

PRELIMINARY REPORT
COMMUNITY SURVEY AND ARTISTS' FOCUS GROUPS
FOR
OASIS @ BARTLETT

Submitted on July 9, 2018

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PRELIMINARY REPORT
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INTRODUCTION

The information, findings, and recommendations that follow are the result of the second phase of a community engagement process to determine how best to guide the newly-formed Creative Design Team (architect, landscape architect, acoustical/sound engineers, and theater designer) as it begins developing Oasis @ Bartlett.

The work was completed with the support and active participation of five members of the volunteer Working Team (Cordelia Moye, Leonard Tshitenge, Jonathan Regis, Matt Army, and Franklin Marval), two staff members of Nuestra Comunidad Community Development Corporation (David Price, Executive Director and Robert Springer, Project Manager), volunteer and Nuestra staff member, Grace Furtado, and Consultant, Andrea Kaiser of Cultural Consulting Services in Wellesley, Massachusetts.

A full report of all community engagement activities will be issued in late August, after all of the community meetings, focus groups, and key informant interviews are completed.

METHODOLOGY

In collaboration with David Price, Executive Director and David Bresnahan, Vice President for Resource Development, the Consultant developed a set of specific activities and a timeline in February, 2018 to serve as a road map for the Working Team and the Creative Team that would be engaged to develop and build Oasis @ Bartlett. This schedule required revision, after it was discovered that a major grant opportunity would require the submission of a detailed description of the project with construction drawings and cost estimates on September 1, 2018. When it was learned that the grant deadline had been moved forward to November, 2018, the Working Team and Consultant agreed to a second revision that would include a phased community engagement process.

The revised Schedule of Activities was adjusted to insure that the Creative Team could begin its work on July 9, 2018 with feedback from the community and a representative group of artists working in Roxbury and Boston. A Community Meeting with the Consultant and the Creative Team is now scheduled for early August, 2018, to be immediately followed by a final phase of focus groups and key informant interviews with residents, neighbors, business leaders, elected officials, law enforcement, neighborhood associations, educators, and religious leaders in Roxbury, where Oasis @ Bartlett will become a new and unique park and arts venue for the community.

In late April and early May of 2018, a Community Survey was created and distributed to get initial feedback from the community. The results of the survey were analyzed and presented to the Working Team on June 15, 2018 and served as the basis for developing a set of nine (9)

questions to be addressed in a series of 20-25 focus groups. The Working Team sent out a "Call to Artists" (See attached) to participate in one of 13 focus groups scheduled between June 25 and June 30, 2018 at the offices of Nuestra Comunidad. Given the numbers of artists working in Roxbury and Boston and the breadth of arts disciplines these artists represent, the focus groups targeted visual, literary, media, performing arts and arts organizations.

In all, ten (10) of the scheduled sessions attracted participants, although some of the sessions required an "interview" style. All of the participants responded to the same set of questions. (See attached).

THANK YOU!

Nuestra Comunidad Community Development Corporation, its staff, and Consultant, Andrea Kaiser which to thank the volunteer Working Team for its time, energy, advice and artistic vision.

We also want to thank the many people who completed the community survey and the participants in our focus groups. All brought knowledge, wisdom, experience and love of community to the process, and gave us insight and new ideas to incorporate into Oasis @ Bartlett.

Question #1: In the recent community survey, the Working Team asked participants about their vision for an arts park. Many respondents checked off both temporary seating (blankets, rental lawn chairs, etc.) and permanent seating (seats fixed into the ground). Would you share your thoughts on which type of seating would most enhance both the park setting and the performance/exhibition space?

Comments:

Kids might mess with permanent seats

People might sleep in the chairs

Vandalism

Bring your own chairs

For multi use of space, don't put in permanent seating

It depends on what is on the stage

Permanent seating might get in the way

If you go with permanent seating, make it a small area

Should be mixed, make an art piece that is seating/multi-functional/ and designed to be maintenance free and energy efficient

Charge higher prices for the permanent seating

If the intent is to program only on the stage, then go with permanent seating. If there is active art going on, such as graffiti art, then temporary seating will take off

Perhaps have moveable bleachers

Both permanent and temporary seating would enhance performance and park space

Flexible seating with two areas, one open, broad hard surface levels, not seating, more like City Hall Plaza, the second in the rear, an elevated area compared to the flat area in front of the stage

Acoustics will have to be considered in developing the seating plan

The area where audiences will watch what is on stage should be tiered for hearing and seeing

It all depends on what is programmed on the stage

As a stage performer, I'd prefer permanent seating with a half-moon arrangement of the chairs

Seating is dependent on what is going on. How does the seating relate to everything else?

Seating as pieces of art that can be manipulated, moved around

Seating needs to be flexible and temporary, not fixed

Both permanent and temporary seating are needed. Could have one area for each type. For seniors and pregnant women, you need seating that allows people to use arm rest to get into and out of chairs.

Prefer temporary seating, gives greater flexibility

Inclusion should be the guide. Will chairs get in the way of art? If so, temporary seating would be better. Chairs may limit how many people can attend.

