



Rail Yards Advisory Board

Monday, November 9, 2009

11:30 AM

Albuquerque/Bernalillo County Government Center

Council Committee Room

9th Floor, Suite 9081

MINUTES

Members Present:

Councilor Isaac Benton
Leba Freed, Wheels Museum
Rep. Miguel Garcia
Rep. Rick Miera
Sen. Jerry Ortiz y Pino
Jay Rembe, ULI – New Mexico
Ron Romero, Barelvas Neighborhood
Yasmin Khan, Barelvas Neighborhood
Diana Dorn-Jones, South Broadway Neighborhood
David Campbell, CAO Select, City of Albuquerque

Members Absent:

Commissioner Art De La Cruz
Rep. Gail Chasey
Janice Convery, South Broadway NA
Sen. Eric Griego

Staff Resources:

Michael Mehling, Dept. of Family and Community Services
Marti Luick, Council Services
Kara Shair-Rosenfield, Council Services
Petra Morris, Council Services
Lawrence Kline, FAICP, Project Coordinator
Tim Karpoff, Facilitator

Others Present:

Alan Clarke, Wheels Museum
Chuck McCune, Prizm Foundation
Daniel Gutierrez, Barelvas Coalition
UNM Graduate Students

1. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS –LAWRENCE KLINE AND TIM KARPOFF

- **Lawrence Kline, FAICP, Rail Yards Advisory Board Coordinator:** Lawrence Kline formally introduced himself to the Board. He explained that he is a City Planner, who grew up in Philadelphia in the 1960s, which was the heyday of planning and architecture in Philadelphia. He wanted to be an architect but came to New Mexico to become a cultural anthropologist, but became a planner, which blends architecture and cultural anthropology. He is married and a dad. He stated that his philosophy about planning is that good planning is knowing “what is” and finding out “what you want it to be.” His approach in helping to coordinate and assist the Board will be to bounce back and forth between open discussion and closed responses so that the Board can eventually synthesize what this redevelopment will be. Lawrence reminded the Board that the stated goal of RYAB is to select the Master Developer who will carry out redevelopment. He also said that the Board will have to give prospective Master Developers a glimmer of what it wants the redevelopment to be. The Board needs to envision what that future is going to be.
- **Tim Karpoff, Facilitator:** Tim Karpoff introduced himself to the Board and explained what his role will be, which is to facilitate discussion amongst the Board in order to develop an RFP/RFQ for Master Developer. He proposed that the group focus on cross talk – people talk with one another and to one another. He explained that he is charged with crafting agendas for meetings moving forward and that he wants to help the Board find points of convergence.

2. DESIGNING A VISION FOR THE RAIL YARDS

- **Tim** told the group that the format of the day’s meeting would be a structured workshop, starting with discussion using an affinity diagram process. He posed a question to the Board: What do you see in place then the Rail Yards have been fully developed? He asked Board members to think in an unconditionally positive way, not without constraints, but something that they could really see happening in 10 years or so. He asked members to provide 4-5 ideas to answer that question and encouraged them to be as specific as possible, which would lead to richer conversations.
- **Leba** expressed a concern about needing to bring in people from across the country and around the world who have done very big and innovative projects.
- **Tim** explained that this is a first step and the goal is to get a series of opening statements, not final answers.
- **Leba** said she was concerned that the opening statements would not be the most progressive statements and that she wants to find out what innovative and successful ideas can other people bring in to Albuquerque.
- **Tim** reassured the Board that this visioning process would help lead the group to that next step.
- **Jay** asked if it is the Board’s goal to develop a framework to provide direction to a developer, who will come in with his team. He said that he’d like to ensure that the people who are the most involved and affected are going to support the plan. He suggested that it would be important to have neighborhood groups tell the Board what they’re willing to support in order for the developer to have the right framework/rules for moving forward. Stated simply, he said that the Board needs to get input from neighborhood groups.
- **Tim** asked Board members to take a few minutes to collect their thoughts, put their ideas on the large Post-Its, and select their top two ideas – the ones for which they’d be the biggest advocates.

