



Rail Yards Advisory Board

January 6, 2023

8:30 am

Council Committee Room

9th Floor, Suite 9081

Attendance is open to the public. The meeting can also be viewed via Zoom webinar by clicking on the following link: <https://cabq.zoom.us/j/85305051889?pwd=MjZzd21mRWFCeVk1YU5jMlRlRUT09> (Meeting ID: 853 0505 1889)

MINUTES

I. Call to Order

II. Welcome & Overview

Welcome to members on Zoom. Sen. Ortiz y Pino, Rick Miera, Christina Rogers is an alternate from Barelás, and Courtney Ball. Go around table for introductions. We do have a quorum.

III. Approval of Minutes: November 15, 2022 RYAB Special Meeting

Councilor Benton moved approval, Rep. Garcia seconded, motion passed unanimously

IV. Rail Yards Master Plan update – Review of draft updated plan

Consultant, Ms. Fishman, and Petra Morris Introduction

Ms. Morris stated that this update to Master Plan is just to catch up the plan with the changes that have occurred since 2014. The Administration has made significant improvements to the north end of the site, and the document has been updated to reflect that. Major change is that we no longer have a master developer, Samitar. Their concepts are no longer on the table. This is the 3rd or 4th meeting with the board on this. Samitar proposed a parcelization of the site, but we are proposing that all of the uses listed be allowed to be used throughout the site. This provides more flexibility without changing the intent. In terms of parking, we are proposing to strike that language that designated the number of

parking spaces. The Planning Commission will approve parking as development comes in.

Ms. Morris continued that at the last meeting we had a draft amendment to make some corrections to the master plan. Those have been incorporated into the plan, along with the language about noise and the recent agreement with the 2926 NM Railroad Historical Society and their maintenance work of the of the turntable.

Ms. Fishman, with Consensus Planning, brought attention to new section on noise. There was a lot of concern about noise at the last meeting. She looked at the Balloon Fiesta Park Master Development Plan noise section and tailored it to the Rail Yards Master Plan.

Councilor Benton stated that the board has had this draft for a while now, but there was not a quorum at the last meeting, which is why the special meeting is being held today.

Councilor Benton stated this was not a major revamp of the plan, but what we wanted to do was take the previous parts that had been previously approved, and clean that up. Councilor Benton opened up floor to discussion by board members.

Mr. Rembe deferred to the neighborhood representatives to make sure they feel comfortable with the language, especially regarding their noise concerns.

Ms. Chavez expressed concern with language that anything can be used anywhere. She expressed that the Spirit Station would be better positioned deeper into the site rather than right on the street. Those businesses on the street should be more in-tune with the neighborhood, rather than a bar. She stated that most bars in that area had been closed down due to the problems they cause for the neighborhood.

Mr. Rael responded that this did not come together and the project is not moving forward. With regards to the buildings that front 2nd St., it is difficult to get a large establishment into those buildings without adding on. He thinks this would be a good area where the neighborhood can have input about what goes in due to the small size of buildings along the street.

Mr. Rael mentioned that there has been some interest in possibly a restaurant in the firehouse, and, at that point, the community could have more input on how it will be utilized, but right now there are not any uses at this moment.

Councilor Benton stated that the firehouse has always been discussed as a potential restaurant, even though that is near the neighborhood edge. There

would a formal process for that if something like that came up, including opportunity for the community to weigh in.

Rep. Garcia brought up the noise updates to the plan and asked about the specific language that was put in, specifically highlighting the part that is unique to the Rail Yards and not found in the Balloon Fiesta plan.

Ms. Fishman responded that the language was only modeled off the Balloon Fiesta plan because a lot of the neighbors there had similar concerns about noise, but this was really tailored to the Rail Yards. The section talks about the City's noise ordinance and how the noise is measured. It also talks about Environmental Health being responsible for any complaints and the role of Cultural Affairs.

Councilor Benton mentioned how Cultural Affairs has been responsible for one-off type of events in the blacksmith shop, but that is an operational issue. That is not the type of detail we would normally go into.

Mr. Rael stated that the condition of the buildings themselves, with the windows missing or in bad shape, contribute to noise escaping the buildings. As we move to redevelop some of those buildings, especially the blacksmith shop, putting more windows and acoustic modalities would help control the noise.

