

MINUTES FOR THE BOSTON CIVIC DESIGN COMMISSION MAY 21, 2024, SESSION B

*This meeting was held virtually. A recording of this meeting is available upon request.
Please reach out to bcdc@boston.gov for more information.*

CALL TO ORDER

A meeting of the Boston Civic Design Commission (BCDC) Design Subcommittee was called to order by the Executive Director of BCDC, Kristina Ricco, at 5:00 PM on Tuesday, MAY 21, 2024.

ATTENDEES

The following Boston Civic Design Commission members were present: Co-chair Linda Eastley, Commissioners Jonathan Evans, Mikyoung Kim, Kathy Kottaridis, Catherine Morris, William Rawn, Laura Solano, and Ex-officio member and BPDA Director of Design Diana Fernandez.

PRESENTATIONS FOR REVIEW AND PUBLIC TESTIMONY

WENTWORTH INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY, MISSION HILL 10-YEAR INSTITUTIONAL MASTER PLAN

A representative of the proponent team, Gautam Sundaram (Perkins&Will), presented the proposed project. Commissioners Eastley, Evans, Kim, Kottaridis, Rawn, and Solano, participated in deliberations.

Discussion: Commissioners interrogated aspects of the proposed site plan, including coordination of public realm improvements with adjacent MWRA facility, and location and configuration of access to below-grade parking and loading. Commissioners asked the proponent to prepare additional materials focused primarily on describing high-level “urban design themes.” “I am intrigued by this idea that the pike is no longer this orthogonal pedestrian passageway but that it jigs and jogs as buildings start to front it, and I want to understand dimensionally how that pike might feel as buildings come quite close to those edges.” “One of the things I think would be helpful, and this is going to sound like detailed information, but really for all the green spaces that you’re making is, where do you enter buildings? Even just a dot where doors are would be helpful to understand how these spaces might function.” “It would also be helpful to hear from you what you think the “Commons,” the “Quad,” the “Grove,” the “Triangle Park,” the “Green,” are for. They’re lovely names, but what do you envision actually happening here, I don’t mean specific program, but what is active, passive, or both?”

Public testimony was given by Alison Pultinas,

Following discussion and an opportunity for public testimony, the commissioners agreed that the Proposed 10-YEAR INSTITUTIONAL MASTER PLAN at the WENTWORTH INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY, MISSION HILL, should be returned to a future convening of the BCDC Design Subcommittee for additional review.

WHITE STADIUM, FRANKLIN PARK

BPDA Deputy Chief of Urban Design Diana Fernandez summarized community engagement efforts related to the proposed project. Representatives of the proponent team, including Tamara Roy (Stantec) and Leah Grossman (Stantec), presented the proposed project. Commissioners Eastley, Evans, Kim, Kottaridis, Morris, Rawn, and Solano, participated in deliberations.

Discussion: Commissioners interrogated aspects of the proposed site plan and proposed architecture. Related to "The Grove," Commissioners commented on the lack of vertical elements defining the space and wondered if it would "feel like another lawn panel." "There's a missed opportunity here. One of the most masterful things about Olmstead's designs is topography. Yes, there's the notion of having a very light touch, as you have done in this rendering, but when I think about how this building wants to be better integrated into the language of Franklin Park ... the long views of the lawn and then pavement, lawn and then pavement and then activity, could really be softened by using topography. I'm not trying to hide the building, just making sure it flows up and down." Commissioners asked the proponent to prepare a long section through the site demonstrating the topographical relationship between the "The Grove" and the Stadium.

Commissioners emphasized that any topography introduced should be very subtle and should not interrupt visual connectivity between open spaces. Commissioners asked for more information about how the proposed project site connects to adjacent existing and planned program elements, including "The Overlook" and "The Play Fields." Commissioners asked for more information about the architecture of the stadium, particularly the expression of "what is old versus what is new" beyond the canopy structure. Commissioners asked for more information about what program within the stadium will be accessible when there is not a professional game event. Commissioners asked for more information about how the structure of the canopy will connect to and impact the existing stadium. Commissioners asked for more information about the lighting plan for the entire site. Commissioners asked for more information about the temporary seating in the "D zone." Public testimony was given by Karen Mauney-Brodek, President of the Emerald Necklace Conservancy, and Jun Seung Lee, staff at Emerald Necklace Conservancy.

Following discussion and an opportunity for public testimony, the commissioners agreed that the Proposed Project at WHITE STADIUM, FRANKLIN PARK, should be returned to a future convening of the BCDC Design Subcommittee for additional review.