



**Christian Science Plaza Revitalization Project  
CAC Working Meeting #21**

**Tuesday, May 3, 2011**

**Location: Christian Science Publishing House Building**

**CAC Attendees:**

Tom Aucella, Belvedere Condo Association  
Mark Cataudella, Boston Symphony Orchestra (BSO)  
Sybil CooperKing, Neighborhood Association of the Back Bay (NABB)  
Ryan Higginson, Resident of the South End  
Meg Mainzer-Cohen, Back Bay Association  
Donald Margotta, Church Park Apartments  
George Thrush, Boston Society of Architects (BSA)  
Robert Wright, Symphony United Neighbors (SUN)

**CAC Members Not in Attendance:**

Kelly Brilliant, Fenway Alliance  
Vanessa Calderon-Rosado, Inquilinos Boricuas en Acción (IBA)  
Christian Coffin, Hilton Hotel Boston Back Bay  
Joanne McKenna, Fenway Community Development Corporation (Fenway CDC)  
Craig Nicholson, American Planning Association (APA) – Massachusetts Chapter  
Bill Richardson, Fenway Civic Association (FCA)  
Lee Steele, St. Botolph Neighborhood Association (SBNA)

**Ex-Officio Attendees:**

Massachusetts State Representative Byron Rushing  
Kate Chang, Office of U.S. Representative Michael Capuano  
Elizabeth Corcoran-Hunt, Office of Representative Rushing  
Sibu Malaba, Office of Massachusetts State Senator Sonia Chang-Diaz  
Liana Posto, Office of Boston City Councillor Tito Jackson  
Bennett Wilson, Office of Boston City Councillor Tito Jackson

**City of Boston Attendees:**

Heather Campisano, BRA  
Marybeth Hammond, BRA  
Lauren Shurtleff, BRA

**Church Team Attendees:**

Barbara Burley, The First Church of Christ, Scientist  
Harley Gates, The First Church of Christ, Scientist  
Bob Herlinger, The First Church of Christ, Scientist  
Bob Ryan, ML Strategies

**Members of the Public:**

Mark Fortune, Sprinkler Fitters and Apprentices Local Union 550  
Shirley Kressel, NABB

Judy Neiswander, Boston Preservation Alliance (BPA)  
Jonathan Smith, KV Associates  
Lucille Taitt, Church Member

### **Meeting Summary**

On Tuesday, May 3, 2011, the twenty-first working session of the Christian Science Plaza Revitalization Project Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC) was called to order at approximately 8:05 a.m. in the Christian Science Publishing House Building by Lauren Shurtleff, BRA Planner.

This meeting was called in order to provide an overview of the Draft Planned Development Area Master Plan (PDA Master Plan) proposed by the Church Team, as well as to fully inform the CAC of the next steps in the review process for the Plaza Revitalization Project.

Lauren explained that since the CAC's last working session in October, the CAC had issued a majority and a minority comment letter on the Revitalization Plan Document and the Church had provided a response. All of these materials can be found on the project website.

Upon receiving the final comment letters from the CAC, the Church in turn finalized the Revitalization Plan Document, which was then presented by the BRA Staff and the Church Team to the BRA Board in an informational session at their meeting on January 13, 2011.

As has been discussed throughout the CAC process, the implementation of the Plaza Revitalization Plan will require certain rezoning. The Church Team has decided to pursue a PDA Master Plan for the site, and has worked with the BRA Staff over the past several months to prepare a Draft PDA Master Plan. This document was distributed to the CAC via email last week.

Lauren then turned the meeting over to Marybeth Hammond, BRA Senior Land Use Counsel, to provide the group with an overview of the PDA Master Plan review and adoption process and its associated zoning procedures.

Marybeth explained that a PDA Master Plan is a zoning mechanism that must be approved by the BRA Board and the Zoning Commission at public hearings. A PDA Master Plan defines the PDA Area and sets forth a statement of the development concept, including the planning objectives and character of the development, the proposed uses of the area, and the range of dimensional requirements (*e.g.*, density and heights) contemplated for each of the proposed buildings, in this case, as outlined in the Church's Plaza Revitalization Plan. PDAs allow for flexibility, but also for greater control in that they identify specifically what will be built and where.

