

ZONING COMMISSION, CITY OF BOSTON

MINUTES

Wednesday, April 17, 2024

Room 900, City Hall, Boston

**Attendance**

**Commissioners**

David Marr	
Building Trade Employers' Association	Absent
Ricardo Austrich	
Boston Society of Architects	Present
Jay Hurley, Chairman	
Greater Boston Massachusetts Labor Council AFL/CIO	Absent
Aisha Miller	
Mayor's Selection	Present
Midori Morikawa	
Neighborhood Association	Present
Jill Hatton	
Mayor's Selection	Present
Michael Nichols	
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
Vacancy	
Neighborhood Association	

**Staff**

Kathleen Onufer	
Deputy Director for Zoning and Regulatory Reform	Present
Jeffrey M. Hampton	
Executive Secretary to the Commission	Present

## **PUBLIC HEARING**

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

1. Acting Chairwoman Hatton called the meeting to order at 9:04 AM and opened the hearing regarding Text Amendment Application Nos. 522 and 523.

The Interpreters assigned to the meeting introduced themselves.

The following offered testimony on the amendment:

Kathleen Onufer, Deputy Director for Zoning, BPDA  
Abdul-Razak Zachariah, Planner I, BPDA  
Maya Kattler-Gold, Planner II, BPDA  
Adam Johnson, BPDA  
Aimee Chambers, Chief Planner, BPDA  
Matt Lawlor, Walk Up Roslindale  
Councilor Pepen  
Jessie Kanson-Benanav  
Kenna Rhyne  
Breanne Frank  
Jordan Frias  
Michael Prokosch  
Scott Batey  
Ken Fields  
Becky Pierce  
Laurie Radwin  
Craig Martin

Ms. Onufer presented the proposed amendments to the Commission (see slide show in folder). This is the first step in a city-wide rezoning initiative. This is pairing policy with new zoning.

Mr. Zachariah also presented to the Commission. This was part of the slide show – what is zoning, existing zoning, piecemeal amendments, etc. This creates part of the problem in zoning and development.

There was a period of testimony going back and forth between Ms. Onufer and Mr. Zachariah where they shared the presentation. This included showing the timeline of public engagement and legal review. BPDA Board approval in March of 2024. This sets up the next phases of planning.

Ms. Onufer went through the actual changes that the amendments presented.

Ms. Kattler-Gold explained the new land use table, definitions, active ground floors.

Adam Johnson spoke to the updated dimensional regulations that better align with the Building Code.

Mr. Zachariah went over the new “S” districts and what they mean and allow.

There was multiple testimony given between the BPDA Planners that dealt with uses and dimensions throughout the Squares and Streets Districts.

Ms. Onufer acknowledged that there were comments submitted to slow down or even change the proposed zoning changes. There will be a rigorous community review process for all Square and Streets neighborhoods moving forward. The proposed amendments do not take effect anywhere right now. The community review and implementation must happen over the next few months and even years.

Commissioner Miller asked what was the level of community engagement?

Ms. Onufer began the engagement back in September of 2023. There were 35 “office hours”, focus groups and attending any organization that requested updates or had questions.

Aimee Chambers weighed in on the community engagement, feeling that the team is communicating the message, process, the “why” to the community groups.

Commissioner Austrich appreciates Commissioner’s Miller’s concerns. Please continue to do that work.

Matt Lawlor spoke in favor of the proposed amendments.

Councilor Pepen spoke in appreciation of the BPDA’s engagement. Sees an opportunity to expand housing and Main Streets Districts. He noted that the amendments submitted can be worked out outside of the proposed amendment. Would recommend approval.

Jesse Kanson-Benanav spoke in favor.

Kennan Rhyne spoke in favor of the proposed amendments.

Jordan Frias (Councilor Ruthzee) spoke to a possible deferral for 20 days.

Breanne Frank spoke in opposition to the current version of Squares and Streets.

Michael Prokosch asked to defer.

Jenn Cartee spoke in favor of the amendments.

Scott Batey spoke to the proposed amendments to the amendments presented and possibly delaying the vote.

Ken Fields spoke to the community review process. Encouraged by the substance in the amendments, but more specifics needed in the Hyde Park planning.

Becky Pierce asks for a deferral of the vote.

Laurie Radwin would like to consider the amendments she has proposed.

Craig Martin would like to defer the vote.

Ms. Onufer spoke to components of the Code that are applicable city-wide and this has been thought of as a similar provision that will be city-wide. Deep intense work of map amendments will commence if a neighborhood has a Squares and Streets initiative developed. No zoning is being changed with these amendments.

Commissioner Miller asked how the BPDA addresses how the black neighborhoods weren't involved or addressed.

Ms. Onufer stated that the BPDA can commit to producing the data she is looking for when the map amendments come forward to the Commission. Making real amendments can change and direct the process – e.g. Mattapan.

Commissioner Austrich stated that the problems of involvement in the minority community are not what these amendments are trying to solve. The Code isn't good. These amendments are doing good.

Commissioner Leff stated that this vote is not about particular neighborhoods. This is providing a set of tools that allows us to move to the next stage. Today's Code doesn't help minority or small business owners. Not making these changes just makes everything else more complicated.

