

## **MINUTES FOR THE BOSTON CIVIC DESIGN COMMISSION**

### **JUNE 04, 2024**

*This meeting was held virtually. A recording of this meeting is available upon request. Please reach out to [bcdc@boston.gov](mailto:bcdc@boston.gov) for more information.*

#### **CALL TO ORDER**

Co-Chair Linda Eastley called the Boston Civic Design Commission (BCDC) meeting to order at 5:00 on Tuesday, June 04, 2024.

#### **ATTENDEES**

The following members of the Boston Civic Design Commission were present: Ex-officio member and BPDA Director of Design Diana Fernandez, Co-Chairs Linda Eastley and Mimi Love, and Commissioners David Hacin, Mikyoung Kim, Kathy Kottaridis, Anne-Marie Lubenau, David Manfredi, William Rawn, Laura Solano, and Kirk Sykes. The following members of the BPDA Staff were present: BCDC Executive Director and Senior Urban Designer Kristina Ricco, Deputy Director of Urban Design Seth Riseman, and Urban Design Assistant Lizzie Turac.

#### **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

On a motion duly made and seconded, it was unanimously VOTED: TO ACCEPT THE MINUTES FOR THE MAY 07, 2024, MONTHLY MEETING AND THE MAY 21, 2024, DESIGN SUBCOMMITTEE MEETINGS.

#### **REPORT FROM BPDA DESIGN REVIEW COMMITTEE**

Executive Director Kristina Ricco gave a report from the BPDA Design Review Committee on the proposed projects at FANEUIL GARDENS, BRIGHTON, and 10 MALCOLM X BOULEVARD, ROXBURY, recommending the proposals for consideration by the commission.

On a motion duly made and seconded, it was VOTED: TO REVIEW THE PROPOSED PROJECTS AT FANEUIL GARDENS, BRIGHTON, AND 10 MALCOLM X BOULEVARD, ROXBURY.

#### **PRESENTATIONS FOR REVIEW AND PUBLIC TESTIMONY**

##### 22—24 PRATT STREET, ALLSTON (80B)

Representatives of the proponent team, including Tamara Roy (Stantec) and Rob Adams (Halvorson | Tighe & Bond Studio), presented the proposed project. Commissioner Sykes recused himself from the proceedings. Commissioners Eastley, Hacin, Kim, Kottaridis, Love, Lubenau, Manfredi, Rawn, and Solano participated in the deliberations.

Discussion: Commissioners appreciated changes made to the proposed project in response to feedback received to date. Commissioners offered additional comments on the proposed building material palette focused primarily on the “darkness” of the ground-floor facade near the drop-off area. Commissioners also offered additional comments on elements of the proposed site plan,

including the configuration of the seating area adjacent to the turn-around and the dimension of planting beds.

There was no public testimony.

On a motion duly made and seconded, it was

VOTED: TO RECOMMEND THAT THE BPDA BOARD APPROVE THE PROPOSED PROJECT AT 22—24 PRATT STREET, ALLSTON, UPON SUCCESSFUL COMPLETION OF THE ARTICLE 80 PUBLIC REVIEW PROCESS.

500 HUNTINGTON AVENUE, MISSION HILL (80C AMENDMENT & 80B)

Representatives of the proponent team, including Donald Johnson (Fallon Company), Peter Schubert, and Christian Lemon, presented the proposed project. Commissioners Hacin and Sykes recused themselves from the proceedings. Commissioners Eastley, Kim, Kottaridis, Love, Lubenau, Manfredi, Rawn, and Solano participated in the deliberations.

Discussion: Commissioners were appreciative of changes made to the proposed project in response to feedback received to date, specifically changes to the “stacking” of the massing that resulted in a “much more dynamic” form and changes to the scale of the facade. However, the Commissioners, while supportive of the high-level planning principles that shaped the proposed site plan, remained concerned about proposed setbacks along Parker Street, the alignment of the through-block connection between Parker Street and Huntington Avenue, and the architectural and material “uniformity” between the two buildings. Commissioners advocated for the alignment of the through-block connection to Museum Way and the West Village A passageway. “I can understand that passageways can get rigid and uninteresting when they’re singular. But when you block the views through, that may be dynamic, but it is not about city building.” Commissioners also commented on the importance of the open space at the intersection of the through-block connection and Huntington Avenue. Commissioners had mixed opinions about the success of the proposed project’s response to its institutional context. Some Commissioners characterized the total impression of the proposed project as “corporate” and “anti-institutional.” “I don’t see a connection between the architecture of these buildings and the architecture of Wentworth or Northeastern or the MFA. This looks like it could be in the Seaport. It looks like it could be in Kendall Square.”