In exhibitions or festival settings, audiences may move around the site and not even focus on the stage activity

Maybe have both permanent seating and open space for temporary chairs

Definitely have benches

Permanent benches are good for families; we don't bring chairs. Passerby needs chair. Elders and kids want to sit, even if nothing is going on

Not rental chairs. Blanket seating can work

If it is a ticketed event, the seating should not cost more

IDEAS:

CREATE UNIQUE ARTISTIC SEATING PIECES THAT COULD BECOME AN EMBLEM OF WHAT OASIS @ BARTLETT IS ALL ABOUT

TEST ALL OPTIONS FOR SEATING, INCLUDING STAGE SEATING FOR MORE INTIMATE PERFORMANCES AND EVENTS

VISUAL ARTISTS WOULD PREFER LESS SEATING AND MORE OPEN SPACE FOR CREATING ART AND BOTH TEMPORARY AND PERMANENT ART INSTALLATIONS

Question #2: The Community Survey results clearly indicated that the venue should focus on "local artists and local audiences". What does the word "local" mean to you, and would you want any touring artists from outside the local area to perform on the stage?

Comments:

I think we should include both local and touring acts

Don't import talent for the sake of importing talent, venue promotes Boston artists, but also should have ability to accommodate touring acts

I have reservations about touring acts, worry about price of touring acts, while the little man gets to have his debut. Local is anyone born and bred in the area, non-professional acts, not national headliners. Locally involved in the event, purpose is to give the community a space where we can afford to perform and rent out space

Apollo Theatre is an example of what we should focus on

Local means belonging to a certain space. I don't see a problem with touring artists

Priority list should include people in the community. Always prioritize local acts

We want to keep it local but we need touring acts to give name recognition to the park

We don't want to make it feel exclusive. Gain recognition/national attention, great opportunity to do something special. Don't create something that has the feelings of exclusion, shed Boston's parochial nature

Create some kind of policy or contract clause to include a local artist, when a touring act is booked.

There are ways to marry local and touring artists

We need to connect with local artists

We need to pay local and touring artists, which will require budgeting

I live in the area; I am not against artists from other Boston neighborhoods like Hyde Park

It is tricky to bring artists from out-of-state. They can be more respected just because they are unknown. We need to treat local artists fairly with facilities on-site in events, including those with out-of-state touring artists

We should include artists from across Boston; that is how artists thrive

Local is "Boston" and surrounding areas

Overall, local is preferred, because we have plenty of talent from which to select

We could bring in outside talent to ooh and ah audiences, if necessary

Local artists are those who live in the area

Local means "unknown" or "not a major artist"

Give opportunity for local artists. There are limited paying gigs in the Boston area

The artists should be a mix of both local and touring, national acts working with local acts. Previous Bartlett events got push back, because it was seen as something from the "outside". Canvas the area; get local people to be excited

Whoever is running Oasis @ Bartlett should become familiar with the area, sit down and talk with everybody. They won't know who you are. Find some local folks who are interested in collaborating

Encourage artists exchange/artist- in- residence. Focus on both national and local artists. Don't limit

For at least the first year, focus on local artists of color. I'm concerned the developers might want "flashy" artists to attract outside customers

I'm more likely to come to an event, if I know I'm supporting community members

There are too few spaces for creative people of color to feel welcomed. Local events and marketing are key. Haley House and Black Market do this well, for example using spoken word nights, trivia nights, sharing talents

For me, local means Boston, maybe just beyond. Roxbury should be a focus for this. There are enough Boston Artists to program a space like this

Residents should decide if touring artists are a good idea

When I hear local, I hear Boston. Performers can be outsiders or local. Keep the focus on local, if there is a mix

IDEAS:

CONSIDER AN ARTISTS' EXCHANGE

PAIR LOCAL TALENT WITH TOURING ARTISTS

LET RESIDENTS DECIDE ABOUT OUTSIDE TALENT

FOR AT LEAST THE FIRST YEAR, FOCUS ON LOCAL ARTISTS OF COLOR

Question #3: Many of the survey participants indicated that they would prefer to see "art shows" in the venue. For you, what would be included in a successful "art show"?

An art show could be anything

Success is defined by who is there and how many people are there

Find a way to incorporate nature as a way to display art (ie hang pictures off tree/sculpture park)

A successful art show must be engaging, include a place to leave comments. Find a way to share/utilize hashtags

A successful art show is interactive, makes you feel like you are back in childhood, nostalgic

We are not talking "gallery" art

Creating art outdoors

Unclear about question. Would be interested in participatory art

Art shows exist around the Country

Connect existing galleries with students

Run a program that introduces kids to graffiti art

Art with chalk on pavement. (all participants agreed)

Combine disciplines, vendors and diverse types of performance (dance, spoken word, live music)

Give priority to local exhibits/vendors and performers

I hear visual art and objects

What is an "art show"?

If you get too specific, you may exclude something you didn't want to exclude

Public vs. artist, viewpoints may differ

The definition of culture is different for many

Because people have broad definitions of culture, you don't have to preclude any art form

An art show includes displays and selling of art objects

Art around people

We should clarify what type of artists and nature of "art shows"

Interactive, participation based on art exhibits, multimedia, multisensory, experience-based, so that I become part of a community

What can immersive interactivity do/change?

