

# Boston Employment Commission Hearing Minutes

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A monthly hearing of the Boston Employment Commission (**BEC**) was held virtually on Zoom, December 15, 2021.

**Commissioners Present: Commissioner JocCole “JC” Burton, Commissioner Charles Cofield, Commissioner Kenell Broomstein, Commissioner Priscilla Flint-Banks and Commissioner Aisha Francis.**

**Hearing Begins: 1:03 PM**

## I. MINUTES

November 17, 2021, minutes accepted and approved (motioned by Commissioner Flint-Banks, second by Commissioner Cofield and approved by all).

## II. SPECIAL PRESENTATIONS

### A. Angell Spencer

**Duration: 13 mins.**

**Present: Ralph Parent (Parent & Diamond Development), Jeff Hirsch (Urban Spaces), Maxime Charles (Mass Construction and Management), Rashmi Ramaswani (Shed Studio Architects), Celso Ribeiro (BRJP Monitor)**

**Ralph Parent (Parent and Diamond):** Angell-Spencer Neighborhood Homes, as part of the City of Boston's Neighborhood Homes Initiative, consists of 9 parcels of city-owned vacant land to be developed into new owner-occupied homeownership opportunities. The project will create 9 affordable homeownership units, two market homeownership units, and two market rental units. Our development team is a joint venture. It's our first time working with the City of Boston. It's a good team and we believe you will be happy with the results. There are lots of Minority Business Enterprises on this project. **Commissioner Burton:** It's been a while since we've seen a diverse project-lead team. I applaud Urban Spaces and Parent & Diamond. **Commissioner Cofield:** I'm concerned about Terratec and BPI Construction regarding Boston hiring goals. **Maxime Charles (Mass Construction and Management):** I specifically addressed them, firmly. **Commissioner Cofield:** I trust you Max. I know their history. **John Feuerbach (DND):** DND is quite supportive of this team. They are engaged with the community. We have commitment of the developer to meet the goals. **Ralph:** I spoke with Katrina Conrad today (WORC2) and will follow-up with her. **Commissioner Burton:** DND set the goals. We look forward to your review.

### A. 776 Summer Street Phase 1 Demo

**Duration: 23mins.**

**Present: Gary Amberik (Redgate), Jasmine Sessoms (HRP), Christopher Hersey (Suffolk), Brooke Woodson (Suffolk), Dara Fredericks (Suffolk) Anastasie Duffaut (Suffolk) and Pamela Ruffo (BRJP Monitor)**

**Christopher Hersey (Suffolk):** This is the old Boston Edison plant, and we are in the deconstruction phase. It is a large 7 – 10-year project. The Deconstruction phase is 20 months. Project enabling started November 2021. **Gary Amberik (Redgate):** This is a mixed-use development. **Dara Fredericks (Suffolk):** Welcome our new Compliance Officer, Anastasie Duffaut. We are taking a pro-active approach in aligning the right partners for Workforce Diversity. Kicked off a jobs fair in November and expanded outreach beyond South Boston - Excel High School, Madison Park High School and Veteran Associations. By the time students graduate, jobs will be available to them. Career Fair – January 14, 2022 at Excel High School, Jobs Bank Opportunity Fair, January 6, 2022, Osha Training and Site Visits – Spring of 2022. Build With Us is formerly known as Trade Partners Diversity. **Pamela Ruffo:** Because of the commitment of Northstar Contracting Group on the City Hall Plaza project (@45% Boston Residents), I'm confident of their commitment to this project. Very happy to hear that Tom (Hilico) is on the job every day. **Commissioner Cofield:** Has Suffolk looked into the Coop program for High School seniors to go on the site? **Brook Woodson (Suffolk):** We did have a conversation and we can look in to it. **Commissioner Cofield:** It would be

helpful to Suffolk's brand. **Dara:** We have engaged with Madison/BPS, but will specifically address Coop. **Commissioner Francis:** It's such a large scale, is there a forecasting for the 2 – 3 years? **Brooke Woodson:** We're in total alignment with that. Great suggestion. **Dara:** It's exactly why we have taken this approach to reach out to the schools. **Commissioner Burton:** I'm so encouraged that Suffolk, Redgate and Hilico is serious about building the pipeline (4 yr – 5 yr plan). Demolition in some ways has a low hanging skill set. It would be cool for community residents to share on how they worked on such a project (this 200 year old building is a historic monument). **Brooke:** Jasmine from Hilico has been instrumental. **Commissioner Burton:** Jasmine and Anna, we see you are on the call. Thank you for your efforts.

