

PLANNING BOARD
FOR THE
CITY OF CAMBRIDGE

GENERAL HEARING
TUESDAY, AUGUST 22, 2023

6:30 p.m.

Remote Meeting
Cambridge, Massachusetts

Mary T. Flynn, Chair
Catherine Preston Connolly, Vice Chair
Louis J. Bacci, Jr.
Hugh Russell
Tom Sieniewicz
Ashley Tan
Diego Macias
Adam Buchanan Westbrook

Community Development Staff
Iram Farooq, Assistant City Manager
Daniel Messplay
Swaathi Joseph
Adithi Moogoor
Erik Thorkildsen
Suzannah Bigolin
Evan Spetrini



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P R O C E E D I N G S

* * * * *

(6:30 p.m.)

Sitting Members: Mary T. Flynn, Catherine Preston Connolly,
Louis J. Bacci, Jr., Hugh Russell, Tom
Sieniewicz, Ashley Tan, Diego Macias, and
Adam Buchanan Westbrook

MARY FLYNN: Welcome to the August 22, 2023
meeting of the Cambridge Planning Board. My name is Mary
Flynn, and I am the Chair.

Pursuant to Chapter 2 of the Acts of 2023 adopted
by the Massachusetts General Court and approved by the
Governor, the City is authorized to use remote participation
at meetings of the Cambridge Planning Board.

All Board members, applicants, and members of the
public will state their name before speaking. All votes
will be taken by roll call.

Members of the public will be kept on mute until
it is time for public comment. I will give instructions for
public comment at that time, and you can also find
instructions on the City's webpage for remote Planning Board
meetings.

1 This meeting is being video and audio recorded and
2 is being streamed live on the City of Cambridge online
3 meeting portal and on cable television Channel 22, within
4 Cambridge. There will also be a transcript of the
5 proceedings.

6 I'll start by asking Staff to take Board member
7 attendance and verify that all members are audible.
8 Daniel?

9 DANIEL MESSPLAY: Lou Bacci, are you present, and
10 is the meeting visible and audible to you?

11 LOUIS J. BACCI, JR.: Present, visible, and
12 audible.

13 DANIEL MESSPLAY: H Theodore Cohen, are you
14 present, and is the meeting visible and audible to you?

15 [Pause]

16 DANIEL MESSPLAY: Absent. Tom Sieniewicz, are you
17 present, and is the meeting visible and audible to you?

18 TOM SIENIEWICZ: Present, visible, and audible.

19 DANIEL MESSPLAY: Hugh Russell, are you present,
20 and is the meeting visible and audible to you?

21 HUGH RUSSELL: Present, visible, and audible.

22 DANIEL MESSPLAY: Ashley Tan, are you present, and

1 is the meeting visible and audible to you?

2 ASHLEY TAN: Present, visible, and audible.

3 DANIEL MESSPLAY: Diego Macias, are you present,
4 and is the meeting visible and audible to you?

5 DIEGO MACIAS: Present, visible, and audible.

6 DANIEL MESSPLAY: Adam Westbrook, are you present,
7 and is the meeting visible and audible to you?

8 ADAM BUCHANAN WESTBROOK: Present, visible, and
9 audible.

10 DANIEL MESSPLAY: Catherine Preston Connolly, are
11 you present, and is the meeting visible and audible to you?

12 CATHERINE PRESTON CONNOLLY: Present, visible, and
13 audible.

14 DANIEL MESSPLAY: And Mary Flynn, are you present,
15 and is the meeting visible and audible to you?

16 MARY FLYNN: Present, visible, and audible.

17 DANIEL MESSPLAY: Thank you. That is eight
18 members present and one absent, which constitutes a quorum.

19 MARY FLYNN: Great. Thank you so much, Daniel.

20 * * * * *

21 (6:32 p.m.)

22 Sitting Members: Mary T. Flynn, Catherine Preston Connolly,

1 Louis J. Bacci, Jr., Hugh Russell, Tom
2 Sieniewicz, Ashley Tan, Diego Macias, and
3 Adam Buchanan Westbrook

4 MARY FLYNN: The first item is an Update from the
5 Community Development Department. Please also introduce
6 Staff present at the meeting. And I believe I'm turning it
7 back to Daniel for this.

8 DANIEL MESSPLAY: Thank you, Chair Flynn. Good
9 evening, everyone. Daniel Messplay here, acting Director of
10 the Zoning and Development Division at CDD. I'll quickly
11 introduce the other Staff we have present at the meeting.

12 So with me from the Zoning and Development team we
13 have Swaathi Joseph and Evan Spetrini, and Adithi Moogoor.
14 We are also joined by Iram Farooq, our Assistant City
15 Manager for Community Development. And from our Community
16 Planning team we are joined by Erik Thorkildsen and Suzannah
17 Bigolin. And I believe that's all the Staff present at the
18 meeting.

19 I have just a short update since we are now at the
20 tail end of summer. Tonight, we will have a continued
21 public hearing on 2161 Mass Ave, followed by a Design Update
22 for Cambridge Crossing, and lastly, a Special Permit

1 Extension Request for 88 Holworthy Street.

2 Next week, we will have a continued public hearing
3 on the Affordable Housing Overlay Amendments Zoning Petition
4 and a public hearing on 303 Third Street, 195 Binney Street,
5 and 249 Third Street, to discuss utilization of existing
6 parking spaces across those projects. That takes us right
7 into Labor Day.

8 We are not planning to have a Planning Board
9 meeting on September 5, so we will take a break then, but
10 then pick it back up on September 12.

11 The City Council is also still on their summer
12 recess but will resume meeting on September 11.

13 And the last thing to note is that this evening
14 will be the last Planning Board meeting for Hugh Russell,
15 who has served this Board and the City for the greater part
16 of four plus decades, I think, at this point.

17 We'll be taking a few moments at the end of our
18 normal business on the agenda to say a few words to Hugh and
19 wish him well. So if you are in attendance, please do stay
20 on for that special moment.

21 And that concludes the presentation, so I will
22 turn it back to you, Chair Flynn. Thank you.

1 MARY FLYNN: Oh, thank you. I appreciate it. I
2 also just want to note, since some of the Planning Board
3 members weren't here last week, that we've been joined by
4 two new Planning Board members, Diego, and Adam. And I hope
5 over the course of their time on the Board that we get to
6 meet each other in person. Looking forward to that.

7 Do any of the Board members have questions on the
8 Update?

9 [Pause]

10 Okay.

11 * * * * *

12 (6:36 p.m.)

13 Sitting Members: Mary T. Flynn, Catherine Preston Connolly,
14 Louis J. Bacci, Jr., Hugh Russell, Tom
15 Sieniewicz, and Ashley Tan

16 MARY FLYNN: Seeing no hands, let's move on then
17 to the first item on the agenda, which is a continued public
18 hearing on case PB-397, a special permit by Nelson Group
19 Companies to redevelop and expand an existing structure at
20 2161 Massachusetts Avenue.

21 CDD Staff will begin by introducing this item, and
22 for that I'm going to turn it over to Evan.

1 EVAN SPETRINI: Thank you, Chair Flynn. This was
2 originally heard at the June 6 meeting, and the Planning
3 Board expressed general support for the project. However,
4 it was determined that the applicant may need an additional
5 special permit related to relief of setback requirements for
6 the on-grade parking that is proposed as a part of the
7 development.

8 The applicant has submitted revised plans that
9 illustrate some minor changes to the design of the building,
10 as well as a request for the additional special permit I
11 mentioned before.

12 As a reminder, the Board's action is to grant or
13 deny the special permit. An updated memo from Zoning and
14 Urban Design Staff has been provided to the Board, and Staff
15 are present to answer any questions the Board may have.

16 And with that, I will turn it back to you.

17 MARY FLYNN: Thank you so much. Jim Rafferty is
18 representing the applicant this evening. Attorney Rafferty,
19 you will have up to thirty minutes to present, but please be
20 as concise as possible. The Board obviously may allow
21 additional time at our discretion.

22 If you would please start by introducing yourself

1 and members of the team and go right ahead. Thank you.

2 JAMES RAFFERTY: Good evening. Thank you, Madam
3 Chair, and members of the Board. For the record, my name is
4 James Rafferty. I'm an attorney with offices located at 907
5 Massachusetts Avenue in Cambridge. I'm appearing this
6 evening on behalf of the applicant, The Nelson Group.

7 Present on behalf of the Nelson Group is the
8 Principal, Nelson DeOliveira. Project Architect from the
9 Khalsa Design Firm Nerijus Bubnelis is also present and will
10 be providing the Board with the Design Updates.

11 As noted by the Chair in her opening remarks, this
12 is our second appearance before the Board. It is a project
13 that is located in the Business A-2 District in North
14 Cambridge on Mass Ave, at the corner of Milton Street.

15 The project involves the conversion of an office
16 building, what was originally a dental office, but most
17 people probably recognize it as the American Service --
18 Friends Service Committee building for years.

19 The proposal involves removing a portion of the
20 rear building, bringing the building forward into the lot,
21 and constructing an addition on the roof and on the side.

22 The conversion will result in eight dwelling units

1 and one commercial office space fronting on Massachusetts
2 Avenue. When we were here last, we did discover that the
3 parking lot layout as proposed did not comply with the
4 setback requirement associated with proximity to windows on
5 the first floor of habitable residences.

6 So we had the benefit of a very productive design
7 session with Mr. Thorkildsen and Mr. Spetrini as we looked
8 at the various options.

9 I don't know if it would be possible to put up
10 that portion of the layout, of the parking area. Otherwise,
11 Nerijus can walk you through it. But suffice it to say
12 there was a lot of exploration about whether or not we could
13 create separation and meet the setback requirements off the
14 building.

15 The short answer is that that wasn't physically
16 possible, and as a result the applicant has filed an amended
17 application seeking a special permit that would allow for
18 the waiver of that five-foot-setback.

19 The building has had some design changes performed
20 intended to mitigate the impact of the windows in that
21 location. Two of the bedrooms have their windows removed
22 from the first floor overlooking the parking lot.

1 Another window was removed or reduced in size on
2 that side, and there are other measures proposed, including
3 having vehicles drive in to the building -- drive in to the
4 parking lot and not back into the parking space to avoid the
5 exhaust by going into any windows.

6 So the Project Architect will walk us through
7 those changes. But suffice it to say the special permit is
8 needed in that location.

