

Boston Employment Commission Hearing Minutes

A monthly hearing of the Boston Employment Commission (**BEC**) was held virtually on Zoom, February 19, 2025.

Present: Commissioners JoCole Burton, Travis Watson and Donald Alexis

Hearing Began: 1:10 PM

December 18, 2024 and January 15, 2025 Minutes were held over for approval in March, due to lack of quorum.

Commissioner Burton began hearing with acknowledgement of 2 trailblazers (Titans/Icons) who were very instrumental in the City of Boston and who recently passed. Robert Terrell ("Father of Fair Housing", 2020 Fair Housing Act)) and Fletcher "Flash" Wiley who started a law firm led by men of color (*first in country or MA*) and created and chaired the Governor's Commission on Minority Business Development in 1984. In addition, Commissioner Burton mentioned that the City of Boston was being acknowledged nationally with the Ivory Award for equity and fair housing work.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Duration: 4 mins.

Jodi Sugerman-Brozan (Deputy Chief, Office of Worker Empowerment): Worker's Rights Safety Initiative and Clinic sessions to be held (virtually) on 2/24 and 2/25 (boston.gov/labor-policy). Free OSHA 10 (must be a Boston Resident) and OSHA 30 training provided (Boston Resident or employed by a company with construction permit from ISD). Workforce Development Grantmaking for college readiness (7th and 8th graders) and Life Science Workforce Development Initiative (*job placement*). The Anti-Displacement presentation on the agenda for today will be rescheduled for May (*presenter was unable to attend*).

Commissioner Burton disclosed that her company, Mavenbuild has a relationship with JMA and Commissioner Watson will oversee the inquiry on this project.

SPECIAL PRESENTATIONS

- **Strider Hotel (*Under the Old Ordinance*)**

Duration: 15 mins.

Present: Kate Blessington (John Moriarty & Associates), Jamie Noon (John Moriarty & Associates), Bob Graham (New Balance Development) and Pamela Ruffo (BRJP Construction Monitor)

Bob Graham (New Balance Development): Overview of project (*shared renderings*) - Strider Hotel is a 9 story, 170 guestroom hotel with accessory restaurant, meeting space and amenity uses. The Project is located within the greater Boston Landing campus at the corner of Guest Street and Arthur Street. The corner lot is flanked to the west by the New Balance Flagship Retail Store, to the north by the New Balance Headquarters and sloped lawn at Athletes Park, and to the east by the Stop and Shop development. A welcoming, social lobby activates the ground floor, along with 4,000 square feet of

adjacent restaurant space. Additional amenities are provided on Levels 2 and 3, including a signature restaurant and a bar with an outdoor terrace. **Kate Blessington (John Moriarty & Associates) - Construction Schedule:** Site Work: December 9th, 2024; Structure: January 18th, 2025; Exterior: November 1st, 2025; Finishes: December 1st, 2025 and C of O: March 1st, 2027. **Construction Buyout (awarded subcontractors):** American Plumbing (Plumbing), G&C Concrete (Concrete), Island Exterior Fabricators (Curtain Wall), Otis Elevator (Elevator) and The Welch Corp. (Site Work). **Workforce Diversity Efforts & Community Partners:** As an affiliate of NB Development Group, Railyard Hotel LLC shares the same overall commitment to incorporating workforce diversity and equity into their operations as do their larger corporate partners. The Proponent has a strategy that stresses education and awareness, talent sourcing and career growth, and culture and engagement. John Moriarty and Associates is an engaged proponent in the growing movement toward fostering greater inclusion and opportunity for Boston residents, people of color, women, and other underrepresented groups in the Boston area. Our efforts are multifaceted including sponsoring/hiring pre-apprentice tradespeople from underrepresented groups in the community to work alongside experienced tradespeople and/or staff to provide an opportunity they would not have otherwise. JMA also works with various trade schools and programs such as the Madison Park High School, Ben Franklin Institute, and The Building Pathways program. **Boston Resident Jobs Policy: This project is under the old BRJP ordinance goals (50% Boston Residents, 25% People of Color and 10% Women).** The Subcontractor compliance process entails Pre-Construction Meetings, Weekly Payroll Submission, Corrective Action Meetings (*payments are held if necessary*), Provide Best Faith Effort Documentation and Verify Boston Residents. **Job Application Process:** An application for employment sign has been set up at the entrance of the project with instructions to apply at JMA onsite office. All applications for employment will be sent via email to project managers of all subcontractors that employ the trade for review as well as the Boston jobs bank coordinator. **Commissioner Watson:** Pam, do you foresee any challenges? **Pamela Ruffo (BRJP Construction Monitor):** Kate and I have great communication and she stays on top of things. This project just started towards the end of December 2024 and we've had 3 Pre-Con meetings. I'm not foreseeing any major hurdles, at this time. **Commissioner Watson:** The example of your previous work gives confidence for this project. Thank you for the presentation. (*No questions were asked from other commissioners or public*)

PROJECT REVIEWS

Enterprise Research Center Residential & Hotel

Duration: 37 mins.

