

BOSTON CIVIC DESIGN COMMISSION MINUTES

The meeting of the Boston Civic Design Commission was held on Tuesday, June 5, 2018, starting in Room #900, Boston City Hall, and beginning at 5:25 p.m.

Members in attendance were: Co-Vice-Chair Michael Davis, Co-Vice-Chair Paul McDonough, Kirk Sykes, William Rawn, Deneen Crosby, and Daniel St. Clair. Absent were David Hacin, David Manfredi, Linda Eastley, and Andrea Leers. Also present was David Carlson, Executive Director of the Commission. Representatives of the BSA were present. Natalie Punzak, Raul Duverge, and Michael Cannizzo were 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 Thursday, May 24, in the BOSTON HERALD.

The first item was the approval of the May 1st, 2018 Meeting Minutes. A motion was made, seconded, and it was duly

VOTED: To approve the May 1st, 2018 BCDC Meeting Minutes.

Votes were passed for signature. William Rawn (WR) recused himself from the next item. The next item was a report from the Review Committee on the **Harbor Square (Seaport Square L Block open space) Project**. David Carlson (DAC) noted that a condition noted during the review of the updated Seaport Square (and referenced during the review of Parcel L4) requires that this open space would be reviewed as a separate project. A new vote to review was recommended. It was moved, seconded, and

VOTED: That the Commission review the schematic design for the Harbor Square Open Space on the 'Upper L Blocks' in the Seaport Square PDA, in the South Boston Waterfront District.

William Rawn (WR) returned. The next item was a report from the Review Committee on the **Fan Pier Parcel E Project**. DAC noted that this parcel is the last development in the Fan Pier area to the West. As a condition of the Fan Pier PDA, every parcel must return to BCDC for review and approval. The project is over 200,000 sq. ft., and a new vote to review was recommended. It was moved, seconded, and

VOTED: That the Commission review the schematic design for Fan Pier Parcel E in the Boston Fan Pier PDA within the South Boston Waterfront District.

The next item was a report from the Review Committee on the **217 Albany Street (Ink Block 7)**, the final building of multi-building project. DAC noted that though the project is not part of a PDA, it is over 100,000 sq. ft. and review is recommended. It was moved, seconded, and

VOTED: That the Commission review the schematic design for the 217 Albany Street Project (Ink Block 7) at the corner of Albany and Herald streets in the Ink Block Project in the South End neighborhood.

The next item was a report from the Review Committee on the **Orient Heights Redevelopment Project (BHA) NPC**. DAC noted that typically this design update would not come before the commission for review, but it is recommended that the team present an update of the substantial modifications to the previously BCDC-approved Phases II and III of the master plan. The commission has the option to vote to reopen review upon seeing the presentation, though no formal action is required.

The next item was a report from the Review Committee on the **Kenmore Square Redevelopment Project**. Seven of the nine properties acquired by Related Beal are undergoing redevelopment, including complete redesign of two parcels. The development is over 200,000 sq. ft. and a new vote to review was recommended. It was duly moved, seconded, and

VOTED: That the Commission review the schematic design for the Kenmore Square Redevelopment Project and PDA at 560-574 Commonwealth Avenue and 645, 651, and 655-665 Beacon Street in the Fenway/Kenmore neighborhood.

The next item was a presentation of the **Seaport Square Block L4**. William Rawn was recused. David Manfredi arrived and was recused. Linda Eastley arrived.

Yanni Tsipis (YT), Senior Vice President of WS Development, introduced the updates to the project. Phase One of construction now extends to include the Central Green of Harbor Square Park. Materials and palette of the exterior facade were presented. Bob Perry (BP) of Gensler's San Francisco office presented studies of the South Tower facade, as requested by the commissioners in previous conversation. YT presented the design guidelines, developed in response to the Commission's request. BP presented the developed design of the Paseo, an

interior pedestrian passage programmed with retail and seating that connects East Service Road with the Central Green.

Deneen Crosby (DC): Will users be able to use the Paseo when the retail is closed? I can see that the side closest to the Central Green will be lively because of the programmed stair and relationship with the park.

