



May 12, 2022

Boston City Council
1 City Hall Square
Boston, MA 02201-2043

Re: Concerns about the BPDA

Dear Councilors,

We write to you now to put our concerns as citizens on the record. Pier 5 Association Inc. is a local citizen group that has as its goal advancing the Environmental and Social Justice needed for our neighborhoods in the form of open green space for our communities and more specifically the restoration of Pier 5 in the Charlestown Navy Yard as open, waterfront public space for the community.

To that end, we have been endeavoring to work with the BPDA who holds title on behalf of the City to that property. As you are aware, the BRA now doing business as the BPDA has an over 70 year history of urban renewal in which our community has not been under served. During the Spring as a result of investigatory studies of the “sinkholes on the Charlestown Navy Yard Harborwalk and conditions in connection with Dry Dock 2 and the Pump House”, the BPDA engineers, GEI Consultants, determined that Pier 4 was in complete failure with most of the steel tube pilings (filled with unreinforced concrete) built in 1957, so corroded that the pilings are in grave danger of falling over. The Pier 4 corrosion was so extreme that the Courageous Sailing Center, a not for profit youth sailing program for 1000 children many from our most vulnerable neighborhoods, located on Pier 4, now has to be moved to other piers to continue to operate safely. Contrast, the well maintained, in good repair Pier 7 was built one year later than Pier 4, and has been restored and maintained by private residents. Even the simple, inexpensive precaution of installing sacrificial anodes (which protect the steel tubing from corrosion in sea water environments) was ignored by the BPDA.

The mission of the BRA was to renew blighted properties not to allow City owned properties to become blighted. Once blighted, the BPDA places the properties into the hands of developers to ‘solve the problem’. Coincidentally this generates revenue for BPDA. The BPDA’s handling of the Charlestown Navy Yard demonstrates that the BPDA has blighted Pier 4 and Pier 5 through its chronic failure to repair these piers during its over 47 years of ownership. The blighting occurs from the systematic failure to maintain these valuable assets until such time as the asset has catastrophic failure and needs to be repaired on an emergency and ‘ad hoc’ basis to the exclusion of planning for the fabric of the community. We are presently

witnessing the impacts of this chronic lack of maintenance in the present potential collapse condition of Pier 4. The BPDA paid for many Childs Engineering reports, yet systematically ignored Childs' recommendation for maintenance. The BPDA has collected approximately \$40 million in fees and rent from the Charlestown Navy Yard, since 2009, but the best we can determine, it has spent less than \$4M for snow removal, landscape, maintenance and repairs. This lack of stewardship leads to waste of the City's valuable assets to the detriment of the community.

The BPDA is now being forced to expend over \$9 million dollars on an emergency basis to repair Pier 4 to prevent the threat of lateral collapse. In dealing with this grave emergency, the BPDA has not commissioned soil borings to insure that the demolition and rebuilding of Pier 4 will not disturb potentially toxic sediments below the surface harbor floor sediment. If these toxins are disturbed, they may potentially pollute beautiful Boston Harbor that we spent billions of taxpayer dollars to clean. This 'emergency' characterizes the BPDA's standard operating procedure of short term 'ad hoc' thinking which ignores any action until the situation is catastrophic.

Of note is the fact that Pier 5 is also in grave need of repair. Our group has been endeavoring to bring community involvement, imagination and constructive plans for the restoration and rehabilitation of Pier 5 as open public waterfront space for the Charlestown community. This open public space is needed, especially in light of the proposed 11,000 additional residents that the BPDA pending projects in Charlestown will bring to our community. 3500 of these new residents will reside in the towers which were approved for at least 500 low income units adjacent to the Tobin Bridge which is a close 5 minute walk from Pier 5.

We need you to step in and advocate on behalf of the Pier 5 and the Charlestown community to urge the BPDA take action immediately. That way Pier 5 can be restored and rehabilitated in a creative and cost effective manner as open waterfront space for the community. First, we believe that economies of scale can be achieved to save money if Pier 4 and Pier 5 are rehabilitated together since the specialized project mobilization costs of barges and divers can be shared between the 2 piers and the bidding of a larger project based upon the restoration of both piers, will likely create a cost savings. Further, Pier 5 only needs to be restored to pedestrian capacity not the heavy duty capacity it was built for in WWII.

We have investigated and introduced the BPDA to the patented technology for pile wrapping of Quake Inc. This new technology will make the rehabilitation of Pier 5 as public open space cost effective example of technology and climate resilience which is a win-win situation and even more so if done in connection with the Pier 4 work. We have brought our professional backgrounds and creativity to advance the immediate restoration of Pier 5 so that we can prevent further deterioration of Pier 5 while using cutting edge marine technology to advantage.

Pier 5, in addition to providing much needed open space for the soon to be further overcrowded conditions of Charlestown, is water front open space needed for physical and mental health of our communities and more importantly for environmental and social justice. We note that the BPDA has privatized parts of Shipyard Park with a drinking establishment

which removes this area from public accessibility and structurally denies access to low income residents and others. Dedication of the entirety of Pier 5 to open public space, will remedy this BPDA open space privatization, this area of Shipyard Park to restore public open space to the community.

Pier 5 is also critical to our history. We are also acutely cognizant that Charlestown celebrates the 250th anniversary of the Battle of Bunker Hill and the American Revolution in a mere 3 years. Pier 5 is located on the site of the British landing and naval battle which were part of the Battle of Bunker Hill, and the shore where Paul Revere landed to warn the Colonialists that "The British are coming!".

With all of these concerns in mind, we have collected 3285 signatures from the community and visitors, undertaken a community survey and have held well received events to show case use of Pier 5 as public open space for the entire community and visitors from all over the world.

In terms of the BPDA, we have requested and had one meeting with the BPDA to share our information, assist the BPDA and to advance our goals for the use of Pier 5 as open public space. We had another meeting scheduled for May 11 only to have the meeting unilaterally cancelled by the BPDA at the last minute. The BPDA refused to meet unless we provided them with our engineer's report which we paid for with private donor funds so that we could confirm the conclusions of the BPDA engineer, Childs Engineering.

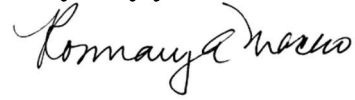
We are volunteers, we have taken our time, our resources to prepare and meet only to have the BPDA refuse to meet on a last minute and invented pretext. Unfortunately, this last minute pretextual cancellation shows the disregard that the BPDA has for community involvement and ideas. We are bringing our expertise and time and are rebuffed, cancelled and ignored. We need your assistance to make sure the community voices are heard.

We are relentless in our goal to accomplish our mission and achieve the vision of restoring Pier 5 to open public space for the community. The BPDA has admitted that it has neglected Pier 5 and that it has to restore Pier 5. We have spent time and effort, are engaging professionals to develop cutting edge technologies, concrete plans to make our vision a reality.

We need you as our City Council to support our efforts by advocating on our behalf to the BPDA. Our community deserves to be heard (as do all the communities of Boston) in relations to the BPDA. The BPDA is an agency in need of meaningful change. We applaud Mayor Wu's efforts to bring in a planner, to cause the BPDA to plan instead of react and ad hoc approve projects that benefit the BPDA more than they do the community.

Help us help our City, to make our City a more hospitable, healthy, and welcoming place for our residents that are in desperate need of open public spaces in especially in densely populated communities like Charlestown.

Very truly yours,



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