



MINUTES
BOSTON CIVIC DESIGN COMMISSION

The meeting of the Boston Civic Design Commission was held on Tuesday, July 7, 2020, and was held virtually to ensure the safety of the public, staff members, and the BPDA Board Members during the COVID-19 situation, and beginning at 5:15 p.m. Members in attendance were Deneen Crosby, Linda Eastley, David Hacin, Eric Höweler, Mikyoung Kim, Anne-Marie Lubeanu, Andrea Leers, David Manfredi, Kirk Sykes, and William Rawn. Absent was Paul McDonough. Elizabeth Stifel, Executive Director of the Commission, was present, as were several BPDA staff including Natalie Punzak, Matt Martin, and John Dalzell.

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. Following a roll call of the present Commissioners, 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 Friday, June 19, in the BOSTON HERALD.

The first item was the approval of the May 5, 2020 Monthly Meeting Minutes, and the Design Committee Minutes from meetings on June 23 and 30, 2020. A motion was made, seconded, and it was duly

VOTED: To approve the May 5 and June 23 and 30, 2020 BCDC Meeting Minutes.

The next item was a report from the Review Committee on the **Herb Chambers Honda project** at 710-720 Morrissey Boulevard in the Dorchester neighborhood. The project, a proposed 65' tall commercial building for sales, service, and storage of automobiles, exceeds BCDC review threshold of 100,000 SF and review is recommended. It was moved, seconded, and

VOTED: That the Commission review the schematic design for the proposed Herb Chambers Honda project in the Dorchester neighborhood.

The Commission moved to project presentation for the **Herb Chambers Honda project** in the Dorchester neighborhood.

Matt Martin, Urban Designer at the BPDA, introduced the project to the Commission: The bulk of the program of this building is a parking garage and the BPDA has been working closely with the team to ensure it does not look like one. The building is highly visible from all sides and we want to help the team animate as much of the façade as possible. Honda's

standards are not typically intended for a building of this scale, so we've been challenged to integrate the brand standards to this site-specific project.

James Mullarkey, Curtis Group: On site is an existing one-story car dealership. This project will improve site access and visibility and add needed green areas to the site. The site plan is constrained by manufacturer-required service drives and uses, as well as parking for 400 cars. The entry off Morrissey Boulevard is key for flow and wayfinding for vehicles through the site. The building is 65' tall; the top floor is parking, administrative and back of house are below, and then a multi-level showroom is occupies the first two floors. The site's existing signage and lighting will remain.

David Manfredi: Do you anticipate that Morrissey Boulevard in its future condition will be designed to Complete Streets Standards? This portion of Morrissey could use public realm enhancements, like street trees and wider sidewalks. I'd like to understand how this project fits into future plans by DCR and the City.

Kirk Sykes: When you come to design committee, it will be important to bring views that show how this site is experienced from a car. We consider views from the highway to be part of the experience of the public realm.

Linda Eastley: I appreciate the effort and expense you've gone through to enclose so much of the program within the building. I'd like to hear about why the top of the building seems to stop short and if there are ways to scale the proportion of some of the design elements to reduce this blank area.

Andrea Leers: On the whole, the Honda corporate design standards seem to be used successfully here. On the sales/showroom façade that faces the parking lot, I have questions about the curvy canopy and heights of windows. The blue vault is a clear marker of the entry that seems it would be successful without the extra elements.

Eric Howeler: The building is very taut. If this were an urban building, it might have more expression that relates to the pedestrian.

Kirk Sykes: You might consider going back to your corporate client with some s. This is a four-sided building that needs a four-sided solution. There are many examples of dealerships that relate to the highway and this is an opportunity to showcase Honda's brand and design.

The project will continue in design committee.

Next was a presentation to the Commission on the **Winthrop Center Notice of Project Change at 115 Winthrop Square.**

Kathleen MacNeil, Millennium Partners: We are here today because we have filed a Notice of Project Change for 115 Winthrop Square/Winthrop Center. As a result of the covid-19 pandemic, we've had to reduce the project cost in order to secure a construction loan and make this project viable in today's financial market.

