

## MINUTES BOSTON CIVIC DESIGN COMMISSION

The meeting of the Boston Civic Design Commission was held on Tuesday, October 3, 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 Linda Eastley, Jonathan Evans, Shauna Gillies-Smith, Mikyoung Kim, Kathy Kottaridis, Mimi Love, Anne-Marie Lubenau, Catherine T. Morris, William Rawn, Laura Solano, and Kirk Sykes. Elizabeth Stifel, Executive Director of the Commission, was present. Representatives of the BSA attended. Diana Fernandez, Adam Johnson, Alexa Pinard, Scott Slarsky, and Lizzie Turac were present for the BPDA.

The Chair, Mimi Love, 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 in the BOSTON HERALD.

The first item was the approval of the September 5 Monthly Meeting Minutes, and the Design Committee Minutes from meetings on September 19. A motion was made, seconded, and it was duly

**VOTED: To approve the September BCDC Meeting Minutes.**

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The next item was a report from the Review Committee on the **Franciscan Children's Hospital Institutional Master Plan and 30 Warren Street** project. Review is recommended. It was moved, seconded, and

**VOTED: That the Commission review the schematic design for the proposed Franciscan Children's Hospital Institutional Master Plan and 30 Warren Street project in the Brighton neighborhood.**

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The Commission moved into Votes of Recommendation for projects from Design Committee.

The first presentation was for **415 Newbury Street in Back Bay**.

Kirk Sykes: I was at the last subcommittee meeting. We were appreciative of the increase in depth at the sidewalk on both the residential portion and the enhanced arcade setbacks. This design is an appropriate transition from the historic fabric to the more modern buildings such as Parcel 12. We had concerns about lighting and safety, but felt that staff could continue to work with them on it.

Mimi Love: This site is very tight. The sidewalks are extremely narrow, and the proponent has been responsive to our comments.

Linda Eastley: In the alley, is there an entry?

Alfred Wojciechowski: *Clarifies the alley entrance usage.*

Linda Eastley: I like the idea that you're creating a district-scale solution here. I appreciate that you took care to think about pedestrians and avoiding conflicts with vehicles.

Two members of the public spoke to voice concerns about the size and zoning path of the project.

It was moved, seconded, and

**VOTED: That the BCDC recommend approval for 415 Newbury Street.** Bill Rawn and Shauna Gillies-Smith were recused.

The next project was **100 Charles Park** in **West Roxbury**.

Catherine Morris: The team has responded to all of our comments. The current design feels fuller and has more connections to the buildings around it.

David Manfredi: The massing design leads to a disintegration of the power of the facades. I would ask BPDA staff to continue to work on that. What's on the roof? Will it be screened?

Dennis Greenwood: Yes.

Linda Eastley: It sounds like other through-block connections will need to be figured out in the future.

Mimi Love: This project has been responsive. There's probably more studying to do with BPDA staff on how the rhythm of the red brick panels will read. We didn't have a landscape architect in our last meeting, so I wonder about that central landscape.

Mikyong Kim: It would be useful to have more information about the site materials. I would recommend continuing to work with BDPA to ensure this feels like a warm entry point.

Laura Solano: The proportion of green to pavement is a little overwhelming. There's not a sense of place. I also wonder about the street trees and lawn.

Shauna Gillies-Smith: It might be helpful to BPDA staff if you have a drawing with the canopy and without the canopy.

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

**VOTED: That the BCDC recommend approval for 100 Charles Park, provided that the project team continues to work with BPDA staff on further developing the landscape design.**

The next project was **125 Tremont Street** in **Downtown**.

Diana Fernandez: This project is full of metaphors. We've all been grappling with the screen, and we appreciate the studies and further refinement. There's certainly more work to be done, and we can continue to explore how this can meet the ephemeral effect the team is seeking. Overall this is a real opportunity.

Jonathan Evans: I appreciate the clarity of the narrative and the commitment to carrying that through the design. The Eisenhower precedent is useful. I would echo the concern about the expression of the screen frame. I'm also wondering about maintenance – how will it weather, what do you do about birds, etc. I'm excited.

David Hacin: It's a beautiful project. I share Jonathan's concerns about maintenance—we live in a very harsh environment. Make sure nothing slips through the cracks. The whole project is incredibly sophisticated and I hope the signage is as sophisticated as the rest of the skin.

Kirk Sykes: I appreciate the changes you've made. You've worked hard to negotiate a tight corner. The recessed entry and diagonal pathway is a good resolution to a challenging scenario.