Present: Max Cassidy (Tishman Speyer), M. Bongiorno (Tishman Speyer), Kacey-Ann Satchell (Consigli), David Cullinane (Consigli), Rochelle Gayle (Consigli), Celso Barros (Smoot Builds), Chrystal Stowe (Smoot Builds), Milton Benjamin (Kagegrowth Inc.), Taidgh McClory (THM Advisors) and Pamela Ruffo (BRJP Construction Monitor)

Overall Numerical Compliance: 486,280 workhours, 1,363 workers, 38 contractors, 25% Boston Residents, 38% People of Color, 7% Women

Pamela Ruffo (BRJP Construction Monitor): The project had a BEC Special Presentation on 09/20/23. The Project is 60% complete. Two out of the top five subcontractors are struggling with resident participation. Two corrective action meetings were held on 11/19/24 with T.J. McCartney & on 01/22/25 with Lymo Construction, Riggs Contracting & PJ Dionne. The BA agents for local 12 Plumbers attended the 01/22/25 meeting to advise PJ Dionne that there are Resident, POC & females workers available if they required increased workforce assistance (*corrective action response letters were provided to the commissioners*). There have been 187 apprentices working on this project: 61 Residents (33%), 81 POC (41%) & 26 Women (15%). 25 out of 38 subcontractors on the project employ apprentices. The top 5 subcontractors with the most apprentices are Your Electrical (21), P.J. Spillane (17), S&F Concrete (16),

K&H Electrical (15) & T.J. McCartney & United HVAC (14). **Commissioner Burton:** I want to acknowledge all those on the team here today and the internal work of Consigli for the energy put towards the goals for this project as to my understanding this is a huge project and had challenges from the beginning. What are the roles of the 6 students (4 Madison Park Vocational, 2 Youth Build Boston)? **Kacey-Ann Satchell (Consigli):** They are 6 graduating highschool seniors from Madison Park High and are carpenter apprentices working for Riggs (2 journeymen this year and 2 sponsored into local (Cohort 2021)).

Commissioner Burton: This is the first project I've heard that you're sponsoring them in and that's good to know. **Commissioner Watson:** No reflection on your report, Pam, but Local 4's statement of bringing more people of color is not hopeful based on what I've witnessed in my years on the Boston

Employment Commission. I'm surprised that the Aliva facade material was not prepared/trained for installation in advance. I'm impressed with Nicole Ritcher's (TCMG) work as it relates to racial and gender equity. Lastly, does PJ Dionne (49,081 wkhrs, 110 wrks, 18% BR, 22% POC, 4% W) have a plan or are they finished? **Pam:** As they stated in the report, they are working on helping build the pipeline and said they will work with the BAs. They are still on the other project, however, at this time I'm not confident they will be bringing additional workers on. **Commissioner Watson:** Understood. Thank you.

Commissioner Burton: The project is doing well with People of Color numbers and close on the women numbers. Is there a strategy moving forward to bump up the Boston resident numbers (25% BR, 38% POC, 7% W)? **David Cullinane (Consigli):** A lot of effort has been made regarding Boston residents and we will continue to have conversations with our trade partners, weekly. As graduates come in, we're lining them up (reference Nathan Polk and YBB program).

Commissioner Burton: It's always good for students to see the pathways, however the cohorts are small. Is there a way for an upswing? **Dave:** Agreed the cohorts are small (maximum 15-18) and it's why we work with multiple pre-apprenticeship programs. The more we have consistent communication with the various trades and training of the trades. We know the Locals have initiatives focused on Boston residents, People of Color and Women.

Commissioner Burton: What do the Locals say, "this is all we have"? **Dave:** The Locals are focused on bringing apprentices in to maximize on Boston residents, People of Color and Women. **Commissioner**

Watson: While I appreciate the conversation about apprentices and the celebratory opportunities for them, we cannot normalize that an over 100 year industry is just now in 2025 getting around to the conversation of providing Black and Brown people with the lowest paid jobs. It's frustrating and the unions need to be checked and held accountable. **Commissioner Burton:** Agreed, we have been talking about ways to invigorate this for a long time and we can respect that the pipeline is being developed. One of the conversations we've had on this commission is Employer Sponsored Housing (a former pathway used in our industrialized society) and I'm going to start repeating that conversation going forward.

