



Rail Yards Advisory Board

January 11, 2010, 11:30 AM
Albuquerque/Bernalillo County Government Center
Council Committee Room
9th Floor, Suite 9081

FACILITATED MEETING NOTES

Members Present:

David Campbell for Mayor Berry
Isaac Benton, City Councilor, District 3
Diana Dorn-Jones, South Broadway
Leba Freed, Wheels Museum
Sen. Eric Griego
Jay Rembe, ULI – New Mexico
Ron Romero, Barelás

Members Absent:

Commissioner Art de la Cruz
Rep. Miguel Garcia
Rep. Rick Miera
Sen. Jerry Ortiz y Pino
Rep. Gail Chasey

Staff Resources:

Tim Karpoff, facilitator
Lawrence Kline, consultant
Kara Shair-Rosenfield, Council Services
Marti Luick, Council Services
Michael Mehling, DFCS
Petra Morris, Planning Dept.
Ed Boles, Planning Dept.

Others Present:

Julie Ferguson
Homer Robinson
Dory Wegrzyn
Tony Monfiletto
Alan Clarke
Chuck McCune
Christopher Frechette
Javier Benavidez
Daniel Gutierrez

Tim Karpoff: Go over agenda. Thank you to members for meeting and speaking with me one-on-one since the last meeting. Reframe what we're doing and why. Agreement on the agenda? Advisory Board is charged with, at a minimum, developing an RFQ for Master Developer for the Rail Yards site. Important job. Another aspect, contending demands, values, issues, built into the authorizing legislation. As I recall, minimum number of workforce housing units, WHEELS Museum, don't negatively impact surrounding neighborhoods. That can set up a number of

debates right there. My observation is that the RYAB has the capacity to really make this happen. It's up to us to make sure this happens in a substantive way and with alacrity. I have a process proposal – get the RFQ out by May. Use a single-text draft beginning at our next meeting. Agenda for today: 1) Continue discussion from last time re: housing. When you touch one issue, you touch every issue. Framework of 7 themes developed at November Visioning Session. 2) Overall schedule of meetings. 3) Purpose and Organization Framework / Ground Rules document. Decision rule, in particular. 4) Rescheduling February meeting.

Tim Karpoff: At the last meeting, Todd Clarke gave a context presentation on housing. Heard differing opinions from Board members on Todd's presentation. Some thought it was the best presentation they'd heard on housing. Other said they had some concerns about it.

Councilor Benton: Last meeting, there seemed to be a lot of discussion and support for housing rehab. I'm not disputing that housing rehab is related to redevelopment, but the need for housing rehab I see as very different than what housing should be placed on the RY site. In my opinion, that issue is going to sidetrack our discussion about redevelopment of the site. The enacting legislation says that there will be at least 30 units of affordable housing on the site. It could be just that, or it could be much more than that. That's a given. I'm going to insist on putting that in, and I'd like to see housing be mixed-income so add another percentage of market-rate housing to create a mixed-income development to make a healthy neighborhood, in my opinion.

Tim Karpoff: Questions about housing data? We can refer to staff – Marti/Lawrence.

Ron Romero: We, the Barelás neighborhood, are in favor of more than just the 30 units of workforce housing. We see the development as part of the community, as an extension of the community, and we need new, affordable rental housing, more than 30 units.

Tim Karpoff: Jay, at the November meeting, I thought that you indicated a preference for quite a number of units. Can you speak to that?

Jay Rembe: I think it's important not to limit the number so low that you would eliminate developers from responding to the RFP. Want to get the best developer. Plans proposed might have quite a bit of density, it might not. But to limit at this point, I would advise against that. Make sure that neighborhood have some say-so in what happens ultimately. For developers, density buys you good architecture and open space.

Tim Karpoff: You're saying let's not get hung up on a number or even setting a range, but come up with other criteria for selecting a master developer. Leave the question of housing wide open, then work with the prospective MD later on to figure out the number of units.

Jay Rembe: Yes, I think we're thinking the worst, but it might actually enhance the neighborhood.

Leba Freed: My biggest fear is that someone would come along – Beazer Homes – and use the RY only for housing and not the other uses we want – attractions, commercial, cultural uses – and we'll just be left with low-income housing. I don't think it's appropriate to live on the RY. If we are going to consider, that's my greatest worry – that we'd not stress the other uses.

