

## DRAFT MINUTES

### BOSTON CIVIC DESIGN COMMISSION

The meeting of the Boston Civic Design Commission was held on Tuesday, February 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2016, starting in the BRA Board Room, 9<sup>th</sup> Floor, Boston City Hall, and beginning at 5:29 p.m.

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

The Co-Vice-Chair, Mike 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 Tuesday, January 19, in the BOSTON HERALD.

The first item was the approval of the January 5<sup>th</sup>, 2016 Meeting Minutes. A motion was made, seconded, and it was duly

**VOTED: To approve the January 5<sup>th</sup>, 2016 Boston Civic Design Commission Meeting Minutes.**

Votes were passed for signature. The next item was a report from the Review Committee on the **530 Western Avenue Project**. David Carlson (DAC) noted that this project, at the highly visible corner of Leo Birmingham Parkway and Western Avenue, was over the BCDC threshold at about 125,000 SF, and review was recommended. It was duly moved, seconded, and

**VOTED: That the Commission review the schematic design for the 530 Western Avenue Residential Project at the intersection of Western Avenue and Leo M. Birmingham Parkway, in the North Allston-Brighton neighborhood.**

The next item was a report from the Review Committee on the **Cote Village Project** at 820 Cummins Highway. DAC noted that the Project was, at 94,000 SF, slightly under the BCDC review threshold, but at a significant location in its neighborhood adjacent to a new proposed commuter rail platform along Cummins Highway. Review

was therefore recommended. It was moved, seconded, and

**VOTED: That the Commission review the schematic design for the proposed Cote Village Project at 820 Cummins Highway and 30-32 Regis Road, in the Mattapan neighborhood.**

MD noted that the agenda allotted each Design Committee report to 15 minutes; teams should adhere to that, as the Commission is inclined to approve such projects. The next item was a report from the Design Committee on the **DOT Block Project**. Eric Robinson (ER) of RODE Architects introduced the Project's changes, first showing a new view of the Project accompanied by a plan showing the revised entry from Dot Ave. ER: We have worked with the BRA and BTD, and shifted the vehicular path northward, and widened the adjacent sidewalks on Dot Ave, contemplating the future of this area. (Shows plan detail, then a plan of the central area, then another of the revised Pleasant/Hancock intersection and that entry. Reprises a series of views, many the same as last seen in Committee. Shows a series of views around the block to recall the whole picture, and ends with views of the internal space.)

MD: Comments? We felt this was much improved.... Daniel St. Clair (DS): Is this all one phase? ER: Yes. DS: That's important for this site. Kirk Sykes (KS): There's a lot of transparency. You have come back from some odd choices with very good results. David Manfredi (DM): This has evolved over time and become quite good. The end walls as shown - I'm not quite convinced of the future. And I have a question about the turn lane into the Project from Dot Ave; it doesn't feel necessary. ER: We wanted to avoid queuing. MD: There's not much traffic in this area. DM: It feels suburban. But there is so much good about this. It would be good if you could eliminate that, I don't feel it's needed. KS: Do you have the view from Glover's Corner? (ER shows.) It looks bulky. ER explained the setback intended. KS: Think about how to address the visual impact. Deneen Crosby (DC): As you enter the site, treat it like a road going in, so that pedestrians are aware. With that, and with no public comment offered, it was moved, seconded, and

**VOTED: That the Commission recommends approval of the schematic design for the proposed DOT Block Project on the block bounded by Dorchester Avenue and Hancock, Pleasant, and Greenmount streets, in Dorchester's Glover's Corner neighborhood.**

Linda Eastley (LE) arrived. DM was recused from the next item. The next item was a report from Design Committee on the **Boston Landing Residential Project at 125 Guest Street**. MD repeated his prior admonition, noting that this had been seen recently and sent back to Committee - so focus ONLY on the changes. Mark Sardegna (MS) of Elkus Manfredi first showed the potential *future* traffic realignment to clarify the intent to be executed under this Project. He then showed a plan view, with the tower shifted north in the back, and stepped above. He showed views from Guest toward the corner (noting a story added there) and then the west tower element, noting changes in the facade planes and treatments. MS then gave a brief Project status update. KS:

The moves have improved it a lot. The extra mass helps along Guest; the tower is better. MD: Anything else? Was there a landscape issue? DC: The intersection (shown first), but nothing along Hichborn. With that, it was moved, seconded, and

