

MINUTES FOR THE BOSTON CIVIC DESIGN COMMISSION APRIL 02, 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 Linda Eastley at 5:00 PM on Tuesday, APRIL 02, 2024.

ATTENDEES

The following members of the Boston Civic Design Commission were present: Ex-officio member and BPDA Director of Design Diana Fernandez, Co-Chairs Linda Eastley and Mimi Love, and Commissioners Jonathan Evans, Shauna Gillies-Smith, Anne-Marie Lubenau, 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 unanimously

VOTED: TO ACCEPT THE MINUTES FOR THE MARCH 05, 2024, MONTHLY MEETING AND THE MARCH 19, 2024, DESIGN SUBCOMMITTEE MEETINGS.

REPORT FROM BPDA DESIGN REVIEW COMMITTEE

2 HARBOR STREET (SOUTH BOSTON INNOVATION CAMPUS), BUILDING 2

Executive Director Kristina Ricco gave a report from the BPDA Design Review Committee on the proposed project at 2 HARBOR STREET (SOUTH BOSTON INNOVATION CAMPUS), BUILDING 2, recommending the proposal for consideration by the commission. Commissioner David Manfredi recused himself from the proceedings.

On a motion duly made and seconded, it was

VOTED: TO REVIEW THE PROPOSED PROJECT AT 2 HARBOR STREET (SOUTH BOSTON INNOVATION CAMPUS), BUILDING 2.

147 W 4TH STREET, SOUTH BOSTON

Executive Director Kristina Ricco gave a report from the BPDA Design Review Committee on the proposed project at 147 W 4TH STREET, SOUTH BOSTON, recommending the proposal for consideration by the commission. Commissioner Sykes recused himself from the proceedings.

On a motion duly made and seconded, it was

VOTED: TO REVIEW THE PROPOSED PROJECT AT 147 W 4TH STREET, SOUTH BOSTON.

PRESENTATIONS FOR REVIEW AND PUBLIC TESTIMONY

475-511 DORCHESTER AVENUE: PHASE 1B

505 DORCHESTER AVENUE, 65 & 75 ELLERY STREET

Representatives of the proponent team, including Mark Rosenshein (Trademark Partners LLC), BK Boley (Stantec), Louis Kraft (Stantec), and Rob Adams (Halvorson | Tighe & Bond Studio), presented the proposed project. Commissioners Love and Sykes recused themselves from the proceedings. Commissioner Gillies-Smith acknowledged having filed a Disclosure of Appearance of Conflict of Interest Form with the City Clerk. Commissioners Eastley, Gillies-Smith, Lubenau, Manfredi, Morris, Rawn, and Solano participated in deliberations.

Discussion: Commissioners appreciated changes made to the proposed project in response to feedback received at earlier meetings. Commissioners encouraged the proponent to continue studies of the podium of 65 Ellery Street. Commissioners expressed mixed opinions on the success of the proposed projects' ability to "read as a whole" but commended the proponent team on the quantity and quality of open space and contribution to the public realm.

Public testimony was given by Pattie McCormick, member of the Project Impact Advisory Group, and Linda Zablocki, member of the Project Impact Advisory Group.

On a motion duly made and seconded, it was

VOTED: TO RECOMMEND THAT THE BPDA BOARD APPROVE THE PROPOSED PROJECT UPON SUCCESSFUL COMPLETION OF THE ARTICLE 80 PUBLIC REVIEW PROCESS.

180 WESTERN AVENUE, ALLSTON

Representatives of the proponent team, including Emily Paparella (Elkus Manfredi Architects) and Doug Jones (Leblanc Jones Landscape Architects), presented the proposed project. Commissioners Gillies-Smith, Manfredi, Rawn, and Solano recused themselves from the proceedings.

Commissioners Eastley, Evans, Love, Lubenau, Morris, and Sykes participated in deliberations.

Discussion: Commissioners appreciated changes made to the proposed project in response to feedback received at earlier meetings. Commissioners encouraged the proponent to continue to study further differentiation of building volume above the cornice line from below the cornice line and further "break down the massing" along Bertram Street, suggesting the proponent explore opportunities to physically connect the proposed Bertram Street open space with the North Harvard Street "promenade" by chamfering the building. Commissioners recommended access to bike parking be articulated as a public door, currently articulated as a service door. Commissioners reiterated the importance of incorporating public art into the building, noting the prevalence and importance of murals and other public art in the neighborhood.

Public testimony was given by Paula Alexander and Robert Breslin.

On a motion duly made and seconded, it was

VOTED: TO RECOMMEND THAT THE BPDA BOARD APPROVE THE PROPOSED PROJECT UPON SUCCESSFUL COMPLETION OF THE ARTICLE 80 PUBLIC REVIEW PROCESS WITH PROVISIO THAT BPDA DESIGN REVIEW STAFF FOCUS FURTHER DESIGN REVIEW ATTENTION ON BUILDING ARTICULATION AND OPEN SPACE ALONG BERTRAM STREET.

