



## **Rail Yards Advisory Board**

April 5<sup>th</sup>, 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/85071244809> (Meeting ID: 850 7124 4809)

### **MINUTES**

I. Call to Order

II. Welcome & Overview

Welcome to CAO Lawrence Rael, ex-officio member Rick Miera, Keith Romero – Barelas, Courtney Bell – Barelas, Margarita Archibeque-assistant to Commissioner Quezada, Director Max Gruner, Raul Miramontes, Representative Miguel Garcia, Councilor Isaac Benton, Ed Adams, Eddie Garcia, Dorothy Chavez, Leba Freed, Senator Jerry Ortiz y Pino, Jay Rembe

III. Approval of Minutes: January 6th, 2023 RYAB Meeting  
Approval of Minutes passed unanimously

IV. Update on Master Plan

Ms. Morris shared that a clean version incorporating recommendations from last meeting is completed. That version was introduced with the resolution and referred to the environmental planning commission. It will be front of the planning commission on April 20.

V. Report from Administration on New Mexico Media Academy at Rail Yards

Mr. Rael explained that Ed Adams is still the project manager for the Railyards redevelopment effort and introduced Max Gruner, Director of Economic Development, whose office will be managing the film academy moving forward. The governor recently announced a significant investment, \$40 million, to create

this academy. Mr. Rael thanked those in the State Legislature for their support for this program. He explained how the Boiler Shop is pretty close to being a cold shell with all of the infrastructure needed for the agreement with CNM for the film academy.

Mr. Rael also described how the lease agreement provides for educational opportunities for the community, and we still have time to create that plan with the community. Once the academy is open, there will be 150-175 students per day on site, which will help activate the rest of the site. He explained how the Mayor is very concerned with making sure we restore other buildings on the site, particularly the firehouse, and the Administration is committed to making sure that building is stabilized.

Mr. Rael is working with folks in the Arts and Culture department to make sure we create historical context on the site that remembers the community around the Rail Yards, who created their lives around this site. Max Gruner is available to present the agreement between the three entities, State, CNM, and the City, if desired and Ed Adams is available for any construction questions as the project moves forward.

Sen. Ortiz y Pino asked about educational institutions being able to access the film academy's resources. Mr. Rael explained that CNM will be handling the working with other institutions to allow them to use the facilities.

Director Gruner explained that he has been involved with the NM media academy for about 3 years and will present on the project. He presented a conceptual rendering of the NM Media Academy. He also presented conceptual renderings of the inside of the academy. It will be functioning on two levels. The outside of the buildings will be kept the same and restored, but the inside will be built as boxes to accommodate the design of the film academy. Director Gruner explained that the academy will include production offices, sound stages, and classrooms. They were able to have drone footage captured and will create a repository of the footage of how the Rail Yards looked. Director Gruner explained how film and media is such big industry in the state and how it is important to focus on workforce development to bring more economic growth to the state and that CNM fully prepared and qualified to run the media academy. Director Gruner shared the proposed, tentative timeline. AY25 is the year that students are expected to begin using the space. A director of the academy has been chosen, and he is in the process of moving to Albuquerque.

Ms. Chavez request a copy of the presentation for the board.

Mr. Romero asked if the MOU is available to the public for review. Director Bruner said, yes, it is part of the public record.

Mr. Romero also asked if the lease agreement was available. CAO Rael explained that the lease agreement is part of the MOU.

Mr. Miramontes asked about the possibility of a health clinic on site. Director Gruner shared that everything is on the table and they are being inundated by many groups and companies who want space at the Rail Yards. Most of these companies are film-related. However, it is possible to see other industries there in the future.

Mr. Miera requested information on the bilingual certificate program as part of the film academy. Director Gruner explained that is part of the academy's commitment to equity and diversity and is able to serve those who have different language proficiencies are able to benefit from the educational opportunities that the academy provides.

Councilor Benton shared that the Council passed a resolution to prioritize the firehouse and its stabilization.

Councilor Benton also explained that the MRA put out an RFP for work on some of the other buildings located near the firehouse.

Mr. Adams described how the firehouse needs more stabilization than the rest of the buildings, including some areas of the foundation failing on the northwest corner of it. He thanked the Council and Administration for their support of the firehouse project.

Mr. Adams shared that the film academy's design is underway, and the schematic design is complete. SMPC Architects were brought on board by CNM. The construction manager RFP is out, and he anticipates a contractor under contract by July.

Mr. Adams explained how the design of the film academy will be on two levels inside the boiler shop, with offices on the top and classrooms on the first floor. Some of the sound stages will be on the south side due to the high ceilings and theaters for film showings. There will also be sites for set manufacturing for the sound stages.

Ms. Chavez asked if the community will be able to have a vote on the contractor RFP. Mr. Adams explained that it is CNM who is managing that aspect of the project, and represents the state there, as well.

Councilor Benton confirmed that CNM will still be a lessor, but the City has a seat at the table with regard to design and CNM is taking the lead.

Councilor Benton confirmed that the exteriors of the buildings will be respected. Mr. Adams said, yes, anything we propose still has to go through the SHPO review.

Mr. Adams noted that the boiler shop has been cleaned up already, including the old utility lines. He acknowledged the lead-based paint on the superstructure that is going to have to be remediated, as well as the asbestos putty in the windows. There is also infill brick from 1960 vintage correct cutouts, there is a good chance that those will go away and we'll put window framing back in like it originally was. Overall, the exterior appearance of the building will remain as it was originally built.

Ms. Freed shared that she thinks the design is excellent and asked for the length of the lease and the cost of the lease.