YT: The building will be staffed with security, as the space will be accessible 24/7 as a passage and as an access point to the garage.

DC: I think the central interior relief space and seating will help enliven the space at all times of day.

Kirk Sykes (KS): Have you looked at making the entrance system collapsible to allow uninhibited connection from inside to outside?

YT: We started with that concept, but Boston's climate becomes a feasibility hindrance.

Linda Eastley (LE): I applaud the creation of this welcoming, public space, especially as has been enhanced by the more expressive, grand entries. I am wondering what the user experience would be like on the inside the Paseo's pinch point, and how one understands the through connection from the park to East Service Road.

BP: We explored options where this connection was a meandering path, but this straight axis strengthens a user's experience with visual connection. The passageway is programmed with continuous retail and public space as you move through.

LE: Think about the art wall on the interior as an opportunity to encourage the pedestrian to come through to the other side. The pinch point can still get better to help enliven what seems like a tight corridor.

DC: Height and public art will be really important in this passageway.

Paul McDonough (PM): What kind of retail do you envision here?

YT: Lively bars, restaurants, or cafes that help to enliven the space with long hours.

Daniel St. Clair (DS): Study the ability to create a recessed threshold along East Service Road, if you can. It might be nice to offer more than a 5' entry relief into the building

With that, and no public comment, it was moved, seconded and:

VOTED: That the commission recommends approval of the schematic design for Seaport Square Parcel L4 in the Seaport Square PDA, in the South Boston Waterfront District.

David Hacin arrived. The next item was presentation of **Harbor Square Park**.

Lisa Tziona Switkin (LTS) of James Corner Field Operations presented the design of the central park: The design is consistent with the proposal from the PDA, with the goal of creating a warm, welcoming, green public space. Sketches for a casual, varied experience were presented. A

variety of smaller, programmed zones welcome a diverse user group with an emphasis on families with children. The planting palette for the space includes significant shade and is visually and seasonally varied. The Central Green, which features large erratics, has transformed from a hardscape to a very green central gathering area. Materiality was inspired by the historic, natural material of the working waterfront in the Seaport, while introducing warmer tones in the wood boardwalk (which serves as site drainage), paving, and weathered steel planter edgings. Furnishings include custom stone seats, play features, a community table, swings, and custom benches, as well as traditional benches, bistro tables, and bike repair stations.

DC: Views of the water and historic building will be incredibly important to providing a sense of place and recognition. I am concerned about the overgrowth and potential enclosure of the Central Green. More open space is better in anticipation of growth.

LTS: We agree that it needs to feel open and accessible from Congress Street to Autumn Lane.

DC: Will you be providing the infrastructure for a winter skating program?

LTS: Yes.

LE: I think this is a really clever plan. There is something for everyone. I was glad that you said the paving palette is warm, especially for the winter; if you haven't, consider adding plants for the winter or elements like lighting or sculpture for an equally beautiful winter experience.

DC: What is the interim condition of the edge of the open space?

YT: There are several options right now, including murals and open retail. It's in our best interest for the area to be visually engaging in the interim.

With that, and no public comment, it was moved, seconded and:

VOTED: That the Commission recommends approval of the schematic design for the Harbor Square Open Space on the 'Upper L Blocks' in the Seaport Square PDA, in the South Boston Waterfront District.

William Rawn returned. The next item was a presentation of the **Fan Pier Parcel E Project**.

Richard Martini (RM) with the Fallon Company introduced the project and team, which includes Peter Zmuidzinas (PZ) & Christian Galvao (CG) of Elkus Manfredi Architects, the architects, and Richard Burck (RB) of Richard Burck Associates, the landscape architects.

PZ: This is a relatively compact parcel as compared with the other Fan Pier parcel footprints. The North-South artery of the site is used to locate primary retail frontage and building entry, and secondary East-West streets are used for service entries. Schematic floor plans and programs were presented.