For example, Arts Commons, Evil leasing-shipping containers

Figment Boston-smaller version of Burning Man

Re-imagine your community

Recording studio

Don't do the same thing over and over

One show could have one theme, and the next another theme

Switch up the art mediums

A good example of an art show is "Radical Black Girl" who does art exhibitions combined with performance spaces and panels/community forums

We need to promote diverse attendees. Offer what is not offered elsewhere

Art Shows should be relevant to the individual attendees and/or their community

Local audiences should feel that the art show was "done for them and with them"

Should be authentic and irreplaceable

Live art with painting taking place, food, good company, and music. The best interaction is conversation

Allow for interaction with artists

Opportunity to purchase art

Tricky to have audience participation in the art; artists need to control their end product

Maybe a temporary public wall art for audiences; however community wants quality

IDEAS:

INTERACTIVE OPPORTUNITIES TO ENGAGE WITH ARTISTS AND WITH ARTISTIC MEDIUMS

ART SHOWS SHOULD BE RELEVANT TO THE INDIVIDUAL ATTENDEES AND THEIR COMMUNITY

CREATE TEMPORARY WALLS AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR AUDIENCES TO CREATE ART

INCLUDE FOOD, PERFORMANCE, AND CONVERSATION AT ART SHOWS

Question #4: Given that people indicated they want local artists featured, what kinds of performances and visual arts presentations would be of interest to you and the community?

Comments:

Everything, including fashion and multimedia

Multi media and multisensory art

Variation, lots of different programming options, show audiences that art is more than one form of "art"

Interdisciplinary art, multimedia

Live art creation

Wine Painting nights

Limited drinks, aka 2 drink maximum

Performances and programming that is intergenerational (something for everybody)

Set up to expose general public to things they wouldn't normally see

Everything that is out there, including dance, which will require a sprung, wood floor and at least 35 x 40 feet of space to include crossover and wing space

30 x 35 would be okay. Enjoyed the stage at the Outside the Box event. Agree that sprung floor, wing space, and crossover is important for dancers and dance companies

We should include master classes, as well as performances. Classes could be held on the stage

Dance, spoken word, live bands, jazz, gospel, theater

Multimedia events, for example, combining dance, music and live painting. Definitely need a screen, so performers can project their own visual imagery

Need opportunity for vendors and artists connected to Roxbury Open Studios (crafts and artwork vendors): must be nicely executed, for example with nice white tents and tables showing a consistent look across all vendors

Murals are good, but should be temporary, rotating. Each should stay for a good period, maybe 6 months, one month is definitely too short

We should present whatever is special and different

Art and artist collaboration is missing in the community

Combine a dance group with the Gay Men's Chorus

Cross pollination between the visual and performing artists

There can be collaboration between artists, genres and venues

The repertoire should include everything from classical to show tunes, including new works

Music should include R&B, rock, and pop

The venue should be open to all types of art

Feature local directors/indie films, dance and theater

Live plays on stage

Monitors for the musicians on stage

A PA system with at least 4 microphones

Dance, as there is a strong tradition of dance in Boston

Start with dance and music

Something that integrates visual and performing art and music and dance

Begin with the people around you in the community

Spoken word has a big audience in Roxbury (Haley House is the leader in building an audience)

Exhibitions

A residency for a local artist in one part of the Plaza.

Paint nights, yoga classes, free movies

Think about collaborating with Hibernian Hall for theater training workshops

Theater is important to us, as is music

Visual and interactive displays can be used with theater

Hands-on experiences can help people think about why the art is important to the community

Good to offer ideas for action, connecting with community organizations

Consistency is important. Solid programming and promotion

People need to know that if I go there, something good will be happening

Events like Bartlett Events Festival: muralists, spoken word DJ, music created great energy

You can find rap artists who will keep language appropriate for families

Jazz music worked great

Don't like rap in a public park where kids are going to hear the language

IDEAS:

FLEXIBILITY IS THE KEY, SO THAT ANY ART FORM CAN BE PRESENTED

BE ABLE TO CONTROL CONTENT, SO THAT IT IS APPROPRIATE FOR FAMILY AUDIENCES

HOST ARTIST RESIDENCIES IN SPECIFIC AREAS OF THE PARK

INCLUDE MULTIDISCIPLINARY ARTISTIC PERFORMANCES, WHEN POSSIBLE

Question #5: How would you or your organization utilize the venue? For example, would you be interested in performing on the stage? renting the stage? sponsoring an event on the stage? hosting a festival? running classes?

Comments:

I would use the stage for all of the options listed above

I am cost conscious, how much are groups allowed to charge? I am very interested in the business model

It should be affordable

The venue should be donated to certain groups for mounting events

I would love to run a class/possibly a day camp. What kind of classes could we have?

Rent out the park to bring in revenue to pay for events and artists. Don't limit

I would love to host a festival

Get national attention in order to attract sponsors

Is the stage a sponsor or a presenter? If you don't set good policies, you run into politics and inequality

Make sure that some events are free

There are problems when you pay one performer, while asking another to pay to rent the stage

I want to use the stage to give back to community

Events like the Caribbean Festival. The budget is the key

I could do a number of activities on the Plaza, including classes and events

My priority is to make sure that artists are compensated

The space should be used for rehearsals and performances

There should be a "charitable budget"

Make sure space has quality acoustics

Use venue for "Silent music parties"

Give artists new opportunities to perform

Program festivals, similar to those on City Hall Plaza

Positive activities, like movies and open mic nights

Put stage in the round, make it as flexible as possible

It should be used for everything from private events to ballet. There are so many empty stages in parks

If there is compensation, I can do portraits outdoors and participate in exhibitions

We've never performed our theater pieces outdoors, but it might happen

We do lots of education programs, including classes and partner with Boston Public Schools

Open rehearsals have audiences of 50-75 people and they are free. Add food, drink and conversation

Could the stage be intimate enough for a small audience?

