



GMNC Monthly Meeting
September 8, 2020 6:30-8:00 pm
Online Meeting via zoom

Meeting Minutes

I. Council Members Present

Fatima Ali-Salaam, Chair
David Halbert
David Lopes
Lenore Perreira
Ruby James Saucer
William King
Matthew Skelly, Secretary
Vicky Siggers, Treasurer
June Joseph
Nikkia Jean-Charles
Joy Gary

II. Meeting minutes from August 3, 2020

Motion to approve – Matthew Skelly
Seconded – Vicky Siggers
Minutes approved unanimously

III. Presenter: Star Laws, Department of Neighborhood Services (DND); Kelly Shay, DND; Shani Fletcher, DND; Brianna, DND

- This is a follow up from a meeting in January. We're going to review what was discussed then and answer some of the questions generated.
- One of the comments that came from the initial outreach was that the GMNC "was disappointed" with the initial effort, which was really only intended to be preliminary. Now we're looking to flesh everything out more.
- The project consists of 4 parcels, and 3 potential options were initially presented
 - Two 3 unit buildings,
 - More units in one building
 - Different arrangement of the buildings
- The comment was also that GMNC would've liked to see more innovated and aesthetically pleasing designs that incorporate permaculture and sustainable landscape. DND is looking for more input on these aspects.
- Another comment mentioned the potential for home ownership with parking in the rear of the building. There are laws that prevent restricting the housing to only people from one single neighborhood, but there are strategies to help make these more accessible to Mattapan residents.
- Another comment mentioned that the affordability should be tied to the Mattapan median income of \$48,000, and that the tradespeople hired for the construction are from the community. The community garden should be used to foster relationships between the neighbors and the students. The housing should also be sustainably built.
- AMI info:

INCOME RANGES TO PURCHASE

ONE+BOSTON INCOME LIMIT @ 80 % AMI (must be under)

Household size	Income limit
1	\$66,650
2	\$76,150
3	\$85,700
4	\$95,200
5	\$102,800
6	\$110,450

ONE+BOSTON INCOME LIMIT @ 100 % AMI (must be under)

Household size	Income limit
1	\$83,300
2	\$95,200
3	\$107,100
4	\$119,000
5	\$128,520
6	\$138,040

- Mixed income and/or mixed use with micro apartments and standard units that have affordable, subsidized and market units for rent and ownership, which DND is open to.
- Another comment said that a community farm model be used instead of a community garden, as community gardens do not provide opportunities for economic development, while community farms do. It's also possible that this could look like a food forest instead of a community garden, but it's important for us to discuss whether we'd want the economic driver or the neighborhood growth vehicle.
- DND RFP guidelines have 10 total criteria
 1. A development plan (community input impacts the grade for this)
 2. Community benefits (community input impacts the grade for this)
 3. Design concepts (community input impacts the grade for this)
 4. Developer Experience & Capacity
 5. Financial Impact
 6. Developers Financial Capacity
 7. Development Cost Feasibility
 8. Operational Feasibility
 9. Diversity & Inclusion
 10. Housing Affordability
- Timeline: RFP drafted by the end of September, the developers response is due November 13, the Developer would present back to GMNC in December, construction could begin in 2022
- Discussion – what are the most important

Q: Niyi – I like the idea of two houses with a food forest also included. Also, if the proposal does not include market rate units would it limit the interest of developers to put in a proposal?

A: It does not mean that we'd receive any less interest, it just means that there's probably going to need other funding from other sources required.

Q: Niyi – I like the idea of 1/3, 1/3, 1/3 in terms of the affordability.

Q: How do I get the materials presented tonight?

A: They will be posted on the DND website.

Q: David Lopes – The experience requirements are typically more difficult for developers who are people of color to meet. How are you going to balance that with the hope for a local minority developer?

A: A lack of experience doesn't rule anybody out. DND would love to have a small, local developer, but it's really important for the developer to show that they can handle a project like this.

Q: Under the sustainable design category, we'd like to see really low maintenance building materials like hardy plant siding and/or azek trim.

A: That will be incorporated.

Q: Marquis Scott – Is there language that specifically calls out what the requirements for minority owned businesses? How can that be incorporated into the RFP? When the pitch day comes and we're reviewing the award – can people contest if they didn't get the award? Can the RFP be reviewed by the residents before it goes out on the street? We'd like the community to have the ability try and get more minority involvement.

A: If we do a good job, we'll hopefully have everything the community wants right in the RFP! The majority of it is boiler plate because it's a legal document. DND can't guarantee that everyone's comments will make it in, but they'll put as much as they possibly can in there. It's pretty uncommon for people to contest a chosen developer, with the scoring system it's pretty difficult to contest, but it can happen. And we'd love to see bigger more established companies teaming with smaller and minority owned businesses.