9 There was also commentary about whether or not the
10 parking layout was compliant with the landscape and
11 screening requirements. We have reviewed those requirements
12 as recently as today with Commissioner Singanayagam, and he
13 concurs with our interpretation that the landscaping as
14 proposed and the screening as proposed does comply with
15 those requirements.

16 So with that, I'm happy to have Mr. Bubnelis walk
17 the Board through the changes to the building façade, both
18 in terms of the parking lot itself and some of the
19 suggestions that were brought up at the prior hearing that
20 have been incorporated into the most recent design.

21 NERIJUS BUBNELIS: Hello. Can you hear me?

22 MARY FLYNN: We can hear you, yes.

1 NERIJUS BUBNELIS: Good evening, Madam Chair.
2 Good evening, Board members.

3 JAMES RAFFERTY: Go ahead, Nerijus.

4 NERIJUS BUBNELIS: Thank you for your time, and if
5 I can maybe ask to share the screen; it will be easier to go
6 through the presentation, if possible. If somebody can
7 allow access for the screensharing.

8 MARY FLYNN: Swaathi, are you able to do that?

9 NERIJUS BUBNELIS: Thank you. Okay. Can you see
10 that? Okay.

11 JAMES RAFFERTY: Yeah. Nerijus, you're going to
12 -- Neri, introduce yourself, please, and spell your last
13 name.

14 NERIJUS BUBNELIS: Yes. Nerijus Bubnelis from
15 Khalsa Design. We have in attendance here as well on the
16 team Natalie Adams from Verdant, and we have their Landscape
17 Architect, and we have Stevan Gold, Arborist.

18 And so, today's presentation will be focused on
19 changes to the previous design, based on the comments. So
20 before we jump into the planting plan, which it did not
21 change much from the previous version, and I want to focus
22 on the parking area and the screening where Mr. Rafferty

1 mentioned.

2 So we have landscaped area along the Milton
3 Street, and we have a screening fence -- a two-foot-tall
4 screen fence from the Milton Street, kind of screening the
5 parking. And the landscaped area on the left is the -- that
6 covers the requirement of landscaped area. I think it's the
7 6.48 section.

8 On the Mass Avenue side, we will show -- we show
9 the magnolia tree, and we show transformer pads. There was
10 some comments about screening the transformer itself, but
11 looking closely into area, it was a very, very tight area
12 with -- pretty much -- that allowed the possibility of any
13 testing in front of the transformer, which will not allow
14 access for a utility company to service the -- what you have
15 all the requirements -- I believe, like five or 10 feet.
16 And I think 10 feet in front and five on the side -- in the
17 back and the side.

18 There was also -- I'm not sure if there's a little
19 confusion, but there was mentioned -- somebody mentioned the
20 street tree, which I believe the rendering, which will get
21 into -- shows the tree on the lot.

22 So now back to the plan, so this iteration of

1 plans, we actually have a layout -- unit layout in the
2 building, and if I want to focus on the unit as typically
3 facing the parking lot, so the unit the way it's laid out is
4 that the sleeping rooms are right now facing the Milton
5 Street, and we have sleeping rooms blank wall and the living
6 room, and so, open concept living -- living and kitchen
7 facing the parking area.

8 So that was, you know, that was the way to sort of
9 screen for, you know, screen for any fumes or what not that
10 cars can produce and get into the building from sleeping
11 rooms.

12 The commercial area -- commercial space would have
13 non-operable windows in this iteration.

14 I can get to the elevation that -- the only
15 elevation change in this iteration is that facing the
16 parking lot.

17 The basement unit, the basement layout has not
18 changed from previous versions.

19 Right now we have the units laid out, but I'm not
20 going -- I don't think, unless somebody asks questions, I'm
21 not going to get into the ways it's laid out. I'm not going
22 to get into details. And I want to get things straight into

1 the renderings.

2 The renderings right now are according to the
3 landscape plan, and it shows a magnolia tree in the existing
4 location. We also will have a view that shows sort of --
5 exposes the elevations, exposes the view and the building
6 itself.

7 And then we also, as per suggestion, we looked
8 into another option of a proportion of the roof and the
9 third-floor lighting -- lighter version.

10 So we looked at that, you know, we created the
11 view. We studied it, and I think that in our opinion, we
12 kind of like this lighter gray versus, like, a charcoal
13 gray. And I think we're fine to continue that option if
14 that's preferable by the Board as well.

15 On the Mass Avenue side, so that's the rendering
16 showing that there isn't a landscape plan, so there's no
17 proposed street tree. The only tree that is shown in this
18 rendering in front of the building is on the Massachusetts
19 Avenue side on the property line, next to the transformer.

20 Here's the transformer. Maybe we'll make a note
21 that that's -- might not be the color of the transformer as
22 it's shown on the rendering.

1 And we show now the magnolia tree in front of the
2 building.

3 Another item that was added to this submission was
4 the Tree Protection Plan, that includes the plan how to
5 protect during construction the magnolia tree. And we have
6 arborists on the board. If somebody has any specific
7 questions, we'll be more than welcome to answer.

8 Maybe I can mention somebody -- if we can add a
9 street tree in front of the building on Mass Avenue. You
10 can see there's some utilities in that area as well as a
11 parking spot.

12 And we also are providing the tree on the opposite
13 side of the sidewalk on the property. So that will be --
14 that will be our comments on this from a landscape plan in
15 terms of the rendering, and there's a lighter version of
16 gray of the upper portion in the infill -- horizontal infill
17 portion between the windows on the Massachusetts Avenue
18 side.

19 And then I think right now we're just waiting for
20 comments, unless somebody has specific questions.

21 MARY FLYNN: We're going to go to public comment
22 before we get to Board questions and discussion. So if that

1 concludes the presentation, that's exactly what we will do.

2 So any members of the public -- excuse me.

3 JAMES RAFFERTY: That concludes the presentation,
4 Madam.

5 MARY FLYNN: Thank you. Any members of the public
6 who wish to speak should now click the button that says,
7 "Raise hand." If you're calling in by phone, you can raise
8 your hand by pressing *9.

9 As of 5:00 p.m. yesterday, the Board received
10 no written communications on this case. Written
11 communications received after 5:00 p.m. yesterday will be
12 entered into the record. So let me see. At the present
13 time, I don't see anyone who's wishing to testify, but that
14 just changed. So let's see.

15 I'll now ask Staff to unmute speakers one at a
16 time. Please begin by stating your name and address and
17 Staff will confirm that we can hear you. After that, you
18 will have up to three minutes to speak before I ask you to
19 wrap up.

20 So Daniel?

21 DANIEL MESSPLAY: Thank you, Chair Flynn. And
22 we'll just do a last call if any speakers wish to provide

1 public comment on 2161 Massachusetts Ave to please use the
2 "Raise hand" Function now.

3 Our first speaker is James Williamson. So James,
4 please begin by unmuting yourself and giving your name and
5 address.

6 JAMES WILLIAMSON: Can you hear me?

7 DANIEL MESSPLAY: Yes. Please go ahead.

8 JAMES WILLIAMSON: So James Williamson, 30
9 Churchill Ave in North Cambridge, just up the road a bit.
10 Members of the Planning Board, Mayor Rafferty, I read the
11 memorandum a couple of times, actually. Interesting points
12 raised there.

13 First of all, let me just say I like the darker
14 version of the upper cladding or whatever it is. I also
15 think that having -- I really like the style of architecture
16 -- we call it Art Moderne -- and many of the images that I
17 looked at have a building set further back from, you know,
18 they're typically -- they're often homes, and they're set
19 back from the sidewalk and the street.

20 And I actually think that that would be a truer
21 representation to that style of architecture and a nicer --
22 it would be hanging onto a nice amenity about this building,

1 although anybody who knows the area knows how badly kept up
2 it's been until it was fairly recently cleaned up again by
3 the new owners.

4 So I think there's an urban form, aesthetic -- you
5 know, pedestrian environment argument for not pushing it
6 forward as much and leaving a little more of the existing
7 green space there.

8 But it seems like in the memo a key issue has --
9 and in the presentation tonight, a lot of it has to do with
10 parking.

11 But what wasn't mentioned in the memorandum was
12 the possibility, the option of actually reducing the scale
13 of the building and concomitantly the number of parking
14 spaces that, obviously, the neighborhood are quite eager to
15 have provided.

16 So I would like to ask the Planning Board to think
17 about the possibility of asking for a reduction in the scale
18 of the build, the number of units, you know, tweaking where
19 the living rooms are. You know, it gets pretty complicated
20 to salvage the scale of this building and the number of
21 parking spaces, you know, off-street parking.

22 There is another dimension to this. Some will

1 know that it's right next door to the Keefe Funeral Home,
2 and there are other businesses in the area as well. And,
3 you know, they've been there for -- I don't know, 70 years.
4 There are funerals and people show up in cars and look for
5 places to park.

6 I think there are particular aspects to this
7 location which deserve greater than the usual attention from
8 the Planning Board in terms of the parking situation,
9 especially if there's going to be commercial uses where
10 parking apparently isn't being provided.

11 I'd also like to ask you to consider: Look, there
12 is a North Mass Ave partial reconstruction coming with
13 separated bike lanes, probably all the way down now to
14 Porter Square, dedicated bus lanes. That's going to put
15 even more pressure on the parking. And I'd ask you to
16 consider the impact of that as well.

17 Thank you.

18 DANIEL MESSPLAY: Thank you. Chair Flynn, that
19 concludes the speakers on the list. So I will turn it back
20 to you.

21 MARY FLYNN: Okay. Thank you so much. So we're
22 now going to move from public comment to Board discussion.

1 Additional written comments may be submitted for the record.

2 Let's start with questions. Do Board members have
3 questions for either the project team or for CDD Staff?

4 Lou, let's start with you.

5 LOUIS J. BACCI, JR.: Screening for the
6 transformer, that's pretty much the only question I have.
7 Parking I think will work out.

8 MARY FLYNN: Okay.

9 LOUIS J. BACCI, JR.: But yes, I'd like to know
10 what, if, how to screen this transformer.

11 MARY FLYNN: Okay. All right. Let's take all the
12 questions first. Tom?

13 TOM SIENIEWICZ: Yes, Thank you, Madam Chair. And
14 this flies in the face of my fellow citizen, Mr. Williamson,
15 but as I was looking at the plans and determining that there
16 isn't any apparent street wall on Mass Ave, the abutter to
17 the south faces sideways. And then the funeral home is set
18 considerably back with its driveway in the front yard.