Public:

Nancy Luc (Building Pathway): Do you/Maven provide employer sponsored housing? **Commissioner Burton:** Yes. There are various ways employer sponsored housing can work (gave scenarios)..

Commissioner Alexis: Because Unions have the resources they should work to help make that happen. We would not need Boston resident goals if workers were offered affordable opportunities to live in the city (referenced City of Boston's local residency requirement). **Commissioner Burton:** The commission

sees a successful project as it relates to Boston residents, 35% or more. We appreciate the People of Color numbers and the efforts toward Women numbers, however, the real issue is Boston residents (currently at 25%). What efforts are being done to increase the numbers today? **Dave:** We are doing

things to get people on the work site in today's environment. There are Boston residents through Madison and Youth Build working on this project. We continue to have conversations with the union to see who they have available for our trade partners to bring on as well. It can be a challenge and I understand the commission's push back on apprentices (referenced higher paying jobs). The journey men numbers may not be high, but I believe there will be a shift. There's a big group here, Smoot, Consigli, outside consultants and we're all working hand in hand to maximize the best that we can. **Commissioner**

Burton: Is the project location challenging? Commissioners have asked for best practices of things that worked for previous projects (referenced a project that provided transportation for its workers). **Kacey:**

We've added 5 residents to the site since this report was done. Timing, communication and occasional lulls are challenging factors we deal with. **Max Cassidy (Tishman Speyer):** We have an awesome team

on this project. For the remaining 40% of the project we will continue to be creative in addressing the challenges of increasing the Boston resident numbers.. Having been in the Alston area for the last 5 years, I haven't heard of any subcontractors challenged with getting workers to the area (referenced

parking availability and public transportation accessibility). We recognize we have an opportunity to do better than the 25% with the new subs coming on for the finishing work and we are committed to that..

Commissioner Burton: Thank you. **Commissioner Watson:** Just want to add another point to the apprenticeship conversation as it relates to retention and tracking retention. It's a critical point and oftentimes gets left out. It's not just about who you're bringing in and more about who you're bringing in and how long they remain employed. **Commissioner Burton:** Thank you for the presentation.

Enterprise Research Center Treehouse

Duration: 33 mins.

Present: Max Cassidy (Tishman Speyer), M. Bongiorno (Tishman Speyer), Kacey-Ann Satchell (Consigli), David Cullinane (Consigli), Alexander Carr (Consigli), Celso Barros (Smoot Builds), Chrystal Stowe (Smoot Builds), Milton Benjamin (Kagegrowth Inc.), Taidgh McClory (THM Advisors) and Pamela Ruffo (BRJP Construction Monitor)

Overall Numerical Compliance: 70,217 workhours, 382 workers, 15 contractors, 11% Boston Residents, 33% People of Color, 7% Women

Pamela Ruffo (BRJP Construction Monitor): The project had a BEC Special Presentation on 11/15/23. The Project is 35% complete. This project is part of the previous project and is one large footprint.

Riggs Contracting is the largest subcontractor onsite with below standard Resident workforce participation of 11%. Attached is a corrective action response from 10/09/24 that details the specialty crew for the Concrete and Mass Timber scope of work. The ERC Treehouse & UMass CSL Building is their first experience with Mass Timber. Most of the crew must be certified in rigging and experience with lifting & setting large pieces weighing 1,500-17,000 pounds of prefinished exposed beams/columns which leaves a lot of room for error. The other related obstacle is the Mass Timber schedule has been falling behind due to the timber components not arriving on time which has forced Riggs to keep the crew size fluid depending upon work/material availability. Riggs is committed to increasing resident workforce participation: There have been 46 apprentices working on this project: 13 Residents (19%), 16 POC (29%) & 3 Women (9%). 10 out of the 15 subcontractors on the project employ apprentices. The top 5 subcontractors with the most apprentices are P.J. Dionne (8), Riggs (7), Corporate Mechanical (5), McDonald Electrical (5) & W.L. French (4). **Commissioner Burton:** Pam, your level of detail is amazing. If Riggs is the lead and their Boston resident number is 11%, how can Riggs show good leadership to the other subcontractors? **Alex Carr (Consigli):** The scope of Riggs work is Mass Timber and unfortunately, we've struggled with getting a crew of carpenters skilled for Mass Timber. We are committed to improve and will have a carpenter union training the first week of April. We are not as far along and will in the next 6 months bring in mechanicals, electrical and duct work. **Commissioner Burton:** Appreciate your commentary of what's happening on site. **Commissioner Watson:** Thank you for that explanation. It's concerning that Local 328 would send unqualified workers and it sounds like this material was newly/recently created. Can you explain? **Alex:** We have had quite a few conversations because of the uniqueness and capacity (*referenced the sustainable nature of this material*), it's been a struggle finding experienced labor for this skill. **Commissioner Burton:** We'll hold you to your word with the doors, hardware and finishing carpentry. **Milton Benjamin (Kagegrowth Inc.):** I'm reflecting on the points you and Commissioner Watson raised. This is a union centered town and the hurdles we face, "are they there, yes, how do they get through a system". In regard to workforce housing, it's worked in the past and perhaps worth taking on. We've been thinking about Pop-up training. We will need to work harder under this new federal administration. **Commissioner Burton:** Thank you for the presentation. We ask the tough questions on behalf of the residents of Boston and all concerned.

