

PLANNING BOARD
FOR THE
CITY OF CAMBRIDGE

GENERAL HEARING

TUESDAY, MARCH 3, 2026

6:30 p.m.

Remote Meeting
Cambridge, Massachusetts

Tom Sieniewicz, Chair
H Theodore Cohen
Mary Lydecker
Diego Macias
Ashley Tan
Carolyn Zern

Community Development Staff
Evan Spetrini
Swaathi Joseph
Beca Mapure
Erik Thorkildsen



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| 2072 Massachusetts Avenue | |

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2 * * * * *

3 (6:30 p.m.)

4 Sitting Members: Tom Sieniewicz, H Theodore Cohen, Mary
5 Lydecker, Diego Macias, Ashley Tan, and
6 Carolyn Zern

7 TOM SIENIEWICZ: Good evening, everyone. Welcome
8 to the March 03, 2026, meeting of the Cambridge Planning
9 Board. My name is Tom Sieniewicz, and I am the Chair.

10 Pursuant to Chapter 2 of the Acts of 2025 adopted
11 by the Massachusetts General Court and approved by the
12 Governor, the City is authorized to use remote participation
13 at meetings of the Cambridge Planning Board.

14 All Board Members, applicants, and members of the
15 public will state their name before speaking, and all votes
16 will be taken by roll call.

17 Members of the public will be kept on mute until
18 it is time for public comment, and I will give instructions
19 for public comment at that time.

20 And you can also find instructions on the City's
21 webpage for remote Planning Board meetings.

22 This meeting is being video and audio recorded and

1 is being streamed live on the City of Cambridge online
2 meeting portal and on cable television Channel 22 within
3 Cambridge.

4 There will also be a transcript of the
5 proceedings.

6 So tonight, I'll start by asking Staff to take
7 Board Member attendance and verify that all members are
8 audible.

9 EVAN SPETRINI: H Theodore Cohen, are you present,
10 and is the meeting visible and audible to you?

11 H THEODORE COHEN: Visible, and audible.

12 EVAN SPETRINI: Thank you.

13 Mary Flynn, are you present, and is the meeting
14 visible and audible to you?

15 Mary is absent.

16 Mary Lydecker, are you present, and is the meeting
17 visible and audible to you?

18 MARY LYDECKER: Present, visible, and audible.

19 EVAN SPETRINI: Thank you, Mary.

20 Diego Macias, are you present, and is the meeting
21 visible and audible to you?

22 DIEGO MACIAS: Present, visible, and audible.

1 EVAN SPETRINI: Thank you.

2 Ashley Tan, are you present, and is the meeting
3 visible and audible to you?

4 ASHLEY TAN: Present, visible, and audible.

5 EVAN SPETRINI: Thank you.

6 Carolyn Zern, are you present, and is the meeting
7 visible and audible to you?

8 CAROLYN ZERN: Present, visible, and audible.

9 EVAN SPETRINI: Thank you.

10 For the Associate members, Dan Anderson, are you
11 present, and is the meeting visible and audible to you?

12 Dan is absent.

13 And Joy Jackson, are you present, and is the
14 meeting visible and audible to you?

15 Joy is also absent.

16 And finally, Tom Sieniewicz, are you present and
17 is the visible and audible to you?

18 TOM SIENIEWICZ: Present, visible, and audible.

19 Thank you, Evan.

20 * * * * *

21 (6:32 p.m.)

22 Sitting Members: Tom Sieniewicz, H Theodore Cohen, Mary

1 Lydecker, Diego Macias, Ashley Tan, and
2 Carolyn Zern

3 TOM SIENIEWICZ: The first item will be an Update
4 from the Community Development Department. Please also
5 introduce any Staff that may be present tonight, Evan.

6 EVAN SPETRINI: Thank you. Yeah, Evan Spetrini.
7 I'm the Senior Manager for Zoning and Development filling in
8 for Jeff Roberts today.

9 Also from the Zoning team, we have Swaathi Joseph
10 and Beca Mapure. And we have Erik Thorkildsen also from
11 Community Development and Urban Design -- Community Planning
12 and Urban Design Division. And then we also have Cassie
13 Arnaud, Janet Haines, and Alexis Turgeon from the Housing
14 Department. I believe that's all City Staff here.

15 Tonight, we have one General Business item. It's
16 a Planning Board Advisory Consultation for an AHO project at
17 2072 Mass Ave. This is the second of two Advisory
18 Consultations.

19 Looking ahead, next week, March 10, there will be
20 two AHO projects: one at Corcoran Park, and the other at 240
21 Broadway. This is the second of two Advisory Consultations
22 for Corcoran Park and the first and only consultation for

1 240 Broadway.

2 The Board might remember some of the Multifamily
3 Zoning Amendments last year made some changes to the AHO
4 Review process, where not all projects go through this two-
5 round review process. So 240 Broadway is one of those
6 smaller projects that only triggers one review with the
7 Planning Board. So that's coming up next week.

8 And that's all we have scheduled so far for
9 upcoming Planning Board meetings. We do have a few Council
10 committee hearings coming up that are related to some work
11 that we're doing.

12 Next Wednesday, March 11, there will be an
13 Ordinance Committee meeting to discuss a future potential
14 zoning petition on some follow-ups from the Mass Ave and
15 Cambridge Street Petitions related to Active Uses. So
16 that's something that will likely come back around as a
17 zoning petition for the Board to review. So this is an
18 initial conversation with the Ordinance Committee.

19 Later in the month, on March 24, there's a Housing
20 Committee meeting updating the Council on Central Square
21 Planning. We did some Planning and Zoning work back in
22 2024, so it's kind of an update on where that process left

1 off.

2 And then the following day, the twenty-fifth,
3 there will be a joint meeting of the Neighborhood Long-term
4 Planning Committee and the Housing Committee on the Annual
5 Housing Review.

6 This is also something that came out of the
7 Multifamily Zoning Amendments. It established an annual
8 review on housing production. So that's something that
9 we've been working on and will be shared with the Council at
10 that time.

11 That's all we have for upcoming work, so I'll stop
12 there and pass it back to the Chair.

13 TOM SIENIEWICZ: Great. Thank you, Evan, for the
14 Update. Are there any questions for Evan from Board
15 members?

16 Oh, it appears there are none, so we'll move on to
17 our Agenda, Agenda item Number 1.

18 * * * * *

19 (6:36 p.m.)

20 Sitting Members: Tom Sieniewicz, H Theodore Cohen, Mary
21 Lydecker, Diego Macias, Ashley Tan, and
22 Carolyn Zern

1 TOM SIENIEWICZ: The next item is an Advisory
2 Design Consultation of Case AHO-9, an Affordable Housing
3 Overlay project proposed by CC HRE 2072 Mass Ave LLC, and CC
4 HRE 2072 Mass Ave Tenant LLC to construct a new 12-story
5 building to create 73 affordable rental units and amenities,
6 and 45 long-term and one short-term bicycle parking space
7 with a gross floor area of 90,472 square feet at 2072
8 Massachusetts Avenue.

9 We'll begin with CDD Staff explaining why this is
10 before us, and we will have a presentation from the
11 developer followed by public comment, and then the Board
12 will ask questions and finally discuss the proposed design.

13 With that, I'll turn it back over to CDD. I
14 believe Beca will summarize.

15 BECA MAPURE: Thank you. Good evening. So this
16 is the second of the required Planning Board Advisory
17 Consultation sessions for this Affordable Housing Overlay
18 project.

19 As a reminder, the AHO creates an alternative set
20 of Development Standards that apply as-of-right for housing
21 development, in which all units are made permanently
22 affordable.

1 The purpose of the Design Review is not for the
2 Planning Board to grant or deny a permit, but to provide
3 Advisory comments on the design and its overall conformance
4 with the City's Urban Design Objectives and Guidelines,
5 which are summarized in the CDD memo.

6 The Planning Board reviewed this proposal on
7 October 7, 2025, and issued a preliminary report on October
8 28 that was sent to the developer. The developer submitted
9 a set of updated plans, and CDD/Zoning and Urban Design
10 teams have provided reports on those to the Board. And
11 Staff members are present to answer any questions here
12 today.

13 The Department of Transportation has also provided
14 a memo with comments on the Transportation component to the
15 project. And tonight, the Board will review the updated
16 proposal and decide what comments to include in a final
17 report.

18 TOM SIENIEWICZ: Great. Thank you, Beca.

19 Next, the presenter, who I understand is Sean
20 Hope, will have up to 30 minutes for a presentation, though
21 we hope you can be as concise as possible since this is the
22 second time we have seen the proposal.

1 So please introduce your project team and begin.

2 Good evening, Sean.

3 SEAN HOPE: Good evening, Mr. Chair, members of
4 the Planning Board and City Staff. We want to thank you.
5 This is our second Planning Board meeting. We're excited to
6 walk through some of the updates and changes, as well as
7 certain clarifications that we'd like to make based on City
8 Staff.

9 Let's see. I don't see the slides up. That would
10 be helpful.

11 Okay. So the site is 2072, as you know. This is
12 an AHO project, consistent with what the City Staff has
13 mentioned. This project is in compliance with the AHO
14 Guidelines, as well as the Ordinances that apply to this
15 project.

16 I'll briefly go through team introductions.

17 If you can go to the next slide.

18 So from the Development team, we have -- with
19 Capstone, we have Jason Korb, William Kennerly; myself, Sean
20 Hope for Hope Real Estate; and for our Project Architects
21 Bruner/Cott, we have Principal Jason Forney, Greg Russell,
22 Jackie Mignone, and Austen Gillen-Keeney.

