

Joint Meeting of the CRA and Planning Board

Tuesday, September 28, 2021 at 6:30pm

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, this meeting was held virtually via Zoom

APPROVED Meeting Minutes

At 6:30 PM, Planning Board (PB) Chair Catherine Preston Connolly called the meeting. It is being held remotely due to state-wide emergency orders limiting the size of public gatherings in response to Covid-19 and in accordance with Governor Baker's order of March 12, 2020 which was updated and passed into law with the Acts of 2021. The meeting is being video and audio recorded, and is being streamed live on the City of Cambridge's online meeting portal and on Cambridge cable TV channel 22. There will also be a transcript of the proceeding. Speakers will state their names before speaking and all votes will be taken by roll call. Members of the public will be kept on mute until it is time for public comment.

A roll call of Planning Board members was taken. Planning Board members present were Louis Bacci, H. Theodore Cohen, Steve Cohen, Mary Flynn, Hugh Russell, Alan Price, Ashley Tan, Catherine Preston Connolly. Tom Sieniewicz was absent.

Iram Farooq, Community Development Department (CDD) Assistant City Manager, introduced her staff. Tonight's agenda is a public hearing of an amendment to the MXD District special permit. This was facilitated by zoning changes that were adopted by the City Council earlier this year. The intention is to move the initial site plan and uses for an electric substation that Eversource plans to build, from a site adjacent to a residential neighborhood to a site in the heart of Kendall Square. She gave a status of non-CRA related dates and items.

Ms. Connolly then began the hearing for the proposal to amend the Infill Development Concept Plan (IDCP) for the MXD Zoning District (PB #315) by Boston Properties Limited Partnership (BxP). As this is a joint hearing held with the Cambridge Redevelopment Board (CRA), the CRA will now opened their meeting.

CRA Chair Kathleen Born said that the same Covid-19 meeting provisions hold for the CRA. A roll call of CRA Board members was taken. Besides herself, Vice Chair Conrad Crawford, Assistant Treasurer Barry Zevin, and Assistant Secretary Margaret Drury were present. Treasurer Christopher Bator was absent. Also present was Executive Director Thomas Evans. As this is a remote meeting, any votes taken by the CRA tonight will be taken by roll call and repeated by Thomas Evans.

Daniel Messplay, CDD Senior Zoning Manager, explained that this is the second major amendment to the MXD IDCP which is regulated by Article 14 of the zoning ordinance. Article 14 was amended earlier this year to allow for additional commercial development, in combination with the siting of an Eversource electrical transformer substation within the site. The IDCP functions like a PUD plan, where there is approval of the overall plan for a site at a schematic level, and then individual building sites are subject to future design review by the PB. To improve the collaboration of the PB and the CRA Board, this is a joint hearing, although joint action on this request is not a requirement. The PB's action is to grant or deny the proposed major amendment. Relevant approval criteria and issue summaries are provided by memos from CDD, the Traffic, Parking, and Transportation Department (TPT) and the Department of Public Works (DPW). Staff is also present to answer questions.

Thomas Evans, CRA Executive Director, said that the IDCP is an outgrowth of the Kendall Square Urban Redevelopment Plan (KSURP), which was amended concurrently with the MXD zoning in order to facilitate the relocation of the Eversource substation. The CRA Board is considering the IDCP, and after it is adopted, will continue to follow established design review procedures, with participation of members from the PB, CDD staff, and BxP. The CRA Board has to make a finding consistent with the KSURP but cannot make that finding until a MEPA certification is complete. A MEPA document is being circulated now and a decision from the state is expected in November.

Michael Tilford, from BxP, gave some background for the amendment to Special Permit #315 in the form of the IDCP, named the "Yellow Book". He named other BxP colleagues, consultants (Sasaki, Stantec, VHB, Pickard Chilton, NBBJ, Lemon Brooke), and Eversource. He thanked City and CRA staff for guidance on the design. At the last two times that BxP has come before the joint boards, a full planning book was brought, as well as a design review submission for one of the buildings that contained more advanced design concepts. In this case, however, the planning book is being advanced at a schematic level with design review books for the buildings to follow later.

