

To: Ines Soto-Palmarin, Senior Planner
Lauren Shurtleff, Project Manager
Boston Redevelopment Authority (BRA)

From: Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC)
Christian Science Church and Plaza
Sybil Cooper-King & George Thrush, Co-Chairs

Three Members;
Bill Richardson, Fenway Civic Association
Joanne McKenna, Fenway Community Development Corporation
Sybil Cooper-King, Neighborhood Association of the Back Bay

Re: Final Letter from CAC to BRA regarding Development Proposal for
Christian Science Plaza Revitalization Project

Date: 28 October, 2010

The Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC) reported “Majority” findings to the Boston Redevelopment Authority (BRA) in a letter filed separately.

This letter constitutes the “Minority” findings to the Boston Redevelopment Authority (BRA) as part of the public review process. The CAC has met monthly for nearly two years, and has discussed many issues pertaining to the Christian Science Church (the Church) requests for additional development. On several issues the “Minority” findings and the “Majority” findings coincide, specifically regarding the omission of the Midtown Hotel property in the plan, the concerns regarding environmental impacts of pedestrian level wind and abutters concerns about construction impacts. Further, we agree that the Belvedere and Dalton Street site is the most appropriate location for additional development, although the current zoning height limit should be further studied in the context of the adjacent historic buildings and other proposed/considered nearby projects.

We acknowledge the right of the Church to develop its privately owned land to its economic benefit. However, as you have heard through the series of meeting of the CAC, we remain concerned about the following:

- the scale of the requested development and
- the failure to ensure protections on other CSC land and adjacent small scale residential neighborhoods through deed restrictions or other protective measures
- the protection of the historic plaza and reflecting pool with it’s civic fountain and the bosc area as a virtual public park for a long term.
- the arbitrary increase of the current as-of-right zoning and FAR to 650,000 square feet, which seems to be a reasonable amount of development for this site.
- specific protection be given to the existing small-scale residential neighborhood on Clearway and St Germain Streets and preventing this neighborhood from becoming an extension of the large scale development that exists at the corner of Belvedere and Dalton Streets and eastward.
- exclusion of Huntington Street, specifically the Sunday school site adjacent to the historic Horticultural Hall and in close proximity to Symphony Hall. as a tower location.
- future protections once these development rights are granted, such as deed restrictions to protect the plaza and its public access in perpetuity and on development on the mid-town hotel site
- what are the next steps and the time frame for these next steps?

We extended our expertise and service to this project and after two years are not certain about the how the process fits into the BRA or the City's development process. We believe that the completed document, with the related meeting notes and many comment letters is a private record for the Church.

We request the assurances from the Church and the BRA that any future development conform to on a full BRA Article 80 and Massachusetts Environment Department large project review. Once a specific building and use is selected we expect that no zoning change be considered without prior, complete environmental impacts analysis for sunlight (shadow), pedestrian level winds, pedestrian, vehicular, and service traffic, groundwater, air quality, etc.

In conclusion, we support the Church in looking to the future and in developing their sites in harmony with the context of this special area of Boston at the intersection of several low scale residential neighborhoods and at the terminus of the tall buildings extending from the Old John Hancock building. We support locating the identified 650,000 square feet of development at the Belvedere and Dalton Streets site and we support the efforts of the Boston Landmarks Commission to protect the ensemble of buildings and particularly the Reflecting Pool and Fountain.

Bill Richardson, Fenway Civic Association

Joanne McKenna, Fenway Community Development Corporation

Sybil Cooper-King, Neighborhood Association of the Back Bay

CAC Membership:

Tom Aucella, Belvedere Condo Association, Kelly Brilliant, Fenway Alliance, Vanessa Calderon-Rosado, Inquilinos Boricuas en Acción (IBA), Mark Cataudella, Boston Symphony Orchestra, Christian Coffin, Back Bay Hilton, Hotel, Sybil Cooper-King, Neighborhood Association of the Back Bay Bill Richardson, Fenway Civic Association, Ryan Higginson, Resident of the South End Meg Mainzer-Cohen, Back Bay Association, Joanne McKenna, Fenway Community Development Corporation Craig Nicholson, American Planning Association – Massachusetts Chapter Lee Steele, St. Botolph Neighborhood Association, George Thrush, Boston Society of Architects, Robert Wright, Symphony United Neighbors, Donald Margotta, Church Park Apartments

Ex-Officio Members:

Massachusetts State Representative Byron Rushing, Massachusetts State Representative Sonia Chang-Diaz, Boston City Councilor Chuck Turner