Councilor Benton: What do you propose about the legislation?

Leba Freed: My hope would be to get the housing money out of there and get other money. Get a MD who would do a complete redevelopment without housing. I don't want children to be on that rail track in affordable rentals.

Jay Rembe: This is where I think, if we're trying to attract a developer, we might get five great proposals that's a combination of what everyone wants. If we restrict it now, we're not going to get any responses.

Ron Romero: Seems that part of the divide has to do with scale of development. Probably should have some conversation around that. We see that development as being more of a residential scale. Businesses that serve the community and need the community to survive. The proposals we've seen in the past negate and overpower the community – would essentially ruin the community.

Leba Freed: Are you saying you don't think this should be a tourist attraction?

Ron Romero: I think it can be a tourist attraction but also other things.

Tim Karpoff: Instead of trying to figure out number of units, let's frame it as all of the things that have to happen on the site. I think I heard Leba and Ron agree – need to address scale, too, to provide guidance to prospective responders.

Diana Dorn-Jones: I'm torn in this conversation. 300-500 units takes my breath away – that would be a whole new neighborhood between Barelas and South Broadway. In South Broadway, we have a lot of vacant lots that are underutilized. Scale of businesses on RY might be different than what's on 4th Street or South Broadway. May be a little bigger, like a Trader Joe's. Neighborhood commercial may not be what's attracted to the site. Don't want to take away from continued revitalization of our commercial corridors.

Councilor Benton: I'm not for a housing free-for-all. West side of 2nd Street is zoned for single family residential, so whatever faces 2nd Street is going to be somewhat limited. I'm not convinced that we've had a thorough conversation about whether there is contamination that would prevent housing on the site.

Michael Mehling: Status update – there is a lot of info that has been accumulated over the years. Remediation has already been done on north end to remove lead paint from the soil. In the process right now, Corps of Engineers is starting an-EPA funding to assess the north end. EPA is costing out estimate to assess south end. Best estimates – north end was already cleaned to commercial standards. When the City bought the property, separated and surveyed the property into three separate tracts that can be tackled one at a time. 1) North end of property – north of buildings on the site – identified to clean to residential standards. Not obligated to do it, but identified to clean to residential. 2) Storehouse – identified to clean to residential. 3) South of Storehouse. Area that has most concern is at the south end around the turntable – petroleum contamination down there – extent is unclear. Quite a bit of information. EPA encouraged us to shoot for the moon – clean the entire site to residential standards. Hope to have EPA assessment on north end by April; south end by July.

Councilor Benton: Areas that were hard-paved over the long-term are theoretically clean?

Michael Mehling: Correct, that is what we have found so far. In big building, there is concrete under wood blocks.

Lawrence Kline: Pesticide contamination? Documents I've seen show no pesticide contamination.

Jay Rembe: Any estimates?

Michael Mehling: No. Those of us who don't know enough would say \$1 million.

Diane Dorn-Jones: Can we review those materials?

Lawrence Kline: Terracon report to EPA is about 25 pages. We could get that to everyone.

Diana Dorn-Jones: When Todd Clarke was here, he compared our neighborhoods to Trumbull/La Mesa. We talked about crime prevention. We don't have the same type of existing housing stock (multi-family housing), and we have a different approach to dealing with crime. Back east they've started to tear down those kinds of multi-family units. Scale is an important issue. Rentals can be single-family detached houses – doesn't have to be multi-units.

David Campbell: I wasn't here when this all got started, but it seems like that decision was made when the property was acquired. I don't like the City doing things like a bait-and-switch. Acquisition dollars that were used said housing. I think there are benefits to housing on the site that we haven't talked about: 24/7 presence of people on the site. More aliveness, activity. Would have been great for downtown. City policy, as I read it, says that we are to do mixed-use development. We have to walk the walk. If we are to encourage developers, generally, around town to do mixed-use development – housing, commercial, jobs – we should be modeling that same sort of behavior. PGS. I like Jay's point with respect to not limiting the RFQ. What we're asking people to give us their best proposals and designs. Why would we want to constrain them? Granted, there may be developers who say I only want to do homes. On the other hand, when we set out the criteria for the RFQ is that you'll be graded higher if you have an inclusive, mixed-use development. Need to be sure that we define that in the RFQ.