CAO Rael described that it is \$1 per year and is a 30-year lease with two additional 15-year options. He also suggested CNM have an open house for the community to share the renderings and design. There will be a need for community input on the landscaping in the entrance and the restructuring because it faces the community. He further stated that the neighborhood and WHEELS and any other board members will be invited to a meeting to discuss the restructuring of the design.

Sen. Ortiz y Pino asked whether the City appropriated enough funding for the stabilization of the firehouse.

Councilor Benton explained that the City is in the middle of the capital budget right now. He said the line item in the budget just says Rail Yards, but that could partly go towards the fire house. He is not sure how much of that \$5 million commitment from the City and it may be a question for CAO Rael.

Sen. Ortiz y Pino noted that it is not too early to start planning for the next legislative session and that we should have plenty of capital outlay money next year, as well.

Councilor Benton said it would be nice to have that as a focus project. He believes we haven't been specific enough about what our needs are to the Legislature, and we appreciate the Capital Outlay that has been provided to the site, including the restoration of the turntable and Ms. Freed's lobbying efforts.

Councilor Benton asked CAO Rael about focusing funding on the fire house and how close are we to getting it to a cold dry box so that we could then put it out for an RFP.

CAO Rael said we have some funding available. He has asked Ed Adams to do an analysis of three basic areas, one is structural issues, look at the wood exterior of

the building, and the environmental issues inside the building. The inside environmental issues will need more discussion because, for example, the lead-based paint can be encapsulated but that ties us to the same room design the building currently has. That may be not be what someone wants, though. CAO Rael said the most important part is the exterior work, foundation and roof repair. Then decide after the RFP to see what needs to be done on the inside. He said there is enough investment to do the exterior, including the structural sinking and windows. The next legislative session is where we may be need to have additional funds to fix the roof, along with an elevator. He said they will be presenting the plan in the next 45 days.

CAO Rael noted that they did put out an RFP some time ago and had a lot of interest, but this was before we announced the CNM project. There would be a lot more interest if they put out the RFP now, and he wants to make sure that the neighborhood is involved with it to make sure that whatever comes creates some value for the neighborhood. Those building along 2<sup>nd</sup> street present those opportunities for the City. We are asking the CIP for \$3 million from the Council to help with that.

CAO Rael reiterated that the Mayor is extremely supportive of the redevelopment of this yard and thankful for the legislators and this group for their support in helping us move forward.

Councilor Benton noted that these types of improvements on the interior, such as tearing out walls or asbestos remediation would be negotiated and could be the responsibility of the lessors, maybe even an elevator.

Mr. Adams explained that they have already looked at an elevator and that it would probably have to go on the exterior of the building, along with ADA compliant bathrooms as an exterior addition. There will also be remediation of the roof, but the inside would wait until we know what tenant is going in. They will have a plan to present to Council in 45 days.

Councilor Benton said he liked what CAO Rael said about trying to proceed with the idea of having a discrete request to the legislature next time around.

Rep. Garcia asked about parking now that the academy will bring more people on to the site. He also asked about the environmentally friendly initiatives including solar panels on the roof and runoff recycling for the landscaping.

Mr. Adams said that right now we have a stormwater pre-treatment area on the property within the landscaping. The parking lot drains into it and the stormwater is connected to the stormwater system on 2<sup>nd</sup> St. Water that falls on the boiler shop also goes to the stormwater system. We can put solar panels, we just have to work with the SHPO on how to do that.

Mr. Adams explained that the agreement has 150 parking spaces identified as non-exclusive for CNM and the parking lot currently has 195 or 198 spaces striped with room for 15 or 20 should we wish to increase it in the pavement we already have on the north. This may or may not include some parking availability on the south side. He believes we have adequate parking for what is performed on the site.

Rep. Garcia asked about the possibility of structure parking.

Mr. Adams said that would be permissible, but that it costs a minimum of \$20,000 per space.

Rep. Garcia said he is concerned about spillover parking into the neighborhood.

Councilor Benton stated that the Master Plan addresses that where the surface parking lot is now, at some point.

Mr. Freed asked to discuss the potential use of the machine shop. She said the Mayor, along with CAO Rael, has said that WHEELS can have the machine shop. She stated that Congresswoman Stansbury's staff said they are going to give them a grant writer for the Federal Congressional Delegation. WHEELS has just completed another study about every person who worked at the Rail Yards, with thousands of pictures. 2926 is working to be in the machine shop and be on the site. WHEELS is also working with other rail groups and rail museums. They did get money from the legislature for repairing the turntable and track.

Mr. Garcia asked if the media academy will have Monday through Friday hours because of conflict with the market.

Mr. Adams said that they are encouraged to have open house type of activities on Saturdays and are aware of the market on Sundays.

Councilor Benton explained that it will be a shared parking situation, and that the more parking that is built, the more cars will come. We need to keep in the forefront alternative ways of getting to the site.

Mr. Roberts from Locomotive 2926 shared that they are working towards a name change to New Mexico Heritage Rail. He thanked the group for those who attended their Advisory Board open house. They are continuing to make progress on the turntable and will be making a trip on the Sawmill Spur with permission to go 4<sup>th</sup> St for a fundraiser collaboration with Tractor Brewing.

Ms. Chavez was concerned that neither her, Mr. Garcia, and Ms. Freed received any type of notification or invitation regarding the film academy announcement. She understands that it was a collaboration with the state but feels that the board should have received notification.

Councilor Benton agreed and stated he did not know until the day prior to the announcement.

VI. Adjourn