1 So just briefly, I'd like to walk through the
2 Development Summary. And I would note for the Board, the
3 Staff has been extremely helpful helping us kind of look
4 through the building program, making sure that we have
5 addressed and/or incorporated comments from the previous
6 meeting, as well as some Staff Design comments.

7 So what you're looking at here now is the site.
8 It's improved currently by Darul Kebab, which is a one-story
9 commercial building. That operation is no longer in
10 business.

11 And to the left, we have the Russell Apartments.
12 Also, on the first floor is a senior center. And as you can
13 see, there's a blank wall there that provides a little bit
14 of a backdrop of what's there.

15 Next slide.

16 This is a site map. Many of us are familiar with
17 the site. It used to be the former KFC. And this slide
18 shows how the building is sited adjacent to the corner of
19 Walden and Mass Ave.

20 On the left-hand side, you have some
21 Transportation data. We looked at a quarter mile and a half
22 a mile away. I think the takeaway is there's some green

1 space. There's lots of transit.

2 And you can see Porter Square in the right-hand
3 corner, and that is a shopping mall, Commuter Rail. So in
4 many ways, this site is well-serviced by amenities and
5 public transportation.

6 Next slide, please.

7 And so, again, as I mentioned, after our
8 submission we continued to work with the Staff, and so there
9 are some different elements I want to highlight.

10 But to begin with, this is a 12-story structure.
11 As required by the AHO, this is 100 percent affordable
12 housing. We have 74 affordable apartment homes that will be
13 affordable in perpetuity. There are 12 homes at or below 30
14 percent; the remaining are at or below 60 percent AMI, which
15 is area median income.

16 We are proud that 72 percent are family units,
17 two-and three-bedrooms. Passive House certification. 600
18 square feet of the residential amenity space will be on the
19 ground floor. As you can see in the corner image, we have
20 an outdoor roof garden and resident amenity on the 12th
21 floor. And then we also have 45 long-term bike spaces.

22 I just want to note on this form, previously we

1 had 73 units, and we were able to be efficient with our
2 layout, which architect Jason Forney will walk through, and
3 so, we're proposing 74 units, and we can walk through how
4 that change came about.

5 Jason, I'll now turn it over to you to walk
6 through the design updates.

7 JASON FORNEY: Thank you, Sean. And good evening,
8 Chairman Sieniewicz, members of the Board and City Staff.
9 I'm Jason Forney, Principal with Bruner/Cott Architects in
10 Boston.

11 As Sean alluded to, we have continued to develop
12 an advance the design of this building. And tonight, in our
13 presentation, we really will focus on the changes and
14 additional details since our first hearing, as requested.

15 So this building has always been about
16 transforming an underutilized site into an elegant
17 contemporary building that has meaningful connections and
18 experiences for its residents. It's a transit-friendly
19 development and integrates best sustainable design
20 practices. So we're continuing in that direction.

21 So I want to start by just summarizing the
22 feedback that we received. We kind of remember that we were

1 here in October. In our view, the project was well-
2 received, and we received some very helpful feedback, which

3 I would categorize -- we categorized into four groups.

4 So we discussed some thoughts on the exterior
5 design to sort of work on revising the geometry and sort of
6 divisions of the façade and to really work on coordinating
7 the interior and exterior layouts and structure.

8 We talked -- I think the most feedback we got was
9 about the ground floor and the pedestrian experience. We
10 worked probably the hardest on that.

11 We talked about the site design and the way that
12 things in the ground plane were connecting to the community,
13 things like bicycles and trash service and electrical
14 service.

15 And then, there were some comments about the
16 overall planning type of the building, which were very
17 helpful and have led to a set of improvements.

18 So I'll start with the exterior design. And just
19 a little more specifics: We were asked to think about the
20 size and shapes of the windows and the façades: the amount
21 of transparency; the material quality; the way that we're
22 sort of dividing the façade up with these vertical recesses;

1 to look, again, at the color and see if we could make it a
2 little bit warmer, and other things like that, thinking
3 about the frame and the dimensions of the vertical and
4 horizontal members.

5 We were also asked to consider a few things which
6 we did not do, and one of those is to consider balconies.

7 So I want to start off by highlighting a change
8 that happened after our submission, in working with the City
9 Staff. On the left is what was in the submission, with
10 three façade recesses. And we realized that another change
11 we had made in the sort of planning of the building caused
12 us to no longer have a recess on the east façade.

13 And so, you'll see on the right with the big
14 Number 4, we've added a recess on the façade that you'll see
15 in all of the subsequent materials, and that's to comply
16 with the Façade Recess provision of the ordinance.

17 So here we are, looking at the building from the
18 corner along Mass Avenue. You can see here one of the
19 biggest shifts was to move that reveal on the Walden Street
20 façade closer to Mass Avenue, which I think really
21 highlights that corner. It turns it into a sort of wrapping
22 volume with three bays on each side and really highlights

1 that roof garden space on the top.

2 We also worked hard to coordinate the interior and
3 exterior units roughly. The smaller windows are bedrooms,
4 and the larger windows are living rooms.

5 And then, here, you start to see the changes that
6 we've made to the ground floor to lighten it and to make it
7 more transparent and to include a piece of public art or a
8 space for public art.

9 We just want to share the massing model of the
10 building. This is also updated. So here, we're looking at
11 the north corner, the west corner, the south corner, and the
12 corner looking as you're coming up Mass Avenue.

13 So that's the massing of the building. You can
14 see the way it's divided by these reveals and façade
15 delineations.

16 Looking from the north side, sort of coming down
17 the avenue, again you see -- one of the things that's always
18 -- we always liked about the design is the fold that happens
19 on the north façade along Mass Avenue that kind of
20 highlights that place where the avenue bends.

21 And again, you can see some of the things that I
22 talked about on the first slide, just from a different

1 location.

2 And a little bit closer.

3 A little bit further back up the road. You can
4 see how shifting that reveal forward really highlights that
5 corner piece with the roof garden on it, which was an
6 important element in our design.

7 Looking from the south side, here, you can see
8 that façade recess that I was talking about between the Mass
9 Avenue sort of volume and the rest of the building.

10 This façade, we also moved the boundary of the
11 building back. It was three feet from the property line.
12 We moved it to five feet, which allowed us to open up and
13 have a larger percentage of fenestration along this façade,
14 which was one of the big comments.

15 We did consider balconies along this façade, as
16 was suggested, but it didn't really seem like a great idea
17 to us in terms of resident safety, and it would have added
18 cost to the project.

19 So again, more articulation and sort of material
20 development at this façade. And looking from Walden Street,
21 a similar thing. Working on -- we also moved this building
22 boundary back so that we could have more -- we could

1 increase the amount of transparency and kind of open it up.

2 Working on the materials, it's a slightly warmer
3 palate, which we think harmonizes really well with the mass
4 timber structure that you would sort of see through the
5 transparent parts of the façade.

6 The last time we were here, we had a dark gray
7 brick on the ground floor, and we have moved towards sort of
8 a buff-colored brick that you see here that I think really
9 softens that ground plane and brings everything together.

10 We've also added a precast concrete base that
11 would match it but give the kind of durability that you need
12 in the urban environment along the ground plane next to
13 those planters.

14 I will just go quickly through the elevations.
15 And I'm going to talk about the ground plane in a moment.
16 But these are the overall elevations.

17 The north elevation on Mass Ave, seeing the kind
18 of changes that we've made to the division of the façade and
19 the fenestration, the Walden Street façade.

20 South elevation facing the city and parking lot
21 with a row of trees at the base of the building.

22 East elevation facing the Russell Apartments.

1 Again, we opened this up, worked on the sort of subdivisions
2 and recesses here.

3 So I'm going to shift now to the pedestrian
4 experience. And what I mean by that is just the way that
5 the building meets the ground.

6 So you asked us, and the City Staff asked us to
7 consider making the building a little bit taller at the
8 ground floor to give it more presence and transparency, to
9 consider reshuffling the program on the ground floor in a
10 way that would make the building -- it would create more
11 opportunities for fenestration and transparency. So we've
12 worked on that.

13 That's really the southwest façade. We worked on
14 the entry -- we were asked to work on the entry and make it
15 a little more prevalent and pronounced, more transparency,
16 more visual interest, materials at the ground floor, and
17 thinking about the future of Mass Ave with the streetscape
18 and the planning that's intended there.

19 So here we are, looking up closer at the corner of
20 Mass Ave and Walden. So the Community Room is on the corner
21 there, and we were able to raise the building height by two
22 feet, so it went from 16 to 18, and I think that's made a

1 really nice difference.

2 The ground floor is more prominent. We've
3 flattened out the entry. It was previously recessed fairly
4 deep into the façade, and we brought it out, sort of in
5 plane so it has more of a presence on the street.

6 We've added, as I mentioned before, a placeholder
7 for a mural or a piece of public art behind the bus stop.
8 We don't know if the bus stop will stay or go, but we're
9 planning for both. And I think, either way, this would be a
10 great backdrop for a piece of public art.

11 And here you see the lighter brick that we've
12 worked into the design along the ground plane, sort of buff
13 color that also makes its way up to the façade recesses.

14 A little bit more around the corner. Here, you
15 start to see the planters that are featured. One of the
16 things we talked about last time was is there enough room
17 for the planters along Walden Street. So what we've ended
18 up doing is -- we think there is, but it starts to get tight
19 at the corner, so we eliminate -- we don't have planters at
20 the corner on the outside of the building, but we have them
21 on the inside, so there's sort of this jump from inside to
22 outside.