Hearing closed at 10:39 AM, BZC entered Business Meeting

Commissioner Miller took offense to comments made during testimony about comments and race.

Commissioner DiMella commends the BPDA for all of the work and process. The status quo is far worse than the amendments that allow new zoning to move forward.

Commissioner Nichols stated that this is spot on and the direction the city needs to be going.

Commissioner Hatton was encouraged that an elected official stated that there were issues outside of zoning.

Commissioner DiMella made a motion to adopt Text Amendment Application Nos. 522 and 523, as submitted.

Commissioner Nichols seconded the motion.

Acting Chairwoman Hatton put the motion to vote:

**Yea:** Hatton, DiMella, Austrich, Arroyo, Nichols, Morikawa, Leff

**Nay:** Miller

**The motion carried 7-1.**

2. Acting Chairwoman Hatton called the meeting to order at 10:49 AM and opened the hearing regarding Map Amendment Application No. 778 and the Development Plan for PDA No. 152, 66 Cambridge Street, Charlestown. Commissioner Arroyo left the meeting.

The following offered testimony on the amendment:

Sarah Peck, Sr. Project Manager, BPDA  
Ted Schwartzberg  
Danny Guadagnoli, Fallon  
Ed Owens, Owens Companies  
John Sullivan, SGA  
Joe McEachern, Councilor Murphy  
Brian Callahan, resident  
Miriam Ortiz  
Joey Nicklas  
Elaine Donovan, Councilor

Ms. Peck presented the proposal to the Commission.

Ted Schwartzberg gave an overview of the zoning compliance,

Ed Owens spoke as the property owner and explained his vision for the future.

Danny Guadagnoli gave a slide presentation on the development proposal and programming.

John Sullivan spoke about the site plan as well as the design of the structure.

Joe McEachern spoke in favor of the proposal.

Brian Callahan spoke in favor of the proposal.

Miriam Ortiz spoke in favor of the proposal.

Joey Nicklas spoke in favor of the proposal.

Elaine Donovan spoke in favor of the proposal.

Hearing closed at 11:12 AM, BZC entered Business Meeting  
Commissioner Miller thanked Fallon

Commissioner DiMella made a motion to adopt Map Amendment Application No. 778 and the Master Plan for PDA No. 152, 66 Cambridge Street, as submitted.

Commissioner Miller seconded the motion.

Acting Chairwoman Hatton put the motion to vote:

**Yea:** Hatton, Austrich, Miller, Morikawa, DiMella, Nichols, Leff

**Nay:** None

**The motion carried 7-0.**

3. Acting Chairwoman Hatton called the meeting to order at 11:14 AM and opened the hearing regarding Map Amendment Application No. 777 and the Master Plan for PDA No. 153, 425 Medford Street, Charlestown

The following offered testimony on the amendment:

Sarah Peck, Sr. Project Manager, BPDA  
Ted Schwartzberg, Deputy Director for Zoning Compliance  
John Roche, Flatley Company  
Jaime Von Klemperer, KFP Architects  
Sanjukta Sen, KFP Architects

Ms. Peck presented the Master Plan to the Commission.

Mr. Schwartzberg went over the zoning details that guided the PDA including the PLAN: Charlestown and the newly adopted zoning for the Charlestown neighborhood.

John Roche gave a brief history of the ownership of the parcels as well as the timeline for the proposed development.

Jaime Von Klemperer presented site plan and design of the proposed Master Plan including public open space, resiliency and climate change.

Sanjukta Sen spoke to the flood mitigation and landscape architecture.

Commissioner DiMella had questions about the breakdown of uses and the access from Medford Street.

Mr. Von Klemperer provided some round numbers. Trucks would come in closer to the Schrafft's Building and wind their way into 465 Medford and then go below-grade into the basement system.

Hearing closed at 11:44 AM, BZC entered Business Meeting

Commissioner Nichols made a motion to adopt Map Amendment Application No. 771 and the Development Plan for PDA No. 153, 425 Medford Street, as submitted.

Commissioner DiMella seconded the motion.

Acting Chairwoman Hatton put the motion to vote:

**Yea:** Hatton, Austrich, Miller, Morikawa, DiMella, Nichols, Leff

**Nay:** None

**The motion carried 7-0.**

4. Acting Chairwoman Hatton opened the informational hearing on the Prudential Center PDA Amendment.

Quinn Valcich from the development review department stated what this informational meeting was about. He stated that the original language of the approved 6<sup>th</sup> Amendment was too vague or broad and the language presented to the Commission today does not present a substantive change, but just provides clarifying language.

Mallory Toomey stated that the removal of the reference to the "South Tower" was inadvertently removed. Language added back into the 6<sup>th</sup> Amendment makes it abundantly clear that the South Tower is where the dormitory is allowed.

Commissioner Nichols made a motion to adopt the clarifying language for the updated 6<sup>th</sup> Amendment to the Prudential Center Redevelopment.

Commissioner Leff seconded the motion.

Acting Chairwoman Hatton put the motion to vote:

**Yea:** Hatton, Austrich, Miller, Morikawa, DiMella, Nichols, Leff

**Nay:** None

**The motion carried 7-0.**

**Acting Chairwoman Hatton adjourned the meeting at 11:52 AM**

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Executive Secretary