

City of Boston BERDO Review Board
Public Meeting Minutes
Zoom Virtual Meeting
September 9, 2024, at 4:30 pm
[View recording here](#)

Board Members in Attendance: Rashida Boyd, Councilor Gabriela Coletta Zapata, Stephen Ellis, Gail Latimore, and Jack Nelson.

Board Members not in Attendance: Hessann Farooqi and Lovette Jacobs

Staff Present: Diana Vasquez and Zengel “Ziggy” Chin.

Others: Approximately twenty-five (25) members of the public attended this meeting.

Motion to Nominate Acting Chair

4:35 pm: Environment staff D. Vasquez led a vote for Acting Chair. Board Member J. Nelson made a motion to nominate Board Member S. Ellis to serve as Acting Chair. Board Member G. Latimore seconded the motion. All Board Members in attendance (5) at the time were in favor. The motion carried at 4:36 pm.

Call Meeting to Order

4:36 pm: A meeting of the Building Emissions Reduction and Disclosure Ordinance, hereafter referred to as (BERDO), within the Air Pollution Control Commission, was called to order on September 9 at 4:37 pm. This meeting was held virtually.

Roll Call

4:37 pm: The following BERDO Review Board members were in attendance: Acting Chair Stephen Ellis, Rashida Boyd, Gail Latimore, and Jack Nelson.

The following Environment Department staff were in attendance: Diana Vasquez and Zengel “Ziggy” Chin.

Others: Approximately twenty-five (25) members of the public attended this meeting.

First Agenda Item: Approval of Meeting Minutes.

4:38 pm: The Review Board voted on approving the [August 26 Meeting Minutes](#). Board Member G. Latimore made a motion to approve the meeting minutes. Board Member R. Boyd seconded the motion. All Board Members in attendance voted in favor. The motion carried at 4:39 pm.

Second Agenda Item: Administrative Updates

4:39 pm: Z. Chin shared the number of building portfolios and ICS applications. The City is still waiting to hear back from the long-term hardship compliance plan applicants regarding resubmissions. There have been two (2) submitted nominations for open seats on the board. There is an upcoming webinar that will provide an overview of BERDO compliance for condo associations on September 25. The Board agreed to move the October 14 meeting to October 15 due to Indigenous People's Day.

The next meeting is scheduled for October September 23.

- S. Ellis asked how long it will take for the nominations for the open seats on the Board to be filled.
 - D. Vasquez explained that the City has sent a summary of the nominations to the Mayor's office and hopefully, by the end of the month, they will hear back. After that City Council has 90 days to confirm the nominee that the Mayor has chosen.

Third Agenda Item: Presentations from Equitable Emissions Investment Fund 2024 Application Cycle Finalists.

4:45 pm: The public hearing was called to order.

4:45 pm: Board Member G. Latimore recused herself.

4:46 pm: Review Board meeting in recess.

4:48 pm: Board Member G. Latimore rejoined the public hearing and the Review Board meeting resumed.

4:48 pm: Diana presented background information about the Equitable Emissions Investment Fund before the presentations from finalists.

4:52 pm: Green Energy Consumer Alliance presented their project: EquiSol: The Blue Line Solar Access Program.

5:05 pm: Councilor Coletta Zapata joined the meeting.

5:05 pm: Board Q&A

- J. Nelson asked how many buildings in the project are subject to BERDO.

- L. Chretien answered that the buildings in the project are not subject to BERDO since the buildings are too small.
 - M. Barr added that most of the buildings are triple-deckers.
- J. Nelson asked what portion of the tenant's electric bill would be offset by the solar array.
 - L. Chretien explained that with the Fund grant and a bonus tax credit, Green Energy Consumer Alliance hopes to provide a reduction of at least 20% and possibly 50%.
- J. Nelson asked if the general contractor had done the work yet to help develop an estimate for the project.
 - L. Chretien answered that Green Consumers Alliance has a solid estimate on the cost and they feel confident that they will be able to move quickly once they hear a decision about the Fund.
- J. Nelson asked if the project plans are sufficiently developed to ask different installing contractors for bids for the project.
 - L. Chretien explained that a contractor has been chosen to be the installing contractor for the project and that their price was competitive.
- J. Nelson asked a follow-up question if the contractor has electricians that will be installing the solar array.
 - A. Gonzalez confirmed they will be the ones installing the PV systems.
 - M. Barr added that each site has had a site visit to create a customized cost estimate for the project.
- J. Nelson asked if structural assessments of the roofs still need to be done.
 - M. Barr confirmed that structural assessments of the roofs needed to be done.

