BCDC APPROVED

MINUTES
BOSTON CIVIC DESIGN COMMISSION

The meeting of the Boston Civic Design Commission was held on Tuesday, March 07, 2023, and was held virtually via Zoom to ensure the safety of the public, staff members, and the BPDA Board Members during the COVID-19 pandemic, and beginning at 5:00 p.m. **Members in attendance were** Commissioners Andrea Leers, Deneen Crosby, Mimi Garza Love, Linda Eastley, David Manfredi, Kirk Sykes, William Rawn, David Hacin and Anne-Marie Lubeanu. Elizabeth Stifel, Executive Director of the Commission, along with Urban Designers Kenya Thompson, Scott Slarsky and Planner Patricia Cafferky 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 February 22, 2022, in the BOSTON HERALD.

The first item was the approval of the February 7, 2023 Monthly Meeting Minutes, and the Design Committee Minutes from meetings on February 14, February 21 and February 28, 2023. A motion was made, seconded, and it was duly.

VOTED: To approve the February 7, February 14, February 21 and February 28, 2023 BCDC Meeting Minutes.

Next on the agenda was a BPDA staff presentation of PLAN Charlestown presented by Planner Patricia Cafferky. This segment was shared with the Commissioners to give context of the many projects happening in the current plan.

Votes were passed for signature. The next item was a report from the Review Committee on the 361 Belgrade Avenue project. Review is recommended. It was moved, seconded, and

VOTED: That the Commission review the schematic design for the proposed 361 Belgrade Avenue project in the Roslindale neighborhood.

The Commission moved into Votes of Recommendation for projects from Design Committee.
The first presentation was for **361 Belgrade Avenue**

Benjamin Thomas, Jake Upton, Mitch Fischman and Michael Radner Presented

RW: Want to compliment the new intervention of turning the courtyard towards the street and not towards the tracks, it's a far stronger projects for that change.

ML: This project had a real transformation in a positive way. The proponent struggles with the site change of nineteen feet, and really came out with a really smart and simple solution. The materials have simplified and in returned has strengthened the scheme. The retail is going to be an added component for the development and neighborhood as well. Continue to strengthen entry points.

DM: Your development of this whole streetscape, the scale and since of invitation is really nice. The scale will be bigger than the surrounding neighbors, but appropriate.

LE: I think its cleaver how you have taken the scale down in parts of the building to reflect what is happening across the street, this also makes the sidewalk feel much wider at these points and provides relief. The pedestrian experience has become much better.

DH: The project feels more anchored unto the site and with a clearer edge to the retail.

AL: I did not see this in the earlier versions, but hearing where you have gotten to reminds me of how great this process of review can be when design teams are talented and open to change. You really made important changes in a way the benefit the project.

KS: Excellent job

There was one public comment.

Johanna Hynes: A resident of the area wanted to know if any trees were coming down and has there been an inventory of the tress existing?

It was moved, seconded, and

VOTED: That the BCDC recommend approval for 361 Belgrade Avenue.

The Commission moved to project presentations, the first being for **40 Roland Street** in the Charlestown Neighborhood.

Phil Casey, David Nagahiro and Laura Rushfeldt Presented

LE: What's happening between 40 Roland and Cambridge Street, the parcels that you don't own? How do your four parcels tie into the larger vision? This is a complicated series of sites. When someone enters Charlestown form I93, your sites will be the gateway. I appreciate the urban design moves you are making such as improving the bridge, the continued multipurpose path and the streetscape along Cambridge St. In subcommittee, I would love to understand more about the context because you are influencing so many parts of this sub neighborhood. How do these site look in the immediate context and the broader context so we can get a since of heights. Would there be a possibility for connecting some of these streets through?

AML: Would you also add in the northern edge of Cambridge Street in your context analysis. This will help in us in understanding how you anticipate future change.

DC: Is there a way to make a cross connection from site # 2 and site #7, making that a more penetrable block would go a long way. I know it's not happening now, but anticipating. This boundary between the project and the highway and railroad, what is happening here and your attitude towards that edge. This will be a publicly used front, and currently your approach look like a back of house/ highway transportation mesh. Please think more about it as a public face and a space you would want to be in. Please provide some sections through this areas because there is a lot of grade change.

