

City of Boston BERDO Review Board
Public Meeting Minutes
Zoom Virtual Meeting
October 15, 2024, at 5:00 pm
[View recording here](#)

Board Members in Attendance: Rashida Boyd, Stephen Ellis, Hessann Farooqi, Gail Latimore, and Jack Nelson.

Board Members not in Attendance: Councilor Gabriela Coletta Zapta and Lovette Jacobs

Staff Present: Hannah Payne, Diana Vasquez, Dr. Claudia Diezmartinez, and Zengel “Ziggy” Chin.

Others: Approximately twenty (20) members of the public attended this meeting.

Motion to Nominate Acting Chair

5:03 pm: Environment staff D. Vasquez led a vote for Acting Chair. Board Member G. Latimore made a motion to nominate Board Member S. Ellis to serve as Acting Chair. Board Member R. Boyd seconded the motion. All Board Members in attendance (4) at the time were in favor. The motion carried at 5:04 pm.

Call Meeting to Order

5:04 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 October 15 at 5:04 pm. This meeting was held virtually.

Roll Call

5:06 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: Hannah Payne, Diana Vasquez, Dr. Claudia Diezmartinez, and Zengel “Ziggy” Chin.

Others: Approximately twenty (20) members of the public attended this meeting.

First Agenda Item: Vote on Building Portfolio Applications

5:07 pm: D. Vasquez presented information and details about Berklee College of Music’s Building Portfolio application.

5:08 pm: Board Q&A Session

- S. Ellis asked how the City verified the college/university building's use when reviewing the application and why a different owner is listed for one of the buildings in the proposed Building Portfolio.
 - N. Hill explained that Berklee and Boston Conservatory merged, and the IMP covers both universities.
 - D. Vasquez explained that the definition of college/university comes from the Energy Star Portfolio Manager, and the City recommends that universities apply for a Building Portfolio to follow that definition.
 - N. Hill added that a small amount of retail space in the buildings contributes a minuscule amount of energy.

5:14 pm: Board Member J. Nelson made a motion to approve Berklee College of Music's Building Portfolio application with standard conditions. Board Member G. Latimore seconded the motion. All board members in attendance (4) voted in favor. The motion carried at 5:15 pm.

5:15 pm: Z. Chin presented information and details about Emerson College's Building Portfolio application.

5:17 pm: Board Q&A Session

- S. Ellis asked if the City has confirmed there are no commercial spaces or spaces that are not used for academic purposes being included in the proposed Building Portfolio.
 - D. Vasquez answered that in previous years, Emerson College had reported some buildings as assembly instead of college/university, as reported in the Building Portfolio application.
 - H. Payne added that the Emerson Colonial Theater is one of the buildings previously reported as assembly.
- S. Ellis commented that it would be worthwhile to have a representative from Emerson answer questions about the application.

5:21 pm: Acting Chair S. Ellis made a motion to continue Emerson College's Building Portfolio application until the October 28 Review Board meeting. Board Member G. Latimore seconded the motion. All board members in attendance (4) voted in favor. The motion carried at 5:22 pm.

5:23 pm: Board Q&A Session

- S. Ellis asked if there are any commercial or non-academic spaces in the proposed building portfolio.
 - N. Hill confirmed that there are no purely commercial spaces but rather a mix of building uses that would fall under the definition of college/university.
- S. Ellis asked if there are any condo buildings that are not fully student housing but serve facilities or other members of the community, such as 2000 Commonwealth Ave.
 - N. Hill clarifies that 2000 Commonwealth Ave is a college dormitory.

5:28 pm: Board Member J. Nelson made a motion to approve Boston College's Building Portfolio application with standard conditions. Board Member R. Boyd seconded the motion. All board members in attendance (4) voted in favor. The motion carried at 5:29 pm.

5:29 pm: D. Vasquez shared that Match Charter Public School rescinded their Building Portfolio application.

- G. Latimore asked if Match Charter Public School owns their buildings and is not a part of Boston Public Schools.
 - D. Vasquez confirmed that Match Charter Public School owns all the buildings in the application.

5:31 pm: D. Vasquez presented information and details about Bismarck Street Owner, LLC's Building Portfolio application.

5:32 pm: Board Q&A Session

- S. Ellis asked if there is an intention for Bismarck Street Owner, LLC, to submeter their buildings.
 - Y. Medina answered that as part of the decarbonization program for the buildings Bismarck Street Owner, LCC is working with the LEAN Multifamily program to electrify the buildings and submeter the buildings as a result.
- G. Latimore asked how the affordable housing is subsidized and the breakdown of affordable units versus market units.

- Y. Medina explained that the property is actually a market-rate property and is naturally occurring affordable housing. 60% of the tenants are below 50% AMI, which allows the property to qualify for the LEAN program.
- G. Latimore asked if Bismarck Street Owner, LLC predicts a change in the number of tenants below 50% AMI as they move forward with the electrification.
 - Y. Medina answered that a requirement of LEAN is to maintain affordability, and Bismarck Street Owner, LLC is working with the City of Boston to expand the LEAN program and make the property as affordable as possible. Any changes to the buildings will be passed on to the owner and will not be the tenants' responsibility.
- G. Latimore asked how long Bismarck Street Owner, LLC has owned the buildings.
 - Y. Medina answered since 2018.

5:35 pm: Board Member Hessann Farooqi joined the meeting.