1 Just an elevational view of that ground plane
2 experience.

3 And then Walden Street -- if you remember before,
4 we had quite a bit of blank wall on this façade, and so
5 we've been able to extend the glazing of the Community Room
6 further around the corner, towards the right of this
7 drawing, and then add windows into the Management Office and
8 the Mailroom and Work room, which are really a part of that
9 public realm too.

10 And then sort of recalibrate the door -- the door
11 that you see at the far end of the building is a rollup door
12 for the transformer, and the door next to that is for the
13 Fire/Sprinkler Room.

14 So we've sort of more intentionally worked these
15 into the façade, along with that planter that sort of comes
16 down as Walden Street slopes towards the neighborhood.

17 And again, all of this, I think, is improved and
18 unified by using the lighter color brick.

19 A view of that, with the City-owned parking lot in
20 the foreground and then a row of new trees between the
21 parking lot and the building.

22 On the site design elements, we talked about --

1 the comments were about loading and drop-off, streetscape
2 design and thinking about the future of Mass Ave, continuing
3 to see our intent to widen Walden Street as a positive
4 thing.

5 We talked about a tree that's in between -- that's
6 on the Russell Apartments building that could be affected by
7 our construction. And I just talked about the planters.

8 And we talked a little bit about Bike Room and
9 concealing trash. It what suggested that we think about
10 parking on site, but we are not doing that. There's zero
11 parking for this project.

12 Starting with the site plan itself, we are
13 continuing to work with the City. We've met with DPW and
14 Traffic and CDD sort of collectively to think about where --
15 there's two possibilities: one is that the drop-off could
16 happen on Mass Avenue; the other is it could happen from the
17 City parking lot. And we really need to wait and see how
18 the Mass Avenue plan develops. But I think we have support
19 from the City to support and help us figure that out as it
20 evolves.

21 We are showing some seating hypothetically along
22 Mass Avenue, which kind of -- some benches and planters,

1 which could be there if that -- if that is a part of the
2 Mass Avenue plan.

3 The sidewalk is really nice and wide right there,
4 but we know things could change with separated bike lanes
5 and things like that that are being considered. So we're --
6 we're aiming to be flexible and allow for that plan to
7 evolve.

8 You can see the corner planter that I talked about
9 where it jumps from inside to outside, which leaves plenty
10 of space to walk around the corner. And we talked about the
11 existing tree, which is just to the east of our building.

12 One of the other benefits, if you see this
13 drawing: the red line is where the building used to be. So
14 by pulling it back, it was -- it was actually at the
15 property line on the ground floor, because we didn't need
16 any windows. So we pulled the whole building back five
17 feet, and w

18 e think that will increase the possibility of that
19 tree surviving.

20 But if not, the team is committed to replacing it,
21 and our landscape architect thinks that an American Hornbeam
22 or Hornbeams would be a good replacement tree for that if

1 that were to happen.

2 But we also have a full Tree Protection Plan from
3 our arborist, who thinks that there's a high likelihood it
4 will survive.

5 A couple other things to note on this drawing: We have
6 reoriented the doors for the trash room. They were opening
7 straight out onto Mass Avenue, and now they're opening into
8 the alleyway between our building and the Russell
9 Apartments, which is a more concealed solution. There is a
10 door from the bike room also into that alleyway. So we were
11 able to conceal -- moving the building back gave us a number
12 of advantages there.

13 Bike parking: Sean mentioned this earlier.
14 Working with the CDD STAFF and realizing that if we use a
15 certain type of rack, that we could actually fit 45 bicycles
16 on the ground floor, whereas we had a small bike room on the
17 second floor to accommodate the number that -- to
18 accommodate that 45. Just by looking at it a slightly
19 different way and using a certain type of rack, we can get
20 all these bikes on the ground floor, which is great news.

21 The other thing we worked on with the bicycle
22 parking is a better access to the room. We are still sort

1 of encouraging people to come into the building with their
2 bicycles. It's an 11' wide passageway from the front doors,
3 and then one turn into the bike room. Before, we had a
4 couple of turns and a much narrower way into that alleyway.

5 And we, you know, we contemplated putting a door
6 to the south, but one of the big requests from the -- from
7 our community meetings was to keep all of the traffic and
8 energy and services on Mass Avenue and not in the
9 neighborhood.

10 In addition to that, there's a great change
11 between the inside of the building and the outside, and then
12 that is a buffer planting area that we're really -- is one

13 of the primary ways of us achieving our COOL Score. So
14 there are several reasons that we chose to not have bicycles
15 come out of the south of the building.

16 We've continued to work with the City on sort of
17 the reimagining of Walden Street and taking it from one 10'
18 lane and two, I think, 8' lanes to three proper 10' travel
19 lanes. And remember that we're sort of giving back a little
20 bit of our property to be able to do that but also
21 cantilevering the building from the second floor and beyond
22 to kind of create a balance there.

1 So the sidewalk is 7'2" from the building edge,
2 with a 2' planter, which leaves about 5' for walking, except
3 when you get at the corner; then it opens back up.

4 The last sort of category here, to go through are
5 adjustments and changes, is about the building planning. We
6 were encouraged to coordinate tighter with our structural
7 grid to think about the relationship between the inside and
8 outside, improve bike room access, make it clear where our
9 accessible units are, to confirm that we have right amount
10 of laundry machines.

11 And then we talked about just providing a little
12 more detail about the concept and arrangement of the roof
13 garden, which I'm excited to show you in a minute.

14 There was some discussion about considering a
15 basement level; considering to move the roof garden to a
16 different part of the building, and to consider eliminating
17 the generator, but I think as we worked through those, there
18 was mixed opinions on some of those. Those were things that
19 we decided not to pursue.

20 So I'll start with the second-floor plan. And
21 this is showing where that Bike Room was that we have
22 determined we no longer need. And so, our current plan,

1 moving forward, would be to convert that into a two-bedroom
2 apartment, and that's why the number has changed from 73 to
3 74.

4 This also makes the building stack perfectly,
5 which is a good thing for our economics.

6 So this doesn't change the way the building looks
7 or feels on the exterior; the windows and façades all remain
8 the same. It's just an internal building change.

9 So that's the same as our typical floor. We've
10 worked with incorporating the inside and outside and
11 thinking about how the windows relate to the units, and
12 whether there are living rooms on the corner or bedrooms
13 along the property line with the Russell Apartments.

14 And also, we have three structural options on the
15 table, all of which can be coordinated with this grid.
16 Three different ways of using mass timber, which remains an
17 important part of our concept. And we were able to achieve
18 a variance at the State Board to expose more of the mass
19 timber than is allowed by code. So we see that as a very
20 positive thing, and we'll just allow for the mass timber to
21 be an important part of the interior of these units.

22 We are showing our -- more detail and where our

1 accessible units are. We have eight group 2A units, three
2 one-bedroom, four two-bedrooms, and one three-bedroom. In
3 addition to that, we have distributed them equally amongst -
4 - across the building and amongst the different unit types.

5 And at the twelfth floor, we have confirmed that
6 with both the vendor and the Building Code, we have eight
7 washers and eight dryers, which is one for every 10 units.

8 I'm going to focus on the roof plan for a second
9 and then the roof garden. Another thing that came up in our
10 discussions with the Staff was sort of encouragement and
11 guidance to pull the equipment away from the edge, in
12 accordance with the zoning.

13 So this was the roof plan that was in our
14 submission package, and this is the roof plan which we would
15 move forward for, all of which moves the equipment back from
16 the edges.

17 I should say that the renderings were all done
18 with the screen closer to the edge, so this will only
19 improve the way the building looks and feels from the
20 ground.

21 And then we are including a small solar array on
22 top of the mechanical room and elevator overrun.

1 So since we last met, we met with Jason and Sean.
2 Their team pulled together residents of Frost Terrace, which
3 is another project that we worked on together. And we had a
4 community engagement and design charette with them about
5 "Hey, if you lived in a building like 2072, and it had a
6 roof terrace, what were the" -- "what are the kinds of
7 activities that you would like to be able to do up there?"

8 And so, this, you know, challenged some of our
9 preconceptions, which were about, you know, larger
10 gatherings and being able to do things as a group. What
11 they -- what we learned from them is that they would really
12 like to have -- just to be outside and be in a place
13 surrounded by the city and surrounded by plants and being
14 able do the things that you do on a more regular basis, like
15 sit at a table and eat, sit at a -- sit on a couch and read
16 or talk to your friends and then, for the kids in the group,
17 to have somewhere that sort of felt like their own.

18 So this revised roof terrace design includes kind
19 of three zones: one with the large picnic table and benches;
20 one with an L-shaped couch, kind of looking out over the
21 edge; and another with a small play structure -- this is a
22 rendered version of that same plan -- a small playhouse for

1 kids that live in the building.

2 So this is not a high intensity or activity roof;
3 it's more of a relaxing place to be surrounded by green and
4 sort of sense that you're in the city, as opposed to one
5 that's about walking up and looking over the edge at how
6 cool the view is. It's about being in community with your
7 fellow residents.

8 We were asked to look at -- sort of illustrate how
9 this might happen technically, and this is a -- sort of a
10 section through the roof terrace by a ground or a landscape
11 architect.

12 So the planters would all sort of be built on the
13 structural deck, and then the furnished areas would be a
14 combination of wood deck and precast pavers on a pedestal
15 system, so that the roof drainage can -- roof drainage and
16 roof slops just happen underneath them, with taller
17 plantings around the edge that really become a part of the
18 building and the landscape.