Mr. Rael also pointed out that with events being scheduled, the neighborhood would be notified, and he will make sure to notify Cultural Affairs to be cognizant of the neighborhood. However, it is a public space. He hopes with activation of the space and trees, that noise will become less of an issue for the community.

Councilor Benton did bring up plans to replace windows on that east wall that faces the neighborhood, which should help with noise.

Mr. Rael said there could be other ways to muffle the noise, even a curtain, since the windows are so expensive. The west side is more muffled by the flue shop.

Mr. Garcia requested some type of buffer on the east side to stop noise from bouncing off and projecting. He also suggested a flyer going out to the neighborhood as notification of events and a phone number to call to make sure noise from events end on time.

Mr. Rael responded that that was definitely something that can be done, with regards to notification and a phone number.

Councilor Benton brought up potential that along Commercial, in the right-of-way, that a long line of nice, evergreen trees could be put up. This is off-site and would be discussed outside of this board. He said we could look for funding in the City's capital improvement.

Ms. Freed thanked the meeting attendees for their help over the years. WHEELS Museum has become highly successful with visitors from all over the world and received a fire truck recently.

She stated that they are now working with Lego, Hot Wheels, and educational institutions and are rapidly expanding.

Councilor Benton also thanked 2926 for their help on the site and Sen. Ortiz y Pino and the other legislators for their help over the years.

Sen. Ortiz y Pino is eager to hear about capital outlay request for the year.

Mr. Rael thanked the legislators for their support over the years, and we would not be where we are with regards to the redevelopment of the area.

Mr. Rael stated that a priority is stabilization of the blacksmith shop and get it into a condition for occupancy, and then look at environmental remediation on the south side of the machine shop. They are also looking at the machine shop and opportunities to get funds for that, just the roof alone is around \$17 million.

Mr. Rael stated that the Administration is putting together the proposal and should be done in a week or so. The number is still being evaluated, and wants to make sure it covers the blacksmith shop windows and noise mitigation so that indoor events can occur there.

Sen. Ortiz y Pino thanked Mr. Rael, and is supportive of the changes regarding the noise issues.

Rep. Garcia moved approval of the plan, Ms. Chavez seconded, motion passed unanimously

V. Update from the Administration on CNM at the Rail Yards

Mr. Rael stated this is a project that has been going on since Mayor Keller came into office. Within the first 6-8 months, the Administration signed a letter of intent with CNM for an agreement between CNM and the City to provide educational opportunities at the Rail Yards.

Mr. Rael said there are now two agreements with CNM that have the inertia to redevelop one of the major buildings on the site. First agreement was from late August 2022 to let CNM use the flue shop to hold digital film program classes to activate the space. They are still working on updating the agreement to continue it into the next fall semester for having classes there 2-3 times per week.

Mr. Rael stated that the other potential agreement is to locate a CNM film academy on the site that would potentially utilize the boiler shop. Details of the agreement are still in negotiations.

Mr. Rael also shared that the Barelás neighborhood is working with them on a community agreement to create a summer or potentially all year program for the young people in the neighborhoods to have access to projects on the site. The goal is activation of the site.

Ms. Freed explained that WHEELS has a large conference room that is available for educational opportunities and events. She also stated that people ask her about using the flue shop and the boiler shop. She asked if anyone is using them at this time and if they can still be used on a short-term basis.

Mr. Rael said yes, they can still be used right now on a lease-by-lease basis.

Councilor Benton mentioned how the machine shop was being discussed as the potential location for CNM to use, but the flue shop and boiler shop connect, so that would be a better fit for them.

Rep. Garcia asked why would CNM want to use these buildings with their lack of development regarding heating, cooling, and security, when they could just use their facilities on their campus.

Rep. Garcia also asked that CNM project have the outcome of producing a product that celebrates the Rail Yards, like a script for a movie that reflects positive happenings at the Rail Yards and history at the site. He suggested focusing on the Chicano perspective, possibly the union issues at the site.

Councilor Benton said he appreciated those thoughts from Rep. Garcia. He stated that the movie industry typically uses the site as a dystopian setting but it has lots of positive connections to the area that should be focused on.

Ms. Freed thanked Rep. Garcia and said that she had a theater group approach her wanting to do a project like that. There is just a lack of funding.