**VOTED: That the Commission recommends approval of the schematic design for the proposed Boston Landing Residential Project at 125 Guest Street in the Boston Landing PDA Master Plan area, in the Allston/Brighton neighborhood.**

DM remained recused from the next item. The next item was a report from the Design Committee on the **Boston Garden Phases Two and Three**. Melissa Shrock (MS) of Boston Properties introduced the team. Devon Patterson (DP) of SCB presented the residential tower changes. DP: The glass is consistent on the building but for its reflectivity. Here, we have simplified it further, a clearer [articulation] of the diagram. (Shows before-and-afters, views, and examples of projects using similar glass - and one using similar vertical metal accents.) J. F. Finn (JF) of Gensler presented the hotel, noting a newer version of the HVAC enclosure at the top. He showed the massing, and compared it with other expressions of the same hotel brand. JF: This is not modular construction, shown in some of the structures. (Shows a precedent with art on the windows.) This (using art) is also part of the brand. There is one in NYC, and another being built; this would be the third in the US. (Shows a sample of what the hotel would look like with art, and compares to the Hancock installation.) We are still looking at wrapping the grid at the edges. We have windows now at the corridor ends.

MD: Did you study the location of the ADA room? JF: We looked at moving that, but thought it would attract too much attention. (The room shows slightly wider glass, and appears to align with the HVAC elevation above.) There is a lounge on the roof, with a signature red canopy. MD: So, you are not prepared with more information on the art? JF: No, but it will be curated throughout the property. DC: Is there a lobby on Causeway? JF: Yes. LE: The views of the art, from the pedestrian level...what is the experience? Is there art at that (lower) level? JF: You can see it from across the street, not directly below. There's a canopy on the street. LE: It would be good if some aspect of the art came to the street. Bryan Koop (BK) of Boston Properties explained the intent of the art briefly, noting a dynamic quality. JF: You're talking about it coming down...red color, the art, etc. LE: Yes. *Some* aspect...coming down to animate...given the scale of the Project. KS: It could be an interesting aspect to add to the dynamic aspects of Causeway Street. JF: There is a lot of effort to program this, to make it a dynamic experience. DS: Is this the same size as in NYC? Do you see activity in the lobby? JF: that's smaller, but something will be there. KS: Something of the scale, even down the windows. JF: That goes over the Aramark movie space, but we can think about it.

Doug Gensler (DG): There's been a significant reboot (on the office) since last we met. We are expressing the height. There is something to be said for the industrial expression. (Shows diagrams - height, context, view aspects, massing evolution. Shows context views from the Zakim, and Tobin. Shows a view of their proposal, noting layers, a series of planes, connecting the building to the podium.) The

Committee asked us to look at the podium connection, and the spire; it should be more engaged, part of the building. (Shows a section.) Now there is landscaping at the edge of the transfer level over the podium. (Shows a series of views of the top. Shows a labeled view with glass types, noting the structural characteristics and the central glass element.)

MD: The Committee was excited about the tower change. The spire is up to you. What about the connection to the podium on Causeway?  
DG: We didn't want it to sit on the podium; it's better to have a break.  
KS: The podium seems lighter here, not as black. That's much better, but it may be just how it's rendered. DG: It's actually two buildings, with entries next to each other on Causeway. (Some discussion over the views ensued.) MD: The entries could be more legible. DS: It's like walking around the Pru - you'll do it in your own self-interest. LE: I like the floating of the tower. From the Zakim, you don't see that. Does it carry around? DG: About 30' on each side. DS: It strikes me that that spire could do a little more. DG: This is LEED Platinum; it will have PV, and we are designing for that. The wind - is not in yet. MD appreciated the night view, and asked for comments. Kevin Bradley, a resident: Is it possible to articulate the spire, bring it all the way down? Do you know the height of that? DG: It's up in the air. Not hearing any further comments, it was moved, seconded, and

**VOTED: That the Commission recommends approval of the revised schematic designs for Phase Two (residential and hotel) and Phase Three (office) of the proposed Boston Garden Project at 80 Causeway Street to the south of the TD Bank Garden in the North Station Economic Development Area.**

BK noted that they would 'turn loose' on the art. DM returned.

