

## DRAFT MINUTES

### BOSTON CIVIC DESIGN COMMISSION

The meeting of the Boston Civic Design Commission was held on Tuesday, April 4<sup>th</sup>, 2017, starting in Room #900, Boston City Hall, and beginning at 5:24 p.m.

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

The Co-Vice-Chair, 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. This hearing was duly advertised on Saturday, March 25, in the BOSTON HERALD. MD expressed his condolences regarding the recent unexpected loss of Howard Elkus of Elkus/Manfredi, the partner of Commissioner David Manfredi (DM), noting that much around Boston and in the country had felt his creative touch. Commissioners briefly shared their thoughts and surprise/sadness at his passing.

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

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

Votes were passed for signature. David Carlson (DAC) noted that some of the votes - for Seaport Square and 105 West First review, and for approval of the Brooke Charter School, would need ratification by Commissioners who were present tonight and agreed with the vote to review or who had been at Committee meetings and agreed with the vote to approve. The votes were subsequently duly ratified as Commissioners signed during the course of the meeting.

The next item was a report from Design Committee on the **270 Dorchester Avenue Project**.

Bill Rawn (WR): I don't think we need to spend much time on this - it was simplified, better. The 3 Commissioners present had thoughts about the windows, and the treatment along the Haul Road, but we could leave that to staff to work on. (DAC agreed with the notion.) Two minutes? Tony Pisani (TP) used their model(s) and an axonometric view of the modified Project to note the change to a 70-foot building and a simplified massing - with some variations in the windows (shows perspective views). Deneen Crosby (DC) asked about the small separate structure shown along the Haul Road. TP: It's state-owned. And the [state] bridge over the Haul Road is what limits the sidewalk there. DC noted a prior discussion about the pass-through. TP: We responded to your comments. The connection is active going through, with retail and residences on the sides. (Indicates the model context and view

through.) DC: I have a concern about the grade; the plaza will need terracing. TP: We have that, as well as a ramp. This will have a high level of activation. There's an open space along B Street, facing the community - but it also has good sun orientation. Kirk Sykes (KS): Do you have a perspective that shows the portal? (TP shows.) KS: How deep is it? TP: 62' long, 12' wide, 24' high. KS: Is one side glazed, or both? TP: Yes, the glass wraps. (DM arrived.) Linda Eastley (LE): I was part of the February review. There were two foci - celebration of the portal, and the treatment along the Haul Road. TP: In February, we had a stair, not the ramp. We had lifts - but they don't work. So we worked in a ramp. LE: Continue to work on the celebration of the portal. The terrace - people will be sitting there. I compliment you on that, but work more on that, too. With that, and hearing no public comment, it was moved, seconded, and

**VOTED: That the Commission recommends approval of the schematic design for the 270 Dorchester Avenue Project ('The Chandlery') on the parcel bounded by Dorchester Avenue, B and 6<sup>th</sup> Street, and the Haul Road in the South Boston neighborhood.**

MD noted that David Manfredi had arrived and reprised some of his earlier comments regarding Howard Elkus: He was a colleague, a friend, and a gifted contributor to the public realm. DM: We will miss him dearly, and we know the City will as well.

The next item was a report from the Design Committee on the **1785 Columbus Avenue Project**. DC: We had a big meeting. There were follow-up issues on the playspace screen, and the openings, which were not overcelebrated, but oversized, for the garages. LE: And the primary corner with the ramp - making sure that's animated. D'Artagnan Brown (DB) of Embarc noted the use of color for the playspaces. (Goes through plan diagrams, then the lower and upper floor plans, noting simplifications. Shows views along Columbus, then the two Amory corners of the building.) We have introduced color into the windows in the brick in front of the playspace, consistent with the color fence in the center along Dimock Street. (Shows elevations.)

