

## **MINUTES FOR THE BOSTON CIVIC DESIGN COMMISSION**

### **MARCH 05, 2024**

*This meeting was held virtually. A recording of this meeting is available upon request. Please reach out to [bcdc@boston.gov](mailto:bcdc@boston.gov) for more information.*

#### **CALL TO ORDER**

A meeting of the Boston Civic Design Commission (BCDC) was called to order by Chair Linda Eastley at 5:05 PM on Tuesday, March 05, 2024.

#### **ATTENDEES**

The following members of the Boston Civic Design Commission were present: Ex-officio member and BPDA Director of Planning Aimee Chambers, Co-Chair Linda Eastley, Commissioner Jonathan Evans, Ex-officio member and BPDA Director of Design Diana Fernandez, Commissioner David Hacin, Commissioner Kathy Kottaridis, Chair Mimi Love, Commissioner Anne-Marie Lubenau, Commissioner David Manfredi, Commissioner Catherine Morris, Commissioner William Rawn, Commissioner Laura Solano, and Commissioner 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 FEBRUARY 06, 2024, MONTHLY MEETING AND THE FEBRUARY 20, 2024, DESIGN SUBCOMMITTEE MEETINGS.

#### **REPORT FROM BPDA DESIGN REVIEW COMMITTEE**

##### 2 CHARLESGATE WEST, FENWAY

Executive Director Kristina Ricco gave a report from the BPDA Design Review Committee on the proposed project at 2 CHARLESGATE WEST, FENWAY, recommending the proposal for consideration by the commission. Commissioner Laura Solano recused themselves from the proceedings.

On a motion duly made and seconded, it was unanimously  
VOTED: TO REVIEW THE PROPOSED PROJECT AT 2 CHARLESGATE WEST, FENWAY.

##### BOSTON UNIVERSITY CHARLES RIVER CAMPUS IMP EXTENSION AND SEVENTH AMENDMENT AND ART 80B REVIEW OF WARREN TOWERS

Executive Director Kristina Ricco gave a report from the BPDA Design Review Committee on the proposed projects at BOSTON UNIVERSITY CHARLES RIVER CAMPUS, and recommended the commission review the proposed IMP EXTENSION AND AMENDMENT and waive the right to ART 80B review of Warren Towers. Commissioners William Rawn and Laura Solano recused themselves from the proceedings.

On a motion duly made and seconded, it was unanimously

VOTED: TO REVIEW THE EXTENSION OF AND SEVENTH AMENDMENT TO THE BOSTON UNIVERSITY CHARLES RIVER CAMPUS IMP AND ART 80B REVIEW OF WARREN TOWERS.

175 NORTH HARVARD

The commission voted to recommend approval of the proposed project at the 2023 09 05 monthly meeting, with the proviso that it should be returned to the commission during the course of BPDA Design Review for additional review of proposed building materiality and landscape elements.

Representatives of the proponent team, including Tom Gibson (Haworth Tompkins) and Debbie Balters (Marvel Designs), presented the proposed project. Commissioners Anne Marie Lubenau, William Rawn, and Laura Solano recused themselves from the proceedings.

Discussion: Commissioners encouraged the proponent to continue working with BPDA Design Review staff to further articulate the proposed “stepping” of the building height by making vertical piers “more emphatic” and to refine the proposed landscape plan, which they felt remained “somewhat conceptual.”

This agenda item was informational to the commission and advisory to the proponent and BPDA Design Review staff. No vote was required.

**PRESENTATIONS FOR REVIEW AND PUBLIC TESTIMONY**

66 CAMBRIDGE STREET, CHARLESTOWN (REFERRED FROM DESIGN SUBCOMMITTEE)

Representatives of the proponent team, including Danny Guadagnoli (Fallon Company), Don Johnson (Fallon Company), Joe Mamayek (SGA), Andrea Varutti (Landworks Studio), and Brian Beisel (Howard Stein Hudson), presented the proposed project. Commissioner Kirk Sykes recused himself from the proceedings.

Discussion: Commissioners expressed appreciation for changes made to the proposed project in response to feedback received previously. Where the proponent reduced the number of columns at the arcade and added planter beds between columns, commissioners questioned the value of the proposed planter beds and suggested they be removed. Commissioners also commented on the configuration of proposed handrails and suggested that handrails not “wrap” the columns so that the columns may be resolved “unimpeded.”

There was no public testimony.

On a motion duly made and seconded, it was

VOTED: TO RECOMMEND THAT THE BPDA BOARD APPROVE THE PROPOSED PROJECT AT 66 CAMBRIDGE STREET, CHARLESTOWN, UPON SUCCESSFUL COMPLETION OF THE ARTICLE 80 PUBLIC REVIEW PROCESS WITH THE PROVISIO THAT ADDITIONAL DESIGN REVIEW ATTENTION BE GIVEN TO THE RESOLUTION OF LANDSCAPE ELEMENTS ALONG THE PROPOSED ARCADE AND THAT THE PROPOSED PROJECT RETURN TO THE COMMISSION DURING THE COURSE OF BPDA DESIGN REVIEW TO REPORT ON RESOLUTION OF THE PROPOSED INTERSECTION AT THE I-93 OFFRAMP AND CAMBRIDGE STREET, AND IMPROVEMENTS TO THE CAMBRIDGE STREET PUBLIC RIGHT OF WAY.