The next item was a presentation of the **530 Western Avenue Project**. David Chilinski (DChil) of Prellwitz Chilinski Associates introduced his associate, David Snell. Snell noted the locus on a larger aerial, pointing out the relationship with the Charles River. In a closer view, showing the site, he pointed out the scale of the parkways. DC: With no crossings! Snell then noted the side streets, the residential context; he showed a sideways view, noting the existing conditions and the grade change. He showed a site plan. Snell: We are set back from the property line about 7' for wide sidewalks. (Shows the ground floor plan imposed on the site plan.) We are shielding the parking; we have 100' less in curb cuts on the site; and we are adhering to Complete Streets criteria, with street trees. (Shows a typical floor plan, the roof deck, and Project views.) Again, there are three distinct contexts. The blue (metal facade) color comes from the river. We have six stories to emphasize the corner. (Shows a view along Western.) We are shifting the scale between Western and the rear. (Shows the base zoning diagram, notes their use of metal panels.) At Waverly and on the Leo M. Birmingham side, we break the mass down to four stories. (Shows a SketchUp video starting at the Speedway building and running along the curve of the sidewalk. Shows views from the abutting streets - Waverly and Mackin. Shows elevations, noting the different contextual character of each side; shows shadow studies.

LE: Can you say something about the planning and zoning of the context? Snell noted the 35' height in zoning, and pointed out the

Santander bank site and gas station. LE: The zoning across Waverly...how should this transition? DS: At the entry, the verticality is powerful but not strong enough. On Western, it still feels like one long building. You could break that up, understanding the other buildings in the neighborhood. Snell: We can get the information. The Speedway Project also has a 70' building, but I'm not sure. KS: Actually, the concern is on the residential side. Breaking that down - Daniel is right - more in the proportion of those houses. The street presence seems like it needs awnings, scaling elements that break it up. And articulation of the non-covered parking. What is the view from the neighbors at that zero lot line? DC: It looks packed in toward the houses. This is a big, wide intersection that you can't get across anywhere. Snell: This has come up a lot, and it is a concern for us. We would like to help resolve it. MD: If you could bring ideas to Design Committee. DChil: There's no question that the issue has been a very hot conversation. DC: you could bring the trees around....

DM: There's a lot here to like. A lot of the moves are good; you need to make the distinction stronger. And take the inside a LOT further. I am totally unconvinced about your retail on the ground floor, especially in 3-D form. The BRA has studied Western, and retail along the edges is very important. I'm not convinced about the show windows if they're not curated. I know parking is a problem. But Barry's Corner acts as one anchor, and this is another - it's very important to make it successful. We had the same discussion at 180 Telford. You as an anchor here have to step up to that. Snell: We're good at the corner; we have to develop the plan on the others. MD: The last building we saw had a fair amount of open space. But I will take a minority position; this is too much building, and not enough benefit. The back side of the building, how you engage the neighborhood, is a real issue. I read Tim McHale's comments - Charlesview sets the standard. So let's look at that in subcommittee, how that works. LE: More on the idea of how you curve the building. That will be experienced by vehicle. For the pedestrian side, Mackin and Western is the opportunity to cross. I'd like to see that corner of the building articulated. More welcoming. Whether it's retail or not, something special. KS: You could do a different scale at the corners, a signal. There has to be a reason to go there, since you can't park.

Rachel Slade: The experience from the building, out...it would be great to get up a little bit. Can you get a 2-story restaurant? You could carve out the facade, create a destination. Tom Galvin: I *am* that house behind the Project. I will look at four stories. This is oversized. And the parking comes out to Waverly, where there is a house [introduction of traffic concern]. I won't have views. Brick, per Tim's email, is a part of the context. And the parking? 108 spaces, for 200 units or beds - they will park in the neighborhood. Exit onto Western - but it's congested. And Mackin is 2-way. Kevin Bradley of the Charles River Conservancy: The Conservancy wants to support *utterly* any improvements to the intersection. The best way to honor the Charles is to make it as accessible as possible. With that, the 530 Western Project was sent to Design Committee.