The top ideas that were offered by Board members were, in no particular order:

- Compatible, community SCALE – culture, history, modernization
- A community within a community
- National model of mixed-use
- Dense housing with no density requirements – 100 dwelling units/acre+
- An international trade zone with manufacturing as a base
- Museum on history of Railyards
- 30% residential with 50% permanently affordable
- Railyard development does not displace neighborhoods

- 950 new, high-paying jobs for neighborhood
 - An urban HUB joining communities and downtown into one
 - Major NM attraction, bringing 1,000,000 people a year to the site
 - Major U.S.A. transportation museum – WHEELS – 8 acres, 166,000 sq.ft.
 - A planned development including 200 housing units (mixed)
 - A self-sustaining project
 - 300-500 mixed-income housing units
 - Live/Work/Trade/Play
 - Welcoming gathering place
 - Employment for 300-500 mixed income
- Once all of the ideas were on the board, Tim asked if any of the members needed clarification on any of the ideas.
 - **Leba** asked if there are any housing studies that show what is needed, what the market will support.
 - **Tim** explained that he was just looking for questions of clarification about what is meant by the idea, not whether or not it will work.
 - **Leba** asked what “International Trade Zone” means.
 - **Rep. Garcia** explained that it is a tariff-free zone that provides an incentive for multi-national corporations to establish manufacturing jobs in the community.

Facilitated discussion about “Developing Themes” based on the initial list of ideas presented:

- **Councilor Benton:** What I heard Rick saying in terms of what “self-sustaining project” means, and I agree, is that we don’t want to drain the public coffers in order to make this project happen.
- **Tim:** We need to reach agreement about how to frame the discussion moving forward. In the funding area, it sounds like the vision for this project is that it doesn’t drain the public coffers and is not 100% subsidized – is that something that is a basic element of the Board’s vision at this time?
- **Sen. Ortiz y Pino:** I would like to add that the site should have a significant education/training component?
- **Jay:** Is the Albuquerque Zoo subsidized?
- **Alan Clarke:** Yes.
- **Jay:** I would love for this to pay for itself, but if there is a use or model that is so wonderful and could make us a model, I would hate to preclude the possibility of that use just because it would need to be subsidized.
- **Leba:** Our studies show that WHEELS Museum will be self-sustaining and revenue generating as long as we have the right amount of space.
- **Sen. Ortiz y Pino:** I have a question about “Regional Sports Complex” – does that mean participatory or spectator sports?
- **Jay:** I put that one in. I coach my kids’ soccer teams. This could become a great community meeting place for kids, but also an opportunity to attract regional events that could generate tax dollars for the City.
- **Sen. Ortiz y Pino:** Are you envisioning this as fields where youth groups would play with occasional tournaments?
- **Jay:** More for youth, neighborhood, city. The new City soccer fields are beautiful, but small.
- **Tim:** At this point, it sounds like the Advisory Board is saying let’s explore having multiple attractions. My understanding was that the Wheels Museum would be the big attraction, but from what I’m seeing here, it looks like there is interest in having multiple attractions.
- **Leba:** What about a roller skating rink? How can we tie sports into “moving” – WHEELS is about moving people. People will bike to site.
- **Rep. Garcia:** I’m picturing the regional activity center in Santa Fe where they have basketball courts that can be partitioned, an ice rink, an Olympic-size swimming pool, a children’s swimming pool, a walking track, etc. A regional activity center is really broad in terms of services it offers and is family oriented. It could even support semi-pro teams.

