

## MINUTES

### **BOSTON CIVIC DESIGN COMMISSION**

The meeting of the Boston Civic Design Commission was held on Tuesday, December 5<sup>th</sup>, 2017, starting in Room #900, Boston City Hall, and beginning at 5:15 p.m.

Members in attendance were: Michael Davis (Co-Vice-Chair); Deneen Crosby, Linda Eastley, David Hacin, David Manfredi Paul McDonough (Co-Vice-Chair), and Kirk Sykes. Absent were: Andrea Leers, William Rawn, and Daniel St. Clair. Also present was David Carlson, Executive Director of the Commission. Representatives of the BSA were present. Elizabeth Stifel, Jonathan Greeley, Tim Czerwinski, Michael Christopher, Matt Martin, and Corey Zehngebot were present for the BPDA.

Michael Davis (MD) announced that this was the meeting of the Boston Civic Design Commission that meets the first Tuesday of every month and welcomed all persons interested in attending. He added thanks to the Commissioners for the contribution of their time to the betterment of the City and its Public Realm. And he welcomed back Paul McDonough (PM), Co-Vice Chair, after an absence due to illness of more than six months. This hearing was duly advertised on Thursday, November 23, in the BOSTON HERALD.

The first item was the approval of the November 7<sup>th</sup>, 2017 Meeting Minutes. A motion was made, seconded, and it was duly

**VOTED: To approve the November 7<sup>th</sup>, 2017 BCDC Meeting Minutes.**

Votes were passed for signature. The next item was a report from the Review Committee on the **Suffolk Downs PDA Masterplan and Phase One Project**. David Carlson (DAC) noted that the overall Masterplan was proposed to total about 16 million SF, 11 million in the City of Boston. Although the recommended vote would combine this review with its Phase One Project, itself over 500,000 SF, the schedule of Phase One required review and a vote by February, while the PDA Masterplan would take considerably longer. The property had also been proposed by Boston (with the Proponent) as a potential Amazon HQ2 site. Review was recommended. It was moved, seconded, and

**VOTED: That the Commission review the PDA Masterplan for the Suffolk Downs Redevelopment, and the schematic design for its proposed Phase One Project, at the edge of the East Boston neighborhood and the City of Revere.**

The next item was a report from Review Committee on the **Old Colony Phase 3 Project**. DAC noted that this Phase was anticipated after the first two (and the background Masterplan) were reviewed by the Commission. This is a BHA property, and now requires 1-for-1 replacement. The initial Masterplan review approval was conditioned on review of all future phases, and Phase 3 is proposed at about 340,000 SF, well over the BCDC threshold in any case. Review was recommended. It was moved, seconded, and

**VOTED:: That the Commission review the schematic design for Phase 3 (bounded by Burke,**

**Dorchester, East 8<sup>th</sup>, and Mercer streets) of the Masterplan for the Old Colony Project, in the South Boston neighborhood.**

The next item was a report from Design Committee on the **248 Dorchester Avenue Project**. David Hacin (DH) noted that the Project changes were received favorably, with changes and detailed plans on the sidewalks, the top 'lantern' element, and building details. There were some question on the long-term relationship of the sidewalk treatment, but the strategy seemed expandable. MD (to 248 team): Just focus on the latest changes. Michael LeBlanc (ML) of Utile showed the sidewalk section: We have adjusted the grade of the building lobby, and have a gentle slope, less than 2%, and pedestrians separated from the bike path but with clear access across. There's a seasonal café, so off-season that becomes part of the public realm. We have tweaked the geometry of the lantern and introduced 'breaks', so that it floats more freely. On the lighting, Lam Partners is testing metal apertures, and has a detail with light coming from the top, which tapers. Our precedents include the UPenn Energy Plant surrounding, and we are improving on that. DH made a motion to approve. Hearing no public comment, it was seconded, and

**VOTED: That the Commission recommends approval of the schematic design for the proposed 248 Dorchester Avenue Project in the South Boston neighborhood.**

David Manfredi (DM) was recused from the next item. The next item was a report from Design Committee on the **Huntington Theater Residential Project**. MD noted that there were members of the Commission at the last Committee meeting who could not be here tonight. BK Boley (BK) of Stantech noted further canopy studies: The Committee preferred the glass version with the LEDs, with a monument to the side. We've added wood at the ceiling. (Shows a rendered view of the theater.) There's lettering on the canopy, and more signage on the Theater. Scott Aquilina (SA) of Bruner Cott: We're continuing to work on that facade. BK noted that the trees have been eliminated in front of the Theater, and showed plans of the first and second floors, and a perspective image.