**Public:**

**Janet Jones (Dorchester, Roxbury Labor Committee):** Shared some positive comments.

**Commissioner Burton:** We look forward to your review.

### III. Project Overview:

#### A. Northeastern EXP

**Duration: 20 mins**

**Present: Jacqueline Valencia (Northeastern), Christine Walsh (Northeastern), Ronaldo Cheeks (Diversity Development), Brooke Woodson (Suffolk Construction)**

**Project Overview:**

**135,761 wkhrs, 64 workers, 25 Contractors, 26%BR, 40%POC, 8%F.**

**Manuel Barbosa (BRJP Monitor):** Northeastern EXP is at 30% complete. 126 Boston residents have been reported. 126 (100%) have been successfully verified. **The comparison between the March BEC review & the current overall participation:** The overall number of work hours increased by 100,887 hours (from 34,882 to 135,769). The number of workers increased by 454 workers (from 195 to 649). Boston Residents performance increased from 23% to 26%. People of Color performance increased from 34% to 40%. Female performance increased from 6% to 8%. The current payroll submission time is 6 days. Comparison from Carpenters Trade improved from last BEC Meeting: 6% to 23% Boston Residents (17% increase), 21% to 50% People of Color (29% Increase), 6% to 8% Female (2% Increase). Goals for the 50% BEC meeting would be to improve Boston Residency and Female participation numbers during the ramp up of work. **Commissioner Burton:** Thank you for the snapshot from last review. **Commissioner Cofield:** Is J. L. Marshall about done? **Answer:** Yes. **Commissioner Cofield:** No way to bring their numbers up for Boston Residents. **Ronaldo Cheeks (Diversity Development):** We have a Corrective Action Meeting with New England Finish Systems. Derenzo is doing the site work. Tower Crane will be on for a while. No way to bring female numbers up. There are two elevators by Omar. We will talk with them about bringing a female on. **Commissioner Flint:** I don't understand why carpenters and laborers are low. Hope to see improvement. **Ronaldo Cheeks (Diversity Development):** We are working on increasing Boston Residents across the board. Laborers are a relatively small crew with Fuse. **Christine Walsh:** BFE Documentation. Had success with Madison Park partnership. 6 students actively working with them. Bringing on as apprentices (Non-union). A few women of color in the program – a good success story. **Commissioner Burton:** Glad to hear the University is involved with the High School. People of color looks like they are coming from outside of the city. **Lisa Kochilaris (Suffolk):** 20% Minority, 15% Women Business (tracking/schedule). In middle of final finish buyouts (structural/rough mechanical). **Commissioner Burton:** I'm hearing optimism – there's time.

#### B. Raffles Hotel

**Duration: 37 mins.**

**Present: Katherine Ehler, Vera Addi (Suffolk Construction), Kyle Hargreaves (Suffolk Construction), Brooke Woodson (Suffolk Construction)**

