



**BOSTON LANDMARKS COMMISSION  
PUBLIC HEARING MINUTES**

Boston City Hall, Boston, MA, 02201  
held virtually via Zoom

**OCTOBER 8, 2024**

**COMMISSIONERS PRESENT:** John Amodeo, Celina Barrios-Millner, David Berarducci, John Freeman, Jeffrey Gonyeau, Richard Henderson, Kirsten Hoffman, Lindsey Mac-Jones, Justine Orlando (Vice-Chair), Brad Walker (Chair).

**COMMISSIONERS ABSENT:** Susan Goganian, Christopher Hart, Jeffrey Heyne, Felicia Jacques, Senam Kumahia, Fadi Samaha, Lynn Smiledge, Angela Ward-Hyatt.

**STAFF PRESENT:** Staff Architect, Chelsea Blanchard; Director of Design Review, Joseph Cornish; & Assistant Survey Director, Dorothy Clark; Architectural Historian, Jennifer Gaugler; Alexa Pinard, Interim Executive Director.

**ELECTED OFFICIALS PRESENT:** Sharon Durkan, District 8 Boston City Councilor; Jay Livingstone, State Representative for the 8th Suffolk District.

**6:04 PM:** Commissioner Walker called the public hearing to order. He explained that, pursuant to the Commonwealth of Massachusetts Executive Order Suspending Certain Provisions of the Open Meeting Law, that the public hearing was being conducted virtually via the online meeting platform Zoom in order to review Design Review applications. He also briefly explained how to participate in the online hearing. There were no members of the press present.

Following this brief introduction he called the first Advisory Review application.

**I. ADVISORY REVIEW**

**APP # 24.0897 BLC**

**ADDRESS: VISITOR CENTER AT CHARLESBANK LANDING - THE CHARLES RIVER ESPLANADE**

Applicant: Jen Mergel

Proposed Work: The applicants request BLC advisory review for a new building and site work at the Charlesbank Landing area of the Esplanade. The project will involve the construction of a building, featuring public restrooms, community rooms and a deck. The building will be a visitor Center, maintenance operations center, and office space for the Esplanade Association.

**PROJECT REPRESENTATIVES:** Jen Mergel, Maryann Thompson, and Jesse Nicholson were the project representatives.



**DOCUMENTS PRESENTED:** The documents presented included existing condition photographs, aerial view images, plan drawings, proposed roof and site plans, revised model images, revised roof form, architectural precedent photographs, and proposed fencing, nets, and railing palettes.

**DISCUSSION TOPICS:** Discussion topics included existing conditions, an overview of the historic precedence at the site, a summary of recommendations and comments from the Commission during previous Advisory Reviews, plans for ADA accessibility to the proposed new building and site, ADA code requirements for the Fiedler footbridge, the existing buildings and site along the Charles River and Esplanade, the existing and proposed entry and access points to buildings and sites along the Esplanade, existing and proposed trails and pathways, the proximity and location of the Lee Pool and the new building to the seawall, the height and scale of the Lee Pool, the existing and possible view approaches of the Esplanade from Storrow Drive, proposed spaces and weather shelters for the public, proposed configurations, height, and scale of the new building and operations yard, an overview of Esplanade operations and storage, the proposed material and height of the new shingle style building, the proposed dimension of operation yard fencing, possible landscape plans and plant species.

**COMMISSIONER COMMENTS AND QUESTIONS:** Commissioners engaged in a discussion regarding the Charles River Esplanade study report, the original Olmsted Park design, historical precedent and site context of the Esplanade, architectural features for shingle style buildings, the existing views of the Esplanade from Storrow Drive, details about the materials, height, and volume of the new building, possible additions of warming elements for the public, the use of the new building during winter seasons, details about the plans for the breezeway, the proposed landscape and plant species, the existing and proposed trails and pathways, the proposed lighting plans, the proposed height of park and operation yard fencing, recommendations to lessen fencing around park areas and the additions of more openings within fencing.

**PUBLIC COMMENT:** Sharon Durkan, District 8 Boston City Councilor, spoke in support of the proposed work.

Jay Livingstone, State Representative for the 8th Suffolk District, spoke in support of the proposed work.

## II. RATIFICATION OF HEARING/ MEETING MINUTES

Ratification of the public hearing meeting minutes for August 27, 2024. .



**COMMISSIONER ORLANDO MOTIONED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES.  
COMMISSIONER BERARDUCCI SECONDED THE MOTION. THE VOTE WAS 8-0-1 (Y:  
RH, JO, DB, LMJ, CBM, KH, JG, BW)(N: NONE)(ABS: JF).**

Ratification of the public hearing meeting minutes for September 24, 2024. .

**COMMISSIONER ORLANDO MOTIONED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES.  
COMMISSIONER FREEMAN SECONDED THE MOTION. THE VOTE WAS 9-0-0 (Y: JF,  
RH, JO, DB, CBM, KH, JG, JA, BW)(N: NONE)(ABS: NONE).**

### **III. STAFF UPDATES**

Chelsea Blanchard, Staff Architect, commented on the White Stadium subcommittee and reminded Commissioners that she will send hearing materials to Commissioners via email and calendar invitations.

Bradford Walker, BLC Commissioner, discussed Commissioner communication and recommended that Commissioners review hearing materials before the hearings.

### **IV. ADJOURN – 7:30 PM**

**COMMISSIONER ORLANDO MOTIONED TO ADJOURN. COMMISSIONER AMODEO  
SECONDED THE MOTION. A VOICE VOTE WAS CALLED AND ALL  
COMMISSIONERS PRESENTED VOTED IN FAVOR.**