5:10 pm: Board Member G. Latimore recused herself.

5:13 pm: Fenway Community Development Corporation presented on their project: Burbank Gardens Zero-Over-Time Decarbonization.

5:25 pm: Board Q&A

- R. Boyd asked if the Fenway CDC will use turnkey heat pumps.

- A. Sugerman answered that Fenway CDC does not have specifications on the heat pumps and they are working with their sustainability consultant to finalize the heat pump selection.
- S. Ellis asked how many BERDO buildings are in the project.
 - A. Sugerman answered that the project is in one (1) BERDO building with 52 (fifty-two) units.
- S. Ellis asked if Fenway CDC is planning to fund future engagements with Climable with the Equitable Emissions Investment Fund.
 - A. Sugerman clarified that Climable is a separate nonprofit organization and they are providing their services of energy literacy for members of the community at no cost to Fenway CDC.
- Councilor Coletta Zapata asked if Fenway has a projected saving per unit that tenants will benefit from after the project is completed.
 - A. Sugerman explained that Fenway CDC pays for domestic hot water for the tenants; there will be no additional savings for the tenants.
 - Councilor Coletta Zapata asked for Fenway CDC to elaborate on what reducing building operating costs would mean then.
 - A. Sugerman explained that the new systems would reduce the cost Fenway CDC pays to heat the building and those savings would be reinvested in the site.
- J. Nelson asked what stage Fenway CDC is at in the design bid process.
 - S. John answered that Fenway CDC has a rough scope to get bids and they are awaiting funding prior to the design process being taken to the next level.
- J. Nelson asked what would happen if Fenway put together their plans and the actual cost of the project is above budget.
 - S. John explained that there is some degree of certainty about the costs of the project, but if the cost is above the projected budget they will seek additional funding sources or use Fenway CDC capital.
- J. Nelson asked if Fenway CDC has been in contact with the utility companies about utility incentives.

- S. John answered that Fenway CDC has tried to get in contact with the utility companies, but they want more concrete plans before the utility companies will engage.

5:33 pm: Dorchester Bay Economic Development Corporation (DBEDC) presented their project: Dorchester Bay Solar for Residents

5:42 pm: Board Q&A

- J. Nelson asked for confirmation if the majority of the energy produced by the solar array will be for the common spaces.
 - K. Dougherty explained that for the Columbia Road buildings, DBEDC covers all of the common area usage plus 15% for residents. The Wilder buildings were originally metered for residents to pay their utilities, but now that DBEDC pays for them any access or rollover will be transferred onto those bills.
- J. Nelson asked if the roof area where the PV arrays will be could be increased in size so tenants get more benefits from the energy produced.
 - K. Dougherty answered that the roof area has been maximized on both buildings.
- J. Nelson asked if the designs are complete and if the installing contractor has bid the work?
 - K. Dougherty answered that as part of the HUD requirements there have to be three (3) bids for the work. After DBEDC chose the installer HUD granted conditional structural permits for the buildings. There are no concerns for the sites for the installation of the solar array.
- J. Nelson asked how quickly after DBEDC receives the funds can the project be implemented.
 - K. Williams-Etienne answered that the project would begin at the end of this year.
- S. Ellis asked for residents' utility benefits to be restated.
 - K. Williams-Etienne explained that for the Glendale building, DBEDC plans on passing on 15% in savings to residents. They will work with residents to identify which residents can maximize the benefits. The residents will

receive credits on their utility bills as long as they remain within the community.

- K. Dougherty added that the utility companies allow the owners of a system to fill out a form to transfer bill credits which can potentially cover the full bill. It depends on how much energy the residents are currently using and how many credits are produced by the solar systems at each building.

