

MINUTES
BOSTON CIVIC DESIGN COMMISSION

The meeting of the Boston Civic Design Commission was held on Tuesday, November 6, 2018, starting in Room #900, Boston City Hall, and beginning at 5:15 p.m.

Members in attendance were: Andrea Leers, Paul McDonough, Linda Eastley, Deneen Crosby, David Manfredi, Anne-Marie Lubenau, Eric Höweler, Kirk Sykes, and William Rawn. Absent were David Hacin and Mikyoung Kim. Elizabeth Stifel, the newly appointed Executive Director of the Commission, was present. Also present was David Carlson, Executive Director of the Commission Emeritus. Representatives of the BSA were present. Alexa Pinard, Matt Martin, Kennan Rhyne, Meera Deeab, Michael Cannizzo, and Natalie Punzak were present for the BPDA.

The Chair, Andrea Leers (AL), 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. 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 Sunday, October 21, in the BOSTON HERALD.

Andrea Leers provided an introduction and welcome to the new BCDC Commissioners, Anne-Marie Lubenau, Eric Höweler, and Mikyoung Kim, and thanked Michael Davis and Daniel St. Clair for their service as Commissioners over many years.

The first item was the response to the Open Meeting Law Complaint was filed on October 1, 2018. Sean Nehill, an attorney with the BPDA, presented the complaint, which alleges that the BCDC violated the Open Meeting Law by not keeping minutes for its Design Committee meetings. Upon authorization for the General Counsel to respond to the complaint, the General Counsel will assemble all appropriate documents and materials, answer the allegations, and make recommendations for any remedial actions and respond in writing to the complainants and the Attorney General. It was moved, seconded, and

VOTED: That the Boston Planning & Development Agency's General Counsel be, and hereby is, authorized to respond on behalf of the Boston Civic Design Commission, to the Open Meeting Law Complaint filed on October 1, 2018, regarding the keeping of minutes for its Design Committee, by filing an answer with the complainants and the Commonwealth of Massachusetts Office of the Attorney General and to take all related actions necessary to respond to such complaint.

The next item on the agenda the approval of the October 2, 2018 Monthly Meeting Minutes, and the Design Committee Minutes from September 4, 11, 25, and October 16, 23, 30. A motion was made, seconded, and it was duly

VOTED: To approve the September 4, 11, 25 and October 2, 16, 23, 30, 2018 BCDC Meeting Minutes.

Votes were passed for signature. David Carlson, the Executive Director Emeritus, took a moment to acknowledge and thank the former Commissioners, Michael Davis who served for more than 23 years, and Daniel St. Clair for 10 years of service. For the first time in nine years, the Commission has appointed new members and a new Chair, Andrea Leers. Additionally, Elizabeth Stifel, Senior Architect/Urban Designer at the BPDA, has been appointed to serve as the new Executive Director of the Boston Civic Design Commission.

In addition to his 23 years of active service on the Commission, Michael Davis served as the acting chair for Commission the last 10 years, which is deserving of praise. Carlson put forward for the consideration of the Commissioners a motion to award Michael Davis with a BCDC Award of Merit. It was then seconded and,

VOTED: That the Commission grant to Michael Davis, FAIA, its Award of Merit in recognition of his extraordinary contributions to the Public Realm of Boston and to the mission of the BCDC.

Andrea Leers thanked David Carlson, too, for his more than 20 years of service to the BCDC as Executive Director. Paul McDonough made a motion to nominate David Carlson for an Award of Merit, which was then seconded and

VOTED: That the Commission grant to David Carlson, Executive Director Emeritus, its Award of Merit in recognition of his extraordinary contributions to the Public Realm of Boston and to the mission of the BCDC.

Linda Eastley arrived. Next, was the report from the Review Committee on the **Hood Park Master Plan NPC Project**. As anticipated during the discussion of 100 Hood Park Drive, the Proponent now proposes a Master Plan amendment that slightly increases FAR and distributes height and density in a new orientation. The substantive PDA modification and 10 Stack Street Project at 365,000 SF both trigger BCDC; a new vote to review was recommended. It was moved, seconded, and

VOTED: That the Commission review the proposed amendment to the Hood Park Master Plan PDA, including the schematic design for 10 Stack Street, in the Charlestown neighborhood.

