by Ben Ewen-Campen. Approved (5-0-0) by roll call vote (Christine Stone had left the meeting so was not present to vote).