19 Given that there's no apparent street wall, at
20 least with the two abutters, I was wondering about
21 considering moving the building closer to Mass Ave to make
22 the parking lot -- not come into compliance, but maybe come

1 into compliance since we're moving the building anyway, it
2 seems like that might -- there might be an opportunity
3 there, the tradeoff being that you're now putting functions
4 right on Mass Ave.

5 So -- and I would like to pose the question about
6 the amount of development, and that maybe what we're seeing
7 here is that the site is pinched because it's just too much
8 of an ambitious development plan on a small lot.

9 MARY FLYNN: Okay. Thank you.

10 Mr. Rafferty, do you want to direct those
11 questions to the appropriate members of your team?

12 JAMES RAFFERTY: Um--

13 MARY FLYNN: Anything --

14 JAMES RAFFERTY: Starting with Mr. Sieniewicz's
15 comment, I think I understood it to be the amount of -- was
16 it made clear there are eight proposed dwelling units and
17 one commercial unit at the front. The project as originally
18 designed included nine dwelling units. So we have reduced
19 it by one.

20 The project also in its early stages had a special
21 permit request to reduce parking, because we were going to
22 be below the one per dwelling unit requirement. But in the

1 pendency of this application, the Council in its wisdom
2 chose to eliminate minimum parking requirements.

3 So we've held two community meetings in this
4 process, and the one consistent message we heard, including
5 from the owners of the funeral home and the dental office
6 next door as well as the residents is how they have been
7 impacted by the proposed demand for off-street parking since
8 the commercial parking and the meters along that stretch of
9 Massachusetts Ave has been all but eliminated.

10 So we made a decision -- strategic decision -- to
11 seek the special permit to allow for us to achieve parking.
12 So that's probably been the biggest takeaway from the
13 project. The building itself is within the five-foot
14 setback along Mass Ave, and bringing it forward certainly
15 seems consistent with the guidelines for the North Mass
16 Overlay.

17 MARY FLYNN: Okay.

18 JAMES RAFFERTY: Mr. Bacci asked a question about
19 the transformer. I'm going to -- Nerijus could address
20 that. We all know the struggles with transformers. It's
21 certainly clear that the coloring of the transformer can
22 benefit from some improvement.

1 The screening of transformer, as Mr. Bacci knows,
2 is a negotiation with the utility company. We're hoping
3 that's something we can address through the Design Review
4 process with CDD.

5 MARY FLYNN: Okay. Thank you for that. Any other
6 questions from Board members before we move to discussion?
7 Okay. Seeing none, Board members, what are your thoughts
8 and your take on where we are with this particular
9 application?

10 Tom?

11 TOM SIENIEWICZ: Well, I appreciate Attorney
12 Rafferty's going through the history here relative to the
13 program already being diminished by a full unit, and also
14 reminding the Board here that through the community -- the
15 Board-mandated community outreach process, that they heard
16 loud and clear from the neighbors that parking is a vital
17 component of this program.

18 So therein lies the decision and the dilemma that
19 the Board members here face. I'm inclined, as I usually am,
20 to defer to the wisdom of people who live most closely to
21 this site, and I appreciate the proponent's care in trying
22 to move the windows around on the site so that air and light

1 are not impinged by the traffic into at least the bedrooms.
2 So there's been some adjustment there.

3 I guess the last element that I don't want to
4 necessarily negotiate away is the addition of one more tree
5 on Mass Ave in a city that's facing increased pressures from
6 climate.

7 I think we have to do everything we can to
8 encourage proponents to put a tree in, and -- you know, that
9 may help lose concern if we have a street tree there to
10 shade or even screen to some degree the infrastructure
11 that's in the front lawn and in the transformer.

12 JAMES RAFFERTY: Madam Chair, I'm --

13 MARY FLYNN: Yes.

14 JAMES RAFFERTY: I'm certain the client would be
15 amenable to installing a tree with the -- obviously,
16 approval of the DPW since it would be in the public way.

17 I think the location, as mentioned by Mr.
18 Sieniewicz, is the obvious one. It was just from our review
19 of our landscape architects and arborists looked at the
20 sidewalk and the amount of activity and utilities there,
21 they questioned whether that was possible, but we certainly
22 are prepared if it were to be a condition that we explore a

1 street tree in that area, we'd be pleased to do so.

2 MARY FLYNN: Okay. Thank you. Hugh, what are
3 your thoughts?

4 HUGH RUSSELL: I think the light is very
5 important. I think the dark top makes it look much more
6 massive. And so I would like to see the light top.

7 I think, you know, we're in a time in our city in
8 which we're trying to pull out all the stops to get more
9 housing. And so, yes this is a -- you're a pretty tightly
10 planned project. The units aren't bad units. And so I
11 think I would not favor asking for more reductions in the
12 size of the building.

13 And I think it's a very good move to provide
14 parking, given the parking situation in the neighborhood.
15 And I would go along very much with Tom's suggestion of
16 making the tree area a little more visible.

17 MARY FLYNN: All right.

18 HUGH RUSSELL: Yeah, I think it's a fine project.
19 It's very -- the essence of a building that's a little
20 different and representative of the era. And I think we
21 should approve it.

22 MARY FLYNN: Okay. Thank you. Other comments

1 from the Planning Board? Ashley?

2 ASHLEY TAN: Yeah. I appreciate the proponents
3 trying to save a historic structure and using that to the
4 best of their abilities to create a site that is useable for
5 housing. So definitely commend that.

6 And, I guess, to Lou's point earlier, I do wish
7 there was some way to screen not just a transformer, but for
8 me also the long-term bike storage for these -- I know they
9 are wonderful, but aesthetically they are not the most
10 pleasing. And so, anything to screen would be great.

11 But otherwise, I think this is ready to go
12 forward.

13 MARY FLYNN: Okay. Thank you. Catherine?

14 CATHERINE PRESTON CONNOLLY: I guess I am saddened
15 and disappointed that this is -- these are the compromises
16 we're making. But I -- it's a huge point. We are at a
17 point in our city where the city is calling for us to do
18 whatever we can to get more housing units.

19 And if -- and I personally would reduce the
20 parking in order to get the better screening for both the
21 transformer and the bike parking, to get a more favorable
22 site plan in terms of the aesthetics, but I also appreciate

1 that the applicant has heard from their neighbors that they
2 really want the parking onsite.

3 I don't think it's as successful as it would be a
4 site plan with less parking. And I certainly don't propose
5 to say, "Let's build fewer housing units," but I do feel
6 like there is too much going on on the site to be really
7 successful.

8 And it seems to me that eliminating the parking or
9 reducing it would be an easy way to fix that problem, but I
10 am, as Tom rightly noted, you know, loath to overrule and
11 okay what seems to be a consensus from the neighbors.

12 So that's where I am.

13 MARY FLYNN: Thank you. Okay. Any other Board
14 members? I think we've covered everybody. Lou, did you
15 want to add comments?

16 [Pause]

17 Did we lose Lou? Maybe we did. Okay. I'm just
18 checking.

19 DANIEL MESSPLAY: Chair Flynn, I don't see him in
20 the Zoom.

21 MARY FLYNN: Okay. Thank you. I was trying to
22 scroll through and see. Okay. So he may have just dropped

1 off temporarily. But yeah, I think this is a tough one.
2 There's a lot of good things about it in terms of providing
3 the housing, and certainly, you know, saving that structure
4 itself, you know, it's really quite an interesting piece of
5 architecture.

6 I tend to agree with Catherine, even though
7 normally I am very supportive of as much parking as possible
8 but it certainly is not the way -- not the direction the
9 City seems to be going in these days. So, you know, I
10 understand the interest in the neighborhood for having one-
11 to-one and quite honestly, I hadn't really figured in the
12 impact of the funeral home until it was brought up this
13 evening.

14 But I think, you know, what we're seeing in so
15 many developments across the city is that the ratio is less
16 than one-to-one. And so, even some slight reduction in
17 parking and other, you know, one or two spaces, which would
18 potentially free up as Catherine so put it, to free up space
19 to put that transformer in a place where you could screen
20 that, et cetera would be helpful.

21 However, I would say based on what I've heard, the
22 majority of the Board seems to be in favor of moving forward

1 with the application with the conditions that people have
2 talked about this evening, which is to add an additional
3 street tree if possible, after consultation with Public
4 Works; to try to figure that out.

5 And let's see. Going with the lighter top, as was
6 proposed this evening. I think that was it, other than
7 there are --

8 JAMES RAFFERTY: Screening on the transformer,
9 Madam Chair, through Design consultation with CDD.

10 MARY FLYNN: Thank you. How could I forget that?
11 Yes. Yeah. Absolutely. There may be ways to do it. I
12 mean, I'm not sure with the way that that side area works
13 whether there's a way of pushing it back a little bit
14 further, so that you might be able to at least screen the
15 street edge. But anyway, yes. And so, with consultation
16 with CDD through the Design Review process.

17 MARY FLYNN: There are also in the memo, I
18 believe, areas for continuing review of -- which we will add
19 to the decision. So before we get to actually voting on a
20 decision, we need to make some findings.

21 And the findings we have to make to grant the
22 special permit include those for additional FAR for a lot

1 containing a historic structure in a BA-2 district in the
2 Massachusetts Ave Overlay District, Section 20.110.6.2.

3 It says, "The Planning Board may grant a special
4 permit to increase the allowable FAR in the BA-2 districts,
5 but not to exceed 1.75 for any combination of permitted uses
6 allowed, which includes facilitating the preservation of a
7 historic structure, preserving historically significant
8 elements of the structure, and introducing uses that are
9 respectful of the structure's historic character, and that
10 advance the stated purpose of the Mass Ave Overlay
11 District."

12 So I think we've met all of those requirements. I
13 believe, too, the FAR is below the 1.75, if I recall
14 correctly.

15 They also require -- this is the new special
16 permit being requested to allow for modification of required
17 setbacks for on grade open parking facilities.

18 And we're allowed to make site-specific
19 modifications if the site factors indicate that it is
20 needed, and that includes in Section 6.44.1(a): "No on grade
21 open parking space shall be located within 10 feet of that
22 portion of a building wall containing windows of habitable

1 or occupiable rooms at basement or first story."

2 It goes on to talk about one two and three family
3 dwellings, which don't apply here. And then there's Section
4 6.44.1(b): "Except for one, two, or three family dwellings
5 existing at the effective date of this Ordinance, no open
6 grade parking or driveway shall be located within five feet
7 of any side or rear property line."