19 Ground also -- one of the questions from last time
20 was do plants thrive and survive at heights like this? And
21 so, these are six examples of projects by the same landscape
22 firm that are at similar heights, from 14 to 17 to 19

1 stories, that have all been in service for quite some time
2 and sort of show that this is a reasonable place to put
3 plants and people.

4 And what I will leave you with is, you know, this
5 has always been an important part of our design, that
6 there's this special outdoor place that occupies what some
7 people would say is the most valuable real estate on the
8 site, the twelfth floor, right in the corner. And so that
9 remains a very prominent feature of this design.

10 And I will turn it back to Sean to close us out.
11 And turn it back to you.

12 SEAN HOPE: Thanks, Jason. I think we presented a
13 lot, so I would now turn it back to the Planning Board if
14 you want to take public comments or ask us any questions.

15 TOM SIENIEWICZ: Great. Thank you very much. By
16 my stopwatch, 29 minutes, 27 seconds, so just under the
17 wire. Thank you for being on time.

18 Now, according to the Zoning, we will take public
19 comment.

20 So we do that at these Design Review sessions.
21 And I'd like to remind speakers that the Board's action
22 tonight is not to approve or deny this application, but to

1 provide Advisory comments on the design that had been
2 presented and evolved since the last presentation.

3 So any members of the public who wish to speak
4 should now click button that says, "Raise hand." If you're
5 calling in by phone, you can raise your hand by pressing *9.

6 And as of 5 p.m. yesterday, the Board had received
7 some written comments from Young Kim, Federico Muchnik, and
8 Pamela Winters. Written communications received after 5
9 p.m. yesterday will be entered into the record.

10 So I will now ask Staff to unmute speakers one at
11 one at a time. You should begin by saying your name and
12 address, and Staff can confirm that we can hear you. After
13 that, you will have up to three minutes to speak before I
14 will ask you to wrap up.

15 Evan, are you going to run that tonight for us?

16 EVAN SPETRINI: Yes, thank you.

17 TOM SIENIEWICZ: Thank you.

18 EVAN SPETRINI: We have three hands raised so far,
19 so just a reminder, please push the Raise Hand button to get
20 in the queue. The first speaker will be Young Kim, followed
21 by Luke Smith.

22 Young, you should be able to unmute yourself.

1 Please begin by stating your name and address for the
2 record.

3 YOUNG KIM: Young Kim, 17 Morris Street. Can you
4 hear me?

5 EVAN SPETRINI: Yes, we can hear you.

6 YOUNG KIM: Good evening, Chair Sieniewicz, and
7 members of the Planning Board. I respectfully request if
8 it's possible that this meeting be continued until the
9 applicant submits the revised review package and clearly and
10 systematically responds to the issues I will outline.

11 Height may be allowed as-of-right, except where
12 the design -- any exemplary documentation should also be
13 expected as-of-right. Because 2072 Mass Avenue is
14 Cambridge's first 12-story residential mass timber building
15 under the Affordable Housing Overlay, this is precedent-
16 setting in final review.

17 That benchmark is not conjecture. In 2024, the
18 same development team acquired the Roseland Portfolio using
19 Cambridge Affordable Housing Trust funding, with a CDD
20 member randomly -- explicitly referencing a plan to combine
21 those six parcels with Frost Terrace to develop the combined
22 lot as a Mass Ave new Affordable Housing Overlay Corridor

1 project.

2 That same land area totals approximately 150,000
3 square feet -- roughly 17 times the lot before you tonight.

4 Even how tightly a 12-story building can be
5 accommodated here as-of-right, the Review Standards
6 established tonight will carry across in scale with similar
7 height buildings proposed on the combined site.

8 This project is designed, designated as AHO-09 in
9 CDD's pipeline. Of the eight AHO projects at CDD, at least
10 six submitted detailed response matrices, clearly linking
11 Planning Board comments to [indiscernible; bad audio at
12 00:43:47].

13 The current submission does not provide the same
14 level of placeable (sic) documentation. A revised package
15 should include a matrix and clearly address contextual
16 transition in upper-level moderation, of continuous
17 accessory repair from curb to accessible units promised by
18 DPW and Transportation before, possible for leasing in the
19 future will not be acceptable.

20 There will be -- I don't remember how many
21 accessory units there are, but without any permitted exits
22 this will be -- this will not fulfill Design Guidelines --

1 Urban Design Guidelines.

2 In [indiscernible; unclear] proposing it to 74
3 units. But what you are providing is not proportional.
4 Clear documentation of the newer contribution, domestic hot
5 water strategy, peak-load performance, and system
6 redundancy, and electricity provided by the solar panel
7 sufficient to accommodate this large unit.

8 You also have a material stewardship,
9 consideration for a 12-story laminated mass timber
10 structure. There there is no City Guideline for building
11 this site, so --

12 TOM SIENIEWICZ: Okay, Mr. Kim. You're beyond
13 your time here. And thank you for your comment.

14 YOUNG KIM: Can I just say one sentence, please?

15 TOM SIENIEWICZ: One sentence, yes. Go ahead.

16 YOUNG KIM: When height is permitted as-of-right,
17 documentation clarity becomes one of the few remaining
18 mechanisms for proposing accountability for a project of
19 this scale and precedent-setting nature. That level
20 [indiscernible; unclear] proportional.

21 Thank you very much for allowing me to finish my
22 statement.

1 TOM SIENIEWICZ: Yeah. Thank you, Mr. Kim, and
2 thank you for your correspondence as well.

3 Next speaker?

4 EVAN SPETRINI: We have one more speaker with
5 their hands raised. It looks like a couple more have raised
6 their hands. Please, if you do want to speak, push the
7 Raise Hand button to get in the queue.

8 The next speaker will be Jamie Ciocco. I
9 apologize if I mispronounced your name. You should be able
10 to unmute yourself. Please begin by stating your name and
11 address for the record.

12 JAMIE CIOCCO: Yeah. Hi. Thank you. I'm Jamie
13 Ciocco. My address is 12 Rindge Avenue Number 3. Yeah, so
14 I own a place maybe a block and a half or so from the
15 proposed -- from the proposed location.

16 And, yeah, I guess I just wanted to say I'm
17 excited about this project, and I'm excited to welcome --
18 you know, have more affordable housing in our neighborhood.

19 That's it. Thanks so much.

20 TOM SIENIEWICZ: Thank you very much.

21 EVAN SPETRINI: The next speaker will be James
22 Zall, and that is the final speaker in the queue. If you do

1 want to speak, please push the Raise Hand button to get in
2 the line.

3 James, you should be able to unmute yourself.
4 Please begin by stating your name and address for the
5 record.

6 JAMES ZALL: Hi, this is James Zall, 203 Pemberton
7 Street. And I am happy that we've reached this phase in
8 this project.

9 I'd like to thank, certainly, the Principals and
10 their architects and Staff that have helped bring this
11 project to this point. It looks beautiful. I think it'll
12 be a great addition to the neighborhood.

13 I would also like to thank the Planning Board
14 members, applicants, both the current ones and the ones who
15 remember an earlier version of this project, perhaps six or
16 seven or so years ago.

17 And I'm very happy that -- as I say, that we've
18 got to this point, that we're going to have 73 new homes in
19 the area, and a wonderful-looking building.

20 And I hope this is -- as Young Kim says, I hope
21 this continues to provide an example of designing housing
22 and approving housing and reviewing the AHO and applying it

1 that continues long into the future.

2 Thank you very much.

3 TOM SIENIEWICZ: Thank you, Mr. Zall.

4 EVAN SPETRINI: The final speaker in line is
5 Kirsten Grecco. Kirsten, you should be able to unmute
6 yourself. Please begin by stating your name and address for
7 the record.

8 KIRSTEN GRECO: Hi, yes. Kirsten Greco. My
9 address is 2103 Massachusetts Avenue, directly across the
10 street from this property. And I actually live in an
11 affordable housing unit. Our condo building is nine units,
12 and they're homeownership opportunities.

13 The one thing that I wanted to ask about was the
14 widening of Walden Street. In the documents that were
15 provided previous -- or, like, before the meeting, it said
16 it was dependent on something to do with something
17 underground; Eversource -- I can't remember exactly what,
18 but there's some discovery that has to take place to
19 determine if you can actually do what you're proposing.
20 What happens if you can't widen Walden Street? So that's
21 one.

22 And then, are you thinking about ways to enhance

1 the safety of the alleyway? We have an alleyway on our
2 property, and -- well, sort of -- and random people walk
3 back there all the time. We've had several instances with
4 unhoused people. And so, just want you guys to think about
5 safety in that area for the residents and neighborhood.

6 And that's it.

7 TOM SIENIEWICZ: Thank you very much. Good
8 questions. We'll have the proponent answer those. Anybody
9 else, Evan, that you see?

10 EVAN SPETRINI: We do have one person. It looks
11 like --

12 TOM SIENIEWICZ: Good.

13 EVAN SPETRINI: -- they raised their hand.

14 Luke Smith, you should be able to unmute yourself.
15 Please begin by stating your name and address for the
16 record.

17 [Pause]

18 You are still muted, if you're trying to speak.

19 [Pause]

20 Okay. Maybe we can move on. There is another
21 person who has raised their hand. Christian Abney, you
22 should be allowed to unmute yourself. Please begin by

1 stating your name and address for the record.

