

SOMERVILLE REDEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY

MEETING MINUTES

Location: Virtual meeting via GoToWebinar

Date: April 20, 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.

SRA Members Absent: None.

Staff Present: Eileen McGettigan (Special Counsel), Rachel Nadkarni (Senior Planner), Ted Fields (Senior Planner).

AGENDA ITEMS:

Staff presented virtual meeting house rules to the Board.

1: Approval of minutes for the March 16, 2022 meeting:

Ms. Bonney moved approval. Seconded by Mr. Gage. Unanimously approved 5-0-0 by roll call vote.

2: Public Comment:

- None.

3: 90 Washington Street Presentation / Update:

- Ted Fields provided a PowerPoint presentation as part of an extended update on the status of the project to date. Mr. Fields reviewed the history of the project, recapped feedback received on potential redevelopment from public meetings held in December 2021 and February 2022 and outlined future milestones in the redevelopment process. Upon completion, Mr. Fields entertained questions from the Authority.
- Mr. Gage asked about the size of the proposed Parcels A, B and C on the 90 Washington Street property. Mr. Fields responded that the overall size of the site is four (4) acres, but he did not have the dimensions of the proposed development parcels. This information will be provided at the next meeting. Mr. Gage asked that Parcel A should be considered for redevelopment as green space.
- Mr. Gage expressed concern about access to Oliviera's Steak House if New Washington Street is reconfigured as proposed in Mr. Fields' presentation and asked if they had been consulted during the redevelopment planning process. Mr. Fields confirmed that access to Oliviera's parking lot will be maintained during construction, and that management has been consulted over the past year during design of the proposed new Public Safety Building as well as overall redevelopment of 90 Washington Street.
- Mr. Gage asked why "compensation" was being considered for residents of the Cobble Hill Apartments next to 90 Washington Street. Is it because they may lose parking on the site? Mr. Fields responded that neighborhood residents suggested "compensation" in the form of T passes, eBikes, etc. to help residents cope with construction disruption.
- Mr. Gage next asked whether a new Public Safety Building can be built on Parcel C. Mr. Fields replied that scenario has been examined by the City's consultants, but the Public Safety Building Committee prefers siting the facility on Parcel B. Mr. Gage noted that Parcels A and B are best suited for private redevelopment and public green space development.
- Mr. Gage asked how much height current zoning allows on 90 Washington. Mr. Fields replied that zoning in the neighborhood allows heights of up to five stories, although this can change if

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public sentiment wishes taller structures to be constructed on the 90 Washington site.

- Mr. McCormick asked if mature trees existing on 90 Washington Street can be moved within the site to accommodate redevelopment. Mr. McCormick is aware that other municipalities have been able to do so. Mr. Fields responded that PSUF can be consulted about this.
- Mr. Ercolini asked about the long-range plans for redevelopment of the Inner Belt industrial areas to the south of 90 Washington Street. Mr. Fields replied that these areas are identified as Transformation Areas in the SomerVision 2040 Plan, and as such, are candidates for redevelopment as commercial and research uses that provide employment and tax revenue to the City. Ms. Nadkarni provided a quick review of plans to connect New Washington Street with Inner Belt Road by crossing the railroad tracks between them.
- Mr. Ercolini asked if the best elements of all the six potential redevelopment scenarios being considered can be combined to make a stronger program. Mr. Fields replied that this was currently being done by municipal staff and the City's planning and design consultants.
- A member of the public posed a question to Mr. Fields regarding discrepancies between the survey data mentioned in Mr. Fields presentation and those available on SomerVoice. Mr. Fields explained that the data shown to the Authority in this meeting combined survey responses obtained from the February 16th public project meeting AND subsequent neighborhood outreach efforts by municipal staff. Overall, 40 people participated in the survey at the February meeting, and another 160 neighborhood residents participated in the three weeks afterwards when additional outreach efforts were made by OSPCD.

4. Winter Hill Update:

- Rachel Nadkarni provided a short briefing. Progress is being made on two related, but separate, fronts. Mark Development is preparing an application for redeveloping 299 Broadway and 15 Temple Street and held a meeting the week prior about program changes they are making (no parking and up to 50% residential affordability) due to changing financing conditions. Mark Development will update the Authority about its plans for the site at the next meeting. The Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC) has met three times to date, including a site walk earlier in the month. The CAC is preparing a multi-lingual survey for area residents to gauge their sentiments about ground floor redevelopment on the site for commercial and civic uses. The survey will be administered in the next few weeks. The CAC will periodically report results to the Authority.

5. Union Square Update:

- Rachel Nadkarni provided a short briefing. The Union Square MBTA Green Line Extension station is now open and running. The elevator is very close to be operational.
- Mr. Gage asked if more street lighting can be installed on Prospect Street – it is very dark by the new station, and Mr. Gage is concerned about pedestrians crossing the street at night. Ms. Nadkarni will talk to the MBTA and municipal staff about responding to this request.
- Development permitting is being prepped for the former Beacon Sales site on Parcel D3.
- Mr. Ercolini asked Ms. Nadkarni for a map of development around Union Square for the Authority's next meeting.
- No public comment was received on this item.

6: Boynton Yards Update:

- Rachel Nadkarni briefed the Authority that construction is proceeding rapidly. Building One is open at 101 South Street. An opening ceremony will be held in May. Upper floors are already operational as lab space.
- Building Two is under construction at 880 Webster Street.

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- 495 Columbia is now under construction as lab space.
- 600 Webster received approval for their Master Plan application.
- Mr. Ercolini asked for data on how many jobs have/will be created in Boynton Yards, how many dwellings will be created there and what share of those dwellings will be affordable.
- Mr. Gage asked about DLJ/LM's Boynton South Master Plan, which entails realignment of South Street. The applicant will start community meetings in May. Mr. Gage asked for the Authority to be notified of the date, time and place of this meeting.
- No public comment was received on this item.

7. Assembly Square Update:

- Mr. Fields informed the Authority that the draft Neighborhood Plan completed the public comment phase in February and is being revised by the city's planning consultant so that it can be submitted to the Planning Board in April or May.
- FRIT has started permitting a new lab structure on Block 7B, and has plans before the Planning Board for additional construction.
- FRIT is working with OSPCD to permit a dog park.
- Construction is ongoing at 5 (Xmbly) and 120 Middlesex.
- Tulip Software is moving into part of the former Kmart space in the Assembly Marketplace building in April. The garden center in the former Kmart space may also be converted into a beer garden by Night Shift Brewery during the summer.
- Mr. Gage if a map of the Assembly Square area be provided to the Authority showing block numbers.
- No public comment was received on this item.

8. Open Meeting Law Training:

- Mr. Ercolini and Ms. McGettigan reminded the Authority about upcoming mandatory training in the Massachusetts Open Meeting Law. This is additional to the normal training and testing required for the Authority.
- No public comment was received on this item.

9. Other Business:

- None

10. Next Meeting:

- The Chair confirmed that the next meeting will be held on May 18th, with presentations by Mark Development concerning redevelopment of 299 Broadway.

Adjournment:

Ms. Bonney moved to adjourn at 6:41pm. Mr. Gage seconded. The motion was unanimously approved 4-0-0 by roll call vote (Mr. Ewen-Campen left at 6:10pm, before the meeting ended).