8 So I think we have gone through this discussion
9 and said based on the location of the building, they -- the
10 adjacent uses, et cetera that it does seem as though it is
11 reasonable to allow for the special permit for the
12 modification of the setbacks.

13 And then the last permit is the general special
14 permit Section 10.43. We have those at pretty much every
15 special permit hearing, so I'm not going to go through those
16 particulars, but so let me just proceed to asking, is there
17 a motion to agree that we can make those findings?

18 TOM SIENIEWICZ: So moved.

19 MARY FLYNN: Thank you, Tom. Is there a second?

20 ASHLEY TAN: Second.

21 MARY FLYNN: Thank you. Roll call vote, please?

22 DANIEL MESSPLAY: Yes. And I see Lou has been

1 able to rejoin. So Lou, we're going to start the roll call
2 with you.

3 Lou Bacci?

4 [Pause]

5 DANIEL MESSPLAY: Lou, you are muted, but the
6 motion is to grant the special permit.

7 LOUIS J. BACCI, JR.: Yes.

8 DANIEL MESSPLAY: Tom Sieniewicz?

9 TOM SIENIEWICZ: Yes.

10 DANIEL MESSPLAY: Hugh Russell?

11 HUGH RUSSELL: Yes.

12 DANIEL MESSPLAY: Ashley Tan?

13 ASHLEY TAN: Yes.

14 DANIEL MESSPLAY: Catherine Preston Connolly?

15 CATHERINE PRESTON CONNOLLY: Yes.

16 DANIEL MESSPLAY: And Mary Flynn?

17 MARY FLYNN: Yes.

18 [All vote YES]

19 DANIEL MESSPLAY: That's all members voting in
20 favor.

21 MARY FLYNN: Okay. So, as I mentioned before, the
22 Staff memo contains some suggested conditions to be included

1 in the special permit decision and include conditions for
2 continuing review and certification by Staff that the
3 conditions are met.

4 And we also talked specifically about the
5 investigation into adding an additional street tree and to
6 working on the screening of the transformer during the
7 Design Review process.

8 Do Board members have any other conditions that
9 they would like attached to the permit?

10 Okay. Seeing none, then is there a motion to
11 grant the requested special permits with those conditions,
12 based on the Board's finding that the applicable the Board's
13 finding that the applicable Special Permit Criteria are met?

14 LOUIS J. BACCI, JR.: So moved.

15 MARY FLYNN: Thank you, Lou. Is there a second?

16 JAMES RAFFERTY: Madam Chair, I think Mr.
17 Sieniewicz made the motion, and Ms. Tan seconded already.

18 MARY FLYNN: Oh, that was on the criteria. I
19 thought I needed to do two separate.

20 JAMES RAFFERTY: Oh, I'm sorry. I apologize,
21 you're right.

22 MARY FLYNN: Yeah. Okay. So we have Lou on the

1 granting of the motion. He has proposed it. Is there a
2 second?

3 TOM SIENIEWICZ: Second.

4 MARY FLYNN: Thank you, Tom. Could we have a roll
5 call on this, please, Daniel?

6 DANIEL MESSPLAY: On that motion, Lou Bacci?

7 LOUIS J. BACCI, JR.: Yes.

8 DANIEL MESSPLAY: Tom Sieniewicz?

9 TOM SIENIEWICZ: Yes.

10 DANIEL MESSPLAY: Hugh Russell?

11 HUGH RUSSELL: Yes.

12 DANIEL MESSPLAY: Ashley Tan?

13 ASHLEY TAN: Yes.

14 DANIEL MESSPLAY: Catherine Preston Connolly?

15 CATHERINE PRESTON CONNOLLY: Yes.

16 DANIEL MESSPLAY: And Mary Flynn?

17 MARY FLYNN: Yes.

18 [All vote YES]

19 DANIEL MESSPLAY: That's all members voting in
20 favor.

21 MARY FLYNN: Okay. There is one more item in
22 regards to this project, and that is that we need an

1 extension of time to draft and file the decision. Does the
2 permittee agree to an extension of time to October 31, 2023
3 to file the decision?

4 JAMES RAFFERTY: If that's what's needed to do so,
5 yes. We would happily grant that.

6 MARY FLYNN: Okay. Thank you very much. Okay.
7 So one more motion here. Is there a motion to agree to an
8 extension of time to file the decision to October 31, 2023?

9 TOM SIENIEWICZ: So moved.

10 MARY FLYNN: Okay. Is there a second?

11 LOUIS J. BACCI, JR.: Second.

12 MARY FLYNN: Thank you. Roll call vote, please?

13 DANIEL MESSPLAY: Roll call on that motion: Lou
14 Bacci?

15 LOUIS J. BACCI, JR.: Yes.

16 DANIEL MESSPLAY: Tom Sieniewicz?

17 TOM SIENIEWICZ: Yes.

18 DANIEL MESSPLAY: Hugh Russell?

19 HUGH RUSSELL: Yes.

20 DANIEL MESSPLAY: Ashley Tan?

21 ASHLEY TAN: Yes.

22 DANIEL MESSPLAY: Catherine Preston Connolly?

1 CATHERINE PRESTON CONNOLLY: Yes.

2 DANIEL MESSPLAY: And Mary Flynn?

3 MARY FLYNN: Yes.

4 [All vote YES]

5 DANIEL MESSPLAY: That's all members voting in
6 favor.

7 MARY FLYNN: Great. Thank you. And thank you to
8 Mr. Rafferty and all of the project team for your
9 presentation tonight. And good luck with the project.

10 JAMES RAFFERTY: Thank you, Madam Chair and thank
11 you members. And I was going to say a special thank you to
12 Mr. Russell, not only for this case, but for his decades of
13 service. I look forward to hearing more later this evening.

14 MARY FLYNN: Thank you for noting that. Much
15 appreciated.

16 * * * * *

17 (7:15 p.m.)

18 Sitting Members: Mary T. Flynn, Catherine Preston Connolly,
19 Louis J. Bacci, Jr., Hugh Russell, Ashley
20 Tan, Diego Macias, and Adam Buchanan
21 Westbrook

22 MARY FLYNN: All right. We're going to move on,

1 then, to Agenda Item No. 2, which is a Design Update on Case
2 PB-179, previously granted special permit for a Planned Unit
3 Development known as Cambridge Crossing. CDD Staff are
4 going to provide an update -- oh, I see Tom's hand up. Tom,
5 you need to recuse from this, correct?

6 TOM SIENIEWICZ: That is correct, Madam Chair.
7 I'll be recusing myself from this matter, but I'll dial in
8 later for the festivities.

9 MARY FLYNN: Oh, good. Thank you. All right. So
10 Daniel is going to summarize this for us.

11 DANIEL MESSPLAY: Thank you, Chair Flynn. So the
12 applicant for Cambridge Crossing Divco West is proposing
13 some district-wide wayfinding signage to help residents and
14 visitors and other stakeholders find their way around this
15 newly created neighborhood district.

16 And Condition No. 10 of the special permit notes
17 that while buildings and parks are subject to Design Review
18 by the Planning Board, there are other elements that fall
19 within the Planning Board's purview such as streetscape
20 details.

21 And prior to the wayfinding signage actually
22 proceeding to the permitting stage, our Urban Design Staff

1 sought some feedback and comments from this Board to better
2 guide Staff in reviewing the proposed signage.

3 MARY FLYNN: All right. Thank you. So the
4 presentation this evening is going to be by Daniel Koehler,
5 who is representing the applicant. Hope I said your name
6 correctly.

7 You'll have up to 30 minutes to present, but
8 please be as concise as possible. We can allow additional
9 time at our discretion and if you would begin by introducing
10 yourself and other members of the team, that would be much
11 appreciated.

12 DANIEL KOEHLER: Thank you, Madam Chair.
13 Excellent pronunciation of my name. Mark Johnson, however,
14 will be providing an introduction -- short introduction
15 prior to my comments. Thank you.

16 MARY FLYNN: Wonderful. Thank you. Welcome, Mr.
17 Johnson.

18 MARK JOHNSON: Thank you. Can you hear me?

19 MARY FLYNN: Yes, we can.

20 MARK JOHNSON: Very good. So my name is Mark
21 Johnson, for the record. I'm Managing Director of
22 Development with Divco West. With me here tonight, Dan

1 Koehler, General Manager for Divco West, responsible for
2 Property Management at Cambridge Crossing; Anthony Galluccio
3 and Darren Baird from our legal team and Bill Galligan from
4 the Wayfinder Collective (sic).

5 We're here tonight to -- at the request of City
6 Staff to provide the Planning Board with an update on
7 wayfinding signage at Cambridge Crossing. All the signage
8 we'll present tonight is exempt from the Cambridge Signage
9 Ordinance because it is not illuminated, and because it has
10 no commercial purpose.

11 While it is our understanding that wayfinding
12 signage does not require Design Review approval, we
13 nonetheless want to receive any feedback tonight that the
14 Planning Board wishes to offer before we start the process
15 of procurement and implementing the design.

16 And I should say we're really excited that
17 wayfinding is something that people feel is needed at
18 Cambridge Crossing; after years of worrying whether or not
19 people would actually show up at the site, this is a good
20 problem to have.

21 Guiding people from the Green Line to the Brian
22 Murphy staircase for example has become important, given the

1 population that is onsite every day.

2 We also feel that wayfinding signage is an
3 important part of making the site feel welcoming to everyone
4 and creating an inclusive place. As you will see, we use
5 signage to celebrate the lives of Cambridge citizens for
6 whom streets and open spaces are named.

7 We would like to thank City Staff for their
8 comments and their interest in the wayfinding signage.
9 After the initial Staff discussions, we essentially started
10 over, and feel that the resulting design that we are
11 presenting this evening reflects all the feedback we
12 received from all the various City departments.

13 Before handing it over to Dan Koehler, who will
14 present the design, I want to take this opportunity to thank
15 Hugh Russell for his many years of service on the Cambridge
16 Planning Board.

17 I first met Hugh in 2005 when I was a Project
18 Manager at Harvard for Wasserstein Caspersen Hall, and the
19 relocation of the wood frame houses down Mass Ave. He was a
20 part of the Board that reviewed my other Harvard projects,
21 including the Harvard Art Museums, the renovation of Holyoke
22 Center, and undergraduate house renewal.

1 His thoughtful guidance and architectural
2 critiques have had a huge impact on the built environment in
3 Cambridge. His legacy is perhaps greatest at Cambridge
4 Crossing, where Hugh was instrumental from the early
5 planning all the way through his thoughtful and detailed
6 reviews of the buildings we have constructed.