We could do adult acting classes, but not outside. We do drop in improv classes at Aeronaut Brewery in Allston, outdoors at night. We might be able to adult and children's theater classes at the same time, in different spaces of the venue

I like to paint, but I am not the one to organize an event around my artwork

I would like a space where I can work on a mural and engage with the public

Classes are possible, as well as festivals and bazaars like SoWa

IDEAS

SCHEDULE OPEN REHEARSALS THAT ARE FREE TO THE PUBLIC

INCLUDE MURAL SPACES IN WHICH THE PUBLIC CAN INTERACT WITH THE ARTISTS

INCLUDE MOVIES, SILENT MUSIC PARTIES, OPEN MIC NIGHTS

CREATE A STAGE THAT CAN WORK FOR INTIMATE AUDIENCES AS WELL AS LARGE CROWDS

PUT STAGE IN THE ROUND

MAKE STAGE FLEXIBLE ENOUGH TO ACCOMMODATE CLASSES

Question #6: When artists and audiences come together, there is an economic impact on the neighborhood. Some businesses see an increase in customers, others become vendors, providing goods and services to the venue. How do you see this venue impacting the economy of Roxbury?

Comments:

Food concessions, chair rentals will do well

Local businesses will get additional customers

Art brings crowds, crowds are exposed to businesses in Roxbury

People will spend money with people in the community

It will be positive for the "Mom and Pop" stores, who will get to showcase their establishments

It will make people in the community more self-sufficient and economically stable

We have to engage the younger generation, the youth

Everyone in the community has a chance to sell their products and showcase local stores

If we get a name, it will help build awareness and build a brand

I'm worried about chains coming into the neighborhood. Invite all the local businesses and give them priority

What can be done to raise money in the winter months?

How can we use the space in a multifunctional way

Create a "semi roof" for winter

How will the venue impact gentrification of the neighborhood? Will Stores at Bartlett Plaza push people out of the neighborhood?

Will this venue really be for Roxbury residents?

In the past, there has been some opposition to this project, as evidenced during the prior arts events to highlight the development

I want the Black children to feel a part of the program and the arts

Businesses in the retail stores at Bartlett will benefit. It is important what businesses can locate there. We need equal opportunity for local businesses to prevent gentrification

Event staff should also reflect the community

This venue should generate a "bucket load" of money

Performers and audiences can create a large impact

Initial visit can allow continued investment into space by visitors

People should be coming to have a unique art experience

There should be no "food chains"

More people visiting the site should create more money being spent

New opportunity for vendors to sell their goods

Vendors are hot, give out tables for free or low costs

Think about ways to extend the season

There should be spaces for food trucks, make sure there is electricity to accommodate

More people and traffic will help all local businesses, especially food

At plaza, itself, sell merchandise designed by local artists

Add a gift shop as a local business, maybe an artists' coop

Food pop-ups can be a draw. Bully Boy Brewery in New Market does these

I have mixed feelings about food pop-ups which can undermine local food outlets

Partner with local food businesses to sponsor a pop-up

This venue should help local restaurants

Try to connect with existing restaurants rather than new ones

Am not sure how businesses will be impacted, other than food

We've painted at SoWa. All the vendors thanked us and said that their sales jumped up, even tripled
SoWa had regular vendors selling food, jewelry, clothes, sculptures, and fine arts

If you have food trucks, you won't hurt Dudley businesses, but you might hurt the Bartlett Station food
businesses. However, more customers, mean more business

IDEAS:

PARTNER WITH LOCAL RESTAURANTS AND FOOD PROVIDERS TO SERVICE THE VENUE.

ADD POP-UP FOOD EVENTS

WORK WITH LOCAL RESTAURANTS AND FOOD PROVIDERS TO CROSS MARKET

DEVELOP SOME LOCAL VENDORS WHO WILL FREQUENT THE PARK AND BUILD A NEW CUSTOMER BASE

USE THE KIOSK AT THE VENUE AND WRITTEN MATERIALS TO PROMOTE VENDORS THAT FREQUENT THE PARK AND THOSE THAT SUPPORT THE VENUE WITH GOODS AND SERVICES

Question #7: What amenities would draw you to the venue, in addition to the park and its arts and cultural activities? For instance, refreshment stand, food trucks, ice cream, alcoholic beverages, coffee bar, bike stations, and/or device charging stations.

Comments:

Food, drinks, bar (numerous)

Nice bathrooms (numerous)

Wi-Fi (numerous)

Charging station (could charge a fee)

Live streaming of events

Space for college students

No alcoholic beverages (numerous)

Cotton candy stand

Flea Market

Vending Machines (use profit to fund the park)

Pot at the events? It is now legal

Food trucks (numerous)

Multicultural food

Dressing rooms for performers (numerous)

A good stage

Coffee Bar (numerous)

Cafe (numerous)

Beer & Wine at adult events

Walking paths

Food trucks are nice, but we want local ownership or connection to community (numerous)

A glass of wine, while listening to jazz would be nice. No "hard" stuff

Rock Climbing Wall

Movie Nights (numerous)

Parking and/or easy T Access

CVS

Clothing Store

Health conscious food items/Farmer's Market

A booth from which to purchase tickets to events

A kiosk advertising programs in Oasis @ Bartlett

Lots of grass

Comfortable seating (numerous)

Don't add charging stations, because technology changes so fast

Great sound on stage

Lighting, at night

Friendly barriers to keep people off the stage

Gelato stand

Places to sit (numerous)

IDEAS:

INSTALL VENDING MACHINES, WHICH COULD SERVE AS REVENUE SOURCE FOR PARK

CHARGE A FEE FOR USING "Wi-Fi"

AN LED KIOSK THAT ADVERTISES PROGRAMMING AT OASIS @ BARTLETT

Question #8: Clearly, there will be operating costs to run the venue, book the talent, promote the events and pay for the performers and artists. How do you anticipate these costs will be covered? Some possibilities are fundraising, venue naming, sponsor, ticket sales, rentals, etc. What are appropriate ticket prices?

