

MINUTES

BOSTON CIVIC DESIGN COMMISSION

The meeting of the Boston Civic Design Commission was held on Tuesday, September 3, 2019, starting in Room #900, Boston City Hall, and beginning at 5:15 p.m.

Members in attendance were: Linda Eastley, David Hacin, Andrea Leers, Anne-Marie Lubeanu, David Manfredi, Paul McDonough, and William Rawn. Absent were Deneen Crosby, Eric Höweler, Mikyoung Kim, Kirk Sykes. Elizabeth Stifel, Executive Director of the Commission, was present. Representatives of the BSA attended. Ed Carmody and Natalie Punzak were present for the BPDA.

The Chair, Andrea Leers, 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. She added thanks to the Commissioners for the contribution of their time to the betterment of the City and its Public Realm. This hearing was duly advertised on Sunday August 18, in the BOSTON HERALD.

The first item was the approval of the August 6 Monthly Meeting Minutes, and the Design Committee Minutes from meetings on August 13, 20, and 27. A motion was made, seconded, and it was duly

VOTED: To approve the August 6, 13, 20, and 27, 2019 BCDC Meeting Minutes.

Votes were passed for signature.

Chair Andrea Leers then took a moment to introduce a Report on the Boston Civic Design Commission's Principles and Priorities. The BCDC has seen a new Executive Director, new Chair, and three new Commissioners within the last year; cognizant of this moment of renewed energy, the Commission has worked to draft a set of principles and priorities to share with the BPDA, proponents, and designers. These include:

- Height, scale, and massing: The Commissioners will look to city-wide initiatives such as Imagine Boston 2030, and planning and precinct studies developed by the BPDA, as well as drawing on their own experiences in an effort to offer the best guidance possible. The Commission will encourage growth which responds to the scale and massing of surrounding properties, sustains the quality of life and distinctive physical character of the city, and supports the neighborhoods that citizens value.
- Accessible open space: The BCDC is committed to supporting functional, beautiful and connected open space throughout the City of Boston. To achieve this vision, the Commission encourages each project to provide thoughtful, public open space that addresses human and ecological resiliency, prioritizes street-level improvements, and responds to the site and neighborhood context.

- Parking and mobility: The Commission believes that the provision of abundant and inexpensive public parking in the city should be questioned in light of a larger movement to recover space from cars, provide a better pedestrian experience, and demonstrate best environmental practices.
- Design creativity: The Commission strongly encourages creative problem solving that reflects the unique qualities of the city's fabric and public realm as well as the city's identity as a global center of leading edge innovation. With a mind to quality, sustainability, and contemporary 21st century expression, the Commission asks proponents and designers to propose thoughtful projects that advance Boston's identity as an internationally recognized hub of design creativity and education while simultaneously respecting its unique character as the capital of the New England region and a touchstone of American history.

The next item was a report from the Review Committee on the **525 Lincoln Street** in Allston. The project proposes a six-story, 129,000SF residential building at 525 Lincoln Street at the corner of Cambridge Street in Allston. The project comprises 80 residential units, community space, and 30 parking spaces with a 4,500 SF green space. It is designed and planned as a co-living building with many on-site amenities like cleaning services and on site management support. The project exceeds the review threshold of 100,000 SF; as such, a new vote to review was recommended. It was moved, seconded, and

VOTED: That the Commission review the schematic design for the proposed Common Allbright project at 525 Lincoln Street project in the Allston neighborhood of Boston.

The next report from Review Committee was for **Brigham and Women's Faulkner Hospital IMP and Projects** in Jamaica Plain. This is the institution's first IMP and it contains three projects that collectively total more than 100,000 SF of development. The proposal includes a new inpatient wing and new structured parking garages. A vote to review was recommended and it was duly, moved, seconded, and

VOTED: That the Commission review the IMP and schematic design for the three proposed projects at Faulkner Hospital in the Jamaica Plain Neighborhood.

The next item was a report from the Design Committee on the **36-70 Sprague Street project**.

Anne-Marie Lubeanu (AML): At design committee we discussed and addressed a number of concerns with the proponent, including the facade design along Horne Street to be a more prominent entrance. With the loss of the second phase of this project initially proposed years ago, the hierarchy of the entry sequence needed revision. This is a large building in

length and footprint, so we looked at ways to break down the scale with the facade and entry strategies. Courtyard entries were improved for pedestrian scale and wayfinding. Joel Bargman, VH+A: The site is buffered from the neighborhood by trees, the railway, and a 80' grade change. The project's entry will be less than 4 minute walk from Readville Station, a commuter rail hub into Boston. The site entry off of Horn Street features a porte cochere which we revised in process with the Commission. A pedestrian walkway connects through the space to interior courtyard, redesigned to be more visually open. We plan to further develop the landscaping strategies to improve shading and encourage places to stay along the stairway into the site.

David Hacin: The port cochere is much stronger. The work you've done to improve the pedestrian connection here with the staircase feels like a really successful iteration of what was already a nice idea. There seem to be multiple clear points to enter and exit the site now. The strengthened building entries off the courtyard are nice.

Linda Eastley: I want to commend you for breaking up the building in order to reduce the length. What you've done on the courtyard side is clever, too. You've created a series of landscaped zones within the courtyard.

Hearing no public comment, it was moved, seconded and:

VOTED: That the Commission recommend approval of the schematic design for the proposed 36-40 Sprague Street Project on the parcel bounded by railroad rights of way, industrial property, Sprague Street, and Horne Street, in the Readville neighborhood of Hyde Park, Boston.

The first project presentation was the **525 Lincoln Street** Common Allbright Co-Living proposal in Allston.