2 CHRISTIAN ABNEY: Hi there. I'm Christian Abney.
3 I'm at 44 Calendar Street. I wanted to say that it was a
4 beautiful design, and I really appreciate the responses to
5 the feedback received.

6 I was just wondering how the changes after the
7 first Advisory Consultation affected development costs and
8 where the per unit development costs stand as is. That's
9 it. Thank you so much.

10 TOM SIENIEWICZ: Thank you, Christian.

11 EVAN SPETRINI: That looks -- it looks like that
12 concludes the list of speakers. So I will -- I'll hand it
13 back over to the Chair.

14 TOM SIENIEWICZ: Mr. Smith, since you can't dial
15 in, please feel free to correspond directly with the
16 Planning Board in writing. We'll get that into the file.
17 I'm sorry that the technology didn't serve you tonight.
18 With that, that concludes public comment.

19 We'll move from public comment now to Board
20 discussion. We'll start with questions for the project team
21 or Staff that the Board would like answered tonight, and I
22 would appreciate, also, if the proponents would answer a few

1 of the questions that were raised in public comment tonight,
2 as well.

3 So we've got Board members who have questions for
4 either proponent or the Staff at this point? Great.

5 Mary?

6 MARY LYDECKER: Well, I have two questions, and
7 one of them built on one of the public comments. I feel
8 like I have to ask the question about Walden Street.

9 It seems like there are two options. If you want
10 10' lanes, you either get rid of a lane, get rid of the turn
11 lane. I'm not coming at this from a transportation
12 perspective, so that's why I'm somewhat asking this to the
13 City; or you do what you've done, which is widen the road,
14 which creates a condition where on the right side of Walden,
15 you cannot have trees, there's not space, you've lost about
16 four feet that you have today.

17 You actually have three options: the other is you
18 don't change anything. It kind of stinks for the driver,
19 but you can make it work; it works today.

20 So that's my -- kind of my first question is did
21 the Study -- did the City think about study alongside the
22 proponent? Both of those options, how did you land at let's

1 make the road wider?

2 And I also want to put this in the context of the
3 Urban Forest Master Plan, which includes a design strategy
4 that says when you have narrow sidewalks, one option is you
5 narrow the road for more planting space, and the City is
6 actually working with the proponent on the opposite
7 direction. So asking the City to speak to that.

8 And then the second, somewhat related, is the Mass
9 Ave design and Study. What's the timeline on that? When
10 could we anticipate seeing the approach to that landscape?

11 TOM SIENIEWICZ: Okay. We're going to take
12 answers as they -- as the questions come up, rather than
13 summarizing them. We did that last week successfully. Does
14 the proponent want to address those questions that Mary just
15 raised?

16 JASON KORB: I'm happy to begin the answer, but I
17 also think that's a question for the City as well.

18 TOM SIENIEWICZ: Can you --

19 JASON KORB: To be honest --

20 TOM SIENIEWICZ: Can you --

21 JASON KORB: -- we're --

22 TOM SIENIEWICZ: -- identify yourself please?

1 JASON KORB: Sure, Jason Korb from Capstone
2 Communities.

3 TOM SIENIEWICZ: Thank you.

4 JASON KORB: I'm the codeveloper with Sean. I
5 mean, I think we're agnostic for whatever the City would
6 like to do out on Walden Street. So I think whether they go
7 down to two lanes, or we give a portion of our land and made
8 it wider, three lanes, that's all -- that's all fine with
9 us. I don't want to put words in Sean's mouth either, but
10 we would defer to the City on that.

11 The person -- the member of the public that asked
12 the question about the impediment in Walden Street to
13 potentially widening it, there's a very large Eversource
14 electrical conduit that runs underneath the sidewalk.

15 We've done a number of studies short of -- we've
16 done everything short of actually digging a test pit out
17 there. We've looked at Eversource records. We've done
18 ground-penetrating radar surveys. We think that we can do
19 it, based on all of this -- all of the information that
20 we've gathered.

21 If we do a test pit, we're hoping -- which we're
22 hoping to do, we've been in communication with DPW for them

1 to do it. You know, it's obviously very difficult to do
2 right now with all the snow we've gotten, but that's how we
3 will have a definitive answer.

4 I believe, Mary, that also impacts street trees,
5 though, too, and how deep -- you know, if -- I guess maybe
6 you can do something above grade. Obviously, you would know
7 better than me. But certainly, street trees where the roots
8 go below grade, I don't think work because of that conduit.

9 So I'm just not sure, in the current plan, there
10 is the width, so --

11 Does that answer your question?

12 MARY LYDECKER: It does. And I think it really is
13 more for the City in terms of transportation planning.
14 Certainly, City Department of Transportation is pro making
15 this is wider for the safety and the function of that
16 intersection. Totally understandable.

17 You know, maybe just for everyone's benefit and
18 for the record, asking for kind of that unpacking from the
19 City of why does it have to be the widening versus either
20 the reduction or holding it as it is.

21 Because even if you couldn't get trees, it's still
22 quite a narrow sidewalk --

1 JASON KORB: Mm-hm.

2 MARY LYDECKER: -- in an area that's supposed to
3 be this pullback towards Raymond Park side. So it's really
4 kind of a City question.

5 EVAN SPETRINI: I can jump in just quickly. We
6 don't have anyone from Transportation here tonight, but we
7 know -- you know, Transportation and DPW have been working
8 closely with the applicant to work on these things. It's an
9 important question.

10 I don't know if anyone can fully speak to kind of
11 the Planning rationale for widening Walden Street or not
12 widening Walden Street and also, you know, the timeline on
13 the Mass Ave design and how that's progressing. But maybe
14 we can follow up with some of those answers as we -- you
15 know, and the proponent work with DOT and DPW. Appreciate
16 the question, though.

17 TOM SIENIEWICZ: Thank you, Evan. Are there other
18 questions from Board members?

19 Diego?

20 DIEGO MACIAS: Yeah. I have two questions, and
21 one of them is sort of two questions in itself, but it's
22 like the same concept. Sort of pedestrian safety -- I see

1 the planting on Walden Street, and it's 5'. I'm wondering
2 if there's a concern with that, if that's narrow compared
3 to, like, the existing condition, you know, just talking
4 about how busy that intersection is. You have these cars
5 turning, going into the Walden Street and then sort of the
6 planting pushing you into Walden Street.

7 And maybe you could put, like, a planting on the
8 other side, so, like, in between the pedestrians and the
9 street of Walden.

10 And then on the same kind of concept is the public
11 comment question about the alleyway. That actually hadn't
12 come to my mind, on the safety of that, and I don't know how
13 developers sort of address that problem sometimes.

14 And then my other question is the roof screen.
15 You sort of have that rendered as, like, a wall. And I'm
16 wondering if the material for that has been chosen, or is
17 that sort of this opaque look that it looks like on the
18 renderings that I've seen.

19 Thank you.

20 TOM SIENIEWICZ: Who wants to take those questions
21 from the Development Team?

22 JASON KORB: So I can maybe try two of the three

1 of those. Maybe Jason Forney can talk about the materiality
2 of the screen.

3 You know, I think you bring up -- one of the
4 attendees as well as the Planning Board members talked about
5 the gap between the buildings. And it's interesting,
6 because we had a pinch point previously, and there were some
7 concerns about not being able to for fire safety and that.

8 Then you pull the building back, and you have a
9 nice buffer for, you know, bikes and things to be brought
10 out. But then, as you imagine, now you have a -- kind of a
11 dark area.

12 One of the suggestions that I think that we could
13 employ would be motion-sensor lighting, right? You know,
14 dark corners allow for people to get in areas, and there's
15 also some issue about people in Porter Square coming down
16 the avenue and looking for places to congregate.

17 So I do think that there is the opportunity for
18 some motion lighting. We also have the benefit of not
19 having windows along that side.

20 So if we did have windows, lighting might impact
21 privacy. But because we have a blank wall, I think there's
22 an opportunity throughout the stretch of that to be able to

1 do some kind of shoebox, focused lighting to make sure that
2 area is little, especially in the evening times.

3 And then on the corner with the plantings, you
4 know, part of the idea was when we were giving some land to
5 expand Walden Street, those plantings are on our property,
6 even though they're hugged against the wall. So I don't
7 know that -- we'll end up now putting plantings on City
8 property, which could be an obstruction.

9 But I do think that, as Jason Forney talked about,
10 at the corners, as you get closer to the corner, the planter
11 is actually on the inside of the building, and we did that
12 especially because of that pinch point.

13 Right now, cars turn and kind of hop the corner,
14 so we did try to add some vegetation. There are no
15 currently street trees on Walden, so we tried to soften that
16 edge, at the same time pulling back the planters from the
17 corner, for some of the same reasons.

18 But that is an area that's not going to get a
19 great light. And so, you know, I think if the planters are
20 an issue, they're mobile so you can move those.

21 JASON FORNEY: Yeah, I'll jump in on a few of
22 those. I can get you a dimension of what the sidewalk is

1 now, before the meeting's over. I don't have it on the top
2 of my head. But I believe it's a little bit narrower than
3 it would be in the finished condition.

4 And then as far as the roof screen material, we
5 haven't chosen one specifically, but I think in my mind it
6 would be, you know, a metal panel or a perforated metal
7 screen that would kind of be the same tone as the building.
8 And, you know, we're going to choose of a

9 ll of our final materials based on a series of
10 onsite mockups. But I think that's what we would have in
11 mind.