Comments:

\$5 or \$6 for a movie

No more than \$10

Prices should vary from event to event

Reasonable vs. affordable

Price scales: youth, seniors, a system that can be put in place per event targeting each population

Depends on the act and the programming

Events should be accessible to the entire community

Prices shouldn't go above \$20, be conscious of families

Utilize corporate sponsors for various events to contain costs before charging public (numerous)

Vouchers for lower income families

Identify businesses and companies that want to be identified as part of community

Concessions and fundraising

Ticket sales (numerous)

I would like to see all events be free of charge

"Suggested donations" "Pay What You Want" model

Naming rights that contribute to cost of running the venue (numerous)

Some, but not all events should be free

Establish a range of ticket prices and a range of events

For fairs and festivals, most vendors will pay for their space

Sell a brick, bike rides, walkathons, silent auctions

Use community connections and partnerships to raise funds, ie. what Derek Lumpkins does

\$10 is affordable for many. Large families might not be able to afford that

If you go to the theater, \$35 is reasonable, \$20 for seniors

Earned revenue from concessions, ticket sales, etc.

Charge for parking

Add a VIP section and charge extra for these seats

Access public funding

If the ticket prices are too low, people won't value the service

I don't believe in discounting ticket fees for last minute takers

Build a "facility fee" into the rent or condo fee; and for that fee, residents get to attend a specific number events each month at no cost

I would be surprised if you could raise \$\$ from individual donors

You might get individuals to donate, once they become attendees at the park

If you get too inexpensive, you are telling the audience you have no value

\$20 would be an average price for a ticket and \$30 if you include food

Grants. Mix ticketed and free events, like they do on Lawn D

\$20 to \$25 for spoken word and paint nights. \$30 is a good price for theater, or more if it is a bigger production

Rent the plaza to outside groups

I'm not excited about naming rights; it takes away from local identity

Run an annual fundraiser, like a festival at Oasis

Rental fees. Most arts organizations have budget that is under \$25,000 and can't afford big fees

Boston Center for the Arts is big and has challenges covering operational costs

Fundraising has become harder in Boston

One idea is to curate a season or multi-year residencies with partner organizations, ahead of time and fundraise together. Funders are attracted to opportunities that have a bigger impact

Strand Theater does a "Pay what you want" model. It is challenging

It is good for the entity to be a 501(c)3 non-profit to help with fundraising

Rental revenues of the Plaza will not cover costs. Target users are local, independent artists or small companies that cannot pay much for rentals

Run ideas by funders to see what would interest them

One challenge: several neighborhood arts companies are opening in next five to ten years in East Boston, Waterfront, and Upham's Corner (anchored at the new Library and Strand). Existing centers are struggling like BCA. Lots of competition for financial resources, so consider collaborations

Ticketing is tricky. The arts are not free, but people don't want to feel that an event is overpriced. For events with children, pricing has to be for "family"

Get vendors to pay for space, too

In the construction of the lighting, consider lighting that can be managed at low cost

IDEAS:

COLLABORATE WHEREVER POSSIBLE - IN MANAGING THE VENUE AND IN FUNDRAISING AND EVENTS

RUN IDEAS BY FUNDERS TO SEE WHAT STRIKES A CHORD

USE EVERY MEANS POSSIBLE, INCLUDING TICKET SALES, RENTALS, NAMING RIGHTS, SPONSORSHIPS, CONCESSIONS, ADVERTISING, VENDOR CONTRIBUTIONS, INDIVIDUAL DONORS, GRANTS, ETC.

NAMING RIGHTS SHOULD INCLUDE THE STAGE, THE BENCHES, EVEN TREES!

Question #9: In this age of technology and many choices for getting information, how would you suggest the programs and events at OASIS @ BARTLETT be promoted?

Comments:

Use traditional media

Social media, buy ads on social media (numerous)

Data driven campaigns, survey audiences (numerous)

Word of mouth (numerous)

Get in with promoters and event planners, including grocery stores

Get mailing lists and use direct mail

Kiosk in the venue

Flyers in popular places (numerous)

Posters in local businesses (numerous)

Text messages

Use artists' fan base

Videographers

Radio (97.7, 96.9, and 94.5) (numerous)

Newspaper stories and ads, The Banner and Metro (numerous)

Dance parties and new music raves

Facebook, Instagram, Periscope, Twitter, Snapchat

Billboards

Banners on street lamps

Ads on Comcast

Ad "retargeting" has been helpful

Oasis Website (numerous)

Create a board of ambassadors to promote the venue

Do a little of everything

Street marketing is very important

Produce great events, audiences will come back if their first experience is positive

Be sure to use lots of physical images in the neighborhoods and highlight faces, so people can see who they will encounter and interact with at events

Boots on the ground marketing. Research backs this up

Start building partnerships to co-promote. It will take some time

Use only neighborhood-based newspapers

Flyers are outdated. Social media is the key

Ads on T buses are good

Digital posters can work

Lots of adults in community don't use computers, so word of mouth and posters are relevant

Be consistent in programming, so that audiences continue to attend events

Use Graffiti as a means of promoting the venue

IDEAS:

CREATE A GROUP OF AMBASSADORS TO PROMOTE THE VENUE

DEVELOP A MARKETING PLAN THAT TARGET A SPECIFIC MARKET FOR VARIOUS EVENTS

START BUILDING PARTNERSHIPS TO PROMOTE THE VENUE

PUBLICIZE THE WEBSITE

BUILD THE KIOSK AS PART OF DESIGN OF OASIS @ BARTLETT

KEY ISSUES

- 1) The sampling in this category was very small and didn't include all artistic disciplines. It would have been helpful to hear from more arts organizations that produce events or performances, and producers of festivals and events.
- 2) The questions asked of all participants were drawn from the community survey results; and some of these questions were not always within the area of expertise of the participants.
- 3) The feedback is incomplete, as the second phase of focus group sessions is not scheduled to be completed until mid August. Therefore, these strengths, challenges, findings and recommendations may change, when both the community focus groups and community meeting results are recorded.
- 4) Some of the focus groups only drew one individual, therefore that focus group did not generate a discussion of an issue, but rather just that person's initial thoughts.

STRENGTHS AND CHALLENGES

STRENGTHS:

Nuestra Comunidad Community Development Corporation is fully committed to this project with administrative and financial support for its development.

Both the Community Survey and the Artists' Focus Groups confirmed that the desire for this new venue is for it be locally run, using local artists as the core, and for the benefit of the local community.

The artists are excited about Oasis @ Bartlett, some having already been part of previous events on the development's site, where large crowds were very responsive.

The newly hired Creative Team is meeting for the first time on July 9, 2018 at which time they will hopefully determine a meeting date to hear directly from a wide variety of performers, visual artists and event producers who hope to become part of Oasis @ Bartlett.

CHALLENGES:

The volunteer Working Team is committed, but does not have the independent ability to fully promote the community engagement process. Some of the Working Team members are focusing on events that will highlight the new venue; leaving only five of the original 13 to manage the outreach and activities of community meetings and additional focus groups.

The timeline for completing the community engagement process and designing the venue was altered in March, 2018 in order to respond to the announcement of a September 1 deadline for a major funding proposal. That deadline was extended by 60 days in May, 2018, which gave some breathing room for both the community engagement activities and the preliminary design phase. In late June, the new deadline for the proposal was moved up to September 28, requiring that both community input and preliminary design be completed by mid September.

The summer is not the best time to gather large groups of artists and/or neighbors, as Bostonians tend to take their vacations during the summer. Many artists are heavily engaged in the summer season with additional gigs and tours.

For many in Roxbury, the project is still an "unknown" and we have to make Oasis @ Bartlett a high profile project and a new asset for the community.

There are many who are concerned about this venue as a community resource. They have seen the gentrification of neighborhoods and want to make sure that this is by, for and about the community.

KEY FINDINGS

Question #1:

There are mixed reactions to the placement of permanent seating in the venue. It is difficult for people to picture the 15,000 square foot space with a stage, trees, benches, and art work, and at the same to imagine how much room is actually left for seating, both temporary and permanent.

Performing artists want a connection with their audiences, and for some genres' an intimate setting is best. Visual artists like the idea of an open canvas on which they can be fully engaged and creative with their art and the audiences.

There was a positive reaction to blankets and lawn chairs, but mixed messages about renting lawn chairs as a convenience, even if the rental fee is under a dollar.

Nearly all are in favor of trees, plantings, grass and bench seating, as long as site lines to the stage are addressed.

Question #2:

For most of the respondents, local means Roxbury and Boston, and there were many requests that this be a venue for local artists, local audiences, and locally-driven administration.

Most were supportive of some touring artists, but it was suggested numerous times that touring artists collaborate with local artists, perhaps as opening acts and also connect with the community.

Most believe that there is a plethora of performing, visual and media artists within the Roxbury community and Boston, enough to fill a stage for quite a while. There were quite a few suggestions that this venue begin its existence with locally-based talent for at least the first year or two.

Question #3:

It became clear that although a majority of respondents to the community survey wanted to attend "Art Shows", many do not have a clear description of what that might entail. The consultant believes that many really meant to check off Arts Festival, which more accurately describes the events of the recent past, in which Nuestra presented a series of outdoor arts activities on the Bartlett Station site. These drew large audiences, who really enjoyed the interaction with artists at work, food, entertainment and opportunities to connect with neighbors.

The visual art community wants the art to be relevant those who attend and the Roxbury community.

Since part of the retaining wall will be used as a backdrop for the stage, the artists suggest that temporary walls, as well as hard surface pathways be available for graffiti art and murals.

Question #4:

The respondents to the community survey and the artists who participated in the focus groups want Oasis @ Bartlett to be able to accommodate a wide variety of artistic events, shows, performances, exhibitions, and interactive engagement with audiences. For some, the ability to teach classes on the stage is requested. The artists very much want opportunities to cross disciplines in order to create new multidisciplinary work.

Those involved in dance suggested that if the stage can accommodate dance, it can accommodate most other forms of performing arts. (40 x 40 preferred; minimum 35 x 30)

Question #5:

The artists interviewed want to be engaged with their audiences. They want festivals with many activities scheduled on the stage and in the park. They want residencies in which they can both create new work and share it with new audiences. They want to host more intimate events with the audience on the stage. They want to see movie nights, painting parties, open mic nights, open and free rehearsals, and mural spaces.

Many of the artists' comments in response to this question were concerned with how artists will either pay or be paid for their work. Policies will have to be developed that are fair and equitable to both artists and audiences.