Q: Councilor Julia Mejia – is there a way to have a dashboard discussing what the reasons were that applicants did not get selected so that they can have lessons learned from the process? Also, as far as the community process goes, we're going to be telling you what we want and you're going to find a developer who can build it, but we'd like to have the communities involved throughout the process. Lastly, you always go with the lowest bidder, but that might exclude the smaller companies who might not be able to have as low prices as the bigger companies?

A: DND does not actually have to pick the lowest bidder, they're allowed to go with a different bidder if the lowest bidder can't do what the community needs. In terms of the community's involvement in the process, we're really trying to get a sense from the community what is wanted for these parcels. We're super interested in building affordable housing, but a farm, a community garden, they're all potentially on the table. The idea for feedback to developers is a really good idea.

Q: When you came to the community in January, did you offer translation? Mattapan has a lot of non-English speakers. Was there child care provided?

A: There was not, but there was a Spanish speaker, and children were welcome to attend. The presentation will be posted in Haitian Creole on the DND website tomorrow.

Q: Barbara Crichlow – I thought there were going to be two triple deckers and a community garden so that a curriculum from the school could be incorporated into the plan. Did the two three family houses idea go away? I'd also like to support the idea of the RFP coming back to the group before it's made public.

A: It seems like a lot of people are in favor of these ideas, so it's likely going to be an aspect of what is included in the RFP. Also, the applicant will be building the garden, but it's typically up to the community to run the actual community garden.

Q: Patricia Bellfield – regarding the affordability, would this potentially take into account 40B? Do the affordability qualifications represent the incomes that are currently found in the neighborhood? Or do they price out people in the neighborhood? Lastly, what type of policies are currently going around at City Hall regarding affordable housing?

A: Julia Mejia – we’re working hard on pushing for policies that support affordable housing. Councilor Edwards and Councilor Wu are both working really hard to get these things going in their committees. We talk a lot about affordability, but affordable for who? Some people in the City are only making \$35,000/year, so we need to consider those people. We need to reevaluate and redesign what affordable means so that the people who built this City can still manage to afford to live here. If there are people here who want to work with Councilor Mejia’s office on these issues, she’ll be more than happy to collaborate on these items. Jacob deBlecourt is Councilor Mejia’s Chief of Policy and he is available to answer other questions.

Q: Nikkia Jean-Charles – where can we see the applications for people who’ve done farming in the past who might apply to this? Pertaining to violence in the community, we don’t always think about how development pertains to violence. Are you only looking for high income families, or will there be spaces that could potentially be used by people escaping violence?

A: We don’t know now who’d be interested in applying, but we’ll know once we receive the proposals. When we get those proposals we’ll provide feedback to the community. You should all tell the gardening groups you know about to contact DND to get involved! We typically do 80% or higher so you can get a bank loan for a mortgage. We also can help with the down payments by 1.5% for people who are under the area median income. If there’s someone who’s experiencing domestic violence, they should definitely reach out to DND, which has an entire department dedicated to finding different housing for people in those situations.

Q: Joy Gary – is there room for the community to come in and give a lot of feedback into what the actual design would be? Like if we came up with a design on our own?

A: That would be a different form from what we’re trying to do right now, and we were hoping to talk through all the specific details of the potential design characteristics tonight.

Q: I’m saying that the community creates the actual architectural designs. Can that work?

A: That’s an interesting idea, we’ve done things like that where we use our internal architects to help tweak things, but architects are expensive. The community can always provide comments on the architectural design, which hopefully will be incorporated.

Q: Kenya Beaman – was the idea that we’d pick one of the three options tonight? There was a comment in the chat about how community gardens can be difficult to maintain, would the community have to be in charge of that? As a community member, I’d like to see mixed income on the site.

A: We weren’t necessarily asking for people to pick, but we did want feedback on the options generally. It also depends on who applies on what will happen in terms of who’s running the garden. Typically they get applicants who want to develop the garden, mow the pathways, provide signage, but then there’s a garden committee who would run the actual garden.

VI. Committee Reports

1. Public Services – Report from Committee Co-Chair Matthew Skelly: Cummins Highway Pilot, AARP on September 9
2. Zoning Committee – Report from Committee Chair David Lopes: we heard from an applicant at 5 Orlando Street. The committee voted to recommend the project with three stipulations:
 - a. Triple pane windows
 - b. Rent for the unit at \$1,000
 - c. Designs need to be stamped

Motion by Matthew Skelly for the GMNC Board to issue a recommendation letter to the Zoning Board of Appeals that the application be approved with the above referenced stipulations.

Second by David Halpert

Approved unanimously.

V – Wrap Up Announcements

- Kenya Beamon – Community engagement manager for the BPDA – short presentation on September 23 will be the next PLAN Mattapan meeting expanding on the last “Corridors” meeting. Information on how to register is all on the GMNC website.
- Chair Fatima Ali-Salaam – GMNC was able to get 1,000 masks made via a City grant, we need to give out 900 more masks. The last date to complete the census is September 30, 2020. If you want to help give them out please contact Fatima.