RW: I am concerned with issues around Roland Street, and it being a dead end situation for a 600,000SF building. Is this site owned by the same enterprise?

DM: Please share more about the preservation efforts of 24 Roland and 40 Roland Street, because I am interested in how the new and the old will meet each other. In subcommittee show more of the surrounding historic pieces that have inspired this project.

ML: When are coming as a pedestrian from Sullivan Square to this area, there is a retail component. These buildings come close to an over pass and I want a better understand of what that space feels like. What can we do

to make it really attractive to come to Roland Street from Sullivan Square Station? It would be nice to see what it looks like walking from Sullivan Square to the residential area with the improvements you are proposing. Sections would be really helpful and appreciated.

AL: This is pretty complex, managing four separate parcels really close to the highway. Looking more closely at the way the two housing buildings work, how they work together as a piece, that's a real opportunity. It would be an invitation to this area. The relation between the two buildings... maybe they are rather similar or slightly different versions of the same building. This will help anchor, and define and begin the conversation in this new area. Right now they are so different.

LE: When see a lot of projects where open space is put on the edge. This is going to be an extremely noisy edge. Maybe even impossible to sit and have a conversation and be able to collaboratively hear one another. Could there be another location where this kind of outdoor experience would be more conducive to the acoustics.

There were two public comments.

Johanna Hynes: This area has been labeled as historically industrial in this presentation. Prior to the taking of Charlestown, this area was quite green and even had a big park called The Charlestown Common. It was taken to make the MBTA. The corridor currently covers the Middlesex Canal which is a national landmark. Things that were green were actually removed when Boston annexed Charlestown. Olmsted's vision was of Sullivan Square Park, not a rotary. Ryan Playground and Charlestown Heights was a place making network along the mystic.
All of the development eventually blocked a lot of light into the neighborhood, still the residence of Sullivan Square, the Lost Village, are not anti-development, and have greater hopes for improvements. They don't feel like they are the historic part of Charlestown. I'd like to see the historic land use report. This was an important area during the Revolutionary War.

Joanne Masarro: My question is about traffic along Cambridge Street. What you have in the images is not accurate. Traffic is standstill many days, especially off of 93. How to you plan to reconcile this traffic other than sidewalks and tress for the traffic here?

The project will be sent to subcommittee.

The next project was **60-66 Cambridge Street** in the Charlestown Neighborhood.

Michael Barelli and Joe Mamayek Presented

AML: I am interested in learning how this project addressed multiple contexts and scales of the public realm. We have the local, the district, and because of its scale and location. How does the project respond to the street scale? Please provide more material of the existing context, so we can see how it responds to the adjacent texture of the neighborhoods, and being up against an elevated highway and proximity to Sullivan Square and a potential landmark for the neighborhood. A little reminder that the view of the skyline is part of our public realm and there are several layers of public realm. Think about those long views particularly in an emerging district like this, and the framework of context is important.

AL: We've been introduced to the larger plan, and I think we have gone too quickly into the detail. This site is immediately adjacent to the Hood structure. The future buildings along Stack Street have been closely looked at. You have the opportunity on this site to make a beautiful conclusion of the system of buildings that's already happening in the Hood Site. I feel like you have treated this like an isolated site. Look at the massing better fit with the urban fabric of the future Stack Street development. The open space between the two massing doesn't make sense to me, where it is and how it is. I see the intention to maybe extend Stack Street. I would just back up with all the details that you already know and look at other ways to put this mass which makes it feel like a continuous

urban fabric. Look at what you have done in comparison to the Charlestown Plan. Is this the density, the amount of site, how much open space was imagined, as part of the Charlestown Plan? You had a lot of details in this plan, let's back it up more to an urban scale.

LE: This feels like a suburban solution to a very complex neighborhood and tight site. The development south of you has worked hard to set up an urban neighborhood framework. I understand that Stack Street may create an odd intersection at Cambridge Street. Are there ways to welcome the end of Stack Street in a different way, instead of offsetting space on either side, and to create a better public realm? What this scheme does really well, it creates a buffer from the off ramp, but once that buffer is created, having a different scale that steps down D Street and Spice Street.

