

# ZONING COMMISSION, CITY OF BOSTON

## MINUTES

Wednesday, October 22, 2025

### **Attendance**

#### **Commissioners**

David Marr	
Building Trade Employers' Association	Present
Ricardo Austrich	
Boston Society of Architects	Present
Jaimie McNeil	
Greater Boston Massachusetts Labor Council AFL/CIO	Present
Aisha Miller	
Mayor's Selection	Present
Midori Morikawa	
Neighborhood Association	Present
Jill Hatton, Vice-Chairwoman	
Mayor's Selection	Present
Michael Nichols, Chairman	
Audubon Circle Neighborhood Association	Present
Michael DiMella	
Greater Boston Real Estate Board	Present
Nelson Arroyo	
Mayor's Selection	Present
Drew Leff	
Greater Boston Chamber of Commerce	Present
Ryan Woods	
Neighborhood Association	Present

#### **Staff**

Kathleen Onufer	
Deputy Director of Zoning	Present
Jeffrey M. Hampton	
Executive Secretary to the Commission	Present

## **PUBLIC HEARING**

### **This meeting was recorded.**

1. Chairman Nichols opened the hearing at 9:03 AM regarding Text Amendment Application Nos. 537-538 with respect to the Groundwater Conservation Overlay District. The interpreter introduced themselves.

The following offered testimony on the amendments:

Jack Halverson, Planner II – Planning Department  
Christian Simonelli, Groundwater Trust

Jack Halverson presented the petitions to the Commission and stated what was being asked of the Commission. This has been developed in collaboration with the Boston Groundwater Trust. The actual change to the GOCD zoning removes a conditional use permit requirement for Substantial Rehab projects subject to GCOD. (See presentation).

Christian Simonelli spoke in favor of the petitions. The Trust was established in 1986 by the City Council. This was originally proposed in 2005 and adopted by the Commission in 2006.

Hearing was declared closed at 9:15 AM.

Commissioner Hatton made a motion to approve Text Amendment Application Nos. 537-538, as submitted.

Commissioner Arroyo seconded the motion.

Chairwoman Nichols put the motion to vote:

**Yea: Hatton, Miller, Morikawa, Arroyo, McNeil, Leff, DiMella, Nichols, Austrich, Woods, Marr**

**Nay:**

**Abstain:**

**Motion Carries 11-0.**

2. Chairman Nichols stated that he would be recusing himself from the next hearing and left the meeting. Vice-Chairwoman Hatton opened the hearing at 9:17 AM regarding Text Amendment Application Nos. 539-542 and Map Amendment Application No. 797 with respect to Skyline zoning.

The following offered testimony on the amendments:

Kairos Shen, Chief Planner  
Andrew Nahmias, Sr. Urban Planner  
Mela Gomez, Sen. Lydia Edwards office  
Rep. Jay Livingstone  
Luigi Natale, Rep. Michelwicz  
Kelsey Pramik, Downtown Boston Alliance  
Ron Druker, Druker Companies  
Leslie Adam, Friends of Public Garden  
Anne Preacher  
Anthony Pangaro  
Thomas Nally, A Better City  
Jesse Kanson-Benarav, Abundant Housing Massachusetts  
Tony Ursillo  
Martyn Roetter, NABB  
Kimberly Trask  
Pamela Messenger, Chair Downtown Boston Alliance  
Martha McNamara, Chair Revolutionary Spaces  
Rishi Shukla, Downtown Neighborhood Association  
Mynor Perez, Carpenter's Union  
Ellen Lipsey  
Patricia Tully, Beacon Hill Civic Association  
Sean McShane, Freedom Trail Foundation  
Bill Grogan, Urban Affairs  
Michelle Landers, Urban Land Institute  
Nancy Gerlach  
David Spriggs  
Michele Guzzi  
Dan Daly, Local 103 and resident  
Oscar Lopez, Charlesview Inc.  
Kathleen Onufer, Deputy Director Zoning – Planning Dept.