Elizabeth Stifel introduced the project context: In April, you saw a presentation on the ongoing Allston-Brighton mobility study. The other major planning initiative in the area is the I-90 Allston Multimodal project by MassDOT. BPDA Staff issues concern the visual length of the building and the pedestrian circulation around the site because of traffic speed and grade change.

Hans Strauch, HDS Architecture: The side fronts Cambridge Street, a highly trafficked vehicular corridor in Allston. Lincoln Street will be the slower ped focused street, which is where we propose an entrance and resident courtyard. Residents can also enter an amenity space at the building base at Cambridge and Lincoln's intersection. Building on the corner to shorten pedestrian links and rationalize the intersection. Project is intended to serve a younger clientele to ease some of the demands of urban living. We are excited to bring life and energy to this location. Parking ratios in these projects in other cities are below .1 so we hope to minimize proposed parking.

David Manfredi: How are you making decisions about street trees, edges, etc.? I suspect the reason the ramps and stairs exist surrounding this site are because the neighborhood uses

this as a cut through. I'm interested in the idea of cutting through this building to divide it, or create a pedestrian throughway between the garage and utility space.

Linda Eastley: This is an amazing mixed-use neighborhood. I think we need to understand where your project connects with Lincoln Street and what the land use types are beyond the building. This site functions as an urban off-ramp and an island. I'd also like to understand more about how to add more parking. Maybe the separation between parking and amenity space can be a clue to breaking the massing on the very long side on Cambridge Street.

Andrea Leers: I'm struck by the uncertainty of which way the building is facing. It seems to have a very public face on Cambridge Street, and yet the entries seem to come off the ends and Lincoln Street. Seeing this project in its larger context will help announce where this building is meant to be approached. I'm struggling to understand what the Cambridge Street side of this project is like. The folding and bending of the Lincoln Street facade is more inviting and interesting. You might find you want to treat Cambridge Street similarly.

David Hacin: There is a lot about the massing and deployment of materials that is very successful, especially on the Lincoln Street side. I, too, would love to see a physical model, and to see some speculation about the public realm zone surrounding the project. I'm wondering if it makes more sense to create one larger public space/park instead of a pedestrian pass through.

William Rawn: Another alternative might be a setback negotiated on both sides. The sidewalk along Cambridge Street does not seem pedestrian friendly.

The next project presentation was for the **Brigham and Women's Faulkner Hospital IMP and Projects** in Jamaica Plain.

Elizabeth Stifel is the BPDA Urban Design staff reviewer: This is the first IMP that has been filed for Faulkner Hospital. Primary focus of design review has been parking and implications on transportation.

David McCready, President of Faulkner Hospital: Currently, Faulkner Hospital has a modest inpatient wing with 171 beds. Demand is high, so we are expanding with an addition to add 78 more beds. This is the first hospital expansion since 1976. Parking is a major issue for the campus. The existing garage is in bad condition. We are proposing new structured parking onsite.

George Takoudes, NBBK: We are early in design though the plan for the hospital's expansion has been ongoing for some time. The first component is a 5-story inpatient addition to the hospital, the new West Garage (replacing existing West Garage), and a vertical expansion of the East Garage which was built to support additional floors on top. The site is bounded by residential neighborhood at its rear, and Allendale, Whitcomb, and Centre Streets. New West Garage is less visible from outside the site. We have three suggestions for the design of garage screening. West Garage trees may have to be removed.

David Hacin: We need to see a model of this project to understand the project in context. I'm guessing that the presented schemes for garage screening are in response to abutters.

What are the issues with this garage? Is the large uninterrupted solar array visible to anyone except hospital patients?

William Rawn: I think it would be helpful for us to understand what the next phase of growth for this hospital will be. I ask this in context of the garage locations on the site, which seem to preclude future growth of facilities on campus.

Andrea Leers: Why not make the new garage big enough so that you don't have to touch the East Garage and preclude options for future development in this location on the site?

David Hacin: Will the large solar array you've proposed be visible to the surrounding neighborhood? The garage and solar array as proposed feel large and relentless. Can you use landscape design or a different massing strategy to better buffer these elements from the surrounding neighborhood?

Andrea Leers: The new wing feels comfortable and natural where you've placed it.

Linda Eastley: What strikes me is how many different areas of parking there are on this site for such a small campus. You need to walk us through some of the other options you've looked at. The building is surrounded by parking options on all sides and I imagine that could create confusion for patients.

Louise Johnson, abutter: I've lived here for 25 years. The campus has parking everywhere. People are confused when they enter the campus. I'm concerned about the solar glare that will be created by the solar panels. I've listened to garage construction improvements for years. Some of the plans to reconstruct are good. I am concerned about the length of time this construction will take to complete and how this relates to future expansion and transportation networks. The T is one mile away (Forest Hills) and there is no way for the public to connect to this hospital.

Frank O'Brien, Allendale Coalition: Don't take as a given the reliance on private vehicles to access the hospital. There should be alternatives to passenger vehicles to access the site.

Sarah Freeman: 78 beds + 500 parking spaces?? How often are spaces turning over? What will be the congestion implications on surrounding streets? We value the hospital and the services, but how can we achieve those goals with a more sensitive proposal regarding sustainability and vehicles?

There being no further items for discussion, a motion was made to adjourn, and the meeting was duly adjourned at 7:02 p.m. The next regular meeting of the Boston Civic Design Commission was scheduled for October 1, 2019. The recording of the September 4, 2019 Boston Civic Design Commission meeting was digitized and is available at the Boston Redevelopment Authority.