

Boston Mayor Wu announces members of steering committee on reforms to development review process

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Steve Samuels

BOSTON—Boston Mayor Michelle Wu announced the members of a steering committee of real estate and civic leaders to advise on reforms to [Article 80](#) of the [Boston Zoning Code](#) being undertaken by the Mayor’s Office and the Boston Planning & Development Agency (BPDA).

She announced her intention to create the committee during her State of the City speech last month as one piece of a comprehensive set of reforms to improve the planning and development process so Boston can meet its housing and

economic growth needs.

Article 80 refers to a section of the Boston Zoning Code adopted in 1996 to establish a more extensive review process for development proposals of more than 20,000 square feet or more than 15 dwelling units. Mayor Wu is undertaking the first comprehensive review of the process after nearly three decades to ensure greater predictability and consistency.

"I'm grateful to these leaders for lending their expertise and working with us to improve our processes," said Mayor Michelle Wu. "From reforming planning and updating our zoning code, to streamlining development review and strengthening compliance, we are taking action to set Boston on a course for sustainable growth so all our communities are included in the city's opportunities."

"Working with this group will be integral to comprehensively reforming planning and development in our communities," said Chief of Planning Arthur Jemison. "I am confident that those selected will bring a unique perspective and help the BPDA reform this process in a way that improves the process and delivers more resilient, affordable, and equitable development across the city."

The steering committee will include:

- **Joseph Bonfiglio**, Business Manager of the Massachusetts and Northern New England District Council since 2009. The Council comprises more than 25,000 represented workers, including laborers working in numerous aspects of the general construction trade.
- **Anthony D’Isidoro**, President of the Allston Civic Association. Among many other community roles, Tony also serves as Board President of the Veronica B Smith Multi-Service Senior Center, Inc., a member of the Allston Multimodal Project task force and Harvard Allston task force, and has served on a number of Impact Advisory Groups. He is a product of the Boston Public Schools both as a student and teacher, a small business owner, and author of a weekly community newsletter. As a community leader, organizer and activist, D’Isidoro advocates with the belief that empowering people can achieve great things to ensure a community that works for everyone.
- **Fernando J. Domenech, Jr.**, President of DHK Architects, where he has worked on community-based urban housing. Domenech has focused primarily on affordable housing for over thirty years, specifically on the revitalization of inner city neighborhoods through creative planning, imaginative urban design and architecture.
- **Colleen Fonseca**, Executive Director of the Builders of Color Coalition, where she is responsible for leading the development and expansion of programming to increase access and diversity in Boston’s commercial real estate sector. Prior to her role with BCC, she served as a Senior Advisor to Mayor Jorge Elorza on COVID Recovery and as the Director of Workforce Development and Economic Opportunity for the City of Providence. She currently sits on the Real Estate Finance Association (REFA) Board of Directors.
- **Beyazmin Jimenez**, Director of Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Culture for the Planning and Real Estate Department at Northeastern University. Jimenez is an urban planner and pro-housing organizer, formerly the Board President for Abundant Housing MA, an organization she co-founded in 2018. Her experience in housing policy and community development has led her to support resident engagement efforts at Madison Park Development Corporation in Roxbury, and lead statewide housing programs at CHAPA. She holds a Master’s in Urban Planning from Boston University.
- **Matthew Kiefer**, land use attorney at Goulston & Storrs. Kiefer’s practice focuses on obtaining site control and development approvals from public agencies for complex urban projects. He co-chairs the firm’s Climate Change Resilience Task Force. Kiefer serves on the Advisory Board and Management Committee of ULI Boston; he is the immediate past Chair of the Boston Municipal Research Bureau, which supports best practices in municipal governance; and he co-chairs the Council of Advisors of Historic Boston, a non-profit redeveloper of historic buildings.
- **Steve Samuels**, Founder and Chairman of Samuels & Associates, a Boston commercial real estate developer, property manager, and leasing company. Samuels serves on the Board of Trustees at The Park School on Building & Grounds Committee in addition to his Board of Trustees role at Emerson College.

- **Kairos Shen**, Executive Director of the Center for Real Estate at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. Prior to joining MIT, Shen worked at the then-BRA for 22 years, first as Boston's Chief City Planner, and then as the Director of Planning. He worked on the development guidelines for the Rose Kennedy Greenway, the planning for the South Boston Waterfront Innovation District, the refurbishment of Fenway Park, and the revitalization of Nubian Square.
- **Kirk Sykes**, Managing Director of Accordia Partners, LLC, a Boston based real estate investment and development company. He also serves on the Boston Civic Design Commission and is the Real Estate Executive Council Chairman for the Initiative for a Competitive Inner City. Sykes was formerly the head of an urban real estate investment fund called Urban Strategy America Fund, L.P. He was the Chairman of The Federal Reserve Bank of Boston Board.

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