SA: The west wing, or Annex, is essential for the Theater's back-of-house and productions (notes the footprint of the production studio). Some of these operations have been moved to Everett, but some must stay. We must consolidate with the offices. In the past, loading was off of Huntington; that can't work now. We looked at combining loading with the residential tower, but the duration of the loading (8 hours to a whole weekend) makes that unworkable. (SA noted the existing building, and showed a loading diagram, then a series of sections.) Originally we had planned a 100' building, which still could not fit all the administrative offices. In our first option, we reduced the height to 90' by moving the administrative functions. In November, we proposed a 70' height, with all administrative offices gone. (Describes the program, noting the mechanicals and dressing rooms 20' below grade.) The Theater is committed to making this work, although it's financially difficult. We are trying to be sensitive; it's open (windows) where there is less sensitivity to privacy. (Shows a massing diagram with windows to show the effect, and shows a view down the alley.) It's understood that we will continue to look at more options, including the basement of the tower. The conversations are still very preliminary, the financing is uncertain, and other opportunities may emerge. Michael Maso (MM), Director of the Huntington Theater Company: We are committed to going to 70'.

We have a vision of a unified campus...and we are going below grade, and below as-of-right. We have had three meetings with the abutter.

DH: I recognize the hardship. But I also see a much improved urban infill condition. This is a solid solution; I appreciate what you did. I like the canopy. Deneen Crosby (DC): I agree. We were really close. It seems like you've done what we asked, with more below grade. Kirk Sykes (KS): These conversations are very difficult. No one anticipated these needs - this is an awfully tight site. Trading the public benefit becomes a negotiation. Jonathan Greeley (JG) of the BPDA: The Agency has worked hard with the abutters. We think this is a good compromise position. We will not support any further height (on the tower). And these will be separate entities.... We feel comfortable in this department. There is no perfect solution. In no small part, the change was due to your push. MD noted the suggested vote to approve with parties continuing to work on a better solution. DC: You could look at the amount of light reaching down. KS: There may be something that can be looked at with materials, windows, etc. DH: I'm sure that everything will be explored. This has gone from, "How did this happen?" to "This is a tight urban condition." Linda Eastley (LE): Look at those suggestions, and different ways of loading.

Caleb Clapp (CC), President of the Riviera Condo building rose and passed out handouts showing the 'view from the other side.' He noted an 8' separation, with an easement to 4'. CC: This is a monolith as high as we are. Arthur Fiedler lived here once. I purchased 75 units in foreclosure from the Dime. The units are now deed-restricted units for the disabled and homeless, with funding from the DMH, VinFen, and others. This is a national model - rare, and fragile. This seems insane. The New England Conservatory was bad enough, but that's 100' away. This crosses the line in a different way. You are putting people in a black hole - criminal, from a human perspective. The people in here are unique. I would hope that this building, in its role, would consider alternatives - this is taking something away from these people. DC pointed out the height variation in the section. CC: I acknowledge that the height is down. I think there's something better that can be done - if we work really hard, and don't have an approval. We need the pressure of NOT approval. Susan Walker: I am one of the service providers, partners in this endeavor for over 20 years. I go along with what Caleb said; it would be detrimental to folks in the building. Right now, to them, it's like a palace. Tim Scofield: I want to point out the practical side. This is not really a design. The effort is appreciated, but the design is not at that stage. This is about functionality.