Currently, the Christian Science Plaza is not within a PDA-eligible area. Accordingly, a map and text amendment to the Boston Zoning Code will also be a necessary process, which will require a public hearing before the Boston Zoning Commission.

After the Church has selected a developer(s), and when each individual building project within the approved PDA Area is further along in planning, a PDA Development Plan for each site will be submitted providing more specific information about various components of each specific project. These submissions provide more opportunities for community input and require additional public hearings and approvals from the BRA Board and the Zoning Commission.

At the conclusion of the zoning process, each building project within the site will go through the applicable Article 80 Development Review process. In the case of Large Project Review, this process will begin once the Church's selected developer(s) file a Letter of Intent, followed by a Project Notification Form (PNF), which kicks off the formal Article 80B Large Project Review process. The CAC's membership will serve as the Impact Advisory Group (IAG) for each of these projects, providing further public hearings and opportunities for comment and discussion on the final details of each building component.

The Article 80 process includes facilitating the evaluation of design, use, and physical and social impacts of a proposed project in conjunction with City agencies and the impacted community. For more information, see **A Citizens Guide to Development Review**.

(<http://www.cityofboston.gov/bra/PDF/Documents/A%20Citizens%20Guide%20to%20Article%2080.pdf>).

Questions and comments in response to Marybeth's overview included:

#### CAC Comments

- In response to a question from Sybil CooperKing, CAC Co-Chair and NABB, Marybeth responded that there will be one PDA Master Plan for the whole site, and within that Master Plan, one or more PDA Development Plans will be submitted as the projects progress. Any changes to the PDA Master Plan would have to go through an amendment process.
- In response to a question from Representative Byron Rushing, Marybeth replied that the Church could not pursue an Institutional Master Plan for the area because they are not a college or university, hospital, nursing or convalescent home.
- Sybil CooperKing asked if the zoning for the site would be covered under the PDA Master Plan. Marybeth replied that a PDA Master Plan creates a special purpose overlay district, where the specific zoning parameters for the PDA Area are set forth within the PDA Master Plan.

#### Public Comments

- Shirley Kressel, NABB, asked if formal responses to public comment letters are required. Marybeth replied that this is not required, but nevertheless the letters are reviewed and considered carefully. Comment periods exist for the proponent to have the opportunity to modify elements of the project in response to concerns raised by the community, if appropriate.

- In a follow-up question, Shirley asked why the Church would pursue a PDA Master Plan rather than a series of separate PDA Development Plans. Marybeth responded that because the buildings within the plan are not designed yet, and there are not even developers for the individual buildings yet, a PDA Master Plan will establish a framework for the future development on the site, while acknowledging the planning process that has occurred thus far.

Lauren then provided the CAC with a tentative timeline outlining the process moving forward:

### **2011 Tentative Timeline – as of May 3, 2011**

May 3, 2011	CAC Meeting #21
May 13, 2011	Comments due from CAC on Draft PDA Master Plan
Week of May 16 <sup>th</sup>	Church to File Draft PDA Master Plan with the BRA
Week of May 30 <sup>th</sup>	<u>Public Meeting</u> : Review of Draft PDA Master Plan + Review Map and Text Amendment Process <i>Location: The First Church of Christ, Scientist</i> Ads will run in the Boston Courant and South End News
Week of July 4 <sup>th</sup>	Public Comment Period on Draft PDA Master Plan Closes (45 days after official filing)
July 14 <sup>th</sup> , 5:30 pm	<u>BRA Board Meeting – Public Hearing</u>
August 2011	<u>Boston Zoning Commission Hearing</u>
Beyond	Church Issues RFQ/RFP and Selects Developer(s)  Developer(s) file(s) PDA Development Plan(s)  Article 80 Review Process Begins  Boston Landmarks Commission (BLC) Review, as needed  CAC Members/Organizations serve on Impact Advisory Group (IAG)

Next, Lauren turned the meeting over to the Church Team, represented by Barbara Burley and Bob Herlinger. Barbara explained that they would highlight a few points within the Draft PDA Master Plan for the CAC. She reiterated that the framework for the Draft PDA Master Plan is the Revitalization Plan Document, and that the Draft PDA Master Plan represents what is already within the Revitalization Plan Document.