### 840 COLUMBUS AVENUE, ROXBURY (REFERRED FROM DESIGN SUBCOMMITTEE)

Representatives of the proponent team, including Viktoija Abolina (Northeastern University), Jason Wills (American Campus), Christian Galvao (Elkus Manfredi), and Carl Frushour (Arcadis), presented the proposed project. Commissioners Mimi Love, and David Manfredi recused themselves from the proceedings. Commissioner Kirk Sykes abstained.

Discussion: Commissioners expressed appreciation for changes made to the proposed project in response to feedback received previously. Commissioners commented on the configuration of the sidewalk and landscape zones at the corner of Melnea Cass Boulevard and Tremont Street and asked that the proponent identify opportunities to better “screen” pedestrians from the intersection and provide more “protection” from the context. Commissioners commented on the material treatment of the proposed “bump out” condition at the corner of Melnea Cass Boulevard and Columbus Avenue. Commissioners commented on the scale of landscape elements designed to separate pedestrian and bike zones along Melnea Cass Boulevard which seem vulnerable to salt (given proximity to the road) and wear (given high-traffic adjacent uses). Commissioners asked the proponent team to study the podium at the corner of Melnea Cass Boulevard and Tremont Street and made comparisons between slides 7 and 8 of the presentation.

Public testimony was given by Alison Putinas, Dolores Boogdanian, and Roy Ingrassia.

On a motion duly made and seconded, it was

VOTED: TO RECOMMEND THAT THE BPDA BOARD APPROVE THE PROPOSED PROJECT AT 840 COLUMBUS AVENUE, ROXBURY, UPON SUCCESSFUL COMPLETION OF THE ARTICLE 80 PUBLIC REVIEW PROCESS.

### 2 CHARLESGATE WEST, FENWAY (INTRODUCTION)

A summary of the planning context for the proposed project at 2 CHARLESGATE WEST, FENWAY, was given by BCDC ex-officio member and Director of Planning Aimee Chambers, followed by a presentation of the proposed project by representatives of the proponent team, including Brett Bentson (Utile), and Emmett Gregory (Mikyong Kim), followed by a summary of BPDA Design Review feedback shared with the proponent team to date given by Deputy Director of Urban Design Seth Riseman. Commissioner Mimi Love recused themselves from the proceedings.

Discussion: Commissioners complemented the “urban design wisdom that this project reflects” and were generally supportive of the massing approach. Commissioners asked the proponent to prepare more information about the “transition” massing or the appendage to the tower element including diagrams of the evolution of its massing and more detailed study of the material transitions between the three massing elements. Commissioners asked the proponent team to prepare further studies of the composition of the facade. “There is a sobriety about it, there is an elegance in the elevations that I’m not sure I’m getting in some of the 3-D views. This site is intended to be a landmark, a gateway, the building looks very elegant. I’m wondering if it’s a little too quiet, if there shouldn’t be some exuberance. In some ways it isn’t landmark enough.” “The context of this building is a place of action and creation. The current design of the building isn’t risky. There’s a story that’s missing from this building.” Commissioners commented on the fenestration of the five-story mass, appearing “neither really contemporary nor historic” and suggested that the scale of the

windows reference the scale of adjacent historic buildings. Commissioners commented on the plaza space adjacent to the mezzanine level amenity and wondered if the plaza could be more “social.” Commissioners commented on the public stair and wondered if it was an opportunity for the project to “be more bold.” Commissioners asked the proponent to prepare more information about the relationship of the proposed project to the Bowker Overpass Rehabilitation Project led by the Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT) and the Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR).

Public testimony was given by Dolores Boogdanian

On a motion duly made and seconded, it was

VOTED: TO REMAND THE PROPOSED PROJECT AT 2 CHARLESGATE WEST, FENWAY, TO FURTHER REVIEW AT THE BCDC DESIGN SUBCOMMITTEE.

#### BOSTON UNIVERSITY CHARLES RIVER CAMPUS IMP EXTENSION AND AMENDMENT (INTRODUCTION)

A summary of the planning context for the proposed project at BOSTON UNIVERSITY CHARLES RIVER CAMPUS was given by BCDC ex-officio member and Director of Planning Aimee Chambers, followed by a presentation of the proposed project by representatives of the proponent team, including Ken Ryan (Boston University), Devanshi Purohit (CBT), and James Loftus (MDS Architecture), followed by a summary of BPDA Design Review feedback shared with the proponent team to date given by Deputy Director of Urban Design Seth Riseman.

Recusals: Commissioner Anne Marie Lubenau, Commissioner Willaim Rawn, and Commissioner Laura Solano

Public Testimony: Dolores Boogdanian and Pam Beale

On a motion duly made and seconded, it was

VOTED: TO REMAND THE PROPOSED PROJECT AT BOSTON UNIVERSITY CHARLES RIVER CAMPUS IMP EXTENSION AND AMENDMENT TO FURTHER REVIEW AT THE BCDC DESIGN SUBCOMMITTEE.

#### **ADJOURNMENT**

At the conclusion of presentations for review and public testimony, on a motion made and seconded, it was unanimously VOTED: TO ADJOURN at 8:20 PM.