

**MEMORANDUM**

**MARCH 14, 2013**

**TO:** BOSTON REDEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY AND  
PETER MEADE, DIRECTOR

**FROM:** HEATHER CAMPISANO, DEPUTY DIRECTOR FOR DEVELOPMENT  
REVIEW  
DAVID CARLSON, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR BCDC/SENIOR  
ARCHITECT  
CASEY HINES, PROJECT MANAGER

**SUBJECT:** SOUTH COVE URBAN RENEWAL AREA, PROJECT NO. MASS. R-92:  
A PORTION OF PARCEL R3A-2, ALSO KNOWN AS PARCEL A

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**SUMMARY:** This Memorandum requests an extension of the tentative designation of the Boston Chinese Evangelical Church (“BCEC”) as the redeveloper of a portion of Parcel R3A-2, also known as a portion of Parcel A consisting approximately 12,193 square feet, located at the corner of Washington Street and Marginal Road in the South Cove Urban Renewal Area, Project No. Mass. R-92 for an additional twenty (24) months, or until March 13, 2015 to construct an approximately 49,000 square foot four-story church facility to expand its ministries.

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**BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

Parcel R3A-2, also known as Parcel A, contains approximately 27,264 square feet and is located at the corner of Washington Street and Marginal Road (“Parcel R3A-2” or the “Parcel”) in the South Cove Urban Renewal Area, Project No. Mass. R-92 (Exhibit A). Parcel R3A-2 is adjacent to the property, located at 249 Harrison Avenue, owned and operated by the Boston Chinese Evangelical Church (“BCEC” or “Church”). Currently on Parcel R3A-2, there is a basketball court used by the community and a modular structure being used temporarily by a branch of the Josiah Quincy Upper School.

Many years ago, the BCEC proposed a land swap to exchange BCEC’s property at 249 Harrison Avenue, which contains approximately 12,193 square feet, for a portion of Parcel R3A-2 of equal size, bordered by Marginal Road, Washington Street, and Pine Street (Exhibit B) to construct a new three-story church facility (“Proposal”).

BCEC has been a valuable member of Chinese community for over forty-five (45) years. It contributes greatly to the vitality of the Chinatown community. The Church

ministers to over 1,000 attending members each week, from children and youth to senior citizens. The growing population of members and the lack of capacity to house them became one of the challenges that the Church has had to overcome. However, the existing triangular configuration of the Church site limits the Church's ability to expand its size and capacity.

The purpose of the Proposal is for the Church to be able to expand its ministries to a new building on a rectangular site, which will have the larger capacity to house current and future members. Also, from the BRA's planning perspective, it is more desirable to relocate the Church to the Washington Street side of the area, where there are other commercial and institutional uses, and to bring the remaining portion of the area, a potential housing site, closer to the Harrison Avenue side, where the residential area is closer.

On June 21, 2007, the BRA granted tentative designation of BCEC as the redeveloper of Parcel A, and authorized the Director to enter into a Term Sheet Agreement for the land swap of BCEC's property at 249 Harrison Avenue.

On March 13, 2008, the BRA granted an extension of tentative designation of BCEC as the redeveloper of a portion of Parcel R3A-2 for an additional 365 days or until March 13, 2009.

On March 10, 2009, the BRA granted an extension of tentative designation of BCEC as the redeveloper of a portion of Parcel R3A-2 for an additional 365 days or until March 13, 2010.

On February 16, 2010, the BRA granted an extension of tentative designation of BCEC as the redeveloper of a portion of Parcel R3A-2 for an additional 365 days or until March 13, 2011.

On March 10, 2011, the BRA granted an extension of tentative designation of BCEC as the redeveloper of a portion of Parcel R3A-2 for an additional 12 months or until March 13, 2012.

On February 16, 2012, the BRA granted an extension of tentative designation of BCEC as the redeveloper of a portion of Parcel R3A-2 for an additional 12 months or until March 13, 2013.

On February 5, 2013, the Church submitted a letter requesting a two (2) year extension of the Tentative Designation (Attachment A). Since its previous extension, the Church has been exercising good faith and diligent effort attempting to meet all the necessary requirements set forth in the Resolution. The Church has been working closely with its members and its professionals to move the Proposal forward. The proposed 49,000

square foot building is designed to accommodate two worship spaces, classrooms, and offices for staff. The worship spaces will be located on the second and third floor, leaving the ground level of the building to be available for public and community uses. The basement will contain approximately seventeen spaces for parking.

The total development cost for the Proposal is estimated at approximately \$19,000,000. Given the amount of funds required to complete the Proposal, the Church authorized its Expansion Committee to initiate the fund raising process. The funds will be raised through BCEC donations, grants, and the potential sale of the 237 Harrison Avenue Annex building.

The relocation of the school facility located on the Parcel has to take place prior to the commencement of the new construction. Since 1999, the current school facility located on the Parcel, a branch of Josiah Quincy Upper School, has accommodated high school students. The main campus of Josiah Quincy Upper School ("School"), formerly known as Abraham Lincoln School, is located in 152 Arlington Street and 20 Church Street in Boston and currently accommodates students from seventh to twelfth grade. It is the School's immediate plan to consolidate these two (2) facilities in one location, which is the main campus, the Arlington Street and Church Street buildings.

The School is in a process of raising funds (approximately \$40,000,000) for the major renovation and expansion of the main campus on Arlington Street, which eventually will be available to students from sixth to twelfth grade.

In addition, there are issues with the title to Parcel R3A-2 that must be resolved by the BRA prior to a transfer of Parcel R3A-2 to the Church. BRA staff is working with City of Boston staff and the Church to resolve the title issues.

### **RECOMMENDATION**

It is therefore recommended that the tentative designation be extended for an additional twenty-four (24) months, or until March 13, 2015, to allow Boston Chinese Evangelical Church additional time to complete an approved site plan, to submit approved final working drawings and specifications, and to show evidence of the availability of equity funds and firm financial commitments, and to allow the BRA time to resolve the title issues.

If the terms and conditions have not been met to the satisfaction of the Director and final designation has not been granted by March 13, 2015, the tentative designation of the BCEC shall be automatically rescinded without prejudice and without further action by the BRA Board.

An appropriate vote follows:

**VOTED:** That the Boston Redevelopment Authority (“BRA”) extend retroactively the tentative designation of Boston Chinese Evangelical Church (“BCEC” or “Church”) as the Redeveloper of a portion of Parcel R3A-2, also known as a portion of Parcel A consisting approximately 12,193 square feet, located at the corner of Washington Street and Marginal Road in the South Cove Urban Renewal Area, Project No. Mass. R-92 for an additional twenty-four (24) months, or until March 13, 2015, to allow BCEC time to meet all the necessary requirements and resolve the title issues. If the terms and conditions have not been met to the satisfaction of the Director, the title issues have not been resolved, and the final designation has not been granted by March 13, 2015, the tentative designation is automatically rescinded without prejudice and without further action by the BRA Board.