



**River Road Study Committee  
Architecture Subcommittee  
June 16, 2016**

**MEETING NOTES**

**Committee Members**

Select Chair Ben Franco  
Dick Benka  
Alan Christ  
Chris Dempsey  
Steve Heikin  
Brian Hochleutner  
Yvette Johnson  
Ken Lewis  
Wendy Machmuller  
Hugh Mattison  
Tom Nally  
Marilyn Newman  
Mariah Nobrega  
Charles Osborne  
Linda Pehlke  
Bill Reyelt  
Daniel Weingart

*Subcommittee Members Present:* Ben Franco, Steve Heikin, Tom Nally, Alan Christ, Wendy Machmuller,

*Subcommittee Members Absent:* Charles Osborne

*Guests:* John Bassett, Matt O'Donnell, Stefanie Greenfield, Carroll Williamson

*Materials:* Agenda, discussion points for preliminary design guidelines developed by Wendy Machmueller and Alan Christ, Boylston Street design guidelines adopted by the Planning Board in 1994, design guidelines for Davis Path zoning,

*Committee members met from 8:30 am to 10:00 am*

**1. Review and Approve Minutes**

- Minutes from March April 21 were approved as amended.

**2. Discussion of design guidelines**

- Andy Martineau stated that both Alan and Wendy have compiled a list of elements that could either be incorporated into the draft zoning or could be part of a design guideline document that is part of the package submitted to Town Meeting.
- Andy stated that some of the elements have already been incorporated into the draft zoning, while others need additional conversation by this committee.
- Andy reminded the group that at their previous meeting they discussed developing design guidelines that build upon the old Boylston St. design guidelines and those that were included in the Davis Path zoning, but that there was consensus that we do not want the guidelines for the industrial district to be so prescriptive that they limit creative design and handcuff the Planning Board and project DAT later on.
- The subcommittee discussed the use of setbacks in the district and generally agreed that side yard setbacks should be required for buildings that abut the storm water easement area, which is envisioned to become a public space.
- The subcommittee discussed the use of setbacks on all three sides and whether or not to allow structural columns and canopies over the sidewalk and property line. The Committee generally agreed that using the minimum desired sidewalk width as a metric for how far back the first floor of a building should be is a viable option, but that allowances for projections over the property line (awnings, canopies and breaks in the massing) should be allowed and perhaps encouraged.
- The subcommittee also agreed that the language for minimum sidewalk width should include exceptions for obstructions like trees, structural columns and planter beds. E.g. a minimum unobstructed width.

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- The subcommittee debated whether LEED certified or certifiable should be required in the zoning. The group was split on this topic.
- Andy stated that the broader Committee will need to weigh in on LEED requirements, but that he thought requiring certification at a lower level would be appropriate given the context of the project
- Each subcommittee member present stated their preference for the different hotel massing options. The group was divided between options #1 (taller massing on Wash St.) and #2 (taller massing in middle of site) with one preference for option #3 (taller massing on Brookline Ave).
- The subcommittee reviewed the draft design guidelines page by page and agreed to:
  - i. eliminate most of the specific numerical requirements so no to be overly prescriptive
  - ii. specify that loading zones should be created internally wherever possible
  - iii. allow bay windows to count as a break in the mass
  - iv. use reasonable desired sidewalk widths in place of standard setback requirements
  - v. to eliminate specific design criteria for the easement space as that will likely be maintained by Parks and Open Space
  - vi. to incorporate street tree requirements into the zoning
  - vii. to incorporate ground floor active use requirements into the zoning
  - viii. to incorporate general landscape and hardscape requirements in the zoning as general language related to the 1% of hard construction cost contribution requirement
  - ix. to incorporate suggested building materials and options for articulating massing in a separate recommended design guideline document that will become a companion to the zoning
  - x. to incorporate Wendy's draft language for the northern end of the district into the companion document

*Subcommittee Questions/Comments:*

- We need to balance predictability with specificity. At Davis Path, there was some concern about trying to preserve the architecture and character of the neighborhood. Those same issues do not necessarily apply here.
- We need to make sure that the design guidelines also reflect and match up with the zoning parameters.

*Public Questions/Comments:*

- Carroll Williamson stated that this is a great project and that the Committee should ask the hotel developer to provide restrooms open to the public.
- John Basset stated that he is supportive of the project and that wider sidewalks on the parcel side of River Road may not be as necessary once the Emerald Necklace path is completed. John also stated that requiring LEED certification would be a stronger sound bite than LEED certifiable at town meeting.