7 So thank you, Hugh, for your vision and for your
8 years of service.

9 And before turning it over to Dan, I believe
10 Anthony wanted to say a few words as well.

11 ANTHONY GALLUCCIO: Thank you, Mark. I'll be very
12 brief, Madam Chair. I know we're going to speak more about
13 Chair Russell's many contributions to the city's land use
14 and development.

15 But I did want to just say it's amazing I think to
16 be here in 2023 to have a wayfinding challenge. I don't
17 think in 2012, 2013 when I began working on the project with
18 HYM and going back to 2001, when I was Mayor when we were
19 just zoning, then North Point, Daryl South from Archstone
20 came into my office and I said, "Get -- we need more
21 housing, we've got to have more housing there."

22 I did want to just make a point that it's pretty

1 awesome to be here with Hugh Russell, talking about signage
2 that gets the Green Line over to the Orange Line and gets
3 new housing connected to all the different transportation
4 infrastructure.

5 I know how much pride Hugh takes in the Central
6 Park and the mixed-use nature of North Point, now Cambridge
7 Crossing. And I just can't think of anyone who's had
8 greater pride or influence over this particular development
9 than Hugh has. So this is an awesome tribute I think to the
10 speed of which the development is taking place and the
11 integrity that the development has been founded on.

12 So thank you. Thanks, Mark, for giving me a
13 chance. I'll turn it back to Dan.

14 Turn it over to Dan, please.

15 DANIEL KOEHLER: Thank you, Anthony and Mark.
16 Good evening, everyone. Good evening, Madam Chair. As Mark
17 Johnson mentioned, my name is Dan Koehler. I'm the General
18 Manager with Divco West Property Management Group at
19 Cambridge Crossing.

20 The purpose of this wayfinding package is to have
21 so much of Cambridge Crossing's open space now accessible to
22 the public. We want to welcome people to the site. These

1 are privately owned, but publicly accessible areas and we
2 want all community members to feel welcome and comfortable,
3 which is why we've adopted the open-to-all City standard.

4 Secondly, we've received feedback from tenants,
5 visitors, and the public that they have difficulty orienting
6 themselves on the site, and we want to create ease of
7 navigation for pedestrians and bicyclists traversing the
8 neighborhood, especially crossing Monsignor O'Brien Highway.

9 So finally, with this entire development built
10 around alternative modes of transportation, we're looking to
11 point people towards those modes of transportation,
12 including the Orange and Green Lines, buses, Bluebikes,
13 carshare, and the Community Path, which ties into the Green
14 Line Extension and is a new front door for the site -- a
15 front door, by the way that we are welcoming an
16 unprecedented number of visitors through.

17 So we're hoping to encourage people to use
18 alternative modes of transportation, connect the Green Line
19 to the Orange Line, orient people within the site, but also
20 importantly connect CX, as we call it, to the cities and
21 communities beyond.

22 We've incorporated all of CDD's initial feedback

1 into our redesign, and I'll walk through the general
2 overview. CDD did provide additional comments to us
3 yesterday, primarily related to the comment on the maps and
4 fabrication details, which we will work to resolve as well.

5 I believe everyone has a hard copy of the whole
6 package to reference, to please feel free to ask any
7 questions as they arise.

8 We can stay on this slide, Swaathi, it's fine.

9 You'll notice here on this layout, we focused our
10 efforts around inclusivity and accessibility with the
11 foundational principles of color palette, mounting heights
12 and font legibility.

13 I want to thank the CDD Staff for bringing to our
14 attention issues of color sensitivities and accessibility
15 concerns that impact the various populations that visit this
16 site. It helped us rethink our approach.

17 So in this layout, you can see the location of
18 each of our monuments represented by red circles. The
19 locations were selected based on typical paths of travel
20 around and through the neighborhood.

21 And we consolidated sign types from our original
22 design to help reduce clutter while providing wayfinding for

1 the area and on the Community Path, navigating via the
2 historic personages that each roadway and open space is
3 named for.

4 The monuments along the Community Path will show
5 the regional connections as it extends from Bedford Station
6 to the north to Boston's North End to the south. All other
7 monuments will include a site wayfinding map marked with a
8 legend for retail, transportation, amenities and other
9 nearby points of interest.

10 The intention here is to solve for wayfinding
11 needs in the neighborhood, while tying Cambridge Crossing
12 into the larger fabric of East Cambridge and beyond.

13 The monuments will be intended as beacons within
14 the site to help direct the increasing number of individuals
15 who live, work or visit Cambridge Crossing on a daily basis.
16 One change we will be making to the design that you see
17 here, based on the feedback we received from CDD yesterday,
18 is to shorten the monuments from 10' to 8' by removing the
19 etched topper and relocating the rendering of the person for
20 whom the adjacent open space or roadway is named as a water
21 mark lower down.

22 With that alteration at the top of the monument is

1 directional wayfinding, followed by the map -- which is key
2 to points of interest -- the legend along with a biography
3 in both text and Braille. All mounting heights and the
4 height of the monuments themselves have been designed for
5 maximum accessibility and ease of use.

6 Next slide, please Swaathi, if you don't mind?

7 The only other sign type we included here was a
8 smaller parking monument, which was represented on the
9 previous slide by blue squares to ensure that vehicle
10 traffic is led quickly and efficiently to the designated
11 garage.

12 Our hope with this is to avoid unnecessary idling,
13 confusion, or three-point turns.

14 Next slide, Swaathi?

15 So we had paused our procurement efforts while we
16 worked to address CDD's initial feedback, and after tonight,
17 we were planning to move forward with implementation. With
18 that, I would be happy to take any questions you have.

19 Next slide, please?

20 And thank you.

21 MARY FLYNN: Great. Thank you. Appreciate your
22 presentation. Are there any questions or comments from

1 Board members? Okay. Adam, start with you.

2 ADAM BUCHANAN WESTBROOK: Sure. Yeah. Thanks for
3 the presentation. I love this project. In fact, I actually
4 learned a bit about some Cambridge history by looking up
5 some of the names that I was unfamiliar with. So I really
6 really appreciate the attention to the diversity of folks
7 who are recognized as impacting Cambridge in the city.

8 And I really appreciate the attention to color
9 palette and accessibility for those who have different kind
10 of seeing color challenges.

11 Just one really quick question about the parking
12 monuments. In the spirit of kind of the color palettes, I
13 notice kind of the blue writing on the black, at least on
14 the hard copy was a little bit challenging for me who does
15 not struggle with any sort of seeing challenges.

16 And I'm wondering if that was just a result of the
17 hard copy and print and the way it looks here, or if there's
18 a way different kind of color contrast that's going to work
19 on the monuments. Thanks.

20 DANIEL KOEHLER: Great question, Adam. That is --
21 and thank you for the kind words. That, I think the
22 intention there was to provide for the sort of universality

1 of that blue parking P. It's something we will certainly
2 review as we go with the implementation, and we can
3 absolutely draw that contrast more sharply pretty easily.
4 But I appreciate that feedback very much.

5 MARY FLYNN: Catherine?

6 CATHERINE PRESTON CONNOLLY: Yeah. I just really
7 wanted to comment the project proponent for working with
8 City Staff and taking into account all of the various
9 accessibility needs and just -- even things like lowering
10 the portrait and the information about the individuals to a
11 height that might be easier to read for folks who have
12 mobility constraints. That kind of thoughtfulness is really
13 to be commended.

14 And, you know, whether that's innate in your
15 project team or feedback you got from City Staff, it's
16 wonderful to see it modeled here. And I just wanted to take
17 a minute to say that.

18 DANIEL KOEHLER: Thank you very much.

19 CATHERINE PRESTON CONNOLLY: Excellent.

20 DANIEL KOEHLER: That was quite a collaboration
21 with CDD Staff. We received a lot of interest, and we're
22 really proud of the final product. Thank you for saying so.

1 MARY FLYNN: Ashley?

2 ASHLEY TAN: Thank you. I was going to say as
3 someone of multiple family members who struggle with color
4 blindness as huge, so thank you for doing that.

5 And I agree with the City Staff on lowering or
6 getting rid of the top. Because that is very high and most
7 people probably can't see it anyway, so thank you.

8 DANIEL KOEHLER: Thank you.

9 MARY FLYNN: Okay. Any other comments or
10 questions from the Board?

11 I just want to -- you know, kind of reemphasize
12 what my colleagues have said. You know, I learned a lot
13 going through your package. I didn't have really any
14 knowledge of the -- that color impacts on people who have
15 various challenges in terms of their ability to see color.
16 So that really was quite interesting.

17 I am appreciative of the fact that the towers are
18 going to be shorter, because I did think they were pretty
19 high. But I really did like that the sort of glass piece up
20 at the top. And so, I'm just wondering what the difference
21 is going to be now. Is it just going to be etched into the
22 material down below? So it will all be the same color,

1 right, going down?

2 DANIEL KOEHLER: Yeah. So the -- thank you for
3 that feedback, Madam Chair. The -- that remains to be seen
4 slightly. I think we'll -- we got the feedback from CDD
5 yesterday about reducing the height, which I think we are in
6 agreement with.

7 I think we can also very easily continue to
8 incorporate that rendering, which I think makes a big impact
9 on the signage package overall by lowering it. It'll likely
10 be -- at least visually the effect will be a watermark
11 behind some of the font there. The ways and means will be
12 finalized as we go through the procurement process.

13 MARY FLYNN: Okay. All right. Yeah, it's
14 interesting. I just -- you know, the -- I appreciate the
15 fact that the intent really is wayfinding. But, you know, I
16 think it's also very wonderful that the streets have been
17 named after a number of people who aren't normally
18 recognized in the city.

19 And so, you know, to the extent that, you know, we
20 make it visible I would appreciate it. I just don't want it
21 to sort of get lost in the mix of it all.

22 Adam, you have your hand up again?

1 ADAM BUCHANAN WESTBROOK: Yeah. Just one other
2 additional question. I notice two of the sites of the
3 monuments are still TBD in terms of how their named. So I'm
4 curious if there's any sort of sense how you'll go about
5 kind of choosing how to name those two to be determined.

6 DANIEL KOEHLER: Great question. I don't know
7 that our discussion point has progressed past TBD quite yet
8 only because I think with development of those areas, you
9 find out what they're going to look like, exactly how
10 they'll be oriented, and then I think that tends to deliver
11 you into productive conversations about how you can dedicate
12 them.