CG: The building's form was shaped in order to break up the massing and soften the edges along Marina Park Drive. Setbacks and terraces break down the massing at the individual building

scale. The building piers, which are folded and taper vertically at each break, create texture on the facade and emphasize the curves of the facade.

RM: The project's park location has changed from the original PDA and the building is set back 35' from Marina Park Drive to accommodate Chapter 91 open space requirements.

David Hacin (DH): These renderings suggest a building that is very vertical, which I prefer to something a little smaller at the residential scale.

DS: The roof decks can help you relate to other elements as you step down in height.

RB: Furnishing and materials correspond with those previously selected and used in Fan Pier. The main landscape feature is a fountain that mimics the building's curve as water leads to a main vertical fountain located on axis with the Harborwalk. There are two scales of landscape plantings.

DC: This is both a walkway and a visual connection to the Institute of Contemporary Art. Can you make a stronger connection with this plaza and with the ICA?

RM: The completion of Parcel H will create another public space terminus, catty-cornered to the ICA.

DH: When this returns to sub-committee, I would like to address the height. The design is supported by something a little more vertical. I appreciate that you are opening up the view corridors. The setback to One Marina Park Drive creates a strong relationship. The corner relative to the Liberty Drive apartment building feels more abrupt. Consider whether the two sides should be as symmetrical as they currently are. The fluting of the piers is really interesting, and I'd like to keep discussing their design in the future.

LE: You aren't able to see the Harbor from this location because of the planters, so I would like to further discuss the plantings in subcommittee in order to preserve the view corridors of the harbor. The landscape doesn't feel resolved at 50 Liberty Drive so I'm wondering if something different can happen there. This is a really unique opportunity to see and protect the harbor.

WR: I want to compliment you for the boldness of this curvaceous edge in your building design. It's a welcomed relief from the orthogonal forms present in the Seaport.

KS: There an opportunity to look at the datum of the lower three levels and study the South corner of the building.

PM: The additions to the public realm are novel.

DC: Like Linda, I am interested in the way this public space relates to the ICA and Harborwalk.

With that, and no public comment, the **Fan Pier Parcel E Project** was sent to Design Committee.

The next item was a presentation of the **217 Albany Street (Ink Block 7) Project**.

Theodore Tye of National Development introduced the project. This parcel is the final piece of the Ink Block development. John Martin (JM) of Elkus Manfredi and John Copley (JC) of Copley Wolff presented the project design.

JM: We're proposing another tall piece to the Ink Block developments--156' to the top floor and 170' to the penthouse--to bookend the New York Streets of Harrison-Albany area. This building chamfers, inflecting to open to the corner in order to work with the existing immovable retaining wall (structurally required for loading dock & is a crash barrier) to create a residential entrance. The primary entrance of the building is a double-height transparent volume located off Albany Street. The entire ground floor is dedicated to a very transparent active, co-living amenity space for the 250 micro-unit apartments in the building. The architectural expression of the building is in its early stages, but every unit wants to be framed on the facade. From the West, the building is two interlocking volumes--one solid and one more transparent.

DH: This is a clever solution to a very difficult problem. I think the way you've treated the corner entry as a break and planting area is about as good as we could hope for. I think this site is a place for height as you've used it.

LE: The corner entry as it responds to the somewhat neglected side of the Ink Block development is very powerful. Has there been a consideration of softening the amenity floor and views to Whole Foods with canopy trees? I think it would help tremendously to make this a 3-sided building and screen a utilitarian view of the loading dock.

DC: The building's outdoor amenity space seems like it's framed by a loading dock.

JC: We agree, and our solution is to screen it on all sides.

DS: The gap between this building and Ink Block 1 does not feel very intentional. Consider architectural or programmatic interventions that could help resolve this gap.

KS: I worry about this gap on Herald Street being an uncomfortable place to be. Adding art could be an attractive solution.

DH: Why did you choose to relocate the billboard onsite?

TT: We were able to negotiate the long-term lease of the billboard to some extent, but we can't build a building without replacing it.

WR: To get to Harrison Ave seems like a chore. Have you considered a secondary entry?

