



## **Rail Yards Advisory Board**

August 4, 2021

8:30 am

Council Committee Room

9th Floor, Suite 9081

### **MINUTES**

#### **I. Call to Order**

The meeting was called to order at 8:41 am.

Board Members Present:

City Councilor Isaac Benton, Chair

Sen. Jerry Ortiz y Pino

Rep. Javier Martinez

Rep. Miguel Garcia

Alex Romero, Governor's Representative

Lawrence Rael, COO

Margarita Archibeque for Commissioner Steven Michael Quezada

Jay Rembe, ULI-New Mexico

Leba Freed, WHEELS Museum

Frances Armijo, South Broadway

Dorothy Chavez, Barelax

Others:

Bob DeGroft

Staff:

Karen Iverson, Metropolitan Redevelopment

Petra Morris, City Council Services

Diane Dolan, City Council Services

#### **II. Welcome & Overview**

#### **III. Approval of Minutes: December 2, 2020 RYAB Meeting**

Councilor Benton moved to approve the minutes

Rep. Garcia seconded

The motion passed unanimously

One item was moved up from "Other Business" – Bob DeGroft provided an update on the SF 2926 (statement attached).

#### **IV. Administration Updates**

COO Rael reported the following:

Finished putting in water and sewer lines to the buildings.

SHPO allowed us to run the line between the Boiler and Machine Shops.

Major accomplishment, gives us the opportunity to connect those spaces, major infrastructure key to development of building.

Re-did the alley and drainage, installed tubing for fiber optic as buildings are activated going forward.

Hoping to get Certificate of Occupancy for Flue Shop, host events so people can see progress.

Replaced all the windows, built in bathroom, have kitchenette, office space in Flue Shop.

New floor – had to put in a liner between the new and old concrete because of environmental/vapor issues. Vapor is pretty much non-existent but wanted to use an abundance of caution.

Will be a nice showcase piece to show work and accomplishments.

Tinder roof completed, solved issue of further deterioration.

Looking to see what funds are available to fix the windows, especially the top portion.

Pretty amazing work in the Boiler Shop, for the most part all of the windows and top of the roof are in place, skylights have been replaced and redone, roof will be completed soon.

Taken all of the creosote-soaked blocks on the floor, got about 3 or 4 pallets of the blocks themselves, saved them for proper placement.

Almost entire roof completed, concrete floor in place, power washed walls, took materials damaged by the fires.

Roof replacement stopped deterioration of Boiler Shop.

Working with Planning/Code Enforcement to see how we might utilize this space going forward, perhaps open-air market.

Also moving forward on Tender Repair.

Available on an interim basis for public activities.

Folks love courtyard, lots of weddings there, rent the facilities.

Landscaping design complete for along 2<sup>nd</sup> St up to where 2<sup>nd</sup> and 1<sup>st</sup> Streets connect, down to WHEELS driveway.

Put out bid for construction, hoping to start to start construction w/in the next 45 days, landscaping and nice fencing.

\$2m EPA funds, augmented w/City funds.

Nice way to show city that the project is moving along.  
Walking trail w/interesting historical notes people can stop and read the history, families that are part of the Barelvas and S Broadway area, connection to the Rail Trail.  
Karen Iverson is go-to person for the Rail Trail if there are questions.  
Trail will go all the way up to connect w/Lomas.  
Met w/Ms. Freed and WHEELS w/respect to landscaping, etc, came up w/compromise. Not a lot of frontage w/out taking parking out for WHEELS because building is too close to the street.  
Will put in fencing to that section of frontage, will clean up that area to make sure WHEELS will continue to operate, show neighborhood that there is a plan to move the project as time and funds are available.  
(Ed Adams had trouble getting on the call.)  
We are happy to report to the state legislators on the board that we have spent every dime you got for us.  
Rail Yards is a symbol of investment in Barelvas and that part of the city, get people to see how the city grew up around the railroad, site wont be as much as an eyesore to the community.

Councilor Benton asked if we do have Ed Adams on the call now, any comments?