Barbara indicated that they had already received a question from one of the CAC members about the inclusion of public City streets in the PDA area. She explained two points. First, the PDA area includes land owned mostly by the Church (and its affiliates),

as well as portions of public streets that fall within the PDA area. Second, the Church plans for a small portion (but not the entirety) of these streets to be part of the development. Bob also noted that the Church plans to provide some of its private land for a public street and that it is highly likely that the City will end up with a net gain in the amount of streets and sidewalks once the entire Revitalization Project is complete. All of this, of course, will need to be worked out with the City during the Article 80 Review Process, after developer(s) have been selected by the Church.

Bob then moved on to the topic of the possible retail pavilion on the corner of Huntington Avenue and Belvidere Street. While this had been discussed as a concept early on and was included in the Executive Summary to the Plaza Revitalization Project document, the potential envelope for such a structure had never been addressed. In the Draft PDA Master Plan, the pavilion will not be larger than 2,000-SF in size, with a maximum height of 35'. The pavilion is envisioned to be similar to the Milk Street Café outpost in Post Office Square downtown, which has a height of 30'.

Barbara also added that the public benefits listed in the Revitalization Plan Document are reiterated in the Draft PDA Master Plan. These include that the Church will continue to maintain the existing open space and continue to make it available for public enjoyment. The specific public benefits associated with each new building will be included in the PDA Development Plans – and will also be reviewed as part of the Article 80 public process.

In terms of proposed uses on the site, the Church continues to envision residential, hotel, retail, and possibly office uses for the new buildings, as discussed before. The Draft PDA Master Plan includes a longer list of uses in accordance with the current zoning uses allowed in the area, covered in Article 41 of the Boston Zoning Code.

In terms of next steps, once the rezoning of the Plaza has concluded, the Church will work towards selecting a developer(s) for the site(s). There will be multiple opportunities for public review, as evidenced in the timeline, and the Church looks forward to moving ahead with the project.

At the conclusion of Bob and Barbara's presentation, the meeting was turned over to the CAC for questions and comments.

#### CAC Comments

- Don Margotta, Church Park Apartments, asked if the recent Landmark status of the site by the Boston Landmarks Commission (BLC) has changed anything about the Plaza Revitalization Project. Barbara replied that the Landmark status does not preclude anything proposed in the Revitalization Project from being considered by the BLC. Lauren added that the Belvidere/Dalton Streets site is not included within the Landmarked boundary.
- George Thrush, CAC Co-Chair and BSA, stated that a PDA Master Plan seems to make the most sense because it concerns the entire enterprise, and appears to be the most logical way to proceed. He added that the CAC has already articulated their areas of common ground, and as a group they are anxious to see the plan move forward. The list of meetings presented on the timeline is

lengthy, and solidifies the argument that nothing will proceed on this site without the CAC being fully informed of it.

- Sybil CooperKing stated that since the Church is not technically able to pursue an IMP, a PDA Master Plan seems to be the most appropriate option. She then asked the CAC if anyone noticed anything within the Draft PDA Master Plan, other than the proposed retail pavilion's dimensions, that was not already detailed in the Revitalization Plan Document. The group as a whole agreed that both documents are consistent with each other.
- George Thrush stated that the proposed pavilion by the Children's Fountain would be a good way to animate the Plaza, and Sybil CooperKing agreed that it would be a nice amenity for that spot.
- Tom Aucella, Belvedere Condo Association, added that the pavilion had been discussed earlier in the process, but originally it was sited further down Huntington Avenue towards Massachusetts Avenue.
- In response to a question from Meg Mainzer-Cohen, Back Bay Association, Barbara confirmed that the retail pavilion would only be a ground-level use.

#### Public Comments

- In response to a question from Shirley Kressel about why a deed restriction was not proposed, Marybeth replied that a Cooperation Agreement, which will be part of the PDA Development Plans, will identify public benefits and obligations and will be contractual and binding. In addition, Barbara added that the BLC Landmark status only allows for the possible development on the site in the locations that have been proposed by the Church under the Plaza Revitalization Plan.

At the conclusion of the meeting, Lauren stated that they will be in touch with the CAC once it is time for the next meeting to be scheduled. She again invited CAC members to send in any comments they might have by Friday, May 13. The PDA Master Plan will be posted to the BRA's project website once the Church submits it to the BRA.