DM: Please pull further out to show site context, on the opposite side of Rutherford Avenue and the development coming to Sullivan Square to better understand the surrounding patterns. The view corridor along Stack is an interesting industrial landmark for the city. Also show perspectives from the ground in a car, and coming down from the ramp.

ML: Its really interesting seeing 40 Roland St right before this presentation, is there connectivity between these two sites? The way this building is positioned, it really challenges that notion. Even with all of the public realm and the thoughtful programing of the ground plain. Maybe more coordinating with development can help with establishing a connectivity and go with the Plan Charlestown is trying to achieve.

RW: In that material, can you make sure to show us all the movement patterns, the pedestrian patterns from the various T stops in the Sullivan Square area and how they connect to the site.

There was one public comment.

Paul Hues: the project is too dense, too huge too high. Currently Charlestown has up to 13 different projects happening that will build an urban wall. The residence will be faced with losing our open space, our mature trees, an increase in shadows, making the heat island effect worse, increasing water pollution and flood control issues, making parking worse and traffic, and the population will increase. All of these issues need to be address in a comprehensive master plan instead of looking at these issues one at a time.

The project will be sent to subcommittee.

The next project was **165 Park Drive** in the Fenway Neighborhood.

Peter Spellios, Jay Szymanski and Sean Sanger Presented

AL: There are two things for me working against the backdrop of the church, one is in plan and the other is in massing. The fact that the building is not parallel to the street, or to the church or to the buildings across the street; I think it's really disruptive. It's very hard to think of it as a quiet background building when it's following an arbitrary site line. I urge you to look at ways that wing of the building to be parallel to the street and parallel church will make it fell more like a backdrop. I'm not persuaded by the breakdown of building #2 as being a good responsive move. It's much too active as a backdrop to the church. I urge you to look for a simple common height, something that is no adjective and a good fabric building. Keep in mind they are meant to be a backdrop to a jewel, and I believe you will figure out the entry.

DC: It would be helpful to see this with a larger plan. Being parallel to the street would help and be more consistent with the context. I can see the grade is dropping off to the church, I think working more to try and increase that level area. Maybe another ten or so feet would help a level space and make it feel a lot more comfortable area as opposed to a pit.

DM: I wanted to pick up the building and make it parallel to Kilmarnock Street, the triangle is incredibly annoying. This is a very important project with the mix of affordable home ownership and the market apartments. There is an extremely difficult property line, and not the project to acquire additional real estate. You have parking at grade, which is actually parking for the church and not the residence. So will there be zero parking a grade for the residence? Please show how you are treating the perimeter on the first floor, how does the building meet the ground beyond the interior courtyard? I don't know anything about the parcel next door, and this project is very close to the property line. Is that parcel developable, and if so, what it endanger those units that face that side?

ML: In reference to the simplicity of the massing... I don't think that the eroding of the upper levels is helping at all to make the building a fabric building. Within the context of the surrounding areas, do you have some great views and they are just brick fabric buildings, which is exactly what you want to be as you describe it. I would think that the materiality can be that of a singular material, then the massing can be a lot simpler.

RW: This view in separates the apartment building from the church, and there is something pleasantly embracing about this entry and it is not fighting against the geometries. I also don't understand how we can put this level of massing on this site. Do we have to pull back this right hand building so that it's parallel to the street? Overall, it is still an embracing building even though it's out of the Fenway texture. S

There were no public comments.

The project will continue in design committee.

There being no further items for discussion, a motion was made to adjourn, and the meeting was duly adjourned at 7:40 p.m. The next regular meeting of the Boston Civic Design Commission was scheduled for March 14, 2023. The recording of the March 7, 2023 Boston Civic Design Commission meeting was digitized and is available at the Boston Redevelopment Authority.

