

City of Boston BERDO Review Board
Public Meeting Minutes
Zoom Virtual Meeting
January 12, 2026, at 4:30 pm
[View recording here](#)

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

Board Members not in Attendance: Councilor Gabriela Coletta Zapata and Lori Ferriss.

Staff Present: Hannah Payne, Diana Vasquez, and Zengel “Ziggy” Chin

Others: Approximately fifteen (15) members of the public attended this meeting.

Call Meeting to Order

4:32 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 January 12 at 4:32 pm. This meeting was held virtually.

Roll Call

4:33 pm: The following BERDO Review Board members were in attendance: Chair Jessica Boatright, Stephen Ellis, Hessann Farooqi, Gail Latimore, and Reginald “Reggie” Stovell Jr.

The following Environment Department staff were in attendance: Hannah Payne, Diana Vasquez, and Zengel “Ziggy” Chin.

Others: Approximately fifteen (15) members of the public attended this meeting.

First Agenda Item: Hardship Compliance Plan Hearing

4:34 pm: D. Vasquez and H. Payne presented an overview of Hardship Compliance Plans (HCP) and solar.

4:42 pm: Commonwealth Zoological Corporation presented information and details about their short-term Hardship Compliance Plan application.

5:04 pm: City staff presented staff comments.

5:07 pm: Board Q&A Session

- J. Boatright asked why the Zoo is applying for a short-term HCP rather than a long-term HCP.

- E. Floyd explained that the short-term HCP was chosen as a starting point because it is simpler and allows for initial conversations about decarbonization, with the intention of developing a more detailed long-term HCP later.
 - H. Payne added that the BERDO team recommended a short-term HCP so the Zoo could complete additional analysis and planning needed to support a clear, credible long-term decarbonization strategy and emissions-reduction schedule.
- S. Ellis asked if there is any potential double-counting under the state's building performance standard that could occur if the Zoo uses the Stoneham Zoo's solar net metering credits for BERDO compliance.
 - H. Payne explained that there is currently no state requirement to report renewable energy use for large buildings. If such reporting is added in the future, staff would want to ensure that net metering credits are assigned only to the BERDO-covered property and not double-counted elsewhere.
- S. Ellis asked whether the March 2026 deadline is sufficient to complete a Level 2 ASHRAE audit.
 - J. Meyer answered that the audit was completed earlier this year, so the results are already available. By March, the Zoo can share an update showing which projects meet the eight-year payback threshold, which projects it plans to pursue in good faith, and how it intends to move forward.
- S. Ellis asked whether the boiler that failed in the winter of 2023 was near the end of its life or an unexpected malfunction.
 - J. Meyer explained that the boiler replacement occurred at the end of the boiler's useful life. While the need for replacement was known, boilers are costly, and evaluating new technologies requires time and study. The short-term HCP is needed to allow approximately three years to complete the necessary studies, as the Zoo did not have the extra time originally hoped for before the system failed.
- H. Farooqi asked for information regarding hiring policies for the decarbonization work that will be done at the Zoo.
 - J. Meyer said that the Zoo does not have a formal hiring policy, but they are interested in creating and implementing one.

- H. Farooqi asked for information about workforce development and hiring practices when the Zoo has the information available.
- G. Latimore requested more information about the 2025 energy audit.
 - J. Meyer explained that the 2018 energy audit was considered outdated, so an updated ASHRAE Level 2 audit was completed in early 2025. The audit identified about 4 recommended projects, all with substantial paybacks of 8 years or less, including some with paybacks of 1 to 3 years. These projects have been reviewed with executive leadership and are considered sound investments. In good faith, at least one or two projects are expected to be implemented within the next one to two years, with the remaining projects planned over the three-year timeframe, aligned with the fiscal year cycle.
- G. Latimore asked if the measures that are going to be implemented are a part of the Zoo's budget.
 - J. Meyer answered that capital planning slowed temporarily due to recent leadership changes and adjustments to internal budgeting workflows. All recommended projects are now slated for the new fiscal year, beginning in July, with planning to start in the coming months. Progress and spending will be reported through the regular annual reporting process.
- G. Latimore stated that she would like to see Minority Women Business Enterprises utilized for decarbonization work at the Zoo.
- R. Stovell inquired about the waste disposal method of the Teflon roof.
 - J. Meyer answered that it is still uncertain whether the existing roof will be removed or retained, as a study is still required and multiple options are being considered, including installing a new roof over the existing one.
- S. Ellis inquired about the disposal of the Teflon roof and its environmental implications.
- H. Payne explained that waste disposal is not within BERDO's jurisdiction.

6:04 pm: Chair J. Boatright opened a public comment period.

6:05 pm: Chair J. Boatright closed a public comment period.

6:12 pm: Board Member H. Farooqi made a motion to approve the Commonwealth Zoological Corporation's short-term Hardship Compliance Plan application with standard conditions, and City Staff recommended special conditions with the amendment of

striking “lifetime” from the Tropical Forest building’s roof study. Chair J. Boatright seconded the motion. Three (3) Board members voted in favor. Two (2) Board members abstained. The motion carried at 6:14 pm.

Second Agenda Item: Discussion and Vote on BERDO Regulations Update

6:18 pm: H. Payne presented details about the streamlined Short-Term Hardship Application.

6:29 pm: Chair J. Boatright proposed continuing the discussion and vote to the following meeting. There were no objections.

Third Item: Approval of Meeting Minutes.

6:31 pm: The Review Board voted to approve the [December 8 Meeting Minutes](#). Chair J. Boatright made a motion to approve the meeting minutes. Board Member G. Latimore seconded the motion. All Board Members in attendance (5) voted in favor. The motion carried at 6:31 pm.

Meeting Adjournment

6:31 pm: Board Member G. Latimore made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Board Member R. Stovell seconded. All board members in attendance (5) voted in favor. The motion carried at 6:32 pm.