Linda Eastley: The urban design moves for this project are good. I appreciate the teams ambition with the facade materials – it still worries me for the reasons others have discussed. I had a chance to see the Corning Glass Museum recently, and the white granite is stunning. Are there opportunities to let that material come through a bit more? The success of this project will be in the detailing. As you're working on the facade materials, there might be a way to incorporate the poetry of the pulling back of the curtain with the interior experience.

Laura Solano: This project is so refreshing. Just as the bay breaks the plane, is there an opportunity for the ground plane to do so as well?

David Manfredi: There have been some great comments about details. The metaphor is powerful.

Mimi Love: I've thought about this project more than other projects, despite its scale. I do wonder about the mesh, but there's time to develop it. You've been very responsive and I don't think there's anything more I can ask you to do.

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

**VOTED: That the BCDC recommend approval for 125 Tremont Street.**

The next project was **25-39 Harvard Avenue in Allston.**

Shauna Gillies-Smith: Even among all of the great landscape design, the most genius part of this design is the parking strategy. Other projects could learn from it. The team has also been good about helping the access to the blue bikes feel public.

Linda Eastley: The courtyard has been a huge improvement and the team has been very responsive. The parking solution is clever. The massing feels really good.

Mimi Love: I haven't seen anything related to lighting of the landscape components or the street facade. Keep that in mind as you continue to develop the drawings.

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

**VOTED: That the BCDC recommend approval for 25-39 Harvard Avenue.**

The next project was **475-511 Dorchester Avenue in South Boston.**

Linda Eastley: Stormwater retention could be a really elegant solution within the park programming. I feel comfortable with the way the project has progressive—the massing, the setbacks, the podia, etc. There isn't a lot of open space in this area and this project goes a long way.

Laura Solano: The use diagrams are terrific, particularly for the larger space. I don't necessarily agree with all of the uses. Each open space should be unique.

Anne-Marie Lubenau: It's exciting to see the addition of such substantial green space. I'd like to see a cross-section across Dorchester Avenue to understand changes in scale and the ground plane. Are there opportunities to look at new ways to use the space?

Catherine Morris: Is the size and capacity of each active open space related to access? The ratio of how people can get there, stay there, and participate needs to be thought about. Be mindful of the different entrances and capacities.

A member of the public spoke in support of the project

it was moved, seconded, and

**VOTED: That the BCDC recommend approval for 475-511 Dorchester Avenue.**

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The Commission moved to the project presentations for **Franciscan Children's Hospital Institutional Master Plan and 30 Warren Street** in the Brighton neighborhood. Jennifer Atlas and Martin Batt presented the project. BPDA Urban Design staff introduced the planning and urban design context.

Anne-Marie Lubenau: I'd like to understand more about how the site currently operates. Projects like this can involve reframing or reorganizing existing uses. I'd also like to understand some of the decision that went into these processes. A site section would be interesting to see. You referred to a plaza, but it looks more like a parking lot at this point.

Bill Rawn: Building 2 seems like the major building in this project. Is there a reason that the connection of the new building to building 2 needs to close up that gap when the space facing building 2 has a clarity that will get altered?

Jonathan Evans: Overall, I'd like a clearer urban design framework to understand how people move through the space in both the existing and proposed condition. I'd also like to understand the larger argument about what the front door of the project is.

Shauna Gillies Smith: I applaud the major moves, but there is a volumetric discomfort between building 2 and the new building. How is the ground plan manifest in three dimensions? We need a real clarity in what is public and what isn't public.

Laura Solano: I'd like to understand the need for ringing the project with a road. How do the existing entries work? Is there any way to make connections? One of the most powerful tools for this population is exposure to nature. I'm wondering whether some studies about parking and how much room it needs would be useful.

Catherine Morris: Building 2 is the heartbeat that gives life to all of the buildings around it. What is the story you want to tell?

Linda Eastley: I'd like to see more about the three-dimensionality. How does the proposed open space respond to and benefit your patients and students? It could be active open space for the courtyards, or visual-what is the positive impact of long views?

Laura Solano: It's going to be important to think about how stormwater is managed on this site.

A member of the public spoke to comment on open space, trees, and the streetscape around the project.

The project will move to Design Committee.

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There being no further items for discussion, a motion was made to adjourn, and the meeting was duly adjourned at 7:56 p.m. The next regular meeting of the Boston Civic Design Commission was scheduled for November 14, 2023. The recording of the October 3, 2023 Boston Civic Design Commission meeting was digitized and is available at the Boston Redevelopment Authority.