The next item was a presentation of the **Cote Village Project**. Lisa Alberghini (LA) of the Planning Office for Urban Affairs introduced the Project and team. LA: We are partnering with the CICD here; we are in a *very* different location, *far* away. This is the site of the old Cote Ford dealership, not used in 25 years. We plan 76 affordable

units, with parking on the site and in the existing building used as a podium. There will be open space open to the community, and an office for the CICD. We have been working on the design several months; it's evolved with input from the community and BRA and DND staffs. We've had 13 community meetings. Most key design elements from the City have been incorporated. We are under great pressure to get to the State funding round. Cliff Boehmer (CB) of Davis Square Architects presented the design, noting first the locus. CB: It's right on the Fairmount Line, at an inflection in Cummins Highway. There are about 40 trains a day. The site is desolate; and, the Cummins ROW is 80'. Regis is much smaller, with about a 40' ROW. (Notes street network, the small scale of the surrounds, notes that it gets larger in scale as it approaches Blue Hill Avenue.) The station extends all the way from Cummins to Blue Hill. Originally it was a double platform and now, a center platform - with very long ramps. DS: Why didn't the neighborhood want the station? LA: They didn't want commuters parking on the streets. CB showed pictures of the site and context, noting the existing structure is 17' high around the corner. On the site plan, he pointed out the four new buildings, the character, the program, including patio space on the podium (a community room, commercial spaces) and a tot lot.

LE: What is the elevation between the parking (shown as proliferating) and the train? CB: A few feet. The T has made no commitment for mitigation. The transportation options include the Mattapan High-Speed Line at the Square. The exact relationship, and the crossings, have not been worked out. Rebecca Barchant (RB) of Ulrich Barchant noted there would be a buffer against the rail, but it hadn't been designed yet. CB noted the skylight(s) shown in the podium. He noted the commercial program, and the pre-teen program. DS: Can you show us plans? CB went to make it so. RB noted the programs in detail. CB: There's an office and unit mix separation due to the grade change. (Shows the upper floors; notes the site plan, and circulation providing drop-off for the programs. KS asked about the drop-off. CB: The T is interested. RB: We are not providing drop-off on our property. But we don't control Cummins.

CB showed views. He noted that the grade allows some light into the podium space. He reminded the Commission of the 80' ROW on Cummins, with 10+' sidewalks. CB: Crosswalks will be done by the T with their improvements. Even the affordable units have materials which give a sense of permanence and scale. We want to make a nice bridge over toward the more commercial Mattapan Square. We're using cementitious panels with some metal. The courtyard view on the back [rear] has cementitious lap siding panels. We don't know how much space the pre-teen center might take. (Shows a view along Regis. Shows photos of the before, noting the variety in the area.) CB: Nothing is keeping the buildings on Regis set back; we are simply allowing landscape. (Shows an animated SketchUp.) DC: The site will be an entry to the T; that will be more open.

DM: I think this is a really important Project. I want to be as encouraging as I can. The corner nearing the T is treated with restraint and dignity. Retaining the existing structure makes a lot of sense. We should see more on the view from the T. I'm a little skeptical about trees on Regis at that (sidewalk) dimension. But I'm less convinced by

the Regis buildings. This context...it *could* be more contextual, straightforward. It's half in, half out. You decide. A nice residential context, with clues. DC: Provide more specifics on the sidewalks, especially outside, on the connection to the T. I don't know if the City has plans for Cummins. CB: We are working with the T to get the plans for their work. Tom O'Malley: I'm trying to figure if this is a State or a City road. From Regis to Mattapan Square, it's pretty rough. This is TOD, and close to Mattapan Square; we can be the catalyst. MD: The massing, the unit count - and we tend to be specific, but are cutting a break for this affordable Project. We'll want to know material quality and colors. And more on the T Project, what it looks like. KS: The perimeter of the site, like those louvers. What is it like? Sight lines, etc., and a buffer along the fence. The environmental issues - have they been fixed? CB: They've changed...there are some constraints. LA: The site is capped; we have updated reports. KS: Cars come over very fast, and there are limited views / sight lines. What are you doing? CB: The T is doing. LE: Your landscape architect should talk more in Committee; you should have an opinion about the buffer along the T. I encourage you to do more between the wall and your building. People out, and enjoying that space, would be good. Show what you're doing between the cut buildings and sidewalk. It's a nice project, catalytic. DS: There's almost an institutional look to the building.... With that, the Cote Village 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 8:06 p.m. The next regular meeting of the Boston Civic Design Commission was scheduled for March 1, 2016. The recording of the February 2, 2016 Boston Civic Design Commission meeting was digitized and is available at the Boston Redevelopment Authority.