13 So far, I don't know that we have the foundation
14 to start that conversation. But --

15 ANTHONY GALUCCIO: Adam, if I could jump in and
16 take Dan off the hotseat, you're going to have to wait in
17 suspense. We are consistently debating and talking about
18 different members of the community, both live and deceased,
19 who fall in the same demographic that you've seen but it's
20 an exciting process. And also sort of what spaces is
21 fitting. So it's not easy, but stay tuned, more to come.

22 I think in the spirit of awe to Hugh, I think some

1 of this goes back to Les Barber -- some of the original
2 namings to Cambridge-based women and famous women, and then
3 we pivoted to folks of color as well. But it's been a fun
4 and exciting process. So we'll keep the Planning Board in
5 the loop.

6 DANIEL KOEHLER: Great.

7 MARY FLYNN: Great.

8 DANIEL KOEHLER: Thank you.

9 MARY FLYNN: Yeah. Thanks, Anthony.

10 All right. Any concluding comments or thoughts
11 from Planning Board members?

12 Okay. Seeing none, is there a motion to, then, to
13 conclude this Design Update?

14 CATHERINE PRESTON CONNOLLY: So moved.

15 MARY FLYNN: Catherine. Is there a second?

16 LOUIS J. BACCI, JR.: Second.

17 MARY FLYNN: All right. Roll call, please,
18 Daniel?

19 DANIEL MESSPLAY: Roll call on that motion: Lou
20 Bacci?

21 LOUIS J. BACCI, JR.: Yes.

22 DANIEL MESSPLAY: Hugh Russell?

1 HUGH RUSSELL: Yes.

2 DANIEL MESSPLAY: Ashley Tan?

3 ASHLEY TAN: Yes.

4 DANIEL MESSPLAY: Diego Macias?

5 DIEGO MACIAS: Yes.

6 DANIEL MESSPLAY: Adam Westbrook?

7 ADAM BUCHANAN WESTBROOK: Yes.

8 DANIEL MESSPLAY: Catherine Preston Connolly?

9 CATHERINE PRESTON CONNOLLY: Yes.

10 DANIEL MESSPLAY: And Mary Flynn?

11 MARY FLYNN: Yes.

12 [All vote YES]

13 DANIEL MESSPLAY: That's all members voting in
14 favor.

15 MARY FLYNN: Okay. Thank you. Thank you, Mr.
16 Johnson, Mr. Koehler, and all of your team, and Attorney
17 Galluccio. It was much appreciated. And continued good
18 luck with Cambridge Crossing.

19 COLLECTIVE: Thank you very much. Thank you.

20 * * * * *

21 (7:36 p.m.)

22 Sitting Members: Mary T. Flynn, Catherine Preston Connolly,

1 Louis J. Bacci, Jr., Tom Sieniewicz, Hugh
2 Russell, Ashley Tan, Diego Macias, and
3 Adam Buchanan Westbrook

4 MARY FLYNN: All right. So now agenda item no. 3
5 is a request for an extension of time to commence
6 construction on Planning Board Case PB-377, a previously
7 granted special permit at 88 Holworthy Street.

8 CDD Staff will begin by summarizing why this is
9 before us. After that, I'm going to turn it over to Daniel.

10 DANIEL MESSPLAY: Thank you, Chair Flynn. So this
11 special permit was granted in 2021. And special permits
12 must typically obtain a building permit within two years of
13 the special permit decision being filed, unless the special
14 permit is extended.

15 So this project required obtaining a variance from
16 the Board of Zoning Appeal, which was not granted until
17 earlier this year. Therefore, the applicant is requesting a
18 one-year extension until June 9, 2024, which can be granted
19 by the Board upon a finding of good cause.

20 And I believe representatives of the applicant are
21 present to provide some additional details and answer any
22 questions the Board may have.

1 MARY FLYNN: Okay. Thank you, Daniel. Would one
2 of those representatives care to add anything at this time?

3 STEPHEN SILLARI: So Steve Sillari here. Good
4 evening, Board members, Associates and CDD.

5 Congratulations, Mr. Russell.

6 Yeah, it just -- it's taken a long time with this
7 project. I bought the property four years ago, and we had
8 to go to BZA as Daniel mentioned. And then we went to
9 Historic twice.

10 But we're almost there. We're just waiting back
11 from Civil Engineering, and we hope to soon after maybe next
12 week apply for the building permit. I partnered with Duncan
13 MacArthur as my builder, and we're excited to get started.

14 MARY FLYNN: All right. Are there questions from
15 the Board at all on this Request for an Extension?
16 Catherine?

17 CATHERINE PRESTON CONNOLLY: Yeah. I guess it
18 would be helpful if we had some more context as to the
19 timing of the application for extension, since I think the -
20 - officially it had already passed by the time you applied.
21 Anything around what caused that, and what kind of
22 circumstances might make us extend anyway?

1 STEPHEN SILLARI: Sure. So like I said, we had
2 some delays. When I bought the property, I bought it with
3 an occupant. It was occupied. I bought it in September of
4 2019, and it took 39 months for us to get the -- to get the
5 occupant out of the residence. We paused our hearing
6 schedule because it was just kind of too disruptive with the
7 situation.

8 So that's why it took us so long to get in front
9 of the BZA, which was just earlier this spring that that was
10 granted. We just recorded that decision at the Recorder of
11 Deeds Office a few weeks ago. So it just took forever to go
12 through the planning process.

13 And then we went back in front of Historic,
14 because we got advice from builders that it would be a lot
15 more economical and easier on the neighborhood and the
16 neighbors who were all very supportive, by the way. We went
17 through a long process of neighborhood meetings and
18 community sessions.

19 But we wanted to tear it down, because we don't
20 want to leave it where it is because it's not right, it's
21 too close to the northern boundary, too close to the street.

22 So initially we got approval to move it. Then we

1 went back asking to tear it down, they said no. So that
2 took quite a bit of time as well. So we went back and got
3 that original permit to move it, and this is the last piece
4 we need before going to DPW with our Civil Report.

5 CATHERINE PRESTON CONNOLLY: I guess that doesn't
6 really -- I mean, it answered my question and maybe there
7 isn't a good answer as, you know, obviously --

8 STEPHEN SILLARI: What was the question again
9 then? I'm sorry.

10 CATHERINE PRESTON CONNOLLY: The question is
11 essentially why did you wait until after the special permit
12 might have expired?

13 STEPHEN SILLARI: To extend it?

14 CATHERINE PRESTON CONNOLLY: To apply to have it
15 extended.

16 STEPHEN SILLARI: Okay. I apologize for that,
17 Catherine. So I'm not a builder, right? I'm an enterprise
18 software sales executive. And been doing that for the last
19 couple of decades.

20 I only was able to buy this property because Abubu
21 (phonetic), who owned it, my neighbor, for 15 years before
22 he passed away -- actually since 1996, so 26 years, I was

1 shoveling his walk for him because I own the house across
2 the street, 85 Holworthy, I bought it in '96.

3 So I just was -- I was luckily able to buy this
4 from his son who didn't want it after he moved to Germany
5 and then eventually passed away. So I just -- I didn't
6 know, to be honest with you. I was ignorant of it.

7 Dan Anderson, who's my architect, he was working
8 with a lot of the folks here in the city, I know him from
9 the Community Arts Center Board, which I served on for a
10 couple decades. But I just had no idea. And he was busy, I
11 was busy. We kind of put, you know, things got put on hold
12 for a while. So that's -- I just didn't know.

13 CATHERINE PRESTON CONNOLLY: Okay. Well, I
14 appreciate that and your candor. I think the good news I
15 think for you is that this all occurred at -- or started --
16 your project started during some of the COVID times, and
17 there may be some question as to impact of state law. So
18 I'm more inclined to be flexible on procedural matters like
19 that than I might ordinarily be.

20 But yeah, you know, it's -- it's -- the two-year
21 lapse is generally not -- those are things we need to pay
22 attention to. Because as we've seen on this Board, changes

1 in zoning and expectations of the neighborhood and the
2 Council can change radically within those two years. So I
3 think --

4 STEPHEN SILLARI: No. Absolutely. And again, I
5 apologize. Because I'm a pretty diligent guy in my life
6 with my profession. So -- and it was in the heat of COVID.

7 CATHERINE PRESTON CONNOLLY: Yeah.

8 STEPHEN SILLARI: We are -- we didn't rush it,
9 though. We are happy to follow the new Regulations that
10 just were passed -- that just were put into effect, I think
11 beginning of July, you know. So we're excited to do all the
12 green stuff we need to do, and electrical stuff.

13 CATHERINE PRESTON CONNOLLY: Okay. Thank you for
14 that. That's very helpful.

15 MARY FLYNN: Thank you, Catherine. Any other
16 questions from the Board, or comments? No. Okay.

17 Daniel, to Catherine's point, you know, normally,
18 going past a deadline is problematic legally, but I
19 understand you've had some discussions with the Law
20 Department, and they have said that there is precedent for
21 us to do this. So could you just confirm that, maybe expand
22 upon it a little, just so we have it in the record, please?

1 DANIEL MESSPLAY: Sure, Chair Flynn. Thank you.
2 And you're correct. We did informally consult with the Law
3 Department on this very question, and they advised us that
4 because of the COVID pandemic, the tolling periods that
5 would otherwise normally apply to these special permits --
6 from I guess this would be the layman's terms -- got all out
7 of whack and become a bit tougher to track.

8 So while the strict two-year deadline might have
9 passed for this special permit, the Law Department did state
10 that an applicant could come before this Board and request
11 an extension, even if that strict two-year period had
12 lapsed.

13 So that's why this is before the Board.

14 MARY FLYNN: All right. Thank you. That was
15 very, very helpful.

16 All right. Are there any other questions or
17 concerns from Board members? And seeing none, then is there
18 a motion to grant this extension of time? And we're just
19 doing one year, is that correct? Yes, one year from the
20 date, which was in June. Okay.