MD: We are all professionals here. But we are concerned not with private parties, but with members of the public. Our recommendations are taken seriously by the BPDA Board and staff. We have met our obligation to the public. I don't disagree with the issue, but this is not the forum for mediation. MM: Part of this is our serious, ongoing efforts. We don't think this is a perfect solution. We understand the condition, and are willing to act with that (in mind.) KS asked if this was part of the overall Project. DAC: This is absolutely a part of the overall Article 80 Project, necessary for the Theater which is key. MD: We can request that the resolution of the west wing and its mitigation will return for an update. DH: That would be good. Mike is correct; we are not statutory for this issue. JG: BPDA staff review is well-respected, and we will continue to work hard to mitigate the issue. Regardless of what it looks like, we will continue to work to resolve matters, and we have worked very hard to date, including numerous meetings, outreach, and conversations. KS: The design (of the annex) should be exceptional - its massing, materials, and treatment. MD noted that the minutes would reflect that comment.

It was then moved, seconded, and

**VOTED: That the Commission recommends approval of the schematic design for the proposed Huntington Residential Development Project at 252-264 Huntington Avenue at the edge of the Fenway neighborhood, with the condition that the Theater Annex building return for a design update focused on adjacency mitigation solutions.**

DM remained recused for the next item. The next item was a report from Design Committee on the **Summer Street (Omni) Hotel Project** (also referenced as Waterside Place Phase 2 NPC). Ross Cameron (RC) of Elkus Manfredi presented the revised design, noting two Committee sessions. He noted the floor plans, focusing on the lower west, which had changed. He showed an overall bird's-eye perspective, then a view from the BCEC, noting that the team had completely re-thought the elevations due to BCDC input. He pointed out the modifications to the open areas, and the modified terrace/canopy with an indoor/outdoor character relating to the canopy of the BCEC. These spaces will also relate to the future 3-4 story building planned across the street. RC showed an evening view taken from the southeast, noting the expression of sliding windows at the ballroom. He showed a view looking south from WTC Avenue, noting again the relationship to the BCEC. He showed elevations, noting that the 'innovation tower' is now the 'east tower', and ended with a view from the terrace looking toward the BCEC.

LE: The corner turned out beautifully; it relates to the BCEC. My only comment is that, on the mezzanine floor, while the framing is really done beautifully, the heaviness of the mezzanine floor at the corner detracts. RC: Possibly a change in materials? LE: Yes...that would be good. The road is no longer a bridge. DC: I like the corner, and think it frames the space across the street. An early concern was the pinch. DH: Part of that might have been the sheer building, but a lot has been done to mitigate that. A lot is improved. The devil is in the curtainwall details. Some are sheer, but some here have the promise of real depth, important for a building of this scale. DC: The bridge experience is diminished. RC: The idea is that it's now lined with building. MD: People might wonder how we can go through a Project so quickly, but here we spent two Committee meetings - three hours - with a lot of work done by the team to reach this point. With that, and hearing no public comment, it was moved, seconded, and

**VOTED: That the Commission recommends approval of the revised schematic design for the Summer Street Omni Hotel Project, Phase 2 NPC of the Waterside Place Development, at 418-466 Summer Street, on the D2 Parcel bounded by the SBWTC Garage and D and Summer Streets, and World Trade Center Avenue, in the South Boston Waterfront District.**

DM returned. The next item was a presentation of the **Suffolk Downs Master Plan PDA and Phase One Project**. Tom O'Brien (TOB) of HYM introduced his team and the Project. TOB: You will see two things tonight - the overall presentation, and then the first building, which Amazon requires to move into by the end of 2019. I'll show slides with Kishore Varanasi (KV) of CBT, our Master Plan consultant. It's 161 acres, a very large site. (Notes the City line on an aerial photo. Notes the relationship to resources such as T stations, beaches, and the Belle Island Marsh.) Upon acquisition, we resisted brokers who offered retail and warehouse deals. We have a vision (shows design principles) - to make a place where people want to live. Jobs