Ian Hatch, from BxP, said the BxP presentation will start with a contextual overview for the IDCP amendment, followed by a review of the south residential building, the center plaza, and commercial buildings C & D, and conclude with Q&A. Four years ago, Eversource's proposal of the Fulkerson Street site for the substation catalyzed a wave of community activism. This culminated in a request for proposals (RFP) to facilitate the relocation of this proposed site to a site away from the Linden Park and East Cambridge residential neighborhoods, as well as the Kennedy-Longfellow school. BxP identified the Blue Garage as a potential site, responded to the RFP, and initiated a course of public engagement with public authorities, community groups, Eversource, and other area stakeholders to refine a redevelopment proposal. During the past 18 months, this has been determined to be a constrained optimization problem that requires a considered balance between heavy infrastructure, engineering needs, a public planning priority, and the economic cross-subsidy from commercial development that sustains the investment. He spoke about the components of the amendment. He emphasized that tonight's presentation is a Master Plan level proposal comprised of baseline massings that are intended to illustrate major ideas of program distribution, known site constraints, and opportunities. Refined building designs are not part of tonight's presentation. There would be a full design process for each component.

Susannah Shaw, from BxP, spoke about the residential portion of the project. In conformance with previously envisioned residential programming and zoning, a significant portion of the residential square footage will be allocated to affordable and middle-income units. Design challenges and site constraints for the building include working around major below-grade transmission ducts on a narrow site; preserving views of the architectural corner of the Akamai building from the pedestrian's perspective; maximizing efficiency of the building's floor plate, loading, and access to the building; and embracing public open space around the site, including Danny Lewin Park.

Mr. Tilford presented a conceptual framework of the Central Plaza component. A formal design review book will be forthcoming. In addition to being a public space, the plaza sits above a critical piece of electrical infrastructure which will need access for operations and maintenance. It also has to be designed to prevent damage from worst-case flooding. He envisions this space to be a flexible open plane without curbs or grade changes, flanked on either side with woonerfs which will also function as service drives, a fountain marking the entrance, and a children's play space. Soliciting public input, BxP would activate the space seasonally. The intake and exhaust structures are structural opportunities. He mentioned a planting infrastructure, commercial entrances of the adjacent buildings, cycle facilities, pedestrian circulation, and cycle connections.

Mr. Hatch continued with the commercial component. Baseline massings with program distribution were discussed, as opposed to a final design. The two buildings are roughly equal in size, and include the new incremental GFA contemplated as part of Amendment #2, that was not previously permitted in 2018 with Amendment #1. The engineering considerations dictated the position of the substation. After adding in the existing service drives and the Sixth Street Connector, the location and footprint of the commercial building was determined. The height is essential from an economic perspective to support the heavy infrastructure investment of the proposal.

Before opening the meeting to public comment, Ms. Connolly asked members of either board if they had clarifying questions.

Mr. Bacci asked if the feeder duct banks running below the residential building could be rerouted to provide basement space for bike parking under the building. Eversource staff spoke about the radius restrictions and the position of the cables when they enter the substation. Ms. Connolly suggested that the project team come back with a more complete explanation.

Mr. Bacci asked if the residential building lands on the southern slurry wall of the substation structure.

Ms. Tan asked if the two zoning reliefs - parking and green roofs – were being considered tonight. Ms. Connolly replied that no action is being taken tonight. Mr. Evans said that the Board would take a single action to approve the development plan for the overall site as well as grant the requested zoning relief.

Ms. Connolly opened the Public Comment section of the meeting. As of 5:00 pm yesterday, she said that the PB had received written communication from Robert Simha, Bjorn Poonen, Stephen Kaiser, and Mark Boswell. Mr. Evans said that the CRA also received a letter this afternoon from the East Cambridge Planning Team.