12 TOM SIENIEWICZ: Great. Diego, does that address
13 your concerns?

14 DIEGO MACIAS: Great. Thank you.
15 Ted?

16 H THEODORE COHEN: Thank you. So I have a couple
17 of questions. I'm just curious with the wood on the
18 interior, and slide page 32 as I read or look at the
19 rendering, it appears that there is a wooden column just
20 sort of floating in the middle of the corner units.

21 Is that really what's going -- it doesn't show on
22 any of the drawings showing the interior of the units --

1 it's just in the rendering -- and I'm wondering if that's
2 what is really intended.

3 You indicated you're still working on various
4 options for the wood on the interior, and you show some
5 pictures where there are just dead spaces, and I'm just
6 really wondering what the plan is.

7 In keeping with the interior on the units, as I
8 think I understand the floor plans, there will be units in
9 the middle of the building on the east side which are below
10 the height of the Russell Apartments. And so, there are
11 windows there.

12 But are they going to get any light or air at all?
13 I can understand the units on both ends; the sides will
14 still get light and air coming from the north and the south.
15 But I'm concerned about those units on the east side, which
16 are just going to be facing a brick wall

17 five feet away.

18 And then my last question is you talked about
19 making final determinations about the colors of all of the
20 components. So you helpfully referred us to the building I
21 believe at 678 Mass Ave.

22 I will confess that I'm not -- I'm perfectly happy

1 with the brick and the sort of yellowish buff color. I'm
2 not wild about the gray, and I'm wondering if you have
3 considered some other colors.

4 678 is a combination of sort of buff tan and a
5 darker, reddish brown. And I wondered if you had thought of
6 something similar for here more in the reddish-ocher, russet
7 categories?

8 You know, I can understand the concept of the
9 colors you've chosen, but I think something tending more
10 into the red would tie in much more with the brick in the
11 Russell building and with the brick in the Henderson
12 Carriage building across the street.

13 And, you know, I think that would be preferable.
14 But that's my opinion only.

15 Anyway, those are my questions.

16 JASON FORNEY: Thank you, Ted. I'll take them in
17 the order that you asked them. I think on the structure, we
18 are indeed looking at three options of dealing with mass
19 timber.

20 One of them would have -- it would be this
21 traditional post and beam that would have a smallish column
22 in that corner. I think that, you know, that's something

1 that we've done before in corner units, and it's really -- I
2 think would be all right.

3 The other option is to have smaller columns and a
4 point loaded, so no beams, which would make the column in
5 the corner even smaller.

6 And then the third option is to do bearing walls
7 and mass timber. So we don't know which one of those we're
8 going to end up with, but they're all on the table. Some of
9 them would have a column in that corner, but I think I am
10 comfortable with that.

11 I've seen -- you know, well-designed units that do
12 have exposed columns in the corners. I think it's a
13 tradeoff of having -- being able to have the corner window.

14 In terms of the east side, I agree with you that -
15 - there's one apartment that's kind of in the middle of the
16 east façade that only has windows facing that direction.
17 And, you know, it's seven or eight feet to the building.

18 But I still think, you know, that's just space
19 that we have. It's space that we've inherited, and I would
20 still choose to put apartments there rather than not.

21 The two units on the east side that are on the top
22 and bottom of the building, or north and south, have the

1 benefit of also having windows on the north and south
2 façades. So that does help mitigate that situation.

3 And then I think -- I'm trying to see if I can --
4 you know, most of the units are above the Russell Apartments
5 building. Even though that's a six-story building, it has
6 very tight floor to floors.

7 And then in terms of the colors, I think we would
8 certainly be willing to look at other colors. Other people
9 have mentioned that too. I think that our kind of intention
10 here is to depart from the colors, the reds and bricks that
11 are in the neighborhoods, and sort of signal a more, you
12 know, contemporary light, airy building.

13 But I'd love to hear from others on the Board, and
14 we will consider that as we go forward and really get into
15 our materials and mockups.

16 Thank you for your questions.

17 TOM SIENIEWICZ: Any other Board members with
18 questions? I have a few. I wanted to zero in -- I think
19 the alleyway that was referenced in public comment, and
20 Diego began to look at, have you considered a gate at the
21 Massachusetts Avenue edge, you know, to potentially --

22 JASON KORB: Yeah.

1 TOM SIENIEWICZ: -- it doesn't have to be
2 fortified or anything, but just to give a sense that it's
3 private property back there?

4 JASON FORNEY: Yeah. I think we would do a locked
5 gate there. We'd have to work with the Housing Authority
6 next door because our property terminates --

7 TOM SIENIEWICZ: Yeah.

8 JASON FORNEY: -- three-quarters of the way
9 through that alley. But we have a great relationship with
10 them, and I'm sure we could figure something out with them.
11 So yes, I definitely --

12 TOM SIENIEWICZ: Okay.

13 JASON FORNEY: -- can see us putting in a gate.

14 TOM SIENIEWICZ: Great. Thank you.

15 JASON FORNEY: We probably -- we would need it on
16 both sides, right?

17 JASON KORB: Mm-hm.

18 JASON FORNEY: And, obviously, we'd have to work
19 with the Fire Department, so.

20 TOM SIENIEWICZ: I wanted to focus in on -- I
21 don't know if we can bring up slide 34, but it's also a
22 point that was raised in the -- or it was page 34. I don't

1 know if it's actually slide 34 in the PowerPoint, but a
2 point that was raised in the memo, as well, that the
3 architect in me is puzzled by.

4 And it's actually the way that the joint comes
5 down and addresses the glazing there. You can see where all
6 three corners, the two bay structures on Mass Ave -- we're
7 looking at a detail of Mass Ave here at the entrance,
8 obviously, and then the glazing come together.

9 And, to my eye, it's a bit of a car crash of all
10 of the pieces coming together at that corner. The previous
11 iteration, as I understand, had a more rational relationship
12 between the previous structure and the base below.

13 So I don't know -- I don't have a solution for it,
14 Mr. Forney, but it looks like a detail that should be looked
15 at the again.

16 JASON FORNEY: Thank you.

17 JASON KORB: Yeah, I don't --

18 TOM SIENIEWICZ: The sign hides it. The
19 rendering's clever.

20 COLLECTIVE: [Laughter]

21 JASON KORB: That's telling. I think it's
22 something that we can continue to work on. I don't disagree

1 with your comment. And there's a -- just like everything,
2 there are tradeoffs, you know?

3 TOM SIENIEWICZ: Mm-hm.

4 JASON KORB: We're trying to get more transparency
5 on the ground floor, pulling it back in alignment would be
6 really nice, but we debated that internally, and I think we
7 would continue to do so as we develop the design.

8 TOM SIENIEWICZ: Yeah.

9 JASON KORB: And thanks to -- Erik has been really
10 great to work with on this project, and I know that comment
11 came from him. And we sort of pushed and pulled a lot of
12 things together, but I think we would continue to work on
13 that.

14 TOM SIENIEWICZ: Yeah, if it was Louis Sullivan or
15 AJ Richardson (phonetic), you'd just put a big piece of
16 ornament there and --

17 JASON KORB: Yeah.

18 TOM SIENIEWICZ: -- hide that, yeah.

19 JASON KORB: [Laugh]

20 TOM SIENIEWICZ: A piece of stained glass or
21 something. Anyway, yeah, so I'm sure you could figure that
22 out. But it does -- the building is so carefully considered

1 all the way around, it just -- it sticks out as something
2 that potentially -- and there you can see, by the way, where
3 gate might go as well.

4 JASON KORB: Right here, yeah.

5 TOM SIENIEWICZ: Right in there --

6 JASON KORB: Yeah.

7 TOM SIENIEWICZ: -- which I think makes sense and
8 could address the good concerns raised by the speaker in the
9 public comment.

10 JASON KORB: We could consider continuing the
11 public art across the gate, too, which would be a cool thing
12 maybe.

13 TOM SIENIEWICZ: So my other line of questioning
14 really is simply trying to understand the depth of the
15 detail on the façade. The building looks like it has a lot
16 of depth. But as I looked at the renderings, it became
17 clear, you know, the glass is rendered more or less clear.
18 But, of course, the glass will appear like the Russell
19 Apartments do. In this elevation, the glass will appear
20 dark and flat, and so there's great depth in the renderings
21 because you see the insides of the apartments. But I wonder
22 -- I'm concerned about it being too flat. And the 3D model,

1 that didn't assuage that concern.

2 JASON KORB: Mm-hm.

3 TOM SIENIEWICZ: So I just want to understand, how
4 many inches have we got, and how flat is it?

5 JASON FORNEY: Let me -- I'm going to look at some
6 drawings, Tom, and talk -- and answer your question in a
7 minute or two. I could be very accurate --

8 TOM SIENIEWICZ: Okay.

9 JASON FORNEY: -- if I do that.

10 TOM SIENIEWICZ: Oh, okay.

11 JASON FORNEY: Okay, yeah.

12 TOM SIENIEWICZ: All right. Yeah, so --

13 JASON FORNEY: But it --

14 TOM SIENIEWICZ: -- some shadow -- I'm just --
15 this --

16 JASON FORNEY: -- the --

17 TOM SIENIEWICZ: -- Board Member's looking for
18 some shadow there.

19 JASON FORNEY: Yeah, I'd say the --

20 TOM SIENIEWICZ: This isn't just a graphic.

21 JASON FORNEY: Yeah, the frame is proud of the
22 gray panels and windows by, you know, I think three or four

1 inches.