5:49 pm: The Community Builders presented their project: New Franklin Park Solar Installation

6:00 pm: Board Q&A

- S. Ellis commented that the idea of a solar canopy was interesting to hear about and asked how the stability of the raised platforms has been addressed.
 - K. Dougherty answered that there has been a load analysis to determine which types of beams will need to be installed to carry the loads of snow and withstand the weather in the northeast.
- J. Nelson asked how far along are the Community Builders with the design and bid process for this project.
 - L. Whiteside answered that the Community Builders are waiting for a funding award, after which they will engage with Resonant Energy to design and assess the load that can be supported with the existing structure. After that, the bid will go out.
- J. Nelson asked what will happen if the cost of the project exceeds the budget.
 - L. Whiteside answered that the Community Builders have sufficiently budgeted with enough cushion in the budget to accommodate that. The biggest risk and cost increase would result if it turns out there's need for more structural support than anticipated. There should be enough of a contingency in the budget to support that.
- J. Nelson asked if the beams sit on top of the roofing materials.
 - K. Dougherty answered that the most common way is to put the sleepers on top and tie them to the roof without piercing the insulation of the roof.
- J. Nelson asked if tenants pay their own electricity bill at the site.
 - L. Whiteside answered that tenants do pay their electric bills.

- J. Nelson asked if the Community Builders considered expanding the size of the array to have more savings available to share with tenants.
 - K. Dougherty explained that based on the racking manufacturer the equipment comes in pre-established widths and lengths so adding another row would be difficult and not cost-effective.

6:08 pm: Codman Square NDC presented on their project: Advancing Building Decarbonization at Washington Columbia I and II.

6:29 pm: Board Q&A

- J. Nelson asked how many buildings in the project are subject to BERDO.
 - M. Thornhill answered that all the twelve (12) buildings at both sites are subject to BERDO.
- J. Nelson asked how far along Codman Square NDC was with the design and bid process for this project.
 - N. Donnelly explained that the individual scope per building still needs to be developed for the implementation of the drain heat water recovery system.
 - G. Van Decker added the design is simple and his company does not charge for the design.
- J. Nelson asked if the drain heat water recovery system is approved by the Massachusetts Plumbing Board.
 - G. Van Decker stated it had been approved in 2007 in Massachusetts, but that his licensing needs to be renewed.
- J. Nelson asked if the project is eligible for incentives from the utility companies.
 - M. Thornhill answered that is something that Codman Square NDC will look into and discuss it further with Resonant Energy.
- J. Nelson asked if tenants will see a reduction in their energy bill after the project.
 - N. Donnelly answered that tenants pay their own bills and they will see an improved system capability in the building.
- S. Ellis asked if Codman NDC has explored other funding opportunities for the project.

- M. Thornhill answered that for this project there are sufficient operating reserves to cover the costs.
- S. Ellis asked if the graph about emissions reductions (slide 78) represents one building.
 - N. Donnelly confirmed that the graph represented Washington I and that the buildings are very similar to each other so it can be used as a starting point for emissions reductions.
 - S. Ellis asked a follow-up question if the work being proposed in the project will cause a large drop in emissions as shown in the graph for Washington I.
 - N. Donnelly answered that the large drop is a full retrofit that goes beyond the work specified in the project.

6:38 pm: Councilor Gabriela Coletta Zapata left the meeting.

6:39 pm: Review Board hearing in recess.

6:43 pm: Review Board meeting resumed and Councilor Gabriela Coletta Zapata rejoined the hearing.

6:43 pm: Chair S. Ellis opened a public comment period.

- In the Zoom Chat, G. Van Decker, in regards to the Community Builders presentation, commented they might consider having the tenants still pay for 50% of the bill because the tenants have control over their consumption.
 - L. Whiteside commented that the Community Builders will take that into consideration as they work through the larger deep energy retrofit scope.

6:45 pm: Chair S. Ellis closed a public comment period.

Meeting Adjournment

6:46 pm: Board Member J. Nelson made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Board Member R. Boyd seconded. All board members in attendance (5) voted in favor. The motion carried at 6:46 pm.