

City of Boston BERDO Review Board  
Public Meeting Minutes  
Zoom Virtual Meeting  
August 25, 2025, at 4:30 pm  
[View recording here](#)

**Board Members in Attendance:** Stephen Ellis, Hessann Farooqi, Gail Latimore, and Reginald “Reggie” Stovell Jr.

**Board Members not in Attendance:** Jessica Boatright, Councilor Gabriela Coletta Zapata, and Lori Ferriss

**Staff Present:** Hannah Payne, Diana Vasquez, Aidan Callan, and Dr. Claudia Diezmartinez.

**Others:** Approximately eight (8) members of the public attended this meeting.

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### Call Meeting to Order

**4:34 pm:** A meeting of the Building Emissions Reduction and Disclosure Ordinance, hereafter referred to as (BERDO), within the Air Pollution Control Commission, was called to order on August 25 at 4:34 pm. This meeting was held virtually.

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### Roll Call

**4:38 pm:** The following BERDO Review Board members were in attendance: Acting Chair Stephen Ellis, Hessann Farooqi, Gail Latimore, and Reginald “Reggie” Stovell Jr.

The following Environment Department staff were in attendance: Hannah Payne, Diana Vasquez, Aidan Callan, and Dr. Claudia Diezmartinez.

**Others:** Approximately eight (8) members of the public attended this meeting.

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### First Agenda Item: Vote on Flexibility Measure Application

**4:36 pm:** D. Vasquez presented information and details about Boston Housing Authority (BHA)’s Building Portfolio application.

**4:39 pm:** City staff presented staff comments.

**4:41 pm:** Board Q&A Session

- R. Stovell asked for more information about the difficulty BHA faced with reporting all their buildings.
  - J. Wool explained that the City and BHA have worked collaboratively since the ordinance was updated, though aligning building and address data took

time due to differences in recordkeeping. BHA's portfolio, while older, has evolved over the past two decades with ownership changes and new unit development, so updating records took a back-and-forth effort. Now that submissions are current, future updates should move more smoothly.

- G. Latimore asked how BHA engages and informs tenants about the decarbonization work happening in the buildings, specifically in the Mildred Haley Development.
  - J. Wool answered that at that property, major work is underway, including retrofits of five buildings on the Heath Street side and demolition plus new construction on Lamartine Street. Because these are full-scale retrofits, not just energy upgrades, tenants have faced short-term relocation, requiring extensive outreach, meetings, and support. The project, strongly backed by the City, is delivering energy efficiency, comfort, accessibility, and modern standards, including updated kitchens and bathrooms. The first building is nearly complete, with tenants set to move back soon, and work will continue building by building to reduce disruption. Open space improvements, like a splash pad and recreation facilities, have also been added for residents.
- G. Latimore asked for specific examples of tenant input into capital plans and how the plans might have changed as a result of their input.
  - J. Wool answered that one example is that electrification projects bring major benefits, such as efficient heating and cooling, which tenants especially value since many currently lack proper air conditioning. However, construction impacts and communication remain critical; residents experience the full scope of disruption, not just one project, and want clear information about what's happening in their homes and communities. Even small design choices, like window or heating system changes, can deeply affect how tenants use and personalize their living space. The goal is to strengthen planning, communication, and feedback loops so that upgrades improve comfort while respecting tenants' homes.
- G. Latimore asked if there were examples of residents or the Youthbuild program getting employed to work on the decarbonization projects happening at BHA buildings.
  - J. Wool answered that BHA is using federal Section 3 to create resident job opportunities during construction projects by requiring contractors to hire public housing or Section 8 participants as outreach staff. Beyond that, BHA supports longer-term career pathways through programs such as Building

Pathways, union pre-apprenticeships, and collaborations with city programs like PowerCorps, which connect residents with green jobs and resiliency work. BHA is also exploring ways to link childcare provided by BHA residents with construction worker schedules, showing how employment efforts extend beyond construction to broader community needs.

- G. Latimore asked how BHA is complying with the Boston Jobs Ordinance and federal Section 3.
  - J. Wool explained that Section 3 hiring requirements are enforced on federally funded projects, while local Boston Residents Jobs Policy (BRJP) preferences cannot be applied to those contracts. However, BRJP does apply to public-private redevelopments, such as those at Mary Ellen McCormack and Charlestown, where private developers are required to comply. BHA does not have compliance statistics available at the time.
  - G. Latimore requested that the compliance statistics be shared when they become available.
- G. Latimore asked who operates the CHP and when the CHP decarbonization study will be completed.
  - J. Wool answered that Ticogen has operated the CHPs and has switched off the CHPs for the summer.
  - A. Abraha added that two sites will start their studies to decarbonize in about 2 weeks. A report will be ready in 2 months for the sites.
- G. Latimore asked what the full cost of electrification will be for BHA properties.
  - J. Wool shared that BHA shared that an electrification study by ARUP estimated costs in the billion-dollar range, comparable to BHA's existing deferred capital needs. The study broke down costs by building typology, revealing that for some properties, demolition and new construction are more viable than retrofits. While portfolio-wide expenses are in the hundreds of millions to over a billion, BHA is advancing projects, such as Mildred Haley, Franklin Field geothermal, a high-rise in Back Bay, and a garden-style retrofit in Jamaica Plain, to test electrification across different housing types. Funding remains the main barrier, not planning. In cases without prior electrification plans, like Lower Mills and Heritage, BHA has sought outside technical assistance with city support to chart viable pathways.