2 TOM SIENIEWICZ: Okay.

3 JASON FORNEY: It may not be --

4 TOM SIENIEWICZ: Good.

5 JASON FORNEY: -- showing that way in the
6 renderings. And then the windows and the panels are in
7 plane. So there's really one shift --

8 TOM SIENIEWICZ: -- Okay.

9 JASON FORNEY: -- to the -- from the frame to the
10 other thing. And then the recesses between the frames are,
11 you know, very deep.

12 TOM SIENIEWICZ: Yeah. Yeah. Okay. Well, that's
13 reassuring.

14 JASON FORNEY: Yeah.

15 TOM SIENIEWICZ: And, certainly, the bottom -- the
16 ground floor, thank you for making it 18'; there's lots of
17 depth and shadow where it matters the most, right, because
18 that's where people will be closest to it in the
19 environment.

20 So I think that's it for questions, other than --
21 you know, I'm a tree advocate like other -- not as
22 articulate as other members on this Board, but it seemed

1 that the -- there's probably a way to work with the City to
2 get bigger shade trees on that parking lot on the parking
3 lot side.

4 And I don't know whether -- you know, the alley,
5 whether there's possibility to even get some trees not right
6 between the two buildings, but is there a way to not just
7 save the one tree but try to get something living back
8 there? So since we're stuck on Walden Street as it'd
9 already been described.

10 Okay. That's it for questions, I think, unless
11 anybody else has got a question.

12 Let's move to comments and discussion from the
13 Board at this point. Who wants to lead off?

14 Ashley?

15 ASHLEY TAN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Happy to
16 start.

17 I guess first off, thank you for the proponents,
18 and thank you to City Staff for your hard work on this. I
19 sometimes -- I'll speak for myself.

20 Sometimes, coming to these Design Review meetings,
21 I'm not sure, you know, how effective these are. And this
22 is a very encouraging meeting to see the changes that have

1 been made since our last meeting.

2 In particular, I really like the fact that the
3 rooftop mechanicals are pulled back. This building at its
4 current state, Mass Ave, has pretty long site lines. And
5 so, it'll be pretty obvious. And so, I really appreciate
6 that.

7 What else? Mass timber: I'm glad to see the
8 project is still being proposed as a mass timber high-rise,
9 and I do love seeing the additional articulation on the
10 south side of the building, because it is one of those long
11 sight line façades right now.

12 Let's see. A few things I would like to see going
13 forward or maybe things to think about as you guys progress:
14 One thing which is actually something -- one of the
15 committee members brought up and we've discussed a bit
16 here, but just the five feet -- I don't want to call it
17 "alley" but, like, the gap between building and Russell
18 Apartments.

19 My initial thought was would Russell Apartments
20 actually want a fence between the buildings if the trash
21 room and Bike Room are going to be accessible? But, you
22 know, that's between you guys and them.

1 Any way of using lighting or gates or whatnot to
2 make it safer I think would be helpful.

3 I would really like to see any way there could be
4 additional short-term bike racks. I think, right now, there
5 is one. And I know that will be dependent on what comes out
6 of, you know, planning layout from Mass Ave. But ideally
7 there could be more, especially near the lobby entrance for
8 guests and even residents of the building.

9 And then just a few small things. You know, we
10 came out of the Mass Ave Zoning and Planning recently, and
11 one goal of the Mass Ave Zoning was to really activate Mass
12 Ave. And, you know, so I think the way we can do it here is
13 with the Community Room.

14 And so, I don't know if this has been discussed,
15 but is there a way to -- if the Community Room isn't always
16 used by the residents of the building, is there a way to, as
17 a benefit almost to the community, to allow members of the
18 community to rent the space on off hours? So that's just
19 something to consider I think would be great and make this
20 part of Mass Ave very lively.

21 And I think on a similar vein, just, you know,
22 what art can we add in the windows, in addition to the mural

1 behind the bus stop. So I think those would be helpful,
2 especially as we, you know, think about Mass Ave in the
3 long-term. So that's all I have. Thank you.

4 TOM SIENIEWICZ: Great. Thank you, Ashley.

5 Diego?

6 DIEGO MACIAS: Yeah. I second a lot of things
7 that Ashley just said. It's so cool to see a mass timber
8 building, especially this tall and so prominent.

9 And I think, when I look at the color scheme that
10 you're proposing now with, like, the lighter scheme compared
11 to the previous one, it's grown on me. I did like the
12 contrast before of the brick, but I think now that you sort
13 of -- Jason mentioned that it's to sort of to distinguish
14 between the context around it makes me like it even more.

15 I do like the mural on the front, on Mass Ave.
16 I'm happy that you put that there. And I think it's a great
17 recommendation by Ashley to expand it some more. It's
18 probably my favorite part of the building. I just think
19 that the building is so tall and sort of this warm color,
20 and then you go to the next street level and it's this
21 really vibrant art space. I think that's really exciting.

22 I think the last concern I have is the south

1 façade, actually. That's the only one that's a little flat
2 to me.

3 Maybe if you could add a little depth between --
4 it just reads as one mass now, whereas before it read as
5 sort of two separate masses with the higher contrast color
6 scheme.

7 But yeah, it's a great project. The roof garden
8 looks awesome with the amenity space. I think that's going
9 to be great for the people that live there and the bike
10 access with that little alley is great, even though there
11 are some security concerns. I think that's a big win.

12 Thank you.

13 TOM SIENIEWICZ: Thank you, Diego. Carolyn?

14 CAROLYN ZERN: Thank you. Yeah, so similar to my
15 colleagues, it's really -- I really appreciate the work that
16 you have done with City Staff, both the Transportation
17 Department and CDD and the Planning Staff.

18 It's awesome to see the changes to the pedestrian
19 experience. I really appreciate the mural. I really
20 appreciate the added fenestration on the Management Office
21 and mailroom and Maintenance Office. I think they're added,
22 but they're great.

1 I was really glad to see that you were able to get
2 rid of the second-floor bike room. Sean, nice work on that
3 bike rack. That's a huge win.

4 And yeah -- oh, yeah, the -- I love what -- the
5 feedback from the community meeting that impacted the design
6 of the rooftop space. I think that's really exciting to
7 see. Thank you for being back in front of us and for
8 continuing to work on this.

9 TOM SIENIEWICZ: Thank you, Carolyn.

10 Ted?

11 H THEODORE COHEN: Oh. Well, thank you. I, you
12 know, pick up on some -- most of the comments made by my
13 colleagues. I really like the project. I think it looks
14 great.

15 I appreciate all the work you and Staff have done,
16 and especially the written work you gave us, which broke
17 down each question and your respond to it and why you did or
18 did not do something. That really made it very helpful.

19 In terms of design, I think the improvements you
20 made have been great. I especially like the change in the
21 windows at the back of the western façade.

22 And I'm very glad that the open space on the roof

1 did not move; I think it's great that you can see it as
2 travel up Mass Ave. And, you know, actually seeing trees
3 there, I hope it will be great up at the rooftop.

4 No, I think everything you did -- you know, I am
5 concerned for people who may be living in the apartment that
6 has really no direct view other than a brick wall. You
7 know, I'm anxious for as much -- as many apartments as we
8 can get. And I can understand that you and Staff and the
9 Department are in favor of that, but I'm a little concerned
10 that those people will have a less than wonderful experience
11 in their units.

12 I've already said what I need to say about the
13 color scheme. I understand what it is now, and I can
14 understand people preferring that to other things. I just
15 think a richer color might be preferable, from my point of
16 view.

17 But I really like the project. I think it looks
18 great, and I'm really anxious to see it built.

19 TOM SIENIEWICZ: Great. Thank you, Ted.

20 Mary Lydecker?

21 MARY LYDECKER: Thank you. And so, I'm echoing my
22 colleagues. I both really like the project; it's -- I think

1 it's a beautiful building -- and I really appreciate -- I
2 think, as Ashley described, I think we're all getting to
3 understand what's our role when we all do these Design
4 Reviews that are not binding in any way. And I really
5 appreciate how much you paid attention last year, and the
6 minor changes make big differences. And so I really
7 appreciate that responsiveness.

8 I will echo, as well, I really like the way that
9 the roof terrace evolved, especially the responding to the
10 meetings with the people who will live there, and it very
11 much resonates with me. I agree; I sometimes just want a
12 space to go, and you don't want to feel like you need a
13 full-on party to be there. And it really feels warm, but
14 also not gratuitous in that, you know, I kind of had a head
15 scratch when I heard, "Oh, there's a play element there."

16 And the little house, I feel like that feels
17 doable. If in the long term, they want to flip it out with
18 something else, they can do that. So I think that is coming
19 along really well.

20 And I actually think that the way that you have
21 the building framing it, I think one of the biggest things
22 on a roof is going to be wind. And I'm hopeful that that

1 would mitigate some of that.

2 And I also thank you for Ground doing the
3 sections, because it also validates, okay, you guys have
4 soil depth to get somewhere close to what you're
5 representing. So I really appreciate that.

6 Most of my concerns remain really at the ground,
7 and in some ways are not as much the purview of this
8 applicant as they are, I think, the City reflecting on the
9 Mass Ave plan. What's that going to look like? We know
10 that across the street, this whole zone is within one of the
11 shade priority areas for the Mass Ave Study.

12 Across the street, there's a real priority because
13 there are no street trees in front of that carriage
14 building. You guys can't do anything about it, but your
15 building's going to look a lot better if there are some
16 street trees in the vicinity.

17 And I'm hopeful that as the City explores that,
18 they get some on the very broad sidewalk in front of you
19 with the bus stop.