2 HARBOR STREET ("SOUTH BOSTON INNOVATION CAMPUS"), BUILDING 2, SOUTH BOSTON WATERFRONT

Assistant Deputy Director for Zoning Compliance Ted Schwartzberg gave a summary of the planning context for the proposed project, followed by a presentation of the proposed project by representatives of the proponent team, including Mike Loring (Beacon Capital), Blake Middleton (Handel Architects), and Mark Klopfer (Klopfer Martin Design Group), followed by a summary of BPDA staff comments by Senior Urban Designer Elizabeth Stifel. Commissioners Eastley and Manfredi recused themselves from the proceedings. Commissioners Evans, Gillies-Smith, Love, Lubenau, Morris, Solano, Sykes, and Rawn participated in deliberations.

Discussion: Commissioners expressed concerns about the relationship between "Building 1" (previously approved) and "Building 2," particularly the condition resulting from the "protrusion" at the southwest corner of "Building 1." Commissioners asked the proponent to prepare more information about the context surrounding the site and the proposed project's "attitude" towards that context. "What cues are you taking from the existing context? Why and how did you decide to either respond to that or deviate from it in a rapidly changing district?" Commissioners asked for additional information about the proposed character of the public realm along Harbor Street, Channel Street, and the shared loading access between "Building 1" and "Building 2." Commissioners interrogated the proposed resilience strategy, which resulted in an "impenetrable edge" along the proposed street connecting Harbor Street and Channel Street, and asked the proponent to study methods of mitigating the impact of the raised ground floor on pedestrian comfort. Commissioners asked for additional study of proposed building materiality in an effort to further differentiate "Building 2" from "Building 1" and asked that special consideration be given to those facades fronting public open space. Commissioners asked for additional study of proposed balconies, noting a "tension" at the corner between "Building 1" and "Building 2."

There was no public testimony.

On a motion duly made and seconded, it was

VOTED: TO RECOMMEND THE PROPOSED PROJECT AT 2 HARBOR STREET, SOUTH BOSTON WATERFRONT, FOR FURTHER REVIEW AT THE BCDC DESIGN SUBCOMMITTEE.

147 W 4TH STREET, SOUTH BOSTON

Assistant Deputy Director for Zoning Compliance Ted Schwartzberg gave a summary of the planning context for the proposed project, followed by a presentation of the proposed project by representatives of the proponent team, including Dante Angleucci (Lincoln Property Company) and David Godfroy (DiMella Shaffer), followed by a summary of BPDA staff comments by Senior Urban Designer Scott Slarsky. Commissioner Sykes recused himself from the proceedings. Commissioners Eastley, Evans, Gillies-Smith, Love, Lubenau, Morris, Solano, and Rawn participated in deliberations. Discussion: Commissioners expressed concern that the proposed project "does not adhere to the planning principles articulated by BPDA Planning" and made recommendations for revisions to the proposed site plan and proposed building massing. While appreciative of the provision of "mid-block connections," Commissioners described the implementation as "confusing" and suggested that the

function of the connections, whether open space or access and loading, be further differentiated and that greater opportunities for open space be identified. Commissioners interrogated the proposed massing strategy and asked the proponent to study alternatives that put greater height at the corner of Dorchester Avenue and A Street. "I know there's that parcel that's left over and not a part of the project, but whether it becomes part of the project at a later date or not, we really need to understand the future of that parcel and how it's going to be part of this larger whole. There's a lot of importance to consider at the corner of Dorchester Avenue, where you're proposing that two-story credit union and I'm just going to suggest that that's really not the right location for a two-story building and not building out to the density that is allowed at that site. That's a really important artery being developed right now, and I feel like this is not contributing to the vision created for Dorchester Avenue." "I know you have limited space, but the lab building is in a complicated location. In this fabric that is all stick-build, all residential, Fourth Street is a really important street for people getting in and out of South Boston, almost equally important to West Broadway." "It's an extremely challenging site with extremely challenging constraints and a very unusual relationship to Dorchester Avenue, but the buildings are a little bit of a patchwork with respect to one another, particularly where you might want more prominence at the corner of Dorchester Avenue." Commissioners asked for more information about the relationship between the proposed buildings and the topography of the site and surrounding public rights-of-way. There was no public testimony.

On a motion duly made and seconded, it was

VOTED: TO RECOMMEND THE PROPOSED PROJECT AT 147 W 4TH STREET, SOUTH BOSTON, FOR FURTHER REVIEW AT THE BCDC DESIGN SUBCOMMITTEE. SUBCOMMITTEE WILL GIVE SPECIAL ATTENTION TO THE HIGH-LEVEL URBAN DESIGN IDEAS, INCLUDING THE RELATIONSHIP TO EXISTING AND FUTURE CONTEXT OF DORCHESTER AVENUE, "INTERSTITIAL SPACES" CREATED BY MID-BLOCK CONNECTIONS, BUILDING HEIGHT AND MASSING, AND RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN BUILDINGS ON SITE, INCLUDING ALTERNATIVE SITE PLAN AND MASSING SCENARIOS. BPDA STAFF SHOULD BE PRESENT TO ADDRESS OUTSTANDING QUESTIONS RELATED TO THE PLANNING AND REGULATORY CONTEXT SPECIFIC TO THIS SITE AND TO PRESENT THE BROADER PLANNING CONTEXT OF DORCHESTER AVENUE.

ADJOURNMENT

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

VOTED: TO ADJOURN.