Mr. Adams reported that carpet in Flue Shop almost 95% installed, putting in block flooring. We have opened bids on the trail, sorting through bid tabs.

Councilor Benton commented that it has been great to have Ed on this project, as he really knows how to move things along.

Councilor Benton asked Ms. Iverson where are we with the future tenant from the successful RFP.

Ms. Iverson reported we have been working with them looking at their business plan and creative concept, working in community about developing the narrative, artistic representation of historical and looking to the future way, determining best footprint for them.

Sen. Ortiz y Pino asked if the proposed use was for the Fire Station.  
COO Rael confirmed that they would like the Fire Station. They are also looking at the Pattern House and thinking about utilizing outdoor space also. Mr. Adams will have contractors review that site to get that building up to a point where we can get it activated, leased out.  
Council passed 2.5 m for rail yards in the '21 GO Bond cycle that will go to voters in November. Would like to see if we can put some dollars into getting that building activated. Not a huge building but very iconic, could be cool useful space, and a bite we can take. May ask legislators' help getting money for that building.

Sen. Ortiz y Pino asked if there could be a restaurant in the building?  
Mr. Adams stated we are open to uses, restaurant is possible, good idea. One of the challenges is two-story, would require elevator for public use. Private use, maybe not. Also asbestos and lead paint in the building to mitigate.

Sen. Ortiz y Pino asked about any progress by CNM on film activity. COO Rael said that as we do more and more of the work, they are more and more interested. Looking at Blacksmith Shop, assessment with programming, may also be interested in Tender Repair, slowed down during pandemic, hoping to get more aggressive in the next couple of months to determine where they will go and what their investment will be. We want them to be a big anchor.

Mr. Adams reported that they've been doing site evaluations, been on site several times in last couple of months to assess, get more information, and have spent a lot of time in Tender and office building, don't know what their thoughts are.

Sen. Ortiz y Pino stated that this is a good year to come to legislature money, we have 40% reserves, around \$3b, this would be a nice time to ask for a big chunk of that, has such potential to change this part of the city, don't be reluctant to ask big.

Rep. Garcia asked if there had been any injuries during the construction work.

Mr. Adams was happy to report NO injuries during roof work.

Rep. Garcia inquired about the creosote blocks; it was stated that we took them out and saved them, didn't mention a plan for what we are going to do with them.

COO Rael stated we hope to use them in the Boiler Shop, had to get environmental review. A lot of the blocks were in such condition that we had to remove most of them, so soaked w/creosote. Ed was able to get our environmental folks to save 3 or 4 crates of blocks that were not as soaked, have not discussed how to use them moving forward but wanted to save them for some possible use. Took them out, had gaps and the rail, put in new concrete in between the spans, going to put in different stamped concrete that looks like blocks that were there before, creates same pattern of the plaza, will level the floor, nod to the old look and style of the floors. All a way to get the building to the point that we can use it for other activities.

Rep. Garcia stated that as we are finishing the different structures, buildings, maybe City staff can further develop a concept around it,

would be ideal if there was a station/living museum in each structure that we are finishing, maybe a corner of the building, have a little station that goes into specifics on what this building was all about, maybe have a video that people going in can tap and watch, maybe have panels of workers in the specific structures, give structure a living museum type of perspective. No need to manage it. Comes to mind great unit the cultural center did many years ago on the greatest US Senator NM has had, Dennis Chavez, really amazed by the video.

COO Rael stated that we have been talking about that, spot on. Would like to create little nodes in each building to give information, many people don't know for example what the Blacksmith Shop is, what went on there. Giving info about each building and what they were about, Ed is looking for areas in the buildings that we finish, having the museum folks coming out and giving us the opportunity to create panels, celebrate the history of these buildings and what they still mean for us.

Ms. Armijo state that she is very happy, the neighborhood has been pushing for that sort of thing for a long time. Regarding concrete at Flue Shop – I have a patio in my back yard, there are cracks in it. Options include putting a barrier, but I understand that will only last 5 years. Do you have reason to believe that this will last more than 5 years?