- H. Farroqi asked for a status update on the EPA Solar for All program funding and other federal funding sources.
  - J. Wool answered that BHA explained that while BHA historically focused on energy efficiency rather than renewables, it now has extensive solar plans at multiple sites across the city, including Mildred Haley, Heritage, Lower Mills, Spring Street, West Brook, and Codman Apartments. BHA was subawarded state funding to support this effort, but the EPA has sought to terminate the program. Despite this uncertainty, BHA is committed to expanding solar energy, both to accelerate adoption at its own properties and to help other housing authorities go solar more quickly. Even if that funding stream ends, BHA plans to push forward and scale up PV deployment.
- S. Ellis asked if there is a broader strategy for engagement with BHA tenants.
  - J. Wool answered that since 2020, BHA has tried multiple methods: holding meetings in every community, organizing regional sessions, and presenting detailed plans, but found that none fully met the need. Some meetings drew strong participation, while others had little turnout, and feedback highlighted the importance of more transparent communication about project goals, timelines, and construction impacts. BHA is now shifting toward more visual and summary-level communication, recognizing that effective engagement must include tenant input. BHA supports resident organizations, runs or contracts third parties to run elections where they don't exist, and works with a resident advisory board to review capital plans before HUD's formal process.
- S. Ellis asked for more information on how BHA has determined that paying RECs would be the best path for compliance to reach their emissions standards.
  - BHA's strategy is to prioritize on-site capital improvements that reduce air pollution while meeting resident needs, such as cooling in a warming city. BHA has pursued renewable energy contracts, explored virtual power purchase agreements, and modeled costs for Class 1 RECs in New England to identify least-cost compliance strategies. Historically, BHA has used off-site net metering contracts primarily for financial savings, improving property budgets, and enhancing resident services. BHA is now shifting toward contracts that blend financial and environmental benefits, ensuring that investments both reduce emissions and improve the quality of life for residents.

- S. Ellis asked if BHA has considered switching to Boston Community Choice Electricity (BCCE) to help with complying with BERDO.
  - J. Wool explained that BHA has almost all owner-paid utilities, which makes electrification less risky for residents since they won't directly face higher electricity costs compared to gas under the current rate structures. Historically, BHA has bulk-procured its power rather than relying on BCCE, though a few properties are enrolled in BCCE. Over the past few years, BHA has been exploring how to both secure operating savings that can be reinvested into buildings and move further into renewable energy beyond state minimums. BHA has been weighing whether it makes more sense to purchase the cheapest power and buy renewable credits separately, or to build renewable content directly into their energy purchases. Rate comparisons suggest that, as a commercial-scale buyer, BHA's procurement options differ from what's available to individual residents through BCCE.

**5:20 pm:** Board Member G. Latimore made a motion to approve Boston Housing Authority's Building Portfolio application with standard conditions and asked that BHA send additional information on BRJP compliance, the results of the CHP decarbonization study, and the status of the EPA Solar For All program funding. Board Member H. Farooqi seconded the motion. All board members in attendance (4) voted in favor. The motion carried at 5:22 pm.

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**Second Agenda Item: Discussion and Update on BERDO Reporting.**

**5:22 pm:** A. Callan presented an update on BERDO 2025 reporting.

**5:38 pm:** Board Q&A Session

- S. Ellis asked if any buildings have not reported their data for any of the years.
  - A. Callan answered that the City's noncompliance outreach focuses first on building owners who are completely unengaged, since those who reported in prior years but missed a deadline are easier to re-engage using existing contact and data. To address this, staff have even gone door-to-door, which has helped improve compliance rates. Condominiums remain the building type with the lowest compliance, largely because condo associations are often not taxable entities and lack centralized mailing addresses, making them harder to reach. Even when reached, compliance requires coordination among trustees or property managers, creating higher barriers. To help, the

city has developed a condo handbook to guide associations through the process, but condos continue to be the most challenging sector for reporting.

- H. Farooqi asked if the BERDO team is tracking when the drop-off points for engagement with building owners are.
  - A. Callan explained that the City tracks detailed points in the reporting process, which helps identify where building owners get stuck. For example, some submit their data through utilities and Portfolio Manager but stop at the step of sending it to a verifier, often due to the extra time or cost involved. Staff can see whether a building has reported in the past, dropped off in recent years, or claimed their building without following through. This level of transparency enables more tailored outreach, distinguishing between those who have never engaged and those who have stalled at specific steps, allowing support to be targeted to address the exact barriers owners face.
- R. Stovell asked which size condo associations are having the most difficulty with reporting and compliance.
  - A. Callan answered that the smaller condos that just meet the 15 unit threshold to be subject to BERDO are having the most difficulty.

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### **Third Item: Approval of Meeting Minutes.**

**6:01 pm:** The Review Board voted to approve the [August 11 Meeting Minutes](#). Board Member G. Latimore made a motion to approve the meeting minutes. Board Member R. Stovell seconded the motion. All board members in attendance (4) voted in favor. The motion carried at 6:02 pm.

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### **Fourth Agenda Item: Administrative Updates**

**6:02 pm:** D. Vasquez shared the following updates:

The number of flexibility measures received by the BERDO Team.

The Equitable Emissions Investment Fund applications have been shared with the Review Board.

The nomination process has been opened for Rashida Boyd's vacant seat, and the deadline has been extended to August 29. This nomination cycle is only open for qualified Community-Based Organizations.

The BERDO team shared more information about BERDO Fest, which will bring together building owners with decarbonization experts.

The next meeting is scheduled for September 8, 2025.

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### **Meeting Adjournment**

**6:17 pm:** Board Member G. Latimore made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Board Member H. Farooqi seconded. All board members in attendance (4) voted in favor. The motion carried at 6:18 pm.