

Value in Community Series

Event #1

Overview

The first event in the Value in Community Series took place on **June 20, 2024**, at the Dorchester Bay EDC offices. This event aimed to highlight the intersection of community, art, and transportation through the lens of local artists. The evening featured presentations by artists Archy LaSalle, Jaypix Belmer, and Michael T. Thomas, each sharing how their work embodies the spirit of the community.

Goals of the Event

- Capture and honor community stories
- Celebrate and preserve the past as the community moves forward
- Foster a sense of connection among community members
- Collect feedback through surveys and conversations
- Highlight the importance of streets as gathering spaces and build enthusiasm for the Columbia Road transportation Action Plan

Artistic Highlights

Archy LaSalle showcased his extensive collection of street photography, capturing the essence of Uphams Corner, Dorchester, and Roxbury. His display included images from the creation of the Orange Line and the South End from the 1960s to the 1990s.

Jaypix Belmer presented a documentary video illustrating the current experience of riding the 16 bus, blending historical context with contemporary reality. This video provided a visual narrative connecting the past to the present.

Activities

The event explored themes of “where we’ve been” and “where we are now,” weaving these narratives into the future vision for Columbia Road. Jaypix’s documentary video set the stage for a discussion on the evolution of transportation and community spaces, leading into a presentation by Abby on the Columbia Road Transportation Action Plan (CRTAP). Attendees engaged in a lively Q&A session, sharing their thoughts and feedback.

Community Feedback

Participants expressed a desire for Columbia Road to remain a place where they feel heard, seen, and involved in its future. Key points of feedback included:

- The need for more green spaces, trees, and shade.
- The importance of community connections for safety: “Safety comes from knowing each other.”
- Pride in being part of a multicultural neighborhood and the wish for a more connected and healed community.

Conclusion

The first Value in Community event successfully highlighted the deep connections between community, history, and future planning for Columbia Road. By integrating art, storytelling, and community engagement, the event fostered a sense of belonging and enthusiasm for the ongoing transformation of Columbia Road.



CITY of BOSTON

Value in Community Series

Event #2

Event Overview

The second event in the Value in Community Series took place on **June 23, 2024**, in front of the Dorchester North Burying Ground. This event focused on art and artists as community connectors, highlighting the value of public art in enriching our streets and fostering community connections.

Artistic Highlights

Jaypix Belmer and Kalumu Keita facilitated interactive art-making sessions, encouraging residents and pedestrians along Columbia Road to engage in painting and creating art. This hands-on activity allowed participants to express themselves and contribute to a collaborative art piece. Jaypix captured portraits of attendees, reflecting the diverse humanity of the community.

Community Feedback

Participants were invited to paint and then share their thoughts on community, artist representation, beautification, and desired destinations. These interactions provided valuable insights into the community's perceptions and aspirations.

Public Art

The significance of public art in the community was a central theme. Attendees discussed what public art means to them and how it can enhance community spaces. There was a strong desire for more artist presence and public art installations in the community. Residents referenced the impact of previous art installations, such as those by Nick Cave during COVID, and expressed a wish for more local art initiatives.

Cultural Connection

Artists are seen as integral to Uphams Corner, with a strong connection to family and community.

Peaceful Spaces: The area near the Dorchester North Burying Ground is appreciated for its peace and beauty.

Community Togetherness: One resident commented, "Artists making a better presence in a community is just bringing the community together, showing that color, showing that activity; really bringing life to an area, whether it be making things a little brighter or rhythmic."

Event Outcomes

The engagement event underscored the need for greater care and attention to Columbia Road's sidewalks, roads, and pedestrian areas. By focusing on welcoming attractions and public art, the community can foster a stronger sense of belonging and well-being. The event successfully highlighted the importance of art in community life and gathered valuable feedback for the Columbia Road Transportation Action Plan.