Mr. Adams stated that all concrete cracks, have to protect it from moisture, especially freeze and thaw. We put down a vapor membrane below the new floor just in case. Put concrete that has fiberglass fibers all through it, only about 3-1/2 inches thick, will be protected from moisture, carpet over it, protected from moisture, not concerned about longevity.

Ms. Armijo asked about the walkway cost.

Mr. Adams reported funding from an EPA grant of \$1.2m, required 100% local match, total is \$2.4m. We are opening bids, in the general range of \$2.2m, little over budget because some money was spent on design. Started at north end, do as much as we can do, path 10' wide, in some areas narrower where buildings are close to the edge of the site. Landscape, traffic calming at Santa Fe – elevated intersection like a speed hump.

Ms. Armijo noted homes on 2<sup>nd</sup> St will benefit from the project.

Mr. Adams agreed, and explained that he and Councilor Benton stood out there about a year ago, open air invite to review the drawings, get input, positive feedback from the neighborhood.

Ms. Armijo asked if other than the bridge to offer alternative access, do we have anything we are doing for South Broadway?

Ms. Iverson explained we are working on the first stage of the Rail Trail. We submitted a grant proposal that would study access/loop/connection to South Broadway, master plan suggested a bridge, based on community input in recent months, pulled back from grant proposal for a bridge, and will start with a planning stage to have a loop to downtown, includes a large amount of funding for community engagement.

Ms. Armijo asked to clarify that there are no actual plans for South Broadway.

COO Rael responded that what Karen described is what we're talking about, if South Broadway neighbors have other ideas, we will be open to them.

Councilor Benton noted that we checked in on the Master Plan. Petra Morris confirmed that while a bridge specifically has been discussed over the years and part of the master plan, it also prioritizes other connections to the site. As pointed out, it requires more community input, requirement of the plan that we investigate connectivity. Don't want security or safety concerns, but it is on record as a requirement.

COO Rael had to excuse himself, thanked everyone, offered a tour of the site to any who would like one.

Councilor Benton stated he'd like to discuss legislative strategy with COO Rael.

Ms. Freed said that WHEELS appreciates COO Rael working with us on landscaping.

Councilor Benton introduced Eric Griego, he is an *ex officio*/former member, along w/Rick Miera, who has been invaluable. Mr. Griego is happy to stay involved as much as possible. He commends Council and Administration on engagement process on this, for neighborhoods it's important to have ongoing conversations about that. Dr. Isaac's study and Leland study called for deep and robust community engagement process. Neighborhoods on both sides of the tracks important to keep engaged. As things start to ramp up, how do we make sure that the community stays involved, especially questions of equity? Study called for CDC and bolstering of the organizations. How can neighborhoods have a serious seat during this process, will let them know if they will be at the table, be heard? Important also for future process for stadium.

Councilor Benton explained that the RYAB is longstanding and has had an important role, probably don't want to get into the stadium issue. He agrees about many of the recommendations of the studies would be applicable to a stadium, especially in the neighborhoods here. Very open

to having the discussion, intend to attend meeting to listen with Mayor and COO on Thursday meeting w/neighborhoods. Would be happy to take that ball and run with it as far as carrying any legislation

Ms. Iverson stated that there is clearly a lot going on in these neighborhoods that have the potential to have a very transformative impact for the city and neighborhoods. It's critically important that the local community benefits in numerous ways, including affordable housing, making sure development connection and elevates existing local business, including workers in contracting. Very similar to the same sort of things that would be recommendations for a stadium. Until now City has been focused on just getting the rail yards ready, not potential with respect to equity and investments and benefits to the community, think we are rounding the corner and reaching a place where we are ready for that. Grant proposal I submitted, while focused on the Rail Trail, all of the changes in the area need to be look at together, need to invest to draw more deeply from the community, this grant is one source to help bring the equity piece along.