Heather Hoffman said that a written requirement should be included that mandates that BxP continue to protect the trees along the Sixth Street Connector to its maximum ability from encroachment, building shadow, and wind impacts that would impact their health. She added that BxP is also adding 800,000 SF of new commercial development with zero residential. The residential discussed was already in the previous plan. A lot of construction is happening in this area and it is going to continue encroaching on the ability of people to live their lives with all the construction noise, road closures, work lights during the night, etc. Navigating Third Street in recent months has been a huge challenge. She urged the City to plan ahead for these projects so people can get around.

There were no other requests for public comment. The meeting moved to questions from Board members.

Ms. Flynn asked about the bicycle parking valet system - its location, security measures, and response time. She also wanted to know if other designs for intake and exhaust vents, that are smaller and take up less space, have been explored.

Ms. Tan asked about bike valet operations after hours and the time it will take to retrieve one's bicycle. She also wanted to know the locations of the drop-offs and pickups. She asked about the status of the PTDM report.

Mr. Bacci noted the staff memo and asked if the vent shafts could be built in the new buildings as they take up a lot of space on the plaza. He thought better engineering might be possible. Rather than have buildings C & D connected by three three-story bridges, he asked if the buildings could be built over the road, narrowing their footprints. He is distressed that the original plan showed a much greener plaza and now it is paved and basically a paved area with some planters in it.

Joe Barr, Director of Traffic, Parking and Transportation (TP&T), responded to the bike valet comments. He said that the City has been working closely with BxP to define operational parameters which will evolve as the building is designed. It is agreed that 24/7 access is needed for residential uses. BxP should confirm that this will be available for the commercial component, too. The level of service one would get at 3am is different than 5pm with regards to security and staffing. This is a relatively new concept on this scale and for a mixed-use building. He said that details will evolve through design review. If the City can get to an agreement on basic operating parameters, he's confident the City can come to a resolution.

Ms. Flynn asked about the operational parameters. Mr. Barr replied that operational parameters are focused on hours of operation, include the type of storage system being used, gathering statistics correlated with meeting user needs, and reporting information required for a special permit or for the PTDM plan. Integrating a staffed bike repair shop is also being discussed. BXP and the City agree that would be valuable but BxP wants to make sure the operator can operate the storage element before adding value features. A zoning requirement is that the valet is free for users. However, the term "user" needs to be better defined before the PB votes on the amendment. He added that this is not a public bike parking station since the purpose is for it to be available for the residents and not be overwhelmed by other users.

Ms. Flynn asked about the length of time people would need to wait before they contact the valet to get their bicycle back.

Mr. Russell said that valet operations should include online reservation capability. As a principle, any amenity that's given to automobile valet parking should apply similarly to bicycles. He asked how the PB's requirement to make a finding that the project will have no substantial adverse effect on any City traffic

within the study area can be made given Mr. Barr's traffic impact report. Mr. Barr explained that Kendall Square and the City have issues with traffic which have to do with Cambridge development as well as regional growth. The City needs to mitigate the impacts with sustainable transportation but it shouldn't be held hostage to that data as the City's doing a better job than the rest of the area to discourage driving. The level of service has worsened in the area, but the City is not in the business of fixing the level of service but rather getting people to the project in other ways. The issue can be discussed again in more detail.

Ms. Connolly said that the PB usually is able to make that determination because there's a finalized package of mitigation measures which offset those exceedances. With the PTDM plan still in development and some bike parking under discussion, the mitigation plan for this amendment has not been worked out yet. Mr. Barr agreed that TP&T's memo described the parameters of the project and provided an idea of what the mitigation might involve. The next communication from TP&T will be more focused on the mitigation and the PTDM plan which will be updated to reflect the additional development.

Mr. Crawford said that as this project is responsible for the Binney Street redesign between Fifth and Sixth Street, he noted that the intersection of Binney Street at the Sixth Street Walkway is a pinch-point. Also, currently at Ames Street, there are a lot of different moves between cyclists and pedestrians and it's only going to get more congested. He asked for a district look at bike parking, since creating a bike valet in this area might not be the best idea.