Question #6:

The artists definitely understand the economic value the arts can bring to a community. Both at earlier events at Bartlett Station and at other arts festivals around the City, the artists have seen the impact of the arts on food vendors, local stores, and others who provided goods and services.

Having vendors at the events is also another draw that brings the community out, with attendees spending money to purchase art and jewelry, as well as food and drinks.

The participants also believe that the venue will draw in new vendors, some of whom are housed elsewhere, but brings their goods and services to events. Others will develop loyal customers and locate their businesses in the neighborhood.

It will be important for the venue to identify local vendors of goods and services in order to further support the economic development of the area.

Partnering with local vendors and businesses to sponsor and support events will enhance the economic growth of Fort Hill.

Using the Oasis Kiosk to promote local vendors will also establish good will and support from the businesses community.

Question #7:

Everyone is in favor of having vendors come into the park to service visitors and audiences. Suggestions include: food trucks, multicultural food items, healthy foods, drinks, ice cream, cotton candy, a cafe or coffee bar and perhaps vending machines, as they can produce revenue. A few suggested flea markets.

Most venues derive income from their concession operations, and there will have to be some clear guidelines as to what will be specific to Oasis and what will be brought in.

Alcohol in the Park received mixed blessings. While most recognize that this service can provide revenue for local liquor stores; it could also produce additional revenue for the operation of the Park. Many think it is not appropriate for family audiences. Others are concerned that serving beer and wine in the park will compete with local liquor stores. Many were concerned about how the staff and/or volunteers can control sales of alcohol.

A grocery store is going to be located within the complex, and it will be important to know in advance of opening the park how the grocery store will partner with and service visitors.

One participant asked about smoking pot in the park, now that marijuana is being legalized.

Wi-Fi was requested by many, as well as charging stations for devices.

Question #8:

Only a few of the participants actually run organizations and have personal knowledge of what it takes to run a non-profit; however, everyone agreed that the venue will have to raise money to operate.

Everyone was supportive of utilizing all possible means to sustain the park and its programming, including grants, naming rights, sponsorships, individual donations, charging outside vendors, renting space, including usage fees in the rents and condo fees of the residents, running concessions, renting lawn chairs at events, etc.

The issue of selling tickets to events and performances generated lots of discussion. Everyone agreed that in order to keep audiences local, ticket pricing will have to be adjusted. However, there were many who believe that all events at Oasis @ Bartlett should be free. It is common knowledge among arts administrators that "ticket sales" almost never cover all of the costs of a production. But ticket sales do contribute significantly to the bottom line.

There has to be a balance of free events, so that the park is available to all and ticketed events, so that the operation can continue to program both on the stage and in the park. Given that the park will have open access, controlling ticketed events will require creative problem solving.

Developing a budget for operations and identifying sources of income should begin soon, so that the programming can be planned and artists and others engaged. A smooth first year of operation, supported by marketing and promotion, will provide the path to loyal audiences and ongoing funding streams.

Many suggested that a community steering committee work with the venue in order to provide guidance and support in planning the events for the inaugural year.

Question #9:

There was general agreement that social media has to play a major role in the promotion of activities and events at Oasis @ Bartlett. However, it is important to note that many of the seniors and some adults do not have access to computers and cell phones. Using traditional methods of promotion will have to become part of the marketing mix.

Suggestions to use billboards, posters in local businesses and on poles, banners around the park, local newspapers (The Banner, Metro, Dorchester Reporter), radio, TV, and a Kiosk in the park should all be considered. The website needs to be maintained and updated regularly, and perhaps a software app for loyal attendees can be developed.

No amount of promotion and advertising, however, will be as effective as "word of mouth" and positive responses to initial events and activities scheduled in the park.

RECOMMENDATIONS

IT IS RECOMMENDED THAT the Working Team review the report and schedule a follow up meeting to add any additional recommendations to the Creative Team and Project Management.

IT IS RECOMMENDED THAT the Creative Team meet with the members of the Working Team, in order to elicit more detailed information, and to share design ideas for the project.

IT IS RECOMMENDED THAT the Project Manager and Working Team get feedback from the Creative Team that provides more clarity as to what can and what cannot be accommodated at Oasis @ Bartlett, so that all invested in the project are well-informed.

IT IS RECOMMENDED THAT the community engagement process move as quickly as possible, to further inform the work of the Creative Team and to continue the community's understanding of the scope of the project. In addition to the nine questions, test more controversial issues and/or those generated by the Creative Team and its interactions with community and Working Team.

IT IS RECOMMENDED THAT the Creative Team schedule a second community meeting close to the deadline for CPA grant submission in order to inform residents of the progress of the Creative Team and Steering Committee.

IT IS RECOMMENDED THAT the Project Management identify potential members of the "Steering Committee" who will help develop the budget and programming outline for the first year of operation.

IT IS RECOMMENDED THAT this Steering Committee begin drafting an operating budget and outline of programming, starting in September of 2018.

IT IS RECOMMENDED THAT the Project Management and Steering Committee develop a list of local vendors and businesses that might partner with and benefit from involvement at Oasis @ Bartlett and begin discussions with the proprietors.

IT IS RECOMMENDED THAT the Steering Committee issue an invitation seeking proposals for partnership, residency, rental, and/or performance/exhibition opportunities at Oasis @ Bartlett in anticipation of its inaugural year. Bartlett has already begun developing a list of potential partners, but the list needs to be expanded, using all resources available from the City's Cultural Office, Massachusetts Cultural Council, Main Street organizations, and arts service organizations.