Present: Kamran Zahedi (Urbanica), Roxanna Zahedi (Urbanica), and Robert Woodson (BRJP Construction Monitor)

Overall Numerical Compliance: 73,384 workhours, 77 workers, 10 contractors, 45% Boston Residents, 98% People of Color, 14% Women

Robert Woodson (BRJP Construction Monitor): This project first appeared before the BEC for a special presentation on 07/17/24. Strong Hand General Construction Corp, is leading the way for work hours performed and workforce diversity at 45% Resident, 100% POC & 14% Women. Their efforts are making the largest onsite trade of Carpenters shine with overall workforce at 37% Resident and 100% POC. True Cleaners, having performed the 2nd most hours on the project, has had all of their work performed by a Boston Resident/ person of color. For the top 5 subcontractors in terms of work hours performed 4/5 are meeting or exceeding the women employment standards. Strong Hand 14% women, National Lumber 12% women, ATCO Plumbing 15% women, and KSH Electrical 20% women. The project's overall payroll submission time is currently at 11 days. Metro Equipment(28 day average) and Strong Hand General Construction Corp.(31 day average) had issues with initial payroll submissions, subsequently negatively impacting the projects overall submission time. 18 Boston Residents have been reported on the project. To date 11 of 18 have had residency verified. **Commissioner Burton:** Open shop project, about 50% complete. **Kamran Zahedi (Urbanica):** Estimated completion by May 2025 and the 0% women numbers on the report seem to be a discrepancy in the trades section because our carpenter trade (*Strong Hand General Construction Corp.*) is at 14% for women. The Urbanica team, Gail, Tish, and Roxanne do a great job carrying out the vision for our company. **Commissioner Watson:** At the heart of the BRJP ordinance is creating jobs/opportunities for BR/POC/W and these are some of the strongest numbers I've seen on a project since I've been on the Commission (*which has been a while*) and you're creating a huge impact on this project. **Commissioner Burton:** Your secret sauce must be the women workforce you have. I say that as a tease, however, what is the secret sauce in how you reach these numbers (*77 workers, 45% Boston Residents, 98% People of Color, 14% Women*)? **Kamran:** My staff knows it's important to me and it's what we believe collectively. They know the community and the workforce and I'm hard when I need to be (*referenced holding payments*). The subcontractors know that if they do well then it will bring them more work. **Commissioner Burton:** This could be a case study (*referenced another one of Urbanica's projects that did well*). Not all open shops have these numbers, but this is a good example as you are meeting and exceeding the goals and there should be some incentive for companies to follow this example (*noted earlier that union projects do have more of a challenge, but it doesn't mean it can't be done*). Thank you for your patience, as we realize it's been a lengthy meeting today.

BEC Commissioners' Follow-up Requests/Concerns

Sanction Recommendation – Nothing Outstanding

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Duration: 9 mins.

Jodi Sugerman Brozan (Deputy Chief, Worker Empowerment): Open Meeting Law for virtual/remote hearings will expire March 31, 2025 and in-person meetings will resume at City Hall, Room 801 as of the next BEC Hearing, April 16, 2025. Commissioners and Presenters are required to meet in-person.

Compliance monitoring snapshot January 2025: BRJP is currently monitoring 160 projects and conducted 24 Corrective Action Meetings. **Christopher Brown (BRJP Manager):** Compliance

improvement strategies will begin in March. **Jodi:** Upcoming guest speaker presentations, 3/19/25 - Union Diversity Initiatives Engagement with BRJP and Greater Boston Labor Council and April 16, 2025 - BPDA Impact Analysis Report. **Commissioner Burton:** Requesting advance notice for commissioners for the April City Council Bi-Annual hearing (*if they are required to participate*).

Motion to adjourn - Commissioner Watson, 2nd - Commissioner Alexis

Meeting adjourned 3:07pm

KO/Executive Coordinator