and work will follow. Amazon crashed into our lives on September 7, but their program meshed with our ideas. (Shows an aerial rendering.) KV showed the proposed program and the idea of diversity of housing types. He commented on an aerial, noting this as actually a landlocked site, and showed views of and possible connections to adjacent neighborhoods. He noted unique on-site resources, including wetlands (shows photos of the site and existing conditions, notes bus routes). KV: There are two access points now. FAA height limits apply, as does the FEMA map; we are working with the Climate Ready Boston recommendations. The idea is to integrate the on-site assets and connect them as an open space network - there will be 40 acres of open space. We will create multiple neighborhoods around that armature, and connections through that, a network of streets, that it is possible to continue in the future through the oil tanks land. We're using a Main Street as a connecting idea. In the initial proposed Master Plan, we are including all. The Streets are all Complete Streets, but not through streets, so one can enjoy the pace of being outside. The streets and infrastructure will be Climate-Ready, which allows a sheltering in place strategy. Urban block clusters allow us to switch between land uses, and even open space. On the land uses, we have Program A (Amazon, more commercial) and Program B (more residential). (Shows the notion of townhouses adjacent to the Orient Heights neighborhood, and the overall retail diagram. Shows views of the proposed Belle Marsh and Beachmont Squares.) The heights and massing strategy are all compliant with FAA limits.

Chris of STOSS showed the landscape plan: The Common will give the space its identity, like the Fens. And there are Green Spines, which will help with stormwater collection. WE also have a 'Sporty Spine,' with more active spaces. (Shows a view of the landscaped central green with Sales Creek and the pond. Shows a diagram of circulation and running loops.) There's a network of ways to get around. And all the park spaces are designed to handle storms. They're designed to hold back flood waters as well. (Shows more views.)

DH left. TOB: On to the Phase One Project. David Nagahiro (DN) of CBT presented the design, showing the location and the evolution of their concept. And how it could interface with a future phase flanking the path to the T Station. DN: This goes to the edge of the Central Common; the buildings have an indoor/outdoor sense. The lobbies and active edges line the Common and the path to the T. There's a parking garage in the lower three stories of the first building. The massing strategy is simple; we're using industrial building strategies and precedents. There's a base, middle, and top. (Shows a series of perspective views.) Chris: On the landscape, we are looking to associate specific plantings with each of Kishore's neighborhoods. Here, we are channeling Belle Island Marsh, creating a 'coastal mews,' with the landscape running up the buildings. There are views to the Commons, the Mews, and the Marsh. And a sense of transparency and activity at the base. The Mews will be like an open air walkway (shows a view). At the base, wood-like boardwalks are being considered. (Shows views of the building terraces, again noting the coastal plant associations.)

LE asked about the process; DAC explained, comparing the Project to the Seaport, to North Point, and to New Balance. DAC: Each of those precedents is slightly different. Here, we will look at both Phase One and the overall Plan. We will make a recommendation on Phase One by February, while our comments on the Masterplan will go into the PDA scoping and a longer process. KS asked about views of the Belle Island Marsh. TOB showed the overall views, and noted the idea of connecting to the Marsh itself: Which is a beautiful resource. The T is amenable to bridging over the tracks near its platforms. We'll have issues at both ends of the bridging for connections. DC: On the water - can it go under the tracks? What's the

topography? TOB: There's a DCR pumping station which controls the water. It goes out, but it's not allowed back in. MD: A reminder that we will send this to Committee, and can go into detail then. Chris: The Blue Line is on a berm. The water has three points of entry.

LE: I want to compliment your presentation - that's a *lot* of information. There are a lot of arrowheads on the diagram showing connections; I'd like to see more. On Projects of this scale, it's important to understand the public feedback. We've spent a lot of time talking about systems. I want to understand what the interim condition is. As a Seattle native, this looks a lot like Puget Sound...this is a fabulous Project. DM: It *is* fabulous. You have all set this up to deal with issues on a precinct level. We need to see a model - enough to include topo, so it will have to be *large*. And I want to know how you solve for the garages, and how the Project addresses the neighbors. I would love to hear how the traffic will meet the neighborhoods. MD: It behooves us to understand how the context supports the uses. Walk to work, etc. The natural amenities are clear, but what are the *built* amenities? On the retail, you've drawn circles, but, but we need a broad-brush understanding of how facilities support the development. How it works. How it connects to the rest of the City. And waste. How all these are accommodated.