Councilor Benton pointed out that WHEELS has the educational resources to inform the history for a project like this, and is looking to see how it all evolves with CNM.

Rep. Garcia asked what is the status of the funding put forward for CNM at the Rail Yards.

Mr. Rael said no funding directly for CNM was put forward. He said, in response to Rep. Garcia's question on why CNM is using the Rail Yards, that it is a fascinating place and a great facility with opportunities to set up stages. It is an

attraction that would work well for lighting and staging is why CNM wants to use it.

Mr. Rael explained that there is now more interest in the human aspect of the site, and that NM True has done some work there to show how the site links to the history of New Mexico.

Mr. Rael shared that CNM does not have direct capital outlay funding from the state, but they did pass a bond issue in 2019 to build a digital film program facility. So they do have some funding to do this, and it is an opportunity for us to use the building that has the history and architecture already available.

Mr. Rael said he would pass the comments on to CNM, and reiterated the Administration's commitment having a space at the Rail Yards to commemorate the human story at the site.

Councilor Benton pointed out the national interest and curiosity about Albuquerque, and with regards to the Rail Yards, we can bank on that publicity to continue to draw interest.

VI. Discussion of the current conditions at the Fire House

Councilor Benton brought up security conditions at the Fire House and how he pitched in some funds towards video cameras for security. He has a draft of a bill to make security a priority on the site.

Mr. Rael said he has been wanting to address how to stabilize the deteriorating conditions at the Fire House. He has been working with Ed Adams to see what could potentially be a legislative ask for funds to stabilize the building. He would at least like to see about covering the windows with new plywood to prevent any more loss of conditions.

Mr. Adams gave an update on cost. He said the immediate issue at hand was vandalism at the site. The building has been secured since the last break-in.

Mr. Adams said they have a design package that is 75% complete that would stabilize the building. There is a structural issue that needs to be addressed on the northwest corner, bringing it close to \$1 million for the stabilization package. The roof needs work, there is some lead paint that would need to be remediated, but it all depends on the type of tenant that would want to go in there.

Mr. Adams explained that the \$1 million would just be for stabilization and not for getting it into a position for development. The main issue is lack of funding, which is why it has not been taken to permit. Given funding, it could go pretty quick.

Councilor Benton offered any assistance he could provide since it is shovel-ready and because the Fire House is an iconic building.

Councilor Benton stated that he is happy with the architect for the project, Lee Gamelski, because of his experience in historical preservation and restaurants, but he stressed the importance of needing an experienced wood worker for the contractor.

Mr. Adams said that Leslie has been doing some restoration work on the windows, but a larger effort is needed. They have several local contractors with very good wood working shops. They could connect all of those dots given funding.

Councilor Benton shared with the legislators that this would be part of the package that Mr. Rael is planning to deliver to them soon.

Rep. Garcia expressed his belief that the Administration's package should have priorities spelled out for the Rail Yards.

Councilor Benton shared that he believes the machine shop roof should be a priority, but he understands the Administration is also seeking grant funding to assist with this. He will further discuss this with Mr. Rael since he stepped out of the meeting.

Sen. Ortiz y Pino explained that his current district will be split in a few years and recommended that Senators O'Neill and Duhigg should be contacted as they will be eager to support things that are new to their portfolio.

Mr. Freed asked it is possible for the City to go ahead and get a tenant in the Fire House that could contribute to this work.

Councilor Benton responded that the background is to get cold, dry boxes at the buildings to make them ready for use.

Director Brunner said the City did put out an RFP earlier to some other projects, but in the case of the Fire House, it is essential to just get the building ready for RFP because a restaurateur is not going to want to come in and stabilize the foundation or put in a new roof.

Councilor Benton explained that for any RFP, the City would need to stabilize and complete restoration to a cold, dry box before any developer comes in. He suggested to Ms. Freed that she should point any potential developers to Director Brunner's office.

Mr. Rael pointed out that Anthony Villanueva is the coordinator for the projects at the Rail Yards and works closely with Ed Adams. He can be contacted for assistance with the site. The Administration is looking to add funds for security cameras for the site.

Councilor Benton reiterated the remaining Advisory Board Meetings for the rest of the year, with the next one being April 5, 8:30 am.

VII. Adjourn