Next, was the report from the Review Committee on **The Parkway Apartments Project**. The proposal will transform a 4.6 acre parking lot into a 258-unit residential apartment community in two detached, four-story buildings. The project exceeds 350,000 SF and will create a unique enclave in West Roxbury along the VFW Parkway near the Charles River. A new vote to review was recommended. It was moved, seconded, and

VOTED: That the Commission review the schematic design for the Parkway Apartments Project at 1507 VFW Parkway in the West Roxbury Neighborhood.

Next, was the report from the Review Committee on **Frankfort + Gove Project**, a proposed residential development of about 112 units in East Boston. The 120,000 SF includes the redevelopment of Our Lady of Mt. Carmel Catholic Church and a new building. A new vote to review was recommended. It was moved, seconded, and

VOTED: That the Commission review the schematic design for the Frankfort/Gove Development in the East Boston Neighborhood.

The next item was a report from the Design Committee on the **Kenmore Square (North) Redevelopment Project**. David Manfredi was recused.

Jake Watkins of Roger Ferris + Partners presented an overview of the massing and circulation on site. Many studies focused on how the top two floors relate to the Citgo sign and the building below. The “fly-bys” have become brick, punctuated openings with translucent openings. The design language wraps along Deerfield in response to Commissioners’ comments. A video depicted a fly-by of the site, and views of the project before and after to highlight view corridors to the Citgo sign.

Kyle Zick of KZLA presented the landscape design, which includes a cycle track at the sidewalk level, street furniture and a significantly increased sidewalk dimension in place of existing parallel on-street parking.

Eric Howeler (EH): I think this project is quite elegant. The sawtoothing of the 7th floor seems a bit uncomfortable relative to the sign.

William Rawn (WR): I’m most interested in what happens in the middle distance between a long and short view along Commonwealth Ave. That is the one view where the Citgo sign may be significantly blocked.

Roger Ferris: There is no intent to obscure. The requested view was presented.

Linda Eastley (LE): The ground plane is so much better than the last time I saw it; it is now very open to the sky. The reveals along the facade on Deerfield are appreciated.

Kirk Sykes (KS): Further recessing the punched openings offers a significant improvement.

Andrea Leers (AL): The strategy of the facade has been clarified and is much improved, and the fanning with open edges works nicely. The sidewalk has simple inlets. The project is much better resolved, and you’ve been really responsive.

Hearing no public comment, it was moved, seconded and:

VOTED: That the Commission recommend approval of 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 **Hood Park Master Plan NPC and 10 Stack Street**. The committee meeting schedule will track the schedule of Article 80 (10 Stack Street will follow PDA proposal). David Manfredi was recused.

Mark Rosenshein, of Trademark Partners, LLC (Owner's Project Manager) offered context. This area has been historically industrial, with a different character from the rest of the Charlestown neighborhood. 100 Hood Park Drive was already approved by the Commission in February. Mark Sardegna from Elkus Manfredi highlighted potential for future connections at the urban scale to the Charlestown neighborhood. The site is located in a neighborhood with flooding potential, so site is being raised by 3'. Compared to the existing, approved PDA Master Plan, the NPC proposal gives more porosity at the ground plane for pedestrians, (visually and clarity in pathways), an improved street network, and redistributed density.

Mark Spaulding, SMMA: There are extensive open space opportunities on site. Several existing buildings on site will remain, including 500 Hood Park Drive, which creates an impetus for development at the rear of the site. SMMA is designing 10 Stack Street, and the massing consists of a series of vertical steps and pleats along the facade.

LE: When we see you in subcommittee, I'd like to understand more about the decision making process around open space. The open space we see today is strengthened by the street grid, but the power of the central space around the Stack from the original proposal has been diffused. I'm not convinced that the open space atop a 1-story retail is effective, and the open space to the south of 10 Stack Street feels disassociated. Why doesn't the open space reflect the work of the interesting tenant in this building? There is potential to fold this into the discussion.

Deneen Crosby (DC): I would like to understand your strategy to raise the entire site. What happens at the site edge?