PM: What about Amazon - and *their* design team? TOB: We want to be prepared. Alex Difronzo: I'm on the IAG, and with the East Boston Sailing Center. How can I follow the Committee? DAC: Check the website. The next two Tuesdays will have this on the Committee agenda. Madeline Cryzinski: I'm with Zumix, and also on the IAG. This was my first time walking the site; it's amazing. There is some concern about the speed of Amazon. If we're rushing, that could damage the potential. We need to do it right. With that, and hearing no further public comment, the Suffolk Downs PDA Masterplan and Phase One Project were sent to Design Committee. PM left.

The next item was a presentation of the **Old Colony Phase 3 Project**. Darcy Jameson (DJ) of Beacon Communities introduced the team, noting Kate Bennett of the BHA couldn't make it. DJ noted the location, and changes in the area - which now also include the first two phases - both in terms of development and planning, and socially. DJ: In the first two phases, we had Federal money. There are more limited resources now. And the City (BHA) policy is now a 1-for-1 replacement of units. Before, 75% was okay, and that allowed for new roads and green spaces. There are limited resources...we cannot exceed \$500,000/unit...we are dancing to a lot of masters. We're using the most efficient building type, and going faster than we would like. We appreciate your accommodating us tonight. Our Master Plan contained a nod to the fact that it would be built out over time as resources became available. We propose no additional road work; the grid works as it stands. LE: Will this be mixed income? DJ: It's 100% affordable. DM: With the additional units proposed, are you getting back to [an overall] 1:1 ratio? DJ: We'll be about 8% short in the first three phases combined.

Jay Syzmanski (JS) of The Architectural Team showed the overall Plan area, the phasing, and photos of Phases 1 and 2. He noted the Community Center, and a fair amount of open space. He then showed the proposed Phase 3, around the Perkins School. LE: Type? DJ: Elementary, K-6. We included kids in the process and used the Project as a teachable moment. JS compared the scheme with the prior Masterplan, which had both mid-rises and townhouses. JS: Now, we can only do mid-rises. We have integrated 3- and 4-bedroom units into the 4-story scheme. We are proposing much larger buildings, and working with the grid. We'll do Buildings A, C, D, and then B. Marcus from the Copley Wolff Design Group showed the

conceptual open space plan, noting the very large saved existing trees will give this Phase [matching] character. There will be new trees within spaces and the property line. The types of spaces will be comparable to those in Phases 1 and 2. JS then showed massing studies, noting the use of projecting bays. JS: The courtyards are generally interior to a block, with the building edges holding the streets. (Shows massing views, including the Phase 2 buildings.) DJ: The redevelopment of the market building at the corner will likely be a 5-story building. The goal is to move through this process quickly; there's a DHCD funding round in mid-February.

LE: I know you don't have the budget. On East 8<sup>th</sup>, the most concern is for building D. Try to understand that location more, break up the visual from the diagonal street. The spaces seem to work well; I want to understand how these mesh with the first two phases. DC: The opportunity to cut through buildings - look at that, we've seen that occasionally. The saving of the specimen street trees was well worth it; it looks really good. DM: This is a fairly dramatic change from the Masterplan. I miss the through streets, but I get that. And the townhouses, but I get that. The sizes of the blocks are a concern. There are devices you can use to break down that mass. Phases 1 and 2 are really successful, the scale is really nice. This is a dramatic shift in scale. I want you to convince me. KS: The challenge is the proximity to the smaller scale of the neighborhood, and how you might apply the principles of 1 and 2 to this. And the nature of the spaces, which elsewhere are ones you go through. Unfortunately, this gets back to some degree to the scale of the original Old Colony project buildings. MD: What about Phases 1 and 2 are really working? How can we apply that, even if at a different scale? Integrate this as one development. KS: Look at the development at Bromley Heath, near Ruggles. How do you break the buildings in plan, but also in elevation? Hearing no public comment, the Old Colony Phase 3 Project was sent to Design Committee.

There being no further items for formal discussion, a motion was made to adjourn, and the meeting was duly adjourned at 8:09 p.m. The next regular meeting of the Boston Civic Design Commission was scheduled for January 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2018. The recording of the December 5<sup>th</sup>, 2017 Boston Civic Design Commission meeting was digitized and is available at the Boston Planning and Development Agency.