There was no public testimony.

On a motion duly made and seconded, it was

VOTED: TO TABLE THE AGENDA ITEM. THE PROPOSED PROJECT AT 500 HUNTINGTON AVENUE, MISSION HILL, WILL RETURN TO THE COMMISSION FOLLOWING ADDITIONAL REVIEW WITH BPDA STAFF TO ADDRESS STATED CONCERNS.

FANEUIL GARDENS, BRIGHTON (121A & 80B FOR 89 FANEUIL GARDENS)

Assistant Deputy Director for Zoning Compliance Ted Schwartzberg summarized the planning context for the proposed project. Representatives of the proponent team, including David Valecillos (The Community Builders), Frans de Witte (MVRDV), and Andres Bernal (JGE Architecture + Design) presented the proposed project. Senior Urban Designer Meghan Richard summarized BPDA staff

comments shared with the proponent team to date. Commissioners Eastley, Hacin, Kim, Kottaridis, Love, Lubenau, Manfredi, Rawn, Solano, and Sykes participated in the deliberations.

Discussion: Commissioners were supportive of the high-level planning principles that shaped the proposed site plan and, at a high level, the proposed building scale. Commissioners interrogated the relationship between this redevelopment and its immediate context, characterizing the existing condition of the site as a “superblock” and noting opportunities for “east and west” connections to and through adjacent sites. Regarding the proposed massing, Commissioners expressed concern for its uniformity and questioned the length of the buildings’ “legs,” noting potential impacts on the visibility of the central open space referred to as the “heart.” Commissioners sought greater articulation of the proposed massing to help “break down the scale” of proposed buildings and suggested that building height may be differentiated in response to existing and anticipated building heights surrounding the site. Regarding the proposed open space, Commissioners interrogated the concept proposed for “courtyards” and suggested that they either be further differentiated in size and character or that they become more uniform, “belonging” in a way to each building. “Recreation and relaxation look quite similar despite having very different programs.” “Rather than letting program A, B, C, D, be the driver of design, what about other features like shade or views?” Commissioners expressed concern for the level of effort needed to preserve the existing tree canopy and suggested that a replacement of the existing caliper may be more successful. Commissioners asked for additional information about the interaction between open space and loading, the quantity and configuration of surface parking, and the location of building entrances. Commissioners asked for more information about the proposed “Design Guidelines.”

There was no public testimony.

On a motion duly made and seconded, it was

VOTED: TO RECOMMEND THE PROPOSED MASTER PLAN FOR FANEUIL GARDENS AND THE ASSOCIATED PROPOSED PROJECT AT 89 FANEUIL GARDENS, BRIGHTON, FOR FURTHER REVIEW AT THE BCDC DESIGN SUBCOMMITTEE.

#### 10 MALCOLM X BOULEVARD, ROXBURY (80B)

Assistant Deputy Director for Zoning Compliance Ted Schwartzberg summarized the planning context for the proposed project. A representative of the proponent team, Dartagnan Brown (Embarc), presented the proposed project. Senior Urban Designer Scott Slarsky summarized BPDA staff comments shared with the proponent team to date. Commissioners Kottaridis, Love, Lubenau, Rawn, Solano, and Sykes participated in the deliberations.

Discussion: Commissioners were supportive of the high-level planning principles that shaped the proposed site plan and, at a high level, the proposed building scale. Commissioners asked for additional information about the proposed project, including “long views” to better understand its response to the “institutional edge, the school, the post office, the mosque, etcetera, from Columbus Avenue to see how your building picks up on some of that as well as some of the historical structures in the square itself.” Commissioners asked for more information about how the proposed project negotiates challenging grade changes, commenting on “eccentric” open space connections at the rear of the site where access to structured parking bisects the site. Commissioners asked for

more information about the residential building on Dudley Street. “The buildings along Malcolm X Blvd, in terms of scale and presentation, are a good reflection of the commercial district, but I’m interested in hearing more about the inspiration and relationship of the 12-unit condo building to Dudley Street. I realize that it does have an institutional adjacency and a school nearby, but it feels to me like the rest of it is a very framed, very 2- 3-family situation.”

Public testimony was given by Lee Peters, Angie (a representative of the District 7 Councilor Tanya Fernandez Anderson’s office), Holly Shepard, and Kate Phelps.

On a motion duly made and seconded, it was

VOTED: TO RECOMMEND THE PROPOSED PROJECT AT 10 MALCOLM X BOULEVARD, ROXBURY, FOR FURTHER REVIEW AT THE BCDC DESIGN SUBCOMMITTEE.

At the conclusion of presentations for review and public testimony, it was

VOTED: TO ADJOURN.

APPROVED 2024 07 09