5:40 pm: Board Member J. Nelson made a motion to approve Bismarck Street Owner LLC's Building Portfolio application with standard conditions. Board Member H. Farooqi seconded the motion. All board members in attendance (5) voted in favor. The motion carried at 5:41 pm.

5:41 pm: D. Vasquez presented information and details about the City of Boston's Building Portfolio application.

5:47 pm: Board Q&A Session

- S. Ellis asked why the Boston Housing Authority (BHA) was excluded from the City's Building Portfolio.
 - C. Kramer explained that the BHA was not included in their portfolio application for two main reasons. First, the BHA is still working on submitting their up-to-date information for a billing portfolio application, and the City team wanted to submit their application early for the 2025 compliance year cycle. Second, due to the complexities of capital planning and the fact that the City only has direct control over certain buildings for capital improvements, they focused on including buildings where they have a direct role in making upgrades, which led to the exclusion of BHA properties.
- S. Ellis asked if the Harbor Islands belong to the Parks and Recreation Services.

- C. Kramer explained that the island on the map is Long Island, and on the island are the Boston Public Health Commission buildings for which the City does annual BERDO reporting.
- H. Farooqi asked if any of the tenants will be displaced in the property that the Boston Health Commission leases to Trinity as a result of deep retrofits.
 - C. Kramer answered that the City must investigate that with the property manager.
- H. Farooqi asked how the City decides which buildings need to be retrofitted first.
 - C. Kramer provided an update on the ongoing efforts to develop a ranking methodology for prioritizing capital upgrades across city buildings. He highlighted two critical assessments: the Boston Public Schools (BPS) Facilities Condition Assessment and the Non-BPS Building Assessment, which will help evaluate the current state of energy-consuming equipment. Combined with the City's long-term capital plan, these studies will guide decision-making on deferred capital upgrades. C. Kramer also discussed the development of a tool to rank buildings based on factors like emissions, energy costs, and environmental justice considerations, noting the complexity of weighing different priorities, such as economies of scale for larger buildings versus higher energy needs in smaller facilities.
- G. Latimore asked if there were any other residential properties besides the one leased to Trinity from the Boston Public Health Commission.
 - C. Kramer clarified that the residential units are condos at the Northampton campus, across from Boston Medical Center. These condos are residential, but the city also leases some spaces as part of a condo arrangement.
 - A. Ferrera added that there is also a residential building on Long Island that was not labeled with a black pin because it is not in an EJ community.
- G. Latimore commented on the importance of involving Boston Public School (BPS) students in learning opportunities related to their schools' decarbonization and energy retrofit projects. G. Latimore also encouraged prioritizing environmental justice (EJ) communities in the city's retrofit projects.
- J. Nelson asked for confirmation that the City applied through Pathway 2 because of the Combined Heat and Power Plants (CHP).
 - C. Kramer confirmed that was correct.

- J. Nelson asked for further explanation as to why applications with CHP will need to submit an EJ Review.
 - H. Payne explained that the EJ Review for applications with a CHP is due to concerns about air pollution and air quality in the EJ populations where the CHPs are located.
- J. Nelson asked if the benefits of CHP will be addressed in the Emissions Compliance Plan that the City of Boston will prepare.
 - H. Payne answered that this factor can be considered in the Emissions Compliance plan the City will prepare.
 - C. Kramer added details about the CHP that are in the City's Building Portfolio applications.

6:16 pm: Board Member G. Latimore made a motion to request a hearing for the City of Boston's Building Portfolio application. Board Member H. Farooqi seconded the motion. All board members in attendance (5) voted in favor. The motion carried at 6:17 pm.

Second Agenda Item: Approval of Meeting Minutes.

6:17 pm: The Review Board voted on approving the [September 23 Meeting Minutes](#). Board Member H. Farooqi made a motion to approve the meeting minutes. Board Member J. Nelson seconded the motion. Board Member G. Latimore abstained. All Board Members in attendance voted in favor. The motion carried at 6:18 pm.

Third Agenda Item: Administrative Updates

6:18 pm: Z. Chin shared the number of building portfolios and ICS applications. The City has received two resubmissions from the long-term hardship compliance plan applicants. There have been three (3) submitted nominations for open seats on the board. Short-Term Hardship Compliance Plan applications are being accepted on a rolling basis if there is an explanation of unforeseen circumstances from the applicant. The December 9 Review Board meeting will be the annual BERDO tenant's meeting.

BERDO annual disclosure was released on October 1 and includes new fields with additional building details.

The next meeting is scheduled for October 28.

Fourth Agenda Item: Discussion on the Equitable Emissions Investment Fund Application Cycle 2024.

6:22 pm: Board Member G. Latimore recused herself from the public hearing.

6:22 pm: The public hearing was called to order.

6:23 pm: D. Vasquez presents information about the finalists of the Equitable Emissions Investment Fund (the Fund).

6:25 pm: Board Q&A Session

No questions from the Board.

6:26 pm: Chair S. Ellis opened a public comment period.

6:27 pm: Chair S. Ellis closed a public comment period.

6:27 pm: Board Member J. Nelson made a motion to approve the award Codman Square NDC, Dorchester Bay Economic Development Corporation, and Fenway CDC grants from the Equitable Emissions Investment Fund. Board Member H. Farooqi seconded the motion. All board members in attendance (4) voted in favor. The motion carried at 6:27 pm.

Meeting Adjournment

6:28 pm: Board Member R. Boyd made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Board Member H. Farooqi seconded. All board members in attendance (4) voted in favor. The motion carried at 6:28 pm.