**203,829 wkhrs, 1,024 workers, 18 Contractors, 21%BR, 36%POC, 8%F**

**Project Overview: Manuel Barbosa (BRJP Monitor):** This project is 50% complete. Payroll reporting has been at 6 days meeting the 7-day requirement. All Boston Residents have been verified for this project (179/179). Corrective Action Meeting was held on Dec 8th for the following subs: Heritage Restoration LLC, The Cheviot Corporation, Component Assembly Systems and E.M. Duggan. (Letters are attached). The Carpenter's Trade has made improvements from the last BEC Meeting. Carpenters' numbers for Boston Residency went from 4% to 23%, People of Color went from 15% to 31% and Female stayed at 4%. Please continue this upwards trend in hiring. The comparison between the February BEC review & the current overall participation: The overall number of work hours increased by 147,160 hours (from 56,669 to 203,829). The number of workers increased by 463 workers (from 561 to 1,024). Boston Residents performance decreased from 26% to 21%. People of Color performance increased from 34% to 36% Female performance decreased from 9% to 8%. **Commissioner Flint:** I don't understand the problem finding Boston residents. **Vera Addi (Suffolk):** There's a 5,754-workhour difference for Boston residents that wasn't included on the BRJP report (21 – 22.4%). During the last BEC, we were in excavation. Since then, 3 project delays (trades, and interior and finishing). We should be able to increase. **Commissioner Burton:** It's still well below. Work with Manny offline, I do understand every hour counts. **Commissioner Cofield:** Carpentry numbers need improvement. There are at least 200 Boston resident and female workers on the union hall bench. **Vera:** I've been in contact with the union (Jimmy Williams). **Kyle Hargreave (Suffolk):** Currently in process of ramping up. Components Assembly is just starting on the project, G&C is 67% complete with their scope of work and were asked to meet with Business Agent. **Commissioner Cofield:** Appreciate increasing efforts. **Vera:** Working very closely with Jimmy. **Commissioner Burton:** People of Color numbers are being met, but they are from out of the city. The request to the Business Agent must be specific. **Kyle:** We understand difficult conversations need to be had. We will reiterate. **Commissioner Burton:** Satisfying the Commission is meeting the Ordinance goals. It's not personal. It's our charge to oversee. **Vera:** Kyle, Jeff Barton and Craig Ransom reached out to the Jobs Bank. **Commissioner Burton:** How much longer for G&C? **Answer:** Top off beginning of February 2022. **Commissioner Flint-Banks:** Corrective Action Meetings? **Vera:** We've had two. **Commissioner Flint-Banks:** They're not working. We've seen improvement from some, but there's none from this. **Kyle:** We asked that principles of the company attend the meeting. **Commissioner Flint-Banks:** When will this project be complete? **Answer:** November 2022. **Commissioner Flint-Banks:** These numbers are heading to a sanction. I hope they improve by the next review. **Kyle:** Understood.

#### **Public:**

**Janet Jones (Janet Jones (Dorchester, Roxbury Labor Committee):** I agree with the criticism. An ultra-luxury hotel – The disparity between project and workforce. Let's get Boston residents and females on the job. **Vera:** No one has applied who are union. Those who are non-union we send apprenticeship applications. **Commissioner Burton:** I'm curious if you have a job site QR Code? What's the outreach to get workers on this project? **Vera:** Katrina Conrad (WORC2). **Commissioner Burton:** Are those being shared with Janine McLaren (BRJP Jobs Bank Coordinator)? What are you doing to get union people to apply? **Vera:** Presented at union apprentice programs. **Brooke Woodson (Suffolk Construction):** We hear you loud and clear. I think this project is trending in the right direction.

**Commissioner Burton:** Thank you all for being here to help shepherd the best practices. **Commissioner Cofield:** Happy holiday!

#### **IV. BEC Commissioners' Follow-up Requests/Concerns**

- One Congress St. at Bulfinch Crossing – Update at January 19, 2022 BEC Hearing on Community Engagement/Workforce Diversity and Boston resident performance. Commission received BFE information/invitation to tours with student engagement (Need more advance notice). BEC Coordinator expressed feedback to GC.
- 41 N. Margin St. – Boston Resident Verification pending

**Commissioner Cofield:** For the record, JMA is one of our better General Contractors. **Commissioner Burton:** We noted that. Unfortunately, the ball dropped on this project.

No follow-up from today's meeting.

**V. DIRECTOR'S REPORT:**

**Duration: 12 mins.**

**Celina (Chief of Equity and Inclusion):** Thank you to all in attendance today. Last month the BEC passed a sanction policy that now provides the ability to sanction. It is effective and official as of the last meeting date (December 15, 2021). Moving forward, if there's a project to bring up for sanctioning, a special meeting with public notice would be the process. **Commissioner Flint-Banks:** What is the process of discussion (ie. developer/GC). **Celina:** Similar to a monthly hearing and depending on volume of the agenda, we might be able to discuss during a regular monthly meeting, but the policy provides for a special meeting. **Commissioner Burton:** We want to partner and not have an adverse relationship. **Celina:** Thank you Commissioner Burton for Chairing and for how you opened up the meeting today. This is the last meeting for this year. Wishing all a happy New year! (Covid PSA). **Commissioner Cofield:** When will an official decision be made for the BEC Chair and do we know whose names are being considered? **Celina:** Should be finalized by next meeting - working with the Mayor's Dept. Feel free to reach out to me. Commissioner Flint-Banks was re-appointed (she was finishing out a previous Commissioner's term). Motion made to accept Director's report and adjourn – Commissioner Cofield motioned and Commissioner Flint 2<sup>nd</sup>. All I's.

**Meeting adjourned: 3:04**