

## MINUTES BOSTON CIVIC DESIGN COMMISSION

The meeting of the Boston Civic Design Commission was held on Tuesday, May 5, 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, William Rawn, Kirk Sykes. Absent was Paul McDonough. Elizabeth Stifel, Executive Director of the Commission, was present, as were several BPDA staff including Natalie Punzak and Scott Slarsky.

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, April 24, in the BOSTON HERALD.

The first item was the approval of the March 3, 2020 Monthly Meeting Minutes, and the Design Committee Minutes from meetings on March 10, 2020. A motion was made, seconded, and it was duly

**VOTED: To approve the March 3 and 10, 2020 BCDC Meeting Minutes.**

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The next item was a report from the Review Committee on the **Jan Karski Way Extension project** at 15 Enterprise Street. At approximately 400,000 SF, it well exceeds the BCDC review threshold of 100,000 SF. Review is recommended. It was moved, seconded, and

**VOTED: That the Commission review the schematic design for the proposed Jan Karski Way Extension project in the Dorchester neighborhood.**

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The Commission moved to project presentation for the **Jan Karski Way Extension project in the Dorchester** neighborhood.

Matt Martin, Urban Designer at the BPDA, introduced the project to the Commission: A key focus of project's design review to-date has been the presence and scale of the pedestrian bridge over a proposed public open space. As projects have developed in this part of Boston near South Bay, the road network has been expanded. There is a planned future extension of Jan Karski Way to Massachusetts Avenue, and we want to ensure that any retaining walls that this project requires will not inhibit future transportation planning.

Tamara Roy, Stantec: The project is located between the South Bay Center and Boston Street in Dorchester. This project follows the density, height, parking, and use of the South Bay PDA of which this project is a part. The project varies in height from 4-5 stories and will have 406 residential units. As a result of the community process to date, the project's massing has been reconfigured throughout the design process to allow for a larger open space on site and respond to the surrounding context. Tamara Roy: For materiality, we've broken the building into three separate volumes and the material expression reinforces this.

Rob Adams, Halverson: The courtyard between the two arms of the building will allow for passive space, connections through the site, and an active space for restaurants and commercial spaces to open on to. The corner of Boston Street and District Ave will be a green lawn that we will program in conversation with the community.

David Hacin: This is such a critical block between Boston Street and the new developments at South Bay. It would be helpful to see more 3D perspectives to help us understand the depth of the façade and space around the building. The bridge between buildings is a little hard to understand in these slides. Why have you chosen to articulate this as a bridge instead of a portal or something else?

Anne-Marie Lubenau: I appreciate your thoughtfulness in this project. At design committee, I would like to learn more about access points through the site and into the building, the circulation between the arms of the building, and how these have informed the architecture.

William Rawn: The graphics represented on the bridge seem to highlight the cubic expanse of the bridge. What if the architectural treatment was fundamentally different in form and visual expression, or more sculptural, than the rest of the building as a way to guide

Deneen Crosby: I would also like to better understand how circulation works.

Eric Howeler: I don't understand the Andy building across Jan Karski Way very well. How do these two bridges relate to each other? What are the urban itineraries and destinations through these projects?

David Manfredi: My favorite drawing is the site plan; I better understand the grain of this project in context of the city. One of the downsides of these virtual meetings is not having a physical model. We will need more renderings to help us understand this project and its topography. I'd like to see a parking plan so that we can understand the relationship of parking to the public realm and grade. I'm a little nervous about Enterprise Street being an inactive edge.

Andrea Leers: I would appreciate a larger context of district arrival by car and transit. The Enterprise Street of the project right now is the least loved and less broken down than the faces of the building along the courtyard. In the perspective you've shown, there seems to be an ambiguity about the bridge. Because the dimensions of the courtyards and the building massing are the same, but the bridge is confusing this logic. I would like to see more openness around the courtyard. It's confusing to have a piece of the building that wraps around and is visually similar, just without a ground floor.

Linda Eastley: I like this project and appreciate the care taken. I want to understand how the neighborhood fabric meets this block as a fly through or series of images.

The project will continue in design committee.

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Next was an informational presentation on the Boston Flood Resilience Design Guidelines and Proposed Coastal Flood Resilience Zoning Overlay.

Chris Busch, Assistant Deputy Director for Climate and Environmental Planning: As part the Climate Ready Boston initiatives, the City has developed a suite of approaches to prepare for the future impacts of climate change. Neighborhood-scale solutions to coastal resilience are in development. These Coastal Resilience Design Guidelines and Zoning will play an important role at the building scale. These were developed in partnership with internal and external stakeholders and residents. The Guidelines were adopted by our Board last September and the final zoning text is in development. The design principles include: utilizing resiliency best practices, enhancing the public realm, relating district scale solutions to the individual project level, and generating co-benefits with the City's other climate goals. The document studies 6 primary building typologies—the triple decker, detached two-family, attached townhouse, pre-war mixed use, general industrial, and contemporary commercial buildings—in waterfront neighborhoods to demonstrate how flood resilient infrastructure can be implemented either incrementally, in comprehensive retrofits, or in new construction. The Boston Zoning Code already includes a flood overlay; this flood resilient overlay will apply in areas modeled for 40" of sea level rise.

Mikyoung Kim: Will there be allowances for variance from the strict ADA guidelines?

Chris Busch: We've tried to make the documents flexible enough to account for other local and national standard. The Disabilities Commission and Landmarks Commissions were involved in the process.

David Hacin: In conversations about utilities, how is the City tackling relocating or protecting major utility infrastructure?

Chris Busch: Most conversations with utility companies has focused on district-scale solutions. We've found it challenging to have these conversations from the individual project perspective. Relocating mechanical systems above flood levels is going to be critical for residents.

Kirk Sykes: Assuming we're designing for a 2070 standard and that sea levels continue to rise, do these guidelines account for an unknown or future with more extreme flooding?

Chris Busch: The models we've utilized consider a high-emissions scenario that is likely to

Andrea Leers: What we do as a Commission is consider the public realm, and these guidelines will have huge implications for the management of the ground plane. Climate resiliency and flooding pose big challenges for the way we think about the public realm.

Public comments:

Co-Chairs Mount Hope-Canterbury: There seems to be a lack of guidance for areas that are susceptible to inland flooding but not in the flood overlay. Will this be addressed?

Chris Busch: Most of the information in the guidelines is applicable to both coastal and inland flooding conditions. Several City departments are working to understand inland flooding risk and capacity.

Constituent from Port Norfolk neighborhood: I'm concerned that the Dorchester and Neponset areas do not have any recent zoning, and these guidelines imply that new development will add height to buildings to accommodate the raised ground plane. I'm also concerned about the wetlands ordinance, and that the public land on the waterfront we have now will be lost to the water in the future.

Alternatives for Community and Environment: Will you be replicating an overlay district for flood control patterns in areas of Dorchester? What is the BPDA doing to address and protect existing affordable housing?

Chris Busch: Much of the area you are talking about will not be subject to coastal flooding for a very long time, but there are concerns with precipitation. The BWSC is working on how to address this kind of flooding. These guidelines speak to flood proofing and preparing for weeks to months long flooding events.

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There being no further items for discussion, a motion was made to adjourn, and the meeting was duly adjourned at 6:45 p.m. The recording of the May 5, 2020 Boston Civic Design Commission meeting was digitized and is available at the Boston Redevelopment Authority.