Mr. T. Cohen said that he would like more greenery in the Central Plaza. He wanted to know what is being planned for the flexible active use areas shown in buildings C & D. A narrow area between the two buildings is not going to be the type of area where kids are going to want to run around or play ball. He would like to know where open green space could go in the project. He wanted to know why commercial buildings C & D are being connected. If the intent is for one company to occupy both building, the buildings could be redesigned as one larger building instead. Several bridges going over the East Plaza Drive is not the best use of that space or the best use of the roadway.

Mr. Bacci said that with respect to the loading issue, the trucks extend beyond the building envelope onto the sidewalk. He asked if there will be protection for pedestrians on the two access roads as there will be a lot of car and truck traffic. He asked if the roads are one-way or two-way. There appeared to be some bottlenecks built into them. He asked for more detail about the bike storage location.

Mr. Hatch replied that bike parking will be on the ground floor of the commercial building, ultimately consolidated into the ground floor of commercial building D.

Mr. Bacci said that at rush hour, a considerable number of valets would be needed.

Mr. Hatch said that the valet concept for this project sprang from the creative tension of lacking space for bike parking. The zoning ordinance has a dimensional requirement for standard, self-park bicycle spaces. Multiplying the number of spaces needed by that area yielded a number that was astronomical relative to the amount of available space given the other objectives and the heavy infrastructure. The best places for precedents are in Denmark and the Netherlands. This will be the largest project in the US for valet bike parking. He noted that BxP brought in a consultant who is operating the current largest valet system, out in Portland. It is smaller but not by much compared to what BxP is proposing. The wait time he targets is three minutes for retrieval. One would hand their bike to a valet and receive a confirmation email. This email would also be used to notify the valet of the pickup time so that the bike would be ready.

Mr. Bacci asked if there would be a secure area for the bikes waiting to be picked up.

Mr. Hatch replied that the valet would serve as a campus bike storage facility for residents in the tower and both commercial buildings. 24/7 staffing would be supported by BxP with staffing levels to match the traffic patterns. Bike data currently exists that can inform staffing decisions. Possible outside staging and the bike valet area will be further discussed in design review. Although their consultant in Portland operates entirely outside, BXP is assuming that 100% of the actual storage will be inside the commercial building, which also helps from a security perspective.

Ms. Born said that during the CRA process for public comment and at other opportunities, people are asking for a greener place, which is a perfectly understandable concern. She hasn't seen a clear understandable section that indicates how much plaza is the roof of the substation. and how much space there is for planting, without varying the elevation of the plaza. During the presentation, it was said that a design goal is to have a level area there. Perhaps for a future hearing, a clearer understanding of some of the technical constraints of the site is important.

Ms. Connolly agreed that this a PB concern as well.

Mr. Bacci said that since the plaza is a roof of a structure, it might fall under the green roof ordinance.

Mr. Messplay said that he would look into this and get an answer for next time.

Mr. Russell noted that this is a utility structure which may be exempt from some of the City's regulations. He added that the entrances to the utility structure must be above flooding levels, which is about four feet above the current service drives. This needs more study to determine whether everything, including the hatches, needs to be lifted to get one unbroken area. The stage area shown on the plan seems to contemplate this. There's an issue that the items going through the roof hatches are heavy, with cranes and trucks needed to access the area, which provides another layer of constraint. He would like to see more greenery and more trees. He is unsure whether this falls within the IDCP, or if it needs to be stated as a design review guideline, or if it is to be left to the design review of the open space. He agrees with all the comments made in CDD's urban design memo. Most specifically, he noted that there has been no discussion of why additional residential space isn't required with the entitlement for additional commercial space of buildings C & D, as is usually done. As noted in the staff memo, buildings C & D on Binney Street are much taller than any other buildings on the street. He'd like to see a 50-foot difference between buildings C and D. Any building height over 250 feet would have to be allowed in the planning document. A better strategy is needed.

