

MINUTES

BOSTON CIVIC DESIGN COMMISSION

The meeting of the Boston Civic Design Commission was held on Tuesday, August 4, 2020, and was held virtually to ensure the safety of the public, staff members, and the BPDA Board Members during the COVID-19 situation, and beginning at 5:15 p.m. Members in attendance were Deneen Crosby, Linda Eastley, , Eric Höweler, Anne-Marie Lubeanu, Andrea Leers, David Manfredi, Paul McDonough, Kirk Sykes, and William Rawn. Absent was David Hacin and Mikyoung Kim. Elizabeth Stifel, Executive Director of the Commission, was present, as were several BPDA staff including Natalie Punzak, Matt Martin, and John Dalzell.

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. Following a roll call of the present Commissioners, 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 Friday, July 24, in the BOSTON HERALD.

The first item was the approval of the July 7, 2020 Monthly Meeting Minutes, and the Design Committee Minutes from meetings on July 14, 21, and 28, 2020. A motion was made, seconded, and it was duly

VOTED: To approve the July 7, 14, 21, and 28, 2020 BCDC Meeting Minutes.

The next item was an informational presentation on the **Fort Point District 100 Acres Masterplan** by Richard McGuinness, Deputy Director for Climate Change and Environmental Planning for the BPDA. The Masterplan area is bounded by South Boston Bypass Road, Summer Street, West Second Street, and the Fort Point Channel. In 2006, this masterplan was completed after a 10-year public planning process and was codified into zoning and includes entitlements for building envelope and use, and accounts for 7 acres of open space within the plan area. Coastal change due to sea level rise and flood events were not accounted for in the 2006 plan and have serious implications for this neighborhood in the future. The Climate Ready and Coastal Resilient Solutions reports from the city show a flood pathway off the Fort Point Channel through this site, so a significant effort of programming and design will be flood mitigation and resilience. Sasaki Architects has been working with the City and neighborhood to develop design and programming for the open space network.

Deneen Crosby: I think it's critical to think about how water, whether tidal or weather-related, will face the buildings in the future. Do the current proposed schemes each consider the elevation of open space in the same way?

Richard McGuinness: The grade change will happen from Necco Street to the Harborwalk while trying to maintain as much usable open space and ground floor activity on the interior of buildings as possible.

Linda Eastley: Signage and wayfinding to water even if views to water will not be possible because of the elevated grade will be important.

The Commission moved to reports from Design Committee, the first being for the **15 Necco Street project** in the South Boston Waterfront neighborhood. David Manfredi was recused.

Mark Sardenga, Elkus Manfredi Architects: This project came before the full Commission at the December 2019 Monthly Meeting, and comments then were focused on the building podium in relation to the top. To be consistent with the 100 Acres Design Guidelines and MHP, the base is masonry instead of a singular curtain wall. We've studied integrating these materials with the upper volume, building coloration, and the transition the building makes at the 6th floor terrace/break between the podium and upper volume. The building podium aligns with 5 Necco Street, our neighbor to the North.

Simon Beer, OJB: The landscape design has been informed by the 100 Acre Open Space planning process so far. Elevating the site up to 21' and including berm/blockade elements to be flood ready pose challenges to accessible pathways, but we are creating barrier-free pathways and places to sit wherever possible. Lighting and plantings will help keep the site active and visually engaging during winter.

William Rawn: I want to compliment the proponent on the dialogue this project had and responded to with the Commission.

Kirk Sykes: The southern elevation feels especially successful. As you detail the façade, I hope the textured nature of the façade that is evident up close can be visible from the Harborwalk and views from the Summer Street bridge.

Linda Eastley: This building is incredibly unique because it has public open space on three sides and the contribution it will make to Boston's public realm is huge in that sense. I'd love for you to keep thinking about the entry to the building across Necco Street. Think about those visual queues for pedestrians to both the water and building entry, as these might be challenged by a high ground elevation that blocks views.

Public comment: Given the inland flooding concerns, why have hardscape materials been chosen for a berm?

Simon Beer: There is a robust underground drainage system to capture water and some of the hardscape features help direct water on site.

Hearing no other comments, a motion was made, then seconded, and

VOTED: That the Commission recommend approval for the proposed 15 Necco Street project in the South Boston waterfront neighborhood.

Next was the report from Design Committee for **401 Congress Street** in the South Boston waterfront.

John Hynes, BGI: Through the Commission's review we've worked to make the pedestrian focused triangle parcel as connected and accessible at all hours and improve pedestrian circulation around the site. This project is at the intersection of Congress Street, World Trade Center Ave, and the on/off ramp to I-90.

Victor Vizgaitis, Sasaki: The biggest changes to this project since the Commission first saw the project in November 2019 are the pedestrian triangle. Clear accessible path and open area underneath this park at the ground level. Maximizing pedestrian connectivity through the building and site. The landscape will be fully ADA-accessible without any hand railings. We've talked with the Commission about the language of building arches, especially at the entry at the corner of World Trade Center Ave. We still prefer the arch at this corner to welcome people into the building, which will have an auditorium space as a community amenity, because it's more unique and bold as a public entry.

Deneen Crosby: I think this landscape is successful in conveying pathways. But I do worry about the lack of views in and out because of the fences and how this might impact safety.

Kirk Sykes: Can you talk about why someone might visit the public space underneath the park?

John Hynes: We've been working with a programming consultant to think about how to use this space. Right now, we envision opportunities for food and arts programming during the day, and we intend for it to be fully flexible. BGI is committed to programming and managing this space as part of this development agreement with Massport.

Linda Eastley: It's wonderful to see a proponent take on this project as seriously as you have, especially with the public realm being such a large part of the program. Regarding the arch at the entry, I feel that having the zipper at the corner come to the ground without the arch helps draw attention to the main structural arches. And the last comment would

be that wayfinding should be part of the public realm plan given the complex relationship in elevation from Congress Street up to World Trade Center Ave through the triangle park.

Andrea Leers: This is a tremendously ambitious project and has resolved many difficult conditions beautifully, and I thank you for this project.

Hearing no other comments, the project was moved, seconded, and

VOTED: That the Commission recommend approval for the 401 Congress Street project in the South Boston waterfront neighborhood.

There being no further items for discussion, a motion was made to adjourn, and the meeting was duly adjourned at 6:45 p.m. The recording of the August 4, 2020 Boston Civic Design Commission meeting was digitized and is available at the Boston Redevelopment Authority.