KS: You've done a good job on the elevations, and treating the wall. A lot of buildings along Columbus are institutional, and imposing. You are the demarcation for the residential zone, and this looms. I feel you have to find some way of breaking down the mass. Maybe we could look to staff to do that - but that's just my reaction. It feels imposing. DM: I think we made very good progress, clarifying the distinction with the base. I do agree with Kirk, with the monotony and scale of the upper floor. I encourage you as Kirk has. Tell me why the grid is so pronounced above, and not so much below. DB: We are using a Neolith panel. We are less constrained on the base. (Notes what they might be able to do.) We can shift some of the parts (notes a room in red as an example). LE: The Dimock elevation works best compositionally. This is really improved, and has a human scale on the street. I really think it works well, showing off the activity with the kids. I visually understand how it works. You can work on the other point. MD: I *totally* agree with Linda. Make the lower floors as animated as possible. The spec, possibly supportive spaces you have above.... this is interesting. Paul McDonough asked about the zoning. A gentleman from Horizons Watermark LLC noted that the dimensional restrictions in the PLAN: JP/Rox mostly addressed residential projects. KS: Other, newer projects at this scale have something to offer. Like the Whittier Health Center [on Tremont/Columbus]. Seriously consider more treatment.... MD: So that's a point. KS: 225 Centre at Jackson Square...more. I will defer to staff. Other Commissioners seem more convinced. Just work on the surface, or on a massing adjustment. With that, and hearing no public comments, it was moved, seconded and (with KS abstaining)

**VOTED: That the Commission recommends approval of the 1785 Columbus Avenue Project near Jackson Square at the corner of Columbus Avenue and Dimock and Amory streets in the Jamaica Plain neighborhood.**

The next item was a report from Design Committee on the **Walk Hill Residences Project**. DM: The Project has made a number of adjustments for the community. *A lot* of changes. They had also made some other changes in response to other comments, but we liked the black & white drawings, and asked them to simplify the elevations. MD noted that this may possibly be a conditioned okay, with work on the design. Rob Del Salvio (RDS) of Embarc presented the updated design, starting with the locus, aerial photos, and context photos. He showed a diagram of the massing. RDS: We have simplified the massing. It's four stories, then three along Canterbury. It's quieter - with the same density and unit counts. We also have worked on the corner, which is visible from the intersection, and created a pass-through in that wall for residents, that comes down via stairs to the green space. (Shows simplified elevations along Walk Hill and fronting American Legion Highway.) There's a consistent one-story base. (Shows a series of simplified perspectives views in a style similar to the drawing referenced by DM). On the landscape, we have more trees in the parking court, and are using either pavers or stamped asphalt. (Shows a section across the space in the rear.)

PM noted that Tom Maistros (TM) on the team had been the first Executive Director of the BCDC. WR: We made a lot of suggestions; I feel this is off-track again. RDS showed the earlier design. WR: The windows here have rhythm, french balconies, etc. Go back to your current design.... DM: I was the one asking them to go back to this. I think there's more work to do, but it's better to start from a simpler design. I appreciate the response. And this is seen without color, correct? RDS: Yes. (Describes the materials - brick, metal, fiber cement.) DM: Two (materials) are better than three.

TM: Does the Commission feel that the massing is improved - is four stories, then three, the way to go? We assumed a return for the design. KS: I think it's the way to go. There are opportunities to break down the mass, like with cornices on projections, etc. LE: Why the speed now? DAC: This was teed up for a presentation last December, then withdrawn, to work out the final density with the community. That's the massing they came to us with. TM: Overall, it was a 2-year process. We are finally at a density we can move on. PM: Is that process done? TM: We hope so. WR: Have the unit counts increased? TM: No, we just adjusted the massing. WR: It's not going to go well with that white massing. TM: We will work on the design, and likely return in June. Michael Cannizzo (MC): They will have to show something with color for our Board meeting; Bill's comment is right.

DC asked about the courtyard space. TM: We were thinking about the European (motor) court concept, making it green, with specialty paving. Rob of Kyle Zick Landscape Architect: We have been working with that direction. LE: You have to constantly remind yourself, when we see that this doesn't feel like it's Boston. It feels rural. Work on that. I'd like to see more when you return. WR: What condition(s) should we have? MD: The fenestration, colors, windows, open space, and the parking court. PM: I'd suggest we avoid doing this in the future. It's confusing. But I will move a conditioned approval, based on Mike's list. Hearing no community comment, this was then seconded, and it was

**VOTED: That the Commission recommends approval of the proposed Walk Hill Residences Project, at 289 Walk Hill Street between the intersections of American Legion Highway and Canterbury Street, in the West Roxbury (Roslindale) neighborhood, with the condition that the schematic design return to the BCDC for review**

**and vote, with work expected on the fenestration, building material/colors, open space, and parking court.**

There being no further items for discussion, a motion was made to adjourn, and the meeting was duly adjourned at 6:37 p.m. The next regular meeting of the Boston Civic Design Commission was scheduled for May 2, 2017. The recording of the April 4<sup>th</sup>, 2017 Boston Civic Design Commission meeting was digitized and is available at the Boston Redevelopment Authority.