JM: The early schemes had a sky connector, but this couldn't be a public route so we decided against it.

LE: I'd be comfortable approving, with the proponent working with staff to solve the design problems.

With that, and no public comment, it was moved, seconded, and

VOTED: That the Commission recommends approval of the 217 Albany Street Project (Ink Block 7) at the corner of Albany and Herald streets in the Ink Block Project in the South End neighborhood

The next item was a presentation of the **Orient Heights NPC**.

Nancy Ludwig (NL) of Icon Architecture presented the proposed changes to the development master plan. Phase One of the development is complete. The unit count is being reduced from 373 to 331 because the neighborhood has pushed back on increased density. Community facilities are to be expanded and the new plan doubles the resident and neighborhood open space. The existing Community Center is being renovated. The proposed connection to Vallar Road can no longer be constructed as planned, but street improvements that align with Boston's Complete Streets regulations will be made. LEED buildings in Phase One were proposed at Gold and achieved Platinum and are performing well.

WR: I'm trying to understand the nature of Waldemar Ave and why the community is opposed to providing a connection.

NL: Our issue relates to funding as allocated by federal money intended to create affordable housing units.

MD: When we saw the original master plan, we approved it without sending it to subcommittee. The revisions have decreased density and significantly increased open space, both of which are to the benefit of the public realm.

LE: Getting the basketball court down at street level is a good give-back in response to the elimination of the Waldemar roadway connection.

No further action was required, and no public comments were exchanged.

The next item was a presentation of the **Kenmore Square Redevelopment Project**. David Hacin was recused.

Kim Sherman of Related Beal introduced the design team, which includes architects Jake Watkins (JW) and Roger Ferris (RF) of Roger Ferris + Partners, and landscape architect Kyle Zick (KZ) of KZLA. JW and RF presented the existing context and proposed additions to the site. Two of the existing buildings on the project site will undergo renovation, and two will be completely redeveloped in response to their poor existing condition. The ground floor is programmed primarily with retail to activate the public realm. The office entry points are accentuated on the building facades. Amenities are created on outdoor balconies as the floors peel away to preserve views of the Citgo sign.

LE & WR requested future renderings to better illustrate the relationship between the new and existing buildings, and views of the Citgo sign from a variety of directions.

KZ presented public realm and streetscape improvements, which includes uniform street tree planting along Beacon Street, an expanded sidewalk, an arcade along the Commonwealth building, and significant public realm improvements.

LE: Are any of the buildings in this projected designated as landmarks?

A representative from Related Beal: The sign undergoing a process to become an official landmark, but none of the buildings are landmarked as the project is outside of a historic district.

LE: What I'm missing is the "why." I encourage you to consider the site context of this critical corner, at the gateway of BU. What I'd like to see when you come back, in model form if possible, is your project in relation to the larger context. The building seems to respond to Beacon and Commonwealth Ave, but I don't understand how it relates to Deerfield, the alleyway, or the experience of the building from the opposite approach on Commonwealth Ave.

WR: We would like to better understand this building in composition with the existing urban context and scale.

Gregg Galer, Boston Preservation Alliance: We've been advocating for the Citgo sign and views. We appreciate the frequent dialogue we've engaged in with the proponent. We share the commissioners' concerns about how this building dialogues with its neighbors. We're losing an interesting building at the corner. We want to see something that celebrates the square, and this has made progress from what we've seen previously, but it needs work. This design seems more reflective of a corporate office park, and the community has expressed concerns. We look forward to this going to subcommittee. Landmarks is focused on landmarking the sign.

Pam Beale of the IAG: We want this project to reach its full potential, and the corner building needs to relate to the square just as much as it responds to the Citgo sign.

With that, the **Kenmore Square Redevelopment Project** was sent to Design Committee.

There being no further items for discussion, a motion was made to adjourn, and the meeting was duly adjourned at 8:40 p.m. The next regular meeting of the Boston Civic Design Commission was scheduled for July 10, 2018. The recording of the June 5, 2018 Boston Civic Design Commission meeting was digitized and is available at the Boston Redevelopment Authority.