Ron Romero: Success of both our communities and the development depends on the interface and connectivity between community and development. We feel very strongly that rental is where you start to go to homeownership – and that's our goal. Some people will stay in rental all their life, but part of our strategy is to encourage people to move towards homeownership.

Leba Freed: I think you know that the only reason I do this is to improve the community. I have no stake in this. You've talked about vacancies and vacant lots. Curious how this is going to help the vacancies? How is this going to help all the people who cannot sell their lot? Just generally bring up the whole tenor of the neighborhood?

Jay Rembe: If it's done well, it only adds value, you want to be around it. If there's an urban presence, the lots will start to fill in because it will stabilize the area.

Diana Dorn-Jones: Where are there models where we can see this?

Jay Rembe: One example – when we did our Harvard project. There wasn't much urban activity on Harvard. We added commercial and residential and there is more traffic supporting the retail. Added light to the street and there's activity there.

Diana Dorn-Jones: This is a lot larger than that infill project.

Councilor Benton: A lot of it will have to do with cars and how people access the site.

Diana Dorn-Jones: One of the things that will happen is that there will be increased traffic in the neighborhoods, regardless of what happens. Have to look at how traffic moves around our neighborhoods. Design is going to make a difference. I agree with Jay about how you do the RFP. Have to be broad. An astute developer will talk to people before submitting a proposal. I think it's good to ask the question about how you mix people with an active train site. All these things have to be taken into consideration.

Sen. Griego: It's really important that we keep it as open-ended as possible. I don't know what the market and the public good – how you strike the balance. As long as we look at models. I love the Santa Fe model. We're not Santa Fe, but there's some commonality. Public uses on the site, stayed in non-profit hands, public planning process, infill, supporting local businesses. I don't even know what a creative MD might come up with. New potential uses – school, public museum. I've been painfully educated about how you pay to run museums, though. NHCC struggles, even with a lot of public and private support. I would love to see a successful

WHEELS Museum there, but the question is what do we wrap around it to make sure it's successful. I'm not going to say it should be 30 or 300 units. Let's get as many people as possible to look at this.

Tim Karpoff: To try to wrap this up. RFQ would keep things open-ended in terms of numbers. Put in the minimum that is in the legislation, but operate according to certain principles. Several things have to hang together in order to make this work: mixed-use, something that builds a sense of community – integrates with surrounding neighborhoods, scale, different kinds of management issue (non-profit, for-profit). I think there's something we can actually work on, and that segues us to the next topic.

Diana Dorn-Jones: Santa Fe redevelopment doesn't have housing, does it?

Jay Rembe: There is some housing.

Diana Dorn-Jones: Seemed to me that they were depending on surrounding neighborhoods. We have rich historic neighborhoods around the site that may be what ends up supporting the site in the end.

Tim Karpoff: Mutually-supporting principles. Think of housing in terms of one component – several things have to work together to support a vibrant sense of community. That's how to meet multiple needs.

Councilor Benton: I agree about Santa Fe and the governance – that would be a plus to any proposal. BUT, we truly are not Santa Fe. This is a much more compelling site. Santa Fe was already gentrified – there was a lot of disposable income in the neighborhoods around to support redevelopment already. Tourists beating down the door.

Jay Rembe: Location makes this even more challenging. It's a tertiary site. From a location POV, developers are not going to pick this location. I think there's a limited ability to make money, and unless we have flexibility in the RFP, it will sit vacant for another 10 years. Going back to the ULI Report, which isn't perfect, it points out how difficult it will be to bring certain uses to the site.

Councilor Benton: That's why I brought up the issue of transportation. Project could evolve organically and in phases over time.

Leba Freed: I think we're looking at it wrong. I think we have the highest possibility for tourism in the state of NM and in all of America. Low-income housing with rentals is not going to bring it. If we could bring AMTRAK into the big building, private train car owners, films. We could get a million people to visit here a year.

Tim Karpoff: Themes that are coming up. Maximize flexibility, ask for creativity, mutually-supporting principles – mixed-use, community building. We can move forward. I think we can have these substantive debates when we see the different proposals.

Councilor Benton: Leba, you have a unique position on this board. You have a guaranteed place on the site, and any MD will be talking to you. And this Board, we need to think about what we want to be once the RFQ is out. I like to trust this Board because of the broad representation.

Tim Karpoff: NEXT ITEM ON AGENDA. There's a role for this Board that will extend over a period of time. Would like to focus on getting a Phase I deliverable. I'm positive that we can get it done. Asking for an RFQ implies less definition than RFP – emphasizes principles of flexibility, creativity, human scale. MY PROPOSAL: staff develops draft RFQ for next meeting. Create a single-text document. Allows Board members to react to specific points. Make continued edits

from there. PART II: May deadline for issuing the RFQ. Implies that we would circulate drafts between meetings – people would do homework – get back to Tim, LSK, or KSR.

Councilor Benton: That would allow neighborhood reps to consult their constituencies?

Tim Karpoff: Yes, all Board members. WHEELS Board, other constituencies.

David Campbell: City Procurement/Purchasing will assist.

Jay Rembe: What's the logic behind RFQ vs. RFP?

Tim Karpoff: Level of detail. Greater level of specificity would be required for RFP. RFQ will still bring schemes to the table.

Jay Rembe: Just want to make sure we get schemes.

Diana Dorn-Jones: Concepts.

Leba Freed: How does the RFP get out to the world?

David Campbell: We have lists of vendors who have self-identified to us. We go through professional associations – AIA, AICP, ULIL – who can identify people as well.

Leba Freed: Has the City ever done something like this on this scale?

David Campbell: Just did the Balloon Park. Not on this scale with this many moving parts.

Tim Karpoff: This is a unique property.

Leba Freed: Want to make sure that we go nationally and internationally to attract a developer.

Diana Dorn-Jones: The Board can suggest places to place the ad, with different trade organizations.

Sen. Griego: Spaceport model. Might be worth talking to State Economic Development.

Tim Karpoff: We're talking about a more flexible RFQ vs. more specific RFP. Broad dissemination. Will have a draft to work off on next time that City Purchasing will help with.

Tim Karpoff: NEXT ITEM – GROUND RULES. Questions, comments, modifications? This is a very provisional document. As we get closer to having to determine agreement on the RFQ to send out – may need to take a vote. Hopefully will be unanimous. Proposing 2/3 super majority of those present. 51% not enough, but if unanimity is impossible, default would be super majority. I originally suggested $\frac{3}{4}$, but I was told it is pretty customary to have 2/3. How would we determine agreement? I think of voting as a last resort. Want to acknowledge, however, that at some point we may need to have a poll or a vote. No secret ballots. We would have to make sure we're meeting the minimum requirements of the authorizing legislation.

Leba Freed: Before we send out an RFQ to the world, do we go to the Mayor?

David Campbell: Generally issued by the Administration. Doesn't have to go to the Council. Would be signed off on by the Mayor's office to send out.

Diana Dorn-Jones: Clarity on how we use alternates. Are alternates going to be able to participate in crafting the document?

Tim Karpoff: I think the representational role of the Advisory Board members will need to take an increasingly important role. For example, Ron has distributed some materials that were developed in consultation with the neighborhood. I think that's completely appropriate. Ron has requested a presentation by the BNA to the Board, but my preference is that we focus on getting the RFQ out. Go ahead and circulate documents.

Diana Dorn-Jones: In terms of alternates, sometimes they're at the table, sometimes they're not. What kind of rules? I have an alternate who works for the railroad; she's a conductor. Is that okay?

Councilor Benton: I think the legislation spelled out who are voting members. I leave it up to the folks on the board, but I think they should be able to participate in discussions.

Tim Karpoff: So Alan and other alternates should be invited to the table?

Diana Dorn-Jones: Having consistency of who's at the table.

David Campbell: I think it's set out in the legislation. We should follow what's in the legislation.

Tim Karpoff: I've seen it done both ways. Let's revisit this at the next meeting.

Councilor Benton: One more thing – Legislative Session. Move Feb. 8 meeting to Tuesday, Feb. 23?

Tim Karpoff: Re: alternates – I will circulate a proposal and ask for responses.

Meeting adjourned at 12:58 PM.