

City of Boston BERDO Review Board
Public Meeting Minutes
Zoom Virtual Meeting
April 27, 2026, at 4:30 pm
[View recording here](#)

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

Board Members not in Attendance: none

Staff Present: Hannah Payne, Diana Vasquez, and Dr. Claudia Diezmartínez.

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

Call Meeting to Order

4:34 pm: A meeting of the Review Board for the Building Emissions Reduction and Disclosure Ordinance, hereafter referred to as (BERDO), was called to order on April 27 at 4:34 pm. This meeting was held virtually.

Roll Call

4:35 pm: The following BERDO Review Board members were in attendance: Chair Jessica Boatright, Stephen Ellis, Hessann Farooqi, Lori Ferriss, Gail Latimore, Reginald “Reggie” Stovell Jr, and Councilor Brian Worrell.

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

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

First Agenda Item: Hardship Compliance Plan Hearing for Institute of Contemporary Art (ICA)

4:36 pm: D. Vasquez presented an overview of Hardship Compliance Plans (HCPs)

4:36: The ICA presented information on their short-term Hardship Compliance Plan application.

5:06 pm: City staff presented staff comments.

5:10 pm: Board Q&A Session

- J. Boatright asked whether the upgrade plans outlined in the ICA's HCP are funded or whether fundraising will be needed.
 - K. Gifford explained that the ICA is actively pursuing multi-channel funding strategies to secure necessary capital for Building Automation System and facilities upgrades. Current efforts rely on a mixture of immediate and near-term grant opportunities to support these systems. Recognizing the inherent challenges of fundraising for capital projects, leadership is also integrating these facility upgrades as a dedicated priority in an upcoming fundraising campaign. This coordinated approach ensures that critical infrastructure needs remain a central focus of both the ICA's current development efforts and its long-term strategic planning.
- S. Ellis asked how the ICA calculated an emission standard of 11.3 for the proposed alternative emission standard in their HCP.
 - D. Vasquez explained that the proposed 11.3 emissions standard is calculated from the building's own reported emissions data over the past three years, using a self-benchmarking methodology previously recommended for unique buildings such as the Aquarium and the Zoo. This approach uses historical performance as a baseline. At the same time, projected future emissions are modeled with the BERDO emissions calculator to ensure targets remain realistic and aligned with the City's broader climate goals.
- S. Ellis asked if the new art installations would cause energy consumption to rise, since there are requirements for humidity and temperature levels for the art,
 - K. Gilford confirmed that the new art installations will have to be maintained to meet museum standards for humidity and temperature, but that the increase in energy consumption has been accounted for in the proposed emissions standard.
- H. Farooqi asked if the ICA has reported 2025 calendar year energy data already.
 - P. Rodríguez confirmed that the ICA has reported its data for the 2025 calendar year and is awaiting third-party verification.
- H. Farooqi asked what percentage of the ICA's operating budget the estimated amount of \$43,000 in ACPs would be.

- J. Regis answered that the ICA has a very lean staff, so the ACPs would be a large percentage of its maintenance and operating budget.
- H. Farqooi asked what emissions reduction improvements the ICA plans on making during the term of the HCP.
 - P. Rodríguez answered that instead of rushing to replace its aging equipment, the ICA is extending the life of its existing equipment and fine-tuning the system to run more efficiently. During mild weather, initial tests showed that simply opening vents to let in outside air, rather than running heavy-duty chillers, creates instant energy savings. By thoroughly adjusting the entire system, the ICA plans to lower temperature settings and improve humidity