21 Could I have a motion, please?

22 LOUIS J. BACCI, JR.: So moved.

1 HUGH RUSSELL: Second.

2 MARY FLYNN: Okay, Louis said it and Hugh second.
3 May I have a roll call vote, please?

4 DANIEL MESSPLAY: Roll call on that motion: Lou
5 Bacci?

6 LOUIS J. BACCI, JR.: Yes.

7 DANIEL MESSPLAY: Tom Sieniewicz?

8 TOM SIENIEWICZ: Yes.

9 DANIEL MESSPLAY: Hugh Russell?

10 HUGH RUSSELL: Yes.

11 DANIEL MESSPLAY: Ashley Tan?

12 ASHLEY TAN: Yes.

13 DANIEL MESSPLAY: Diego Macias?

14 DIEGO MACIAS: Yes.

15 DANIEL MESSPLAY: Adam Westbrook?

16 ADAM BUCHANAN WESTBROOK: Yes.

17 DANIEL MESSPLAY: Catherine Preston Connolly?

18 CATHERINE PRESTON CONNOLLY: Yes.

19 DANIEL MESSPLAY: And Mary Flynn?

20 MARY FLYNN: Yes.

21 [All vote YES]

22 DANIEL MESSPLAY: That's all members voting in

1 favor.

2 MARY FLYNN: Okay. Thank you very much, Mr.
3 Sillari, for coming in. Being the diligent person you are,
4 we know we won't see you back here on another project with
5 an expiration. So we appreciate your coming in and being
6 candid, and we wish you luck on the project.

7 Okay. Now we are moving on. We've concluded the
8 official business on our agenda, but before we adjourn, we
9 have to take notice of the fact that tonight is a very
10 bittersweet occasion for those of us who have been on the
11 Board for some time, or who know Hugh through other places
12 and interactions.

13 And so, we're going to take a few moments to
14 recognize Hugh's incredible service to the Planning Board
15 and the City of Cambridge community.

16 And so, Hugh, in my opinion you are without a
17 doubt one of the City's longest serving volunteers and are
18 truly a Cambridge treasure.

19 With 35 years on the Planning Board and years of
20 service on the BZA before that, it's hard to easily
21 summarize your many contributions to the city. So I asked
22 Staff to select from your decades of service a few

1 highlights. But even at that, the list is quite lengthy, so
2 I've asked Catherine to join me in reflecting on your
3 Planning Board career. She noted that she's had the
4 pleasure of working with you as Staff as well as fellow
5 Board Member. As I was thinking about it last night, I
6 realized that I too have had that pleasure since your early
7 years on the Planning Board occurred before I left CDD in
8 1994.

9 So with many thanks to the Staff, including Jeff,
10 who helped put this tribute together, I will begin.

11 Hugh started his tenure on the Planning Board with
12 a case in Harvard Square, PB-81, which was issued on May 24,
13 1989. The project would have demolished what's now the
14 Harvard Square Hotel, then called The Motor House, and
15 replaced it with a new building with offices and retail. It
16 would have also restored the historic Conductor's Building
17 on a part of the site controlled by the MBTA.

18 Ultimately, the project didn't proceed. Like many
19 projects in Harvard Square at that time, it ran into
20 community opposition. But Hugh would go on to sit on many
21 more cases in Harvard Square, and 20 years later, the Board
22 would approve another project that involved the restoration

1 of the Conductor's Building, this time along with an office
2 and retail building on the opposite side from the Harvard
3 Square Hotel. That project did get built, and the
4 Conductor's Building is now one of Harvard Square's hottest
5 restaurants.

6 Throughout the 1990s, the Board heard many cases
7 that were as likely not to be built as to be built.
8 However, many residential projects did get approved and
9 proceeded during that time.

10 Examples included many townhouse and multifamily
11 projects, including affordable housing at 380 Putnam Avenue,
12 and Columbia and Hampshire Streets, and the former
13 Nightstage site in 823 Main Street, bringing in infill
14 projects in Residence B districts, starting with 152 Vassal
15 Lane, which was approved in 1996.

16 The Planning Board was involved in recommending
17 this provision to allow for infill development, while
18 exercising control over design impacts.

19 Conversions of nonresidential structures to
20 residential use; an early example being 115 Brookline Street
21 which was approved in 1998, and which was also a very early
22 inclusionary housing project.

1 And then there were also several projects in
2 Central Square, including the mixed-use homes Trust Building
3 at Mass Ave and Western Avenue in the Square, notable for
4 its controversy that culminated in residents carrying a
5 casket into the Planning Board meeting room before the final
6 vote.

7 I wasn't there for that one. It must have been
8 interesting. [Laughter]

9 Catherine?

10 CATHERINE PRESTON CONNOLLY: Thanks, Mary. Yeah,
11 I was there. That was at the very beginning of my
12 interactions with Hugh and kind of a transformational period
13 in Cambridge development, starting in the late '90s.

14 And it was really that period when we saw East
15 Cambridge and Kendall Square in particular become this
16 transformed area where the Board's involvement really played
17 a crucial role in shaping the redevelopment of this area
18 from single technical office uses, lots of parking lot --
19 surface parking lots all over the area -- to mixed-use
20 pattern that included housing and retail and public open
21 space. And the Board was really responsible for overseeing
22 that vision.

1 One of the first big projects that kind of set
2 that trend was at the time called, "Cambridge Research
3 Park." It's now "Canal District Kendall." And it was kind
4 of the cutting edge of that trend when it was approved in, I
5 want to say '99. And Hugh served on the Board from its
6 approval all the way through to its completion almost two
7 decades later.

8 And through all the phases of development and
9 Design Review and, you know, and through new phases of
10 development up to and including the latest Canal District
11 Planning Board approval, which was in 2021.

12 And then of course as well as the Review of the
13 Volpe parcel just across the street. Hugh's long
14 perspective has been incredibly valuable, given the time
15 frame of the redevelopment.

16 And it's -- by a lot of Planning Standards, this
17 kind of stuff is happening relatively fast. But it's -- it
18 is so helpful to have someone on the Board who has been here
19 to see it all happen and give the history.

20 In that intervening time, Hugh played a role in
21 reviewing a lot of other major developments in the areas --
22 cases that involved zoning changes, and so, the Board played

1 both a role in advising the Council on policy choices and
2 then implementing the zoning changes through development and
3 review.

4 And, you know, those included everything from the
5 expansion of Tech Square, Cambridge Crossing, as well as
6 noted earlier, the residential buildings at 303 Third Street
7 and One First Street, the Alexandria PUD, the Broad
8 Institute expansion to 75 Ames, the MIT NoMa and SoMa
9 developments, the Kendall Center Infill Development, and
10 most recently the Cambridgeside redevelopment.

11 Mary?

12 MARY FLYNN: So along with Zoning and Planning,
13 you've also been very active in Design, given your
14 background in architecture.

15 Hugh, you've been very active in planning for
16 Cambridge's future, starting around the turn of the
17 millennium, which -- again, just notes the incredible length
18 of service.

19 Hugh participated on the Growth Management
20 Advisory Committee. His input led to the comprehensive
21 citywide rezoning adopted in 2001. Among other changes,
22 this rezoning codified a citywide Project Review process,

1 which gave the Planning Board a central role in reviewing
2 all major development across the city. The rezoning helped
3 place a renewed emphasis on Urban Design.

4 And again, Hugh's perspective as an architect
5 helped to ensure that Urban Design was at the forefront of
6 the Board's review.

7 Some of the notable buildings that have been
8 reviewed under Hugh's tenure are many university projects,
9 including MIT's Simmons Hall and MIT's Stata Center,
10 Harvard's North Yard Science Complex, Harvard Law School's
11 building at Mass Ave and Everett, the Art Institute at
12 Lesley University in Porter Square, and the Harvard Kennedy
13 School of Government expansion.

14 Other projects include the Polaroid site on
15 Memorial Drive, the Novartis campus, including renovation of
16 the former Necco factory and the new Maya Lin-designed
17 Research Center, and Zero Arrow Street, formerly Club
18 Oberon.

19 And then there is more. Cambridge Discovery Park;
20 Redevelopment of CHA's Lincoln Way House and redevelopment
21 of Faces Night Club and Lanes & Games; New EF World
22 Headquarters; the M.L. King Jr. and King Open Schools; the

1 Mass and Main development in Central Square, and the Foundry
2 Arts Center.

3 You have your fingers in projects all across this
4 city. It's really remarkable.

5 Catherine?

6 CATHERINE PRESTON CONNOLLY: Yeah. Just to build
7 on that, in addition to the project specific rezonings that
8 Hugh has played a huge role in, and also in addition to the
9 citywide rezoning that eventually was adopted in 2001, you
10 know, Hugh has participated in Board deliberations on many
11 of the big regional rezonings that have occurred in all of
12 this time, not the least of which was the Eastern Cambridge
13 Rezoning, the Concord Alewife Rezoning Petitions that have
14 been reviewed for individual projects.

15 And then also served on the City's Green Building
16 Zoning Task Force, which recommended the first performance-
17 based Sustainable Design Standards that were adopted into
18 the Zoning Ordinance.

19 It really just -- the impact has been both very
20 project-specific, neighborhood wide in nature and citywide,
21 really regionally, when you think about the impact the City
22 has on setting standards for what is sustainable urban

1 development. And Hugh has really been an asset to the City
2 in setting that tone.

3 MARY FLYNN: So in addition to all of the Zoning,
4 Planning and Design work, you've also had a leadership role
5 on the Board. Hugh served as the Planning Board Chair from
6 2010 to 2014. And I believe you were Vice Chair before
7 that.

8 HUGH RUSSELL: Mm-hm.

9 MARY FLYNN: Most notably, you were the Chair
10 during the review of the redevelopment of the Sullivan
11 Courthouse, and the project that I missed, arguably the most
12 complicated and contentious development case in recent
13 Cambridge history --

14 HUGH RUSSELL: Mm-hm.

15 MARY FLYNN: -- involving countless hours of
16 public testimony and deliberation.

17 HUGH RUSSELL: Mm-hm.

18 MARY FLYNN: Your leadership ensured that voices
19 were heard in a meaningful way, and that the Board was able
20 to reach a decision.

21 Hugh, your service to the Planning Board and to
22 the City really is unparalleled. I would say that of all of

1 the qualities that Hugh has brought to the Board, the most
2 remarkable has been your consistent effort to make projects
3 better wherever possible and at all scales.

4 Whether it was a good small infill house to a
5 five-plus-million-square-foot mixed-use redevelopment, I've
6 always appreciated the fact that not only do you identify
7 the problems, but you bring the solutions to them.

8 And as someone who doesn't have the architectural
9 background, I can't tell you how tremendously valuable that
10 is -- has been to the Board.

11 And this level of effort that you've put over the
12 span of your tenure has had really many compounding
13 benefits. There are few aspects of the city that have not
14 been made better in some way by your work.