- **Councilor Benton:** When we hear “sportplex,” a lot of people think of outdoors, but it could be indoor/outdoor. We used to have a real “Recreation Center” – but we have mostly multi-purpose centers now.
- **Diana:** I have two “should not” statements – 1) I don’t want to see revitalization effort take away from or compete with revitalization efforts along the commercial corridors in South Broadway and Barelás. Redevelopment has to be compatible. 2) There is only so much infrastructure money. I would hate to see this project impede the ability of the surrounding neighborhoods to have their infrastructure improved. People who live around the site need to still be served. The infrastructure need of the older neighborhoods cannot be forgotten.
- **Yasmin:** To your first point, the International District in Albuquerque is an example of where a clear differentiation is being made between community commercial and larger attractions. Talin Market, e.g., is the larger attraction. There are two different types of commercial.
- **Tim:** How do we frame this issue?
- **Councilor Benton:** Could we say “Benefit Communities”? We don’t just want this not to harm, we want this to benefit.
- **Rep. Miera:** How much do we think the locals are going to use on a consistent basis and how much will we need to rely on people from outside coming in to support this project?
- **Rep. Garcia:** How will the communities surrounding the Rail Yards benefit? We need to get our creative juices flowing. We might be able to do a Revitalization GRT to impose on businesses within the Rail Yards that is specifically earmarked for use in the communities.
- **Jay:** Like a Business Improvement District. That’s why I think mixed-use is so important. What supports commercial uses is housing. What supports housing is other amenities within project. I would strongly encourage us to support mixed-use with a good housing component.
- **Councilor Benton:** A strong housing component gives you 24/7 presence of people on the site, which gives you more security.
- **Tim:** One category of vision – Model of Mixed Use Development? Another category – Housing?
- **Councilor Benton:** To the extent that there’s housing there, I’d like to see if we all agree that it should be mixed-income. Can we all agree to that?
- **Jay:** I have a general comment about density – the market eventually is going to drive the density because of parking issues; higher density allows you good architecture and amenities. The Downtown 2010 Plan has no parking requirement, and that flexibility is good for the developer.
- **Leba:** I stand where Diana stands about no housing.
- **Diana:** Wait a minute. I just put the idea out there for discussion.
- **Leba:** I’m very concerned about housing. My husband went on a ride-along with the Police Chief the other day, and the Chief agrees that housing should not go on the site. I don’t think the site is safe for children/families. I would like to know the market – is there a market for housing on the site? Houses on wheels? No houses? I have not heard any statistics.
- **Diana:** My concern about housing is about former uses of the site. Is it environmentally safe? That’s a question I would like to have explored.
- **Yasmin:** I need clarification on the issue of density: a lot of housing is already being built in downtown, and a lot of services are lacking. Depending on what kind of commercial you want, the density already exists to support services. It’s not necessarily about putting more housing to get commercial. We need to provide commercial for the people who already live in the area.
- **Tim:** What about the framing of the issue around jobs/economy?
- **Councilor Benton:** There is no shortage of different ideas that people want to bring forward for this project. I think those are going to continue to come forth. I think if we agree there should be a mix, that’s a good starting point.
- **Tim:** Should we call it Mixed-Use Commercial Development?
- **Tim:** What about framing the public access issue?
- **David:** This project needs to be really open and accessible to the public. The public is welcome and has a reason to go there.
- **Yasmin:** There is a difference between services and types of jobs – two different categories.
- **Tim:** There’s a lot more to talk about on all of these issues, but it sounds like everyone wants to talk about these. In the areas of “Housing(?)(!)” and “Mixed Use Commercial Development” – it

sounds like we could run into some sharp edges and will need to explore those areas with care. Let's see if this framework can help us determine sequence and substance of subsequent agendas. Sounds like Housing might be the first issue to tackle in depth?