Kairos Shen presented the petitions to the Commission and went into the process where PLAN Downtown and the zoning that came from it. The City is committed to protecting the State Shadow Law and any new development under the new zoning will go through the Article 80 process.

Andrew Nahmias made a presentation to the Commission on the new zoning (see presentation).

Ryan Woods asked about the area around Pi Alley wouldn't necessarily cast shadow on the Common/Garden?

Andrew stated he was correct.

Ricardo Austrich asked about the compliance with State Shadow Law.

Andrew stated that the Law will supersede the zoning. This will be the first time that there is a reference to the law in the zoning.

Mela Gomez read a letter from Senator Edwards in neither support nor opposition.

State Representative Jay Livingstone spoke in opposition to the proposals.

Luigi Natale from Rep. Michelwicz's office spoke in opposition.

Kelsey Pramik of the Downtown Boston Alliance spoke in support via prepared statement.

Ron Druker spoke in favor. Downtown Crossing needs this zoning to revitalize the area.

Leslie Adam spoke in opposition. Spoke to the concern of the shadows on the Public Garden.

Anne Preacher spoke in opposition. Concern is about height.

Anthony Pangaro spoke in opposition.

Thomas Nally spoke in favor of the proposed zoning.

Jesse Kanson-Benनाव spoke in favor of the zoning, specifically supporting affordable housing.

Tony Ursillo spoke in opposition to the zoning. Tremont Street and Ladder Blocks have different characteristics than the rest of the Skyline zoning.

Martyn Roetter spoke in opposition to the proposed zoning. Believes the process is being rushed and is a quick-fix.

Kimberly Trask spoke in opposition. Downtown residents need to be heard.

Pam Messenger spoke in support of the proposed zoning.

Martha McNamara spoke in opposition. Spoke to the protection of wind and shadow effects on Old State House and the Old South Meeting House.

Rishi Shukla spoke in opposition to the proposed zoning.

Mynor Perez spoke in support of the proposed zoning. This is essentially to revitalizing Downtown.

Ellen Lipsey spoke in opposition to the zoning.

Patricia Tully spoke in opposition to the proposed zoning.

Bill Grogan spoke in favor of the zoning .

Sean McShane spoke in opposition to the zoning. Concern is the preservation of historic sites because of over-development.

Michelle Landers spoke in favor of the proposed zoning. Aligns with best practices to revitalize urban centers.

Nancy Gerlach spoke in opposition to the proposed zoning. High rise development is not necessarily a benefit.

David Spriggs spoke in favor of the proposed zoning.

Dan Daly spoke in favor of the proposed zoning.

Oscar Lopez spoke in favor of the proposed zoning.

Vice-Chair acknowledged all of the written testimony submitted to the Commission.

Kathleen Onufer acknowledged that the zoning has changed considerably since this started with a focus on residential development downtown. There are few sites, approximately 4, that can use the new potential height.

Public Hearing closed at 10:32 AM.

Commissioner Leff stated that this was a thoughtful proposal. Downtown has changed. Transportation is in place, this needs to be take advantage of and activate the Downtown. One comment that struck him was the compromise on shadows – this should be looked at in the future.

Commissioner Austrich agreed with Commissioner Leff. Acknowledges that shadows are a concern, but is important that the Shadow Law has been acknowledged in the zoning. Tall buildings and green space can exist together.

Commissioner DiMella stated that there is an urgency to move this forward to help spur housing and affordable housing activity.

Commissioner DiMella made a motion to approve Text Amendment Application Nos. 539-542 and Map Amendment Application No. 797, as submitted.

Commissioner Miller seconded the motion.

Commissioner Woods thanked everyone for taking the time for their testimony and work involved in this process.

Vice-Chairwoman Hatton put the motion to vote:

**Yea:** Hatton, Miller, Morikawa, Arroyo, McNeil, Leff, DiMella, Marr, Austrich,  
Woods

**Nay:**

**Abstain:**

**Motion Carries 10-0.**

**Vice-Chairwoman Hatton adjourned the meeting at 10:50**

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Executive Secretary