Blake Middleton, Handel Architects: The change to this project is the reduction of the east tower. We've cut down 18-20 floors, just shy of 90,000 SF of residential space. The main tower, curtain wall design, building base, office area, and retail connector all remain the same. The change in financial structure has caused us to reexamine how this east portion of the building will work. The top of the building is capped with fins that turn the corner. The curtain wall on the rest of the eastern portion of the building will remain the same. The building material mock up has been completed, and you can see from images how these materials will be applied to the building.

Eric Höweler: It's very difficult to reduce a building like this after such thoughtful work. The taller building is now more slender on the skyline which is welcome, and the shorter portion now has a street-level relation with the KPF building adjacent to it. Your building is more about a field condition than hierarchy, but I can't help but look at these two buildings—new and old—as a composition since they are aligned at the top.

William Rawn: When you worked with us on the design of this building, I appreciated how willing you were to integrate our feedback into your design. This speaks highly of the design and development team. I personally respond positively to this change; it frees up the taller tower, which was always compromised by its connection to the eastern tower. I am enthusiastic about what I see as a significant improvement to the project.

Andrea Leers: I want to echo Bill's sentiment. I feel positively about what must have been a difficult change for you. This lower element is clearly distinguished from the tower and joins a smaller scale of elements on Federal Street.

Kirk Sykes: I'm supportive and think this is probably the move we initially wanted.

Mikyoung Kim: I think we are inclined to support this project and move forward with an approval, especially in light of the implications for construction and financing.

Public comment: I've been awaiting the results of the wind and solar glare studies and want to be sure this change does not further negative impacts on the public realm.

Kathleen MacNeil: We did study the impact of wind and solar glare, and changed the building material to reduce glare.

Rebecca Lee: We're particularly interested in pedestrian-level effects of this building. Will the results of the wind study be available before the end of the public comment period?

Kathleen MacNeil: Yes.

Hearing no further comments, a motion was made to recommend approval for the Winthrop Square Notice of Public Change project. It was seconded, and

VOTED: That the Commission recommend approval for the Winthrop Square Notice of Public Change project at 115 Winthrop in the Downtown neighborhood.

The last item on the agenda was an informational presentation on the Carbon Free Boston and 2019 Climate Action Plan for the City of Boston.

Kat Eshel, Environment Department: Boston has a city-wide goal of becoming carbon-neutral by 2050 and preparing for the impacts of climate change through coastal infrastructure and building-scale interventions. Boston has a long history of climate action, adaptation, and mitigation. The 2019 Climate Action Plan is focused on reducing carbon emissions. Buildings represent 70% of Boston's carbon emissions; to reach neutrality, we will need to decarbonize Boston's building sector. The three strategies are: reduce demand for energy by increasing efficiency, convert fossil fuel dependency to electricity, and buy 100% clean energy. Big gains in the building sector will require state-wide clean energy grid implementation after net zero new construction and deep energy retrofits are implemented. The City is leading by example, having signed a zero net carbon standard for all new municipal construction; a zero net carbon standard for city-funded affordable housing; and investment in energy efficiency and renewable energy generation in municipal buildings.

John Dalzell, Senior Architect for Sustainable Development at the BPDA: The Climate Action Plan commits us to a net-zero carbon standard in zoning for new construction, in addition to smart utilities and Article 37 efforts that have been underway for several years. We've implemented a carbon neutral building assessment for new buildings. A few great examples of carbon neutral projects that are in development are the Bunker Hill Housing Project and BU Data Sciences Center. We've proven with these projects that high performance buildings are attainable without significant cost increases.

Kirk Sykes: What are some examples of the largest projects that you've been able to apply these principles to, and where do you see it work better or worse at scale compared to smaller projects.

John Dalzell: Winthrop Center is a great example of the upfront investment. The building enclosure and curtain wall system has been critical to informing the rest of the strategy and cost efficiency of the project.

Linda Eastley: What other incentives are available to retrofit old buildings? If more than half of our building stock was built before 1950, how do we make retrofits financially accessible?

Kat Eshel: The building performance industry is moving to mandating compliance and enforcement of these standards in the future. There are many state-level incentives and subsidies for retrofits, like alternative compliance payments. We're exploring climate banks as a concept and collaborating directly with utility companies. Renew Boston Trust is a path forward for us to explore this.

There being no further items for discussion, a motion was made to adjourn, and the meeting was duly adjourned at 7:15 p.m. The recording of the July 7, 2020 Boston Civic Design Commission meeting was digitized and is available at the Boston Redevelopment Authority.