Mr. Griego cautioned against assuming that existing organizations have capacity, some have them, capacity truly wanted/needed is community organizations, without the ability to be at the table. As we move forward, we need to think about how to get a neighborhood organization in the community a long time to get the capacity to stay at the table. Good opportunities, create space where neighborhoods feel like they were truly included and listened to.

Councilor Benton agreed that it is critical and becomes more so now with top two stadium sites suggested.

Ms. Iverson noted that there are a lot of processes going on. UDAG money the funds from old LEDA project, trying to make plan for deployment of \$6m resource pool for the community to be engaged in directing those funds. Run out of DFCS, opportunity to really engage the community.

Councilor Benton noted that Ms. Armijo was appointed to the HNEDF (UDAG) committee.

Ms. Chavez asked who the Barelás representative is on that committee? Deacon Robert Vigil is the Barelás representative on the HNEDF, past president of neighborhood association.

Councilor Benton noted that committee is an important venue, \$6m been on the table for a long time, maybe seed money for a larger effort, maybe a CDC.

Councilor Benton suggested the City maybe do another tour for our legislative delegation so they can see all of the progress. Going to show well.

**V. WHEELS Updates**

Ms. Freed gave updates on activities and needs at the WHEELS Museum. Security continues to be a concern.

**VI. Other Business**

Councilor Benton asked about security cameras on the site.

Mr. Adams reported that there are two cameras permanently affixed, four mobile units, all tie into city hall, have expanded security, have brought in power, looking at adding it to other places in the site, will add cameras also.

Councilor Benton asked Ms. Freed if any cameras face the south side of the site? Ms. Freed reported that no, the south side of the site has not been addressed as she's hoping it will be. Councilor Benton said he will help pay for a camera to look over the south side of the site.

**VII. Adjourn**

Councilor Benton noted that the next RYAB meeting is December 1, hoping to have it in the Flue Shop to celebrate activating that space. Mr. Adams noted that if we are going to do a tour of the Flue Shop, sooner is probably better as well as other buildings, as we have very large film production moving to the site in December and the City is going to lease out many buildings in the near term, good amount of money. Going to pay for the floor in the Boiler Shop. Councilor Benton stated that more important than this board is the tour for the delegation, maybe put bug in the ear of tenant. Mr. Adams is happy to talk with them, productions are very fluid process, will talk to them about ability of us to do some tours while they are fabricating the set, actual filming time is surprisingly short. Councilor Benton understands they are specific about their needs, but this would be a very important tour. May need one or two critical tours that have to do with the future of the Rail Yards.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:12 am.



To: Railyards Advisory Board  
August 4, 2021

From: Bob DeGroft,

New Mexico Steam Locomotive & RR Historical Society

For the first time since 1953, ATSF 2926, the world's largest 4-8-4 Steam Locomotive moved with steam on July 24 and 25. The engine had been on display in Coronado Park in Albuquerque until 1999 when the Society took possession and moved it to its home at 1833 8<sup>th</sup> St NW to begin restoration.

Her movement was limited to the siding she resides on and viewing was restricted for safety purposes since our site is quite small. Over 300 folks showed up when word got out and all were given a chance to ride in the cab back and forth on the short track. The BNSF engineer who operated the engine said that it was like trying to drive a Corvette in a parking garage. She needs a place to run!

Trains Magazine covered the event LIVE and congratulations were received by folks from England, Italy, Germany, Australia, Mexico, Denmark, and of course all over the USA. Over 512 comments were received during the event, all calling out possible excursions and wanting to know when they can visit a future moving event. To see the webcast and commentary go to Trains Magazine Facebook and scroll down to July 24. Channels 4 and 13 also covered the event and included it in their newscast for July 25. Prior to Covid, our website received an average of 18,000 to 24,000 hits a month. During Covid that number went down to 4,000-6,000 hits, but in July it roared back to 17,772. Donations from the public remained at pre-Covid levels, exceeding our expectations. The Society feels that the relationship of our steam locomotive with the Rail Yards is dependent upon the preservation of the turn table and access to it from main line. We believe the steam locomotive will be a huge draw for tourists from all over the USA and many places from around the world.

Thank you for your time.