

MINUTES FOR THE BOSTON CIVIC DESIGN COMMISSION AUGUST 06, 2024

*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) was called to order by Co-Chair Mimi Love at 5:00 PM on Tuesday, AUGUST 06, 2024.

ATTENDEES

The following members of the Boston Civic Design Commission were present: Ex-officio member and Planning and Zoning Director Planning Aimee Chambers, Ex-officio member and Urban Design Director Diana Fernandez, Co-Chairs Linda Eastley and Mimi Love, and Commissioners Jonathan Evans, Shauna Gillies-Smith, David Hacin, Mikyoung Kim, Kathy Kottaridis, David Manfredi, Catherine Morris, William Rawn, Laura Solano, and Kirk Sykes. The following members of the BPDA Staff were present: Executive Director BCDC and Senior Urban Designer Kristina Ricco, Deputy Director of Urban Design Seth Riseman, and Urban Design Assistant Lizzie Turac.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

On a motion duly made and seconded, it was

VOTED: TO ACCEPT THE MINUTES FOR THE JULY 09, 2024, MONTHLY MEETING AND THE JULY 23, 2024, SESSION A DESIGN SUBCOMMITTEE MEETING.

REPORT FROM THE PLANNING DEPARTMENT DEVELOPMENT REVIEW COMMITTEE

DANA FARBER CANCER INSTITUTE AND BETH ISRAEL DEACONESS MEDICAL CENTER 10-YEAR IMP (ART 80D)

Kristina Ricco gave a report from the Planning Department Development Review Committee on the proposed 10-year Institutional Master Plans at the DANA FARBER CANCER INSTITUTE and the BETH ISRAEL DEACONESS MEDICAL CENTER, recommending the proposed IMPs for consideration by the commission. Commissioners Mikyoung Kim and Laura Solano recused themselves from the deliberations. Commissioners Linda Eastley, Jonathan Evans, Shauna Gillies-Smith, David Hacin, Kathy Kottaridis, Mimi Love, David Manfredi, Catherine Morris, William Rawn, and Kirk Sykes.

On a motion duly made and seconded, it was

VOTED: TO REVIEW THE PROPOSED INSTITUTIONAL MASTER PLANS FOR THE DANA FARBER CANCER INSTITUTE AND THE BETH ISRAEL DEACONESS MEDICAL CENTER.

PRESENTATIONS FOR REVIEW AND PUBLIC TESTIMONY

500 HUNTINGTON AVENUE, MISSION HILL (80C PDA AMENDMENT AND 80B)

Representatives of the proponent team, including Donald Johnson (Fallon Company), Peter Schubert (Ennead Architects), and Ethan Shaw (Ennead Architects), presented the proposed project.

Commissioners David Hacin and Kirk Sykes recused themselves from the deliberations. Commissioners Linda Eastley, Jonathan Evans, Mikyoung Kim, Kathy Kottaridis, Mimi Love, David Manfredi, Catherine Morris, William Rawn, and Laura Solano participated in the deliberations. Discussion: Commissioners were appreciative of changes made to the project in response to feedback, naming specifically an improved alignment between the pedestrian passageway and Museum Road, increased setbacks along Parker Street, the introduction of a color change at the podium portion of the two buildings, and a “subtle but effective” color differentiation between the two towers. “I’m excited about the change in the color of the podium. It makes a big difference in breaking up the mass and responding to the neighboring buildings.” “They are a couple, but they are different, and I think they’re different enough to affect the kind of perception that you’re striving for.” Commissioners underscored the importance of meaningfully incorporating public art in the pedestrian passageway. And, while acknowledging that glass specified for the tower elements will likely need to be reflective to meet energy code standards, Commissioners asked that the proponent make every effort to preserve transparency at the ground level, particularly around the larger framed openings.

Public testimony was given by Eric Woods, Chief Operating Officer of the Museum of Fine Arts. On a motion duly made and seconded, it was

VOTED: TO RECOMMEND THAT THE BPDA BOARD APPROVE THE PROPOSED PROJECT AT 500 HUNTINGTON AVENUE, MISSION HILL, UPON SUCCESSFUL COMPLETION OF THE ARTICLE 80 REVIEW PROCESS SUBJECT TO PROVISIO THAT THE PLANNING DEPARTMENT DIRECT FURTHER REVIEW TO MITIGATION OF PROPOSED PROJECT IMPACTS INCLUDING TRAFFIC AND ENVIRONMENTAL COMFORT.

DANA FARBER CANCER INSTITUTE AND BETH ISRAEL DEACONESS MEDICAL CENTER
10-YEAR IMP (ART 80D)

Planning and Zoning Director Aimee Chambers summarized the planning context for the proposed project. Representatives of the proponent team, including Michael Hincliff (Payette) and Craig Bunnell (Dana Farber Cancer Institute), presented the proposed project. Urban Design Deputy Director Seth Riseman summarized Planning Department staff comments shared with the proponent team to date. Commissioners Mikyoung Kim and Laura Solano recused themselves from the deliberations. Commissioners Linda Eastley, Jonathan Evans, David Hacin, Kathy Kottaridis, Mimi Love, David Manfredi, Catherine Morris, William Rawn, and Kirk Sykes participated in the deliberations.

Discussion: Commissioners, while acknowledging that the proposed Master Plans focus primarily on the redevelopment of a single building, sought additional information about both campuses, specifically networks of open space and public realm. Commissioners characterized the proposed open space strategy as “opportunistic and piecemeal, ultimately deferential to the overall building form.” Commissioners characterized the scale and character of the LMA as “rather relentless,” contributing to the need for relief. “While in some ways the Rosenberg Building is nice as a newer addition, I’m not sure it feels welcoming or comfortable.” “This is a very complex part of the city. It is a very dense part of the city. It is a very important part of the city. Almost anything we do in this

neighborhood feels surgical. I want to understand more about how it (Joslin Park) works today. It is a small piece of green in a very dense part of the city. Has that entire area, the park, the roadways on either side and everything below it been considered a potential site for the hospital as well?"

Commissioners sought additional rationale for the proposed building location and the constraints that inform the proposed massing strategy. "Help us understand why this site made the most sense of all the other sites you may have considered, especially since it means that you have more of a complicated connection." "Would the hospital build a taller tower were it not for the shadow impact to The Riverway?" "What are the plans of these two institutions for razing some of the outmoded buildings on campus?" "Help us understand your decisions either through diagrams or visual representation of what's there." Commissioners sought additional information about the master plan from the user's perspective. "What is it like to come here as a patient? Someone who works here? Someone who is visiting someone?"

Public testimony was given by Barry Nelson and Jani Reynor.

On a motion duly made and seconded, it was

VOTED: TO RECOMMEND THE PROPOSED INSTITUTIONAL MASTER PLANS FOR DANA FARBER CANCER INSTITUTE AND BETH ISRAEL DEACONESS MEDICAL CENTER FOR FURTHER REVIEW AT THE BCDC DESIGN SUBCOMMITTEE.

At the conclusion of presentations for review and public testimony, it was

VOTED: TO ADJOURN.