20 On the Walden Street side, I do think just a
21 follow-up of what's the transportation rationale for
22 widening it? Because I think that based on the City's

1 objectives to deprioritizing pedestrians' trees, all these
2 other things, I think it's just answering the question.

3 If there's just a fundamental, it absolutely has
4 been on the Agenda to do this and this is enacting it,
5 that's great.

6 I looked at the that duct bank. It's about dead-
7 center on the current sidewalk. And the duct bank has to be
8 -- or the tree has to be three feet from it, the tree well.

9 So if you got rid of a lane instead of widening
10 the lanes, you could probably get your street trees, which
11 would be about four down that length, even at 30'. So
12 that's pretty substantial.

13 I think even that little Urban Design move of when
14 you notch a street like that, to widen it out for the second
15 turn lane, you're basically saying, from someone on Mass
16 Ave, you're looking down that street, it's a pedestrian --
17 it's a vehicular priority, right?

18 Whereas, it looks great when you look dead down
19 the sidewalk and that curblineline. It's saying pedestrian.
20 You come here, Raymond Park, down through here, come along.
21 Right?

22 And I think that that ties more effectively to the

1 residential neighborhood you're trying to tie it to.
2 Obviously, you have that parking lot in between right now,
3 but it creates this moment of, well, then you have to jog in
4 the parking lot.

5 So it's really urging the City to maybe follow up
6 with this group and the public about why this has to happen.
7 And a lot of public will say "Great, I hate that
8 intersection when I'm in a car," but kind of rethinking it
9 towards the pedestrian bicyclists like, you know, kind of
10 compel that story on the other side.

11 I was also thinking, Diego, a bit like you that
12 maybe the planters on the curbside, it's always tricky with,
13 like, stormwater, and irrigation is going to be easier
14 shrinking the building.

15 But I would say when I look at rendering 36 --
16 page 36, whatever you plant there, a) It's probably not
17 grasses, because if it doesn't get good -- great light, make
18 sure it's kind of like robust and scaled to the building.

19 And I know Ground will get there, in terms of --
20 I'm sure they haven't done a lot of the planting design down
21 at the ground. But when I see the lower stuff, it feels to
22 me like it's going to end up being a mulch bed that no one's

1 doing anything with.

2 And on the trees on the back and that rendering as
3 well, there are kind of, like, two types of trees, and they
4 look a little bit wimpy again.

5 And I feel like probably with the scale of the
6 building, and I think as Diego was describing, that back
7 façade is tricky anyway. You probably want something more
8 stronger in form, upright and more uniform, right?

9 You only have six, so this is not the place you
10 need to build your biodiversity; just make it, like, a
11 single gesture to create that kind of barrier. Or not
12 barrier -- let's not call it a barrier, but that kind of
13 transition to that parking lot, which probably will evolve
14 over time.

15 And I think that would speak better at the base of
16 that building, where you're also kind of concealing a blank
17 wall down at that edge, and probably you could do grass; you
18 could do something else, But I'm sure Ground will kind of
19 look and do what they can with that.

20 And so, again, it's -- I really like the building,
21 and we just urge that the City continue to work with the
22 applicant and also work on our -- all of our streetscapes,

1 to make sure that at the end of the day, this is great and
2 aligned with the vision from the Mass Ave Planning Study,
3 both on Mass Ave and on Walden.

4 Great. Thank you.

5 TOM SIENIEWICZ: Thank you, Mary. I knew I could
6 count on somebody to talk about trees in a much more
7 articulate way than I can. I'm just saying "more trees."

8 Ted?

9 H THEODORE COHEN: I just wanted to respond to
10 something Mary said.

11 TOM SIENIEWICZ: Okay.

12 H THEODORE COHEN: And I know it's not the
13 proponents or our bailiwick to make the decision, but as
14 someone who goes through that Walden and Mass Ave
15 intersection many, many times a day, I think it incredibly
16 unlikely the City would do away with a lane, because the
17 left turn lane and the right turn lane onto Mass Ave are
18 already no quite backed up all the time.

19 And to think that they would go to just one lane
20 where you would have to go either left or right would just
21 cause near chaos for drivers in North Cambridge and Huron
22 Village and through the whole section of Cambridge.

1 I'm just suggesting that it probably wouldn't
2 happen. But I don't -- we don't have to make that decision.

3 TOM SIENIEWICZ: Great. Thank you, Ted. All
4 right. Well, I love living in a community where we have a
5 debate tonight, and we're wrestling with bikes versus
6 affordable housing.

7 And tonight the -- we've got an extra unit, and we
8 were able to still accommodate the bikes and what a great
9 kind of discussion and great kind of design problem to be in
10 the middle of, and appreciate the way that it's come out so
11 that we added a unit.

12 Mass timber, I agree with Diego: really exciting
13 to have the tall mass timber building. Well, why is it
14 exciting? Yes, it sequesters carbon, but that's rather
15 abstract but important.

16 The interior renderings are humane, right?
17 There's wood there. There's wood ceilings; it's not
18 drywall. And to Ted's comment and concern about the units
19 that have no light: Yes, it's a New York City condition
20 probably, but you know what? Inside that unit, you've got
21 wood ceilings and maybe wood columns.

22 So we're doing our very best to try to make a

1 decision building that, to some degree, has some humanity in
2 terms of its detail, and I really appreciate that aspect of
3 that structural decision that the Development group has made
4 together.

5 So I would -- if it doesn't take too long at the
6 end of this, I'd love to understand what the variance is all
7 about, and your doggedness to build the building out of that
8 system.

9 I did not comment about color in question, because
10 it's not a question; I agree with Ted, it might be an
11 opinion. I don't know why people are afraid -- why
12 architects are afraid of color. I understand the beige and
13 the palette and the coolness of the whole thing, but, gosh,
14 it would be great to have some.

15 Even the mural is rendered in kind of pastel
16 colors. And couldn't we paint the mullions orange or
17 something? I don't know, maybe I'm a child of the sixties,
18 and a splash of color would go a long way.

19 So I agree with Ted; it would be great to rather
20 than gray -- it's not a bank, it's where people live -- I
21 wonder if we could look at maybe another color. ,
22 certainly, brick is an inspiration with what's there in the

1 neighborhood.

2 I think this is the first Planning Board hearing -
3 - and I was on the Zoning Board 10 years before the 14 years
4 here -- where we're doing Design Review for a playhouse.

5 And I also think that's wonderful because of the
6 values that that says about our community, but also about
7 the proponent's care about the spaces and the people that
8 will live here.

9 Of course, I'd want more playhouses but, you know,
10 let's start with this. It's an acknowledgment that
11 multigenerations will be inhabiting this place. It is
12 family housing. And what a wonderful thing that that
13 thing's up 12 stories in the air, a bit of a temple.

14 So thank you for that. I, too, like the building,
15 and I like the care that you've taken with it, and I will
16 say what other Board members have said: The fact that you
17 listened carefully both to Staff and to the Planning Board
18 and then organized those thoughts, both in the written
19 submissions in advance of this hearing and also tonight in
20 terms of the way you presented in a very respectful way,
21 even when you didn't do what we were hoping you were going
22 to do -- I think goes a long way to earning credibility in

1 the community and certainly showing respect for this
2 process.

3 And as Chair, I just have to single that out as
4 being a really laudable way to proceed. So thank you very
5 much for care you've taken with the process. I'm sure it's
6 frustrating at times.

7 So with that, I'm in favor of this. I am looking
8 for a motion to conclude the Design Consultation and submit
9 a final report with our comments to the Superintendent of
10 Buildings in support of the building permit applications. I
11 need a motion to that effect.

12 H THEODORE COHEN: This is Ted, so moved.

13 TOM SIENIEWICZ: Great. Thank you, Ted. And a
14 second?

15 DIEGO MACIAS: This is Diego, second.

16 TOM SIENIEWICZ: Thank you, Diego, very much.

17 Evan, we'll have a roll call on that motion,
18 please?

19 EVAN SPETRINI: H Theodore Cohen?

20 H THEODORE COHEN: Yes.

21 EVAN SPETRINI: Mary Flynn is absent.

22 Mary Lydecker?

1 MARY LYDECKER: Yes.

2 EVAN SPETRINI: Diego Macias?

3 DIEGO MACIAS: Yes.

4 EVAN SPETRINI: Ashley Tan?

5 ASHLEY TAN: Yes.

6 EVAN SPETRINI: Carolyn Zern?

7 CAROLYN ZERN: Yes.

8 EVAN SPETRINI: And Tom Sieniewicz?

9 TOM SIENIEWICZ: Yes.

10 [All vote YES]

11 TOM SIENIEWICZ: All right. So this concludes the
12 business on our Agenda tonight. Are there additional
13 comments from Staff?

14 None indicated.

15 Any additional comments from Board members? If
16 not, we will adjourn.

17 Thank you.

18 COLLECTIVE: Thank you.

19 (8:05 p.m.)

20

21

22

CERTIFICATE

Commonwealth of Massachusetts

Middlesex, ss.

I, Michele Dent, Notary Public in and for the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, do hereby certify that the above transcript is a true record, to the best of my ability, of the proceedings.

I further certify that I am neither related to nor employed by any of the parties in or counsel to this action, nor am I financially interested in the outcome of this action.

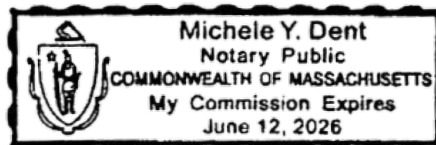
In witness whereof, I have hereunto set my hand this 11th day of March 2026.



Notary Public

My commission expires:

June 12, 2026



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