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DESIGN COMMITTEE OF THE BOSTON CIVIC DESIGN COMMISSION

March 14, 2023

5:00 pm, Held virtually via Zoom
Project: **155 N Beacon St**, Allston
Present: Commissioner David Hacin, Commissioner Mimi Love

DISCUSSION:

The Project team used a digital presentation to outline their approach and project updates, focusing on direct responses to feedback given at the previous Design Committee meeting. The Commissioners praised the simplifications and general massing and site strategies, but asked for further exploration of the mechanical penthouses. It was suggested that the mechanical screens take on a more architectural character that more directly relates to the rest of the building, such as by using a similar color or an extension of materiality. The Commissioners also recommended that the project team explore bringing the landscape design of the interior courtyard out into the streetscape, to make use of the wide sidewalk dimensions along North Beacon.

The Project will return to the full Commission.

6:00 pm
Project: **Stanhope Hotel**, Back Bay
Present: Commissioner David Hacin, Commissioner Mimi Love

DISCUSSION:

The Project team used a digital presentation to outline their approach, focusing on site design, landscape, and resilience strategies. The Commissioners acknowledged the rich detail of the design and the comprehensive approach to designing the variety of spaces around the site. The Project Team was advised to think about how people would move through exterior spaces from building to building, and how the planting and design of the "Ways" could differ according to the program and use of the adjacent buildings. It was also recommended that the project team find an appropriate balance between ornamental plants and native species. A member of the public spoke to ask about the connection of the Ramble to Doherty Park.

The Project will continue in Design Committee.

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MINUTES

DESIGN COMMITTEE OF THE BOSTON CIVIC DESIGN COMMISSION

March 21, 2023

5:00 pm, Held virtually via Zoom
Projects: **Fenway Corners**, Fenway
Present: Commissioner Rawn Williams, Commissioner Anne-Marie Lubenau, Commissioner Kirk Sykes, Commissioner David Manfredi, Commissioner Mikyoung Kim, and Commissioner Jonathan Evens

DISCUSSION:

The Project team shared project updates which were focused on streetscape improvements for Van Ness Street, Lansdowne Street, Ortiz Drive, Jersey Street and Arthur Alley. The commissioners asked for diagrams showing streetscape hierarchy along with vehicular and pedestrian circulation in the area. The commissioners enjoyed the incorporation of the stair cases and concluded that these places will gather an audience and excited. Still, there was concern about accessibility and inclusivity for all visitors.

There were a few public comments about the overdevelopment of the Fenway area. Residences would like a hold on new construction until assessment of a future transportation plan from BTD. Residence would also like a non-motorized pedestrian way in this area.

The Project will continue in Design Committee.

6:00 pm, Held virtually via Zoom
Projects: and **Dorchester Bay City**, Dorchester
Present: Commissioner Rawn Williams, Commissioner Anne-Marie Lubenau, Commissioner Kirk Sykes, Commissioner David Manfredi, Commissioner Mikyoung Kim, and Commissioner Jonathan Evens

DISCUSSION:

The Project team shared project updates which were focused on improvements with the public realm's walk to the sea, iconic buildings and landscape ecology. Commissioners agreed that there is still a lot of lawn in the landscape and they would like more ecotypes and resiliency efforts in the designated open spaces. The current building structures feel like a corporate campus in relation to the existing residential Harbor Point neighborhood and the unique location by the waterfront.

There were a few public comments about the pleasantries with the design team in community engagement process with residence in planning for the area.

The Project will continue in Design Committee.

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BOSTON CIVIC DESIGN COMMISSION
Tuesday, March 28, 2023

Virtual Meeting
BPDA is continuing to host public meetings in a virtual setting for the health, safety, and accessibility of Boston residents.

REVISED AGENDA

Register in advance for this Zoom meeting: bit.ly/BCDCMarch28
Or join by calling 669 254 5252 or 833 568 8864 (Toll Free) with Meeting ID: 161 591 6472

5:00 pm **Mary Ellen McCormack Redevelopment**, South Boston

6:00 pm **Stanhope Hotel**, 39 Stanhope Street, Back Bay

Register in advance for this Zoom meeting: bit.ly/BCDCMarch2815Washington
Or join by calling 669 254 5252 or 833 568 8864 (Toll Free) with Meeting ID: 160 132 3689

6:00 pm **Fenway Corners**, Fenway

All are welcome to attend.
Thank you for your interest in the public realm of the City of Boston