Erik Thorkildsen, CDD urban designer, said that many PB and CRA Board member comments parallel those included in CDD's memo. Plaza and green space are important, not just for the incorporation of vegetation but also for the potential of the street trees defining the space and to complement the spaces set up by the building masses. This project is potentially a wonderful thing. Taking a congested super block and removing the parking garage will transform the district and provide a new center. It is important to keep in mind during further review that street trees and framing the space are important to provide a solid center. Incorporating one of the exhaust vents into Commercial Building C building would be a benefit to the project. He's also concerned about the noise the vents will be making. The noise study in the plan only includes the noise of the buildings, not that of the Eversource vault. If the vent area needs to be as large as what the intake vent shows, there will be a lot of air movement in this area that will affect the space. He repeated a previous concern regarding a coherent landscape if the edges of the hatchways need to be four feet above anticipated flood levels, i.e., above the service drives. He wondered if the East Drive should be stronger as a street or be downplayed so that it is not shown as a pedestrian route, but rather a service area. At this point in the process, CDD is concerned with big picture items – the spatial character of the public realm, activation of its ground-floor uses, and how the building massing enhances the landscape designs. An overlay of landscape design for the area would help distinguish the space. He is concerned about comfort levels, including wind, shadow, and noise.

Ms. Drury agreed with Mr. Thorkildsen's remarks about the potential of this space and what it can do and bring. The space will bring a lot of children there so it's important to think about them and their concerns and how to structure them into what's being built.

Mr. Bacci asked if any of the existing trees on the site would be retained. He is also concerned about ventilation from the substation. The air temperature could be relatively high and have a great volume. He wanted to know if this will create a hot spot, especially if there's not a lot of cover. He asked if there would be any smell.

Mr. Crawford is concerned about the protection of the trees. If the trees cannot stay in the same place he asked about the potential for them to be replanted around East Cambridge. The healthy trees on the south side of the Blue Garage will not remain. East Cambridge has 13% of cover of tree canopy. One of the views from Fulkerson was pretty sparse. Although DPW's been good about planting more trees, he'd like to see more.

Mr. Evans followed up on Mr. Thorkildsen's statements and responded to Mr. Bacci. He referenced a circulation pattern proposed on page 182, which has the West Drive function as the primary pedestrian connection and consider the value of the East Drive as just a service area. The question is whether more should be built on top of it to get more articulation of design or if the designs should keep that area free of structures. The connection to Volpe remains very important as the open space is planned out; the two projects should be closely coordinated. The play structure shown at one connector might complement the open space that is on the other side of the Sixth Street Walkway. He also thinks a connection across Broadway to Danny Lewin park needs more exploration.

Mr. Bacci questioned the ability to have play areas in the narrow east-west connectors that are flanked by buildings and utility areas.

Mr. Zevin said that the tree plan starts on page 159 in the IDCP book, and that view also shows that there's a large and well-equipped play area belonging to Biogen. Although there is an ownership issue, he wondered if there is a way to make more use of that. He emphasized that this space can accommodate only a limited number of amenities, and that some desires may need to be fulfilled elsewhere.

Mr. S. Cohen is concerned about the quality as well as the amount of the outdoor space. He isn't convinced that the City needs to take these building structures in these proportions as a given. It's not necessarily the square footage of the buildings, but more their impact on the ground and the amount of open space that's left. Comparing the size of the buildings plus the additional thousands of people living and working here with the size and quality of the open space, the proportion is wrong. He questioned the urban area being created and whether something better is possible. Cambridge was settling. He thinks the site plan needs more and better open space.

Mr. Bacci asked for more details on how the substation is getting built, if BxP was providing the real estate, if BxP was building the shell, and if Eversource is providing the equipment.

Mr. Tilford explained that what is before the two Boards tonight is a very fragile proposal that originated with a request to move the substation away from Fulkerson Street to Kendall Square. The massive economic constraint, which was adjudicated very effectively in the City Council process, was generated by staff consultants. It's fragile because of the many aspirations for public space and because of the realities of what a substation needs. BXP is putting their best foot forward to solve the issue of moving the substation. The play area is 60 feet, which is more than adequate for creative solutions. BxP's 2016, 2018, and 2021 proposals all have the same tree diagram. There is no way to dig a 100-foot-deep substation and retain the existing trees.

Mr. Lanham, from Eversource, addressed the amount of greenery on top of an electrical substations. He emphasized that this is an atypical substation electric infrastructure project. A typical substation is in open air, on a gravel base, and secured by a chain linked fence. A substation needs to be as close as possible to where electricity is needed and this is for the Kendall Square area. The station will meet local electricity needs and the substation will increase resiliency regionally. Extensive modeling has been done to design adequate venting and ducting in and out of the station, which would normally occur naturally in the open air. A lot of hard work has occurred to create a public space on top of the station, which normally isn't done. This is a key benefit of this project. The vent stacks have been located in a way that impacts the open space in the least obtrusive way. The exhaust louvers are 12 feet above ground so this won't impede the pedestrian experience. Eversource asked BxP to help design the hardscape aspect because in addition to being a substation roof, there will be a need for maintenance vehicles to operate on top of this station. Greenery will get damaged; hardscape gives engineers flexibility. There might be times where vehicles need to move off of the alleyways onto parts of the station. The goal is to create a welcoming

space. He appreciates the feedback and the collaboration of the staff and boards, and the various agencies. He emphasized that this is an operating electric substation which has constraints and limitations.

Mr. Zicko, from Eversource, confirmed that the mechanical equipment proposed to be put in the substation gives off heat. The substations are typically outdoors and the heat dissipates into the outdoors. Because this substation is in an underground building, that building must be force ventilated. They are calculating 1,500,000 cubic feet a minute to move air through the station to keep the temperatures within the operating limits of the electrical equipment. A sufficient amount of space is required to move the air. Working with sound consultants, the proposed vent stacks are as small as reasonably possible while also being able to maintain an appropriate sound level. It has been a herculean routing effort to get all the duct work around all the electrical equipment.

Mr. Bacci asked for the expected air temperature of the vented air. He said that he has relocated transformers which are never hardscaped. They always have stone so grounding can be put below the grade. These are usually crane mats and steel plates to provide access to the transformers.

Mr. Zicko responded that at full design heat rejection, which is about 6.5 million BTU/hour, as is expected on a peak day, the design parameters are 104-degrees Fahrenheit air in and 120-degrees air out. He agreed that transformers in yards are on a concrete foundation usually surrounded by crushed stone. The transformers will be in the base, on the lowest level of the substation. Accordingly, they will be on a reinforced concrete floor with a reinforced concrete pad around it. The finish of the plaza level or the substation roof has no bearing on setting the transformers.

Mr. Bacci asked if the difference in grade might be an issue.

Mr. Zicko said that the grades are being explored to keep the entrance ports above the flood elevation. He explained that it is a balancing act and there's more detail to come.

Mr. Lanham added that is it not desirable to have tree roots which can impact the waterproof membrane of the roof of the substation. Grass is different, but water and irrigation lines are still a concern. Hardscaping is also more conducive to accessing the station.

Mr. Bacci asked if having more cover over the roof of the substation would make more sense.

Mr. Lanham said that the lip would be at the access hatches, where there would be potential for water intrusion.

Mr. Zicko noted the level of the top of the substation is proposed to be four feet below the plaza area. Roots growing into the waterproofing membrane are unwanted, as are chemicals that could damage the waterproof membrane or introduce chlorides into the concrete. The more greenery there is, the more retained water there is in the soil, which would add to the dead load on top of the roof.

Mr. Tilford agreed with Ms. Born's suggestion of a detailed cross section being useful. He said that the idea for resiliency and having a lot of greenery is mutually exclusive, as articulated by Eversource. Planters can add greenery. He also added that the Fulkerson site could be used for the open space mitigation since it won't have the substation.

Mr. Zevin said that the existing park between Akamai and Biogen is framed by two rows of mature trees that are almost as far apart as the edges of the proposed central plaza. Trees planted along the service drives could eventually grow to replicate this very satisfactory arrangement.

Mr. Tilford added that BxP can help define the outer edges of the slurry wall system underneath. The areas in front of the drive isles and Biogen buildings are terra-firma and could include additional plantings.