IT IS RECOMMENDED THAT the Project Management develop a list of possible funders for the venue, and begin meeting with these individuals, as soon as preliminary design is ready for distribution.

IT IS RECOMMENDED THAT the Working Team and Project Management upgrade, maintain, and utilize the newly established website to publicize the development of Oasis @ Bartlett. Add all reports, updates, and invitations to the website.

IT IS RECOMMENDED THAT the Project Management try to find a local billboard which might be available to reflect the developmental phases of Oasis @ Bartlett, in an effort to excite the community.

Artists' Focus Group and interview Participants

Jeremy Alliger (Dance Producer)

Shavanae Anderson (Portrait Artist, Photographer/Videographer)

Tyler Barbosa (Spoken Word/Visual Artist)

Pat Brown (Author of Children's Books)

May-Lisa Chandler (Dancer, Co-Director Jo-Me Dance)

Craig Coogan (Choral Music/Arts Administrator)

Wanda Devereaux ((Poet)

Joe Gonzalez (Dancer/Co-Director, Jo-Me Dance)

Penny Hodge (Poet/Spoken Word)

Sayem Khan (Architect, Reggae Music/Songwriter)

Lisa Lee (Portrait Artist)

Ron Mallis (Public Art Advocate and Producer)

Genaro Ortega (Muralist)

Willie Pleasants ((Poet, Author)

Sarah Champnois (Theater)

Luis Taforo (Muralist)

Crystal Tavares (Vocal Performer)

Chanel Thervil (Portrait Artist)

Sara Ting (Spoken Word)

Jason Turgeon (Event Producer)

Ethan Vogt (Filmmaker, Photographer, Festival Producer)

JhaD Williams (Architect, Spoken Word)

NUESTRA COMUNIDAD CDC STAFF

DAVID PRICE, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

ROBERT SPRINGER, PROJECT MANAGER

ANDREA KAISER, PROJECT CONSULTANT

WORKING TEAM MEMBERS

CORDELIA MOYE

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LEONARD TSHITENGE

MATT ARMY

FRANKLIN MARVAL

J. CURTIS WARNER, JR.

MAY LISA CHANDLER

SAMAR HASSAN

RICARDO GOMEZ

DANIEL CALLAHAN

DUMAS LAFONTANT

FOCUS GROUP FACILITATORS

MATT ARMY

ANDREA KAISER

CORDELIA MOYE

JONATHAN REGIS

LEONARD TSHITENGE

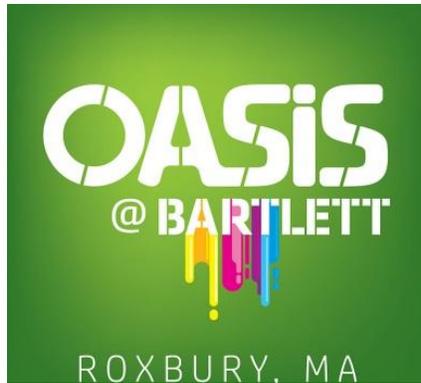
NOTE TAKERS/GREETERS

MATT ARMY

GRACE FURTADO

DAVID PRICE

ROBERT SPRINGER



CALLING ALL ARTISTS AND PERFORMERS IN ROXBURY AND BOSTON

A new arts plaza, "Oasis @ Bartlett", is planned on a 15,000 square foot lot within the new Bartlett Station development in the Dudley Square neighborhood of Roxbury. A team of architects, theater designers, acoustical/audio visual engineers, and landscape architects will soon be designing the venue which will serve as a park and three-season performing and exhibition pavilion opening in 2020.

In order to guide the design team, we have scheduled 13 seventy-five minute FOCUS GROUP conversations for visual, literary, media and performing artists, arts organizations and arts service providers. A volunteer Working Team has conducted a community survey and now wishes to engage the arts community to better understand how Oasis @ Bartlett can serve both artists and local audiences.

YOU are invited to participate in one of the Focus Groups that matches your art form! To sign up, email our Project Consultant, Andrea Kaiser at ccstpg@verizon.net, or call her at 781-235-0555 to confirm a seat. Each focus group is limited to 10 participants. For additional information, please visit our website at oasisbartlett.com. All focus groups will take place at Nuestra Comunidad, 56 Warren Street, Suite 200, Roxbury, MA 02119. The deadline for reserving a seat is June 21, 2018.

SCHEDULE OF FOCUS GROUPS

DAY	DATE	TIME	DESCRIPTION OF GROUP
Monday	June 25	5:30 pm	Spoken word/poetry/speakers
Monday	June 25	7:00 pm	Video/film/multimedia arts
Tuesday	June 26	5:30 pm	Dance Companies/dancers/choreographers
Tuesday	June 26	7:00 pm	Graphic and Textile Artists, Fashion Designers
Wednesday	June 27	5:30 pm	Classical music and Choral groups
Wednesday	June 27	7:00 pm	Jazz/R&B/Blues Performers
Thursday	June 28	5:30 pm	Traditional and folk artists
Thursday	June 28	7:00 pm	Craftspeople
Friday	June 29	5:30 pm	Multicultural and World Music

Friday	June 29	7:00 pm	Arts organizations and arts schools
Saturday	June 30	10:00 am	Fine artists and Sculptors
Saturday	June 30	11:30 am	Theater companies/actors/directors/playwrights
Saturday	June 30	4:00 pm	Muralists

THANK YOU FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION!