



Rail Yards Advisory Board

Monday, October 8, 2012

12:00 PM

Albuquerque/Bernalillo County Government Center
Council Committee Room
9th Floor, Suite 9081

MINUTES

Members Present:

Gilbert Montano for Mayor Berry
Isaac Benton, City Councilor, District 3
Diana Dorn-Jones, South Broadway
Leba Freed, Wheels Museum
Rep. Miguel Garcia
Sen. Eric Griego
Rep. Rick Miera
Sen. Jerry Ortiz y Pino
Jay Rembe, ULI – New Mexico
Ron Romero, Barelás

Members Absent:

Commissioner Art de la Cruz

Staff Resources:

Kara Shair-Rosenfield, Council Services

Others Participants:

Jim Trump (Build New Mexico), on behalf of Samitaur
Steve Bradford, New Mexico Steam Locomotive/Railroad Historic Society

- 1. Approval of Minutes from 3-14-12 Meeting:** The minutes from the 3-14-12 RYAB meeting were approved by a unanimous vote of the Board.
- 2. Master Plan Update: Kara Shair-Rosenfield** provided a brief update on the Master Plan process. The process began with three public kick-off meetings in late August that were attended by over 200 people. The Master Planning Team then held small-group stakeholder meetings with a dozen key stakeholders, including the Barelás and South Broadway neighborhoods, the WHEELS Museum, Mayor Berry, City staff, local economic development experts (Hispano Chamber, Economic Forum, Albuquerque Economic Development), New Mexico Steam Locomotive / Railroad Historic Society, MRCOG, the Downtown Action Team, the ACVB, and affordable housing providers. She reported that Samitaur is currently working on developing a first draft of the plan, which will be presented at a public meeting on October 25.

Councilor Benton added that the Mayor was able to attend two of the three kick-off meetings and that there was good energy at the first public meetings where a lot of positive suggestions and comments were offered.

- 3. Interim Uses Update: Deputy CAO Gilbert Montano** provided an update on the Administration's efforts to develop a plan for establishing interim uses on the site. He explained that the purpose of establishing interim uses is to get people excited about the site. He mentioned that the Administration had identified the Blacksmith Shop as a possible location for interim uses and commissioned a study by Cherry/See/Reames Architects to identify how to ready the building for occupation. The C/S/R report is 98% complete, and the Administration is planning to move forward with a design/build contract to make the building ready for public use. Gilbert also mentioned that there would first need to be an amendment to the Barelvas Sector Plan (pending before the Council with final action expected to take place on October 15) in order to allow interim uses to be established, which is needed in order to make sure there are no conflicts with the Master Plan process. He said that if the Master Developer brings in a tenant for that building, they would be happy to change the place for interim uses. He went on to describe some of the types of interim uses that are being contemplated, including a farmers market, car shows, mostly daytime activities including people just walking around the site and maybe even having a picnic. The first phase of improvements would include sprinkling the building, creating sidewalks or a path for people to walk on to peek into the big buildings. The Administration's hope is to be done with construction by the beginning of the summer of 2013. Gilbert explained that there is \$1 million in 2011 General Obligation Bonds for the site and that the Administration has considered using up to \$750,000 for the Blacksmith Shop improvements. He also said that the Administration has programmed another \$500,000 for the site in the 2013 G.O. Bond.

Leba Freed said that WHEELS is thrilled about interim uses and mentioned that National Train Day is in early May.

Ron Romero also said that the idea of interim uses is excited and asked about whether the community and Rail Yards Advisory Board would be involved in that process moving forward.

Gilbert responded by saying that the public process regarding interim uses happened at the EPC and that there were no concerns, only support, expressed there. He also said that the Council meeting would be another opportunity for the public to comment and that he hoped that both the Barelvas and South Broadway neighborhoods would be excited about interim uses.

Ron reiterated that he thinks the community generally supports the concept of interim uses but would be interested in having a more active role and voice in the process, through that RYAB or otherwise. He also asked if the \$1 million for the site was needed for more basic improvements, like securing the site and weatherproofing buildings.

Gilbert said that the million dollars was really a drop in the bucket and that how to spend that money is a policy question. The Administration is proposing that the money would best be spent making one particular building ready for public use. He said that ongoing rentals to the film industry is helping to provide for the daily security and upkeep needs of the site.

Ron asked if the RYAB would be consulted about interim uses in the future.

Gilbert said that he doesn't have a problem consulting the RYAB but that he didn't feel that anything they're doing will generate controversy.

Senator Griego said he thought it would be great to get people on the site and was encouraged by the discussion about interim uses. He offered that there just needs to be a conversation about the range of things that might happen. He asked about other possible funding sources that could help support interim uses and long-term redevelopment.

Gilbert said that the Administration has actively engaged the Kellogg Foundation about the farmers market concept, in particular, and that they're having ongoing conversations. He also offered that he thought the interim use(s) could be turned into an enterprise fund that might be able to pay for itself eventually. He concluded, though, that the City doesn't currently have any partners on the interim uses and will be financially supporting it 100% for the time being.

Sen. Griego asked about other parts of the site that could be used for interim uses. He mentioned that he believes Samitaur has an idea about using a different portion of the site for establishing interim uses.

Gilbert confirmed that Samitaur has proposed to activate the southern portion of the site with interim uses and that the Administration is not opposed to the idea but prefers the Blacksmith Shop since it is an enclosed space that can protect against the element and allow people to look into the big buildings.

Jim Trump said that Samitaur very much supports the Mayor's desire to establish interim uses and that the Samitaur team is looking at the site from a different perspective since they are working on developing the long-range Master Plan. He said that Samitaur is planning to present their ideas and concepts for interim uses during the Master Plan process.

Sen. Griego asked what the "basics" for improving the site for interim uses included.

Gilbert and Councilor Benton explained that "basics" included electricity and a fire suppression system. Bathroom facilities would be provided via porta-potties in the interim rather than as permanent facilities due to prohibitive costs.

Diana Dorn-Jones asked for clarification regarding the expectation of the interim uses being "income generating."

Gilbert said that, while nothing has been formalized yet, they expect interim uses to eventually generate revenue.

Diana asked who would manage the process.

Gilbert explained that there are two ideas: 1) have the same people who manage permits through Special Events (i.e., Cultural Services staff), or 2) have Metropolitan Redevelopment staff handle scheduling/operations. **Gilbert** said that he was personally leaning towards having MR staff manage the interim uses.

Diana asked if the City would actually hire an events manager.

Gilbert said that the Administration is not planning to create a new position but would use existing staff.

Councilor Benton summed up that interim uses will be discussed at the Master Plan public meeting on October 25 and that it didn't sound like there was any opposition from the Board regarding the general concept of establishing interim uses.

4. Discussion Items:

I. General Discussion

Representative Miera asked about the timing for establishing uses. He said that he saw in the facilitator's report from the kick-off meetings that it might take six years to start seeing development. He wondered, in particular, how that might affect the Steam Locomotive.

Kara explained that the Master Planning team has been talking to the Steam Locomotive folks and that there is definitely interest in trying to see if it would be possible to get them on the site much sooner than that.

Steve Bradford (NMSL/RHS) with the Steam Locomotive said that they don't have to leave their current facility on 8th Street any time soon.

Representative Garcia, also based on a quick review of the facilitator's report, said that he agreed with many of the points that general public made, particularly regarding looking at revitalization of the Guadalupe overpass. He said he thought that would be a good thing to focus on. He also expressed interest in renaming 2nd Street "Railroad Avenue" as suggested at one of the kick-off meetings. He also asked about one of the comments that was recorded about having the Rail Yards model after Quebec City project. Quebec involved themselves in a linguistic movement - revival of French - required businesses to conduct business in French. He asked if there was there a more in-depth suggestion about Quebec City?

Kara said she would go back and review the notes from the kick-off meetings and speak with other City staff who may have recorded the comment to find out if there was a more specific suggestion tied to the comment. [NOTE: Upon review of the notes from the kick-off meetings, staff can offer that the comment about Quebec City appeared to be specific to the

idea of having a sort of “artists in residence” program where artists actually live and produce and show their work on the site. Staff’s research suggests that the reference made by the meeting participant was to the “Artists’ Residences and Workspaces” development in Quebec City. The following is a brief description of the Quebec City project: “The upper levels are apartments and the large garage doors at grade level open into loft type work spaces” (www.architecture.waterloo.ca/faculty_projects/terri/qu-art.html).]

Ron asked about the workforce housing component of the project and whether the City will issue an RFP to seek a developer for housing on the site.

Kara said that she has had some discussions with both Family & Community Services staff and Samitaur about how to proceed with that and that no decision had been reached yet.

Jim said that Samitaur feels that there are local organizations that can develop the housing component better than California folks. He said he isn’t sure who the lead will be but that Samitaur and the City will both be very involved.

Leba asked if the Board would have any decision-making authority with respect to the housing piece.

Councilor Benton confirmed that, insofar as the Board is providing input on the Master Plan, yes.

Diana asked if the RFP would call for design charrettes, which she indicated would be a good idea.

Kara explained that the RFP certainly could call for having charrettes and that the expectation is that issues related to the design of any new buildings on the site will be addressed, at least at a conceptual level, in the Master Plan.

II. Rail Yards Advisory Board Membership, Meeting Schedule, and Role

Membership: Councilor Benton explained that he wanted the Board’s input about updating the membership of the Board, which is necessary due to redistricting and in order to make sure there is proper representation as the redevelopment process moves into the next, critical phase. Suggestions that were made and generally supported by the Board included:

- Give two seats to each of the neighborhoods in order to make up for “lost” representation (i.e., State Senator from District 14 no longer representing the area and State Rep. from District 18 not being able to actively participate)
 - South Broadway representative Diana Dorn-Jones suggested that the additional representative for South Broadway might come from the San Jose neighborhood, even though San Jose is not immediately adjacent to the Rail Yards, since it is within the boundaries of the South Broadway Sector Plan. There were no objections to that idea.
- Keep and try to activate the Governor’s representative – possibly get someone from the MainStreet program or State Tourism Department.
- Allow voting members to assign a designee to represent them in the event that they are not able to attend a meeting (e.g., County Commissioner from District 2 or designee from the County Manager’s Office).
- Find out if the State Representative from District 10, which includes areas to the immediate south of the Rail yards, would be interested in joining the Board.
- Offer positions to members of the federal delegation (i.e., Congressional District 1 Representative and U.S. Senators) or their staff.

Leba Freed commented that she does not want the Master Developer on the Board since it could be a conflict of interest.

Sen. Griego suggested that one possibility would be to create non-voting positions and also include other organizations with expertise, such as the Downtown Action Team, ACVB, and Hispano Chamber.

Rep. Garcia suggested that MRCOG might be a good organization to have as a non-voting member since they have a lot to do with transportation planning.

Councilor Benton agreed and pointed out that MRCOG controls the main rail line that is adjacent to the Rail Yards.

Councilor Benton directed staff to prepare a bill with the proposed adjustments to membership.

Meeting Schedule: The Board also agreed that it would be good to schedule quarterly meetings in addition to other meetings that might be called on an as-needed basis.

Role of the Board: Councilor Benton and Kara explained that the original bill that created the RYAB simply said that the role of the Board is to “oversee” the redevelopment process. Councilor Benton asked if the Board felt that that description was sufficient or needed to be modified. The Board generally agreed that “overseeing the redevelopment process” is an appropriate way to describe their function and that the only thing that could maybe be specified is the Board’s role with respect to reviewing interim use proposals and the Master Plan. Specifically, it should be clearly stated that the Master Plan and proposals for interim uses come before the Board prior to being heard by other City Boards/Commissions (e.g., the EPC) or the City Council.

5. Other Discussion & Adjournment: The Board continued general discussion about interim uses, including expressing support for getting interim uses going ASAP in order to generate positive buzz about the project. There was mention of developing a marketing plan for interim uses once the Sector Plan amendment hurdle is removed. Senator Ortiz y Pino asked about the acoustics of the buildings and said he thought the spaces would be great for concerts, such as the symphony. Representative Garcia suggested that a good interim use would be to get Barelaños and South Broadway folks who have first-hand knowledge of and history with the site to start a tour company to give tours of the site; Councilor Benton said he really liked the idea of getting tours going.

Jay Rembe asked whether the new impact fee structure would make the site subject to impact fees; Gilbert said he thought there was an exception for “economic development”; Councilor Benton said he thought affordable housing projects would also remain exempt from impact fees.

Senator Griego mentioned the Barelas Fiestas event, taking place on Saturday, October 13, to support the revitalization of 4th Street, which is seen as being a complementary effort to redeveloping the Rail Yards. He invited everyone to attend the event and support that effort.

Representative Garcia conveyed concerns he had heard from some constituents in South Broadway who live right by the railroad tracks. People he had recently spoken with were leery of redevelopment based on something that happened years ago when there was a proposal that would have required the acquisition of their homes and businesses. He asked for more information about what that past proposal was. Various members of the Board (Leba Freed, Diana Dorn-Jones, Councilor Benton) explained that an old proposal that required property acquisition had been definitively rejected by both the community and more recently by the Board when it refused to interview the respondent to the RFP that brought forward the same proposal. Representative Garcia said that is what he thought and had conveyed to the constituents and appreciated the confirmation.

The meeting adjourned at 1:27 PM.