Anne-Marie Lubenau (AML): The height is articulated well, and I'm interested in understanding the impact on the skyline in the Charlestown neighborhood. I'm not yet convinced about the new organization of open space.

WR: The Commission gets nervous about above grade parking. Walk us through parking in the future.

AL: I appreciate how the initial plan maintained and restored old buildings, and framed them with new development of more or less continuous heights. That sense feels lost in this massing - not about any one height, but that the new buildings don't entirely surround the old. The purposeful mismatch of heights and shape don't make the place coherent in the way the original proposal did. As we think about the masterplan, I would ask you to rethink the notion of variety in exchange for more continuity.

Bill Lamm, Charlestown Preservation: Many community members would like to see a more cohesive design strategy to the architecture in the Master Plan.

David Manfredi returned. The next item was a presentation of the **Parkway Apartments**. Kirk Sykes was recused.

Basil Koutsogeorgas (BS), SK&I: Our site is constrained by zoning FAR 2.0 and 45' building height. The project creates a strong urban edge along the VFW Parkway, with a more porous

elevation along the RV Park. Apartments and parking will be accessed from Avenue A through the center of the site, with an entry court that provides a sense of arrival.

EH: How does the building meet the ground? Sections through the landscape depict a grade change?

BS: We will be excavating and adding a retaining wall that only impacts ~6 or 7 units. There is a 8-10' total change in elevation across the site.

David Manfredi (DM): I fear that those units will feel like basement apartments.

DC: I noticed along this edge of the parkway that there are large utility poles and wires. When you come to committee, accurately represent the relationship between utility poles, trees, property line.

DM: I want to commend your restraint in the architecture at this scale. This is an exceedingly large project. We need to see a physical model with topography. It doesn't need to be extensive.

AML: We need to see how this project relates to adjacent development, too, with more urban context represented. This is substantial with large massing.

LE: I'm interested in Avenue A, and in the streets between this development and the Charles River. Can you start to think about how this project might start to connect with or set up a framework to connect with the river?

AL: This site is so prominent. My sense when I first saw this is that it's three buildings, not two. It's very long and it would do well to be more permeable with another through street.

The next item on the agenda was the presentation of the **Frankfort + Gove Housing Project**. Anne-Marie Lubenau and William Rawn were recused.

Jeff Drago of Drago+Toscano: This project proposes to combine four lots into two, preserving and redeveloping the historic Mt. Carmel Church into 14 condo units and adding 112 residential condos and 84 parking spaces in total.

Jason Forney (JF), Bruner/Cott Architects: The three driving principles in this project are to save, respect, and renew Mt. Carmel Church; weave the new building into neighborhood context; and provide a variety of open space. Surround context is brick, with strong cornice lines. We are reinterpreting this with row house-inspired volumes and recessed stoop entries. The community is concerned about sufficient parking mitigation, and we are covering the parking area with a tree canopy to create a visual buffer at street edge.

EH: This project is beautiful. The Church is so frontal, but I didn't see a front elevation of your building. It doesn't look like a front in its current form, and I encourage you to think about the relationship of the front and side elevations.

LE: What is the hierarchy between Frankfort and Gove Streets, and which are you choosing as the front?

DM: The attention to detail is outstanding, and good job with parking solutions (some below grade, some above). Rhythm of massing is nicely done. Agree with Eric about front/side relationship.

AL: Thoughtful, piece-by-piece assembly. There are two areas I have questions about, though. You are taking down a building to create a parking lot. If it's better as open space, why isn't it a park? Then, on the Gove Street elevation, only one of the several recesses along the facade

operates as an entry to the building. Either the entry should be somewhere else, or the recessed entry should be demarcated as something different.

KS: Some detailing in the church could be incorporated into building across the street.

Resident of Frankfort Street and Gove Street Citizens Committee founder: The team has been receptive to making as many changes as possible to the project in response to community comment. Our recommendation is that you go along with the changes they offer, as the neighborhood appreciates what they are doing with the property.

There being no further items for discussion, a motion was made to adjourn, and the meeting was duly adjourned at 7:55 p.m. The next regular meeting of the Boston Civic Design Commission was scheduled for December 4. The recording of the November 6, 2018 Boston Civic Design Commission meeting was digitized and is available at the Boston Redevelopment Authority.