Ms. Connolly said that there will be another chance to continue this discussion. She summarized that both Boards want a better understanding of what can be done to make this a cool, inviting, green place that is

useful and attractive to the public. More drawings would be helpful to convince the boards that it could work.

Mr. Bacci repeated his question regarding the removal of all the trees. Mike Tilford again referenced the drawings in the IDCP submission.

Mr. Evans asked for BxP to clarify who's responsible for building the Eversource structure.

Mr. Hatch said that BXP will build the shell of the structure for Eversource, in addition to providing the real estate. Eversource will put their equipment into it and route the transmission and distribution lines.

Ms. Farooq focused on the amount of housing and the overall building-to-open space ratio on the site. She said that this rezoning was thrust upon the proponent as a problem-solving effort between the City, BxP, Alexandria, Wellington-Harrington residents, and East Cambridge residents. There was no perfect solution and no good place to put the substation. This isn't the absolute ideal outcome, but looking at the whole project, including the substation, it was the best of the solutions in the Kendall Square proper and surrounding environment. There are big infrastructure moves to be accommodated on the site, which lead to outcomes above grade, particularly the building-to-open space ratio. It's possible that the buildings could have a different form. There isn't more housing commensurate with the increased commercial GFA due to financially balancing all the pieces on the site. She welcomes further detailed discussions about ensuring that the amount of space on the site makes a great space, and that the buildings add to the character of the district rather than feel like the buildings are simply placed there. The height was not modified in the zoning, so there are constraints on going any taller. Some of the past design guidelines have urged applicants to break up the massing. If BxP were to combine the massing of the two commercial buildings into one, it might be too large, and could create some other problems.

Mr. S. Cohen asked that the open space be made better and larger.

Ms. Connolly said that she related to Ms. Farooq's comments about the zoning. A lot of the tradeoffs to open space and housing that are being discussed tonight was worked out in the zoning.

Mr. Russell agreed that being reminded of the background of the project is important. The basic parameters are different because of the need to get the substation in this location. There are things, however, that can be done in the design of the buildings that might create more usable open space at upper levels. He referenced Isola Bella, an island in Lake Maggiore, Italy that has a pyramid structure that's a garden. The walls mediate the climate so they can grow plants that typically wouldn't grow in northern Italy. With awareness to the compromises needed, there are creative ways to incorporate other green roofs as you go up the building.

Mr. Bacci added that building over the roadway and narrowing the footprint of the buildings would create more open space, using the available space over the roadway.

Mr. S. Cohen said that he would gladly trade off additional height in exchange for more open space at the ground level. Height is always a big issue in the City, and more so in other locations. In this location, it is not much of a negative.

Mr. Russell said that even office buildings don't want to have massive floor-plates because people want to see daylight, which keeps buildings C & D from being one building. Covering part of the service drive and wrapping the building around into it might provide more options. More height provides more flexibility to do more but he doubts anyone would want to go through rezoning.

Ms. Flynn agreed that it would be great to have the flexibility but didn't want to tackle another petition. This project has an enormous number of constraints. Open space on Fulkerson could be considered.

Organizational Next Steps

The PB voted unanimously in favor to continue the hearing. Kathleen Born said that the CRA did not need to take any action this evening. With this meeting, the Boards have fulfilled the zoning requirements for a meeting as a joint body. Since the PB is waiting for the PTDM plan and the CRA is waiting for MEPA approval, which have different timings, Ms. Connolly suggested that future hearings are held separately. Members from both Boards spoke about benefitting from joint meetings. Ms. Born said that the CRA holds Design Review meetings with PB representation by Mr. Russell and, until this project, Mr. Sieniewicz, as well as CDD staff members. She would like that to continue. Ms. Farooq suggested that CDD staff could attend relevant CRA meetings and CRA staff could present at relevant PB meetings.

Mr. Evans noted the possibility for a future joint meeting if different designs directions are presented, such as one building mass versus two or making a sculpture of the vent shaft versus incorporating it into the building.

Adjournment of CRA Board Meeting

Ms. Connolly adjourned the meeting at 9:25 PM