15 I am really privileged to have served on the Board
16 with you. I've learned an awful lot from you. I learned a
17 lot from you back in the day as well, and I'm glad that I
18 was there at the beginning and at the end of your service.

19 And I just want to let you know that on my behalf
20 -- for me and as well as I'm sure all of the other Board
21 members, and probably a good percentage of the city
22 residents, you're going to really be missed.

1 So with that, are there other Board members who
2 would like to say a few words to Hugh?

3 Tom?

4 TOM SIENIEWICZ: Well, I have to say that on some
5 level, it's -- I'm looking forward to the future because
6 what you may or may not know is that as the other architect
7 on the Board, I used to consistently lose the Jeopardy game
8 of hitting the button. And Hugh would always, always win,
9 which was terrific, but then to my chagrin then I would have
10 to follow the incredibly wise things and detailed analysis
11 that he had made, both formally and architecturally and
12 programmatically in the projects.

13 So careful what you wish for relative to Jeopardy.
14 And I'm in the end quite happy to be his second.

15 I missed a lot of things in the pandemic. One of
16 them I'm missed was that Hugh brought chocolate to the
17 hearings, consistently, because of his connection to
18 Switzerland, I think. His family had moved to Leysin in the
19 Alps, and I think inspired by that, he used to bring
20 chocolate every year, which I have not had, and I deeply,
21 deeply miss.

22 I will never pass a Science Complex at Harvard

1 University -- a building I adore, I love, by Sir Jackson,
2 that Hugh had a huge part in authoring in another chapter of
3 his life.

4 So there's some rumor that he actually keeps all
5 the papers that we get sent, and that I'm imagining that
6 that pile of papers exceeds those that the current -- the
7 former President is complaining about. So it must well
8 exceed several times the height of the Washington Monument
9 in terms of our record of our deliberations.

10 But anyway, Hugh, an inspiration. I'll miss you
11 terribly, but I know I'll see you in civilian life at
12 concerts and around the city. And I wanted to thank you and
13 really express how humbled I am to be in your shadow on this
14 Board because you just have done extraordinary,
15 extraordinary work here. So I'll try to reach your
16 standards at some point.

17 Thank you.

18 MARY FLYNN: Thanks, Tom. Ashley?

19 ASHLEY TAN: Thank you. I just was reflecting on
20 this the other day but Hugh, literally Cambridge as I know
21 it from a child now, is what it is -- you know, has the
22 economic diversity, and welcome by so many people and yeah,

1 is what it is because of a lot of your work. And so I hope
2 you take pride in that and hope you can still bike around to
3 all the sites and visit and -- yeah.

4 So thank you so much and yeah, I'm sure we'll see
5 you in different meetings.

6 MARY FLYNN: Thank you, Ashley.

7 Iram, would you like to say a few words on behalf
8 of Staff?

9 IRAM FAROOQ: Yes, please. Thank you, Chair.

10 I -- it's really hard -- it's hard to know where
11 to even begin to say thank you to you, Hugh. I mean,
12 everything that Mary and Catherine laid out is just such a
13 testament to the fact that you haven't just been a Board
14 member, you are at this point an institution. You've been
15 on the Board longer than any of us have worked for the City.
16 The knowledge, the history that you hold has just served all
17 of us on the Board -- Board members as well as Staff, as we
18 have worked together to try to shape Cambridge.

19 And I would say that not just for this set of
20 Staff, but really our predecessors, you know, in Zoning and
21 Development and Community Planning. My predecessors in this
22 role, I would say at least five to six of my predecessors

1 have benefitted from your service and your dedication to the
2 City of Cambridge. I feel like we have been thinking of how
3 we can bring some folks back together in person, because
4 it's just -- this feels very, very unsatisfactory in some
5 ways to be doing this over Zoom.

6 And unfortunately, while summer is the best time
7 to have a Board member transition, it's really not the best
8 time to get people together. But we will definitely try to
9 do some kind of in-person connection once we get into the
10 fall and people are back in the city.

11 I do have to say that I have personally benefitted
12 from your wisdom because I feel like whenever we hit some
13 crazy wall in Development, but also just like thinking
14 through work stuff, personal stuff, I've always felt
15 comfortable having a conversation with you.

16 And you have always been this almost like the sage
17 of the Planning Board, where you have always provided great
18 thoughtfulness to any problem, no matter whether it's big or
19 small.

20 So, you know, the litany of projects that Mary and
21 Catherine laid out, you have put as much care to a small
22 project with -- you know, like a townhouse project, as you

1 have to projects like Cambridge Crossing and Volpe. So --
2 and that has meant a lot, and that has resulted in the
3 design, no matter what scale we're looking at.

4 I feel like I can go on and on, because there are
5 -- you know, each of those projects, each of those zoning
6 discussions has stories embedded within it, and times when
7 people have leaned on you to be the person who brings an
8 insight that helps clarify a problem and helped folks
9 catalyze a decision. And I think that that has -- that's
10 something that we are all going to miss tremendously.

11 I think the hour is long, and I will stop now,
12 even though I know that I have this long list of things that
13 I could say. But I don't think -- I certainly don't know
14 anybody -- I don't think any of us on Staff know anybody who
15 has been so dedicated and has given so much to the city of
16 Cambridge.

17 So on behalf of all of us from the CDD team, and I
18 would say also on behalf of the City Manager, I just want to
19 say thank you to you for your incredible years of service,
20 and the thousands of hours that you have devoted on City
21 boards, on committees that we have wangled you to join,
22 regional service like the Charles River CAC.

1 And so, you will be missed deeply, and we hope
2 you're not going to be a stranger. But also, we hope that
3 you're going to have wonderful Tuesday nights from now on.
4 So we wish you all the best, and just deep, deep, deep
5 gratitude from all of us.

6 Thank you.

7 MARY FLYNN: Thank you, Iram.

8 So as Iram mentioned, you know, we are planning on
9 having a get-together in September, where more people will
10 have an opportunity to thank you personally.

11 But tonight, I want to end with you having an
12 opportunity to say whatever you would like to say to us and
13 your other colleagues in the City before we say goodnight.

14 So Hugh, the floor is yours.

15 HUGH RUSSELL: Oh, thank you, Mary. You know, the
16 Planning Board's greater power is to say yes to good
17 proposals. And yes, we do work to try to make them better,
18 try to resolve conflict. But it's very much a team effort.

19 And then in Cambridge, because we've had such a
20 clear in domain Planning documents, it's been relatively
21 easy to work with the developers community, because they can
22 read what our intentions are. And so, we're on the same

1 page to start with; projects that you listed I had a part
2 in, I'd say, "part" in them. And it was a relatively small
3 part.

4 Oh, yes, I can remember the time in the first
5 discussion in the Planning Board where -- which was about
6 rezoning of the North Point -- where people would say,
7 "Well, we'd like to get more housing." And I said, "Well, if
8 you want to get more housing, you've got to give housing
9 more height."

10 Because floor plates are relatively small, and
11 frankly, on North Point, the up-close stuff down low isn't
12 anywhere near as nice as the long distance view you get from
13 the upper floors of an apartment building.

14 And there was a commercial development proposed
15 that got into trouble. They looked and said, "Oh my God, we
16 could do housing." And so, that's why the first North Point
17 project ended up with housing. It was a market issue for
18 them.

19 I brought certain experience that is valuable, and
20 I hope that the Board will continue to have people with this
21 experience.

22 A great deal of my architectural career was in

1 designing mixed-income housing projects. Something like
2 9,000 units in 40 or 50 different places, working again in
3 teams of architects and planners and developers, but it gave
4 me also a great knowledge of how developers think, and I
5 think that made it easier to find the common ground.

6 Because, you know, for so many of the projects in
7 the city, there's an enlightened developer behind the
8 project. And without those people, and without in fact the
9 enlightened legal counsel that they get from Andrea
10 (phonetic) or Jim, that's a very important part of the
11 whole system.

12 And they have been a particular -- played a very
13 important role in bringing together what the City wants and
14 what the developer needs to have a successful project.

15 And as Anthony mentioned, you know, he was Mayor
16 at one point in time. You might think that he didn't have
17 any particular political aspirations, but -- so if I can
18 give advice to my colleagues, keep striving for the best.
19 Keep asking for the best.

20 And the city will continue to develop hopefully as
21 it's been developing and as a place of excellence and charm
22 and diversity. It's a complicated thing. But we can do it

1 together.

2 MARY FLYNN: Thank you so much. We really
3 appreciate everything that you've done, Hugh. It really is
4 tremendous. And your advice, as always, is very valuable.
5 So we appreciate it.

6 I think we'll end there for tonight. As we said,
7 we'll be continuing accolades coming down the road, in a
8 month or so.

9 So Hugh, best of luck. We'll be seeing you around
10 town. We know where you live [laughter] and we hope to stay
11 in touch over many, many years. So thank you.

12 HUGH RUSSELL: Thanks all of my colleagues who
13 served with me on the Board, and the Staff. And again, the
14 other members of the Development team. It's made it very
15 rewarding.

16 MARY FLYNN: Thank you. Excellent. All right. I
17 guess we will leave it there for tonight, then. And thanks
18 to all of you who have participated this evening and had
19 nice things and very true things to say about Hugh, and I'll
20 just leave it at that and say goodnight, we are adjourned.

21 HUGH RUSSELL: Thank you.

22 ASHLEY TAN: Thank you.

1 TOM SIENIEWICZ: Thank you, Mary. Goodnight,
2 Hugh.

3 DANIEL MESSPLAY: Goodnight, everyone.

4 [08:16 p.m. End of proceedings.]

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E R R A T A S H E E T

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I have read the foregoing transcript of the Planning Board meeting, and except for any corrections or changes noted above, I hereby subscribe to the transcript as an accurate record of the proceedings.

Name

Date

CERTIFICATE

Commonwealth of Massachusetts

Middlesex, ss.

I, Michele Dent, Notary Public in and for the
Commonwealth of Massachusetts, do hereby certify that the
above transcript is a true record, to the best of my
ability, of the proceedings.

I further certify that I am neither related to nor
employed by any of the parties in or counsel to this action,
nor am I financially interested in the outcome of this
action.

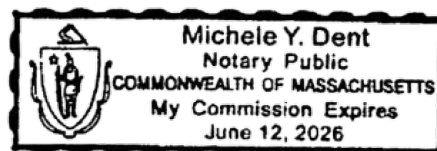
In witness whereof, I have hereunto set my hand this
15th day of September, 2023.



Notary Public

My commission expires:

June 12, 2026



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