- **Leba:** I think we should leave housing for last. Lawrence Rael would like to have a RailRunner repair facility on the site. I think if we do this right, we can bring all the categories together.
- **Tim:** Where do we go from here? I'm looking for reactions/suggestions.
- **Diana:** I think we should take on the two most contentious issues first. The community has these same questions, and we have to get some answers. If we don't answer those questions, we're going to have a difficult time getting overall support.
- **Councilor Benton:** I agree with you, Diana.
- **David:** I have a process question: we've been doing a lot of brainstorming, and it sounds like you're asking if we should start narrowing things down. Should we start setting some limitations?
- **Tim:** I'm thinking we have a range of ideas, and we need to categorize them so they can be more discreetly tackled. We may need to take a couple meetings to get some of the market analyses, models from other places, and more discussion amongst the group. Where do we go from here? The pink cards (Developing Themes) may help us formulate future agendas. Let's tackle the big stuff.
- **Rep. Miera:** How do we give other people the opportunity to make their play?
- **Councilor Benton:** I struggle with this question a lot. To give special access to this Board to any particular developer seems premature. People have exciting ideas, but I don't think we're there yet.
- **Jay:** What if we had a website and provide email addresses of board members?
- **Diana:** Not everyone has electronic access. What about everyone else? Should we have some public hearings or public meetings held at public venues near the site, like the NHCC, Barelás Community Center, and South Broadway Cultural Center?
- **Lawrence:** On the issue of housing. We are working on getting a market model needs assessment and will provide that at the next meeting. A red herring I want to address: on the issue of public infrastructure being stolen from neighborhoods. I've had meetings with all of the different utility providers, and there is plenty of capacity to provide water, sewer, drainage, and electrical to the site. Also, regarding the situation with railroad itself, it may not as be as onerous as ULI thought. We can probably take "cannibalizing infrastructure" off the table as an issue that needs to be addressed.
- **Tim:** Agenda items for the next meeting may include housing and the community outreach process. We'll figure that out.

The "Developing Themes" that the group decided on were:

1. Possibility of Having Multiple Attractions
2. Mixed-Use Commercial Development
3. Housing (?)(!)
4. Overall Development Benefits – Local Community
5. Open/Accessible to Public
6. Model of Mixed Use
7. Not Heavily Subsidized

Complete Results of the Visioning Session:

1. Possibility of Having Multiple Attractions
 - a. Major NM attraction bringing 1,000,000 people a year to site
 - b. Museum on history of Railyards
 - c. Regional activities center
 - d. Major U.S.A. transportation museum – WHEELS – 8 acres, 166,000 sq. ft.
 - e. Stem excursions, entrepreneurial, major USA museum involvement
 - f. Be unique attraction in USA = history, culture, technology
 - g. Satellites = retail, educational, other museums and attractions
 - h. Local/State and Regional Sportsplex (still mixed use)

- i. Preservation of builds with a green strategy
 - j. Full use made of site's rail line location
2. Mixed-Use Commercial Development
 - a. 950 new high paying jobs for neighborhood
 - b. Employment for 300-500 mixed income
 - c. International trade zone w/manufacturing as base
 - d. Historic buildings transformed into contemporary sites for jobs
 - e. Economic dev. – community gardens take goods to market
 - f. Community-run working food co-op (service and jobs)
 - g. Employment not solely based on service/tourism/retail (light industrial?)
 - h. Local regional farmers market
 - i. Locally owned small cottage type business and shops
 - j. Full use made of site's rail line location
 3. Housing(?)(!)
 - a. A planned development including 200 housing units (mixed)
 - b. Dense housing w/no density requirements – 100 DU's per acre+
 - c. 300-500 mixed-income housing units
 - d. 30% residential w/50% permanent affordable
 - e. Railyard succeeds without housing on sit
 4. Overall Development Benefits – Local Community
 - a. Compatible community scale – culture/history/modernization
 - b. A community within a community
 - c. An urban HUB joining communities and downtown into one
 - d. Railyard development does not displace neighborhoods
 - e. Integration w/community
 - f. Need community buy-in
 - g. Compatible with existing commercial interests (neighborhood)
 5. Open/Accessible to Public
 - a. Welcome gathering place
 - b. Grower's public market
 6. Model of Mixed Use
 - a. National model of mixed use
 - b. Live/Work/Trade/Play
 - c. Education uses on the site; K-20 and training
 7. Not Heavily Subsidized
 - a. A self-sustaining project

3. DESIGNING THE ADVISORY BOARD'S AGENDA THROUGH MID-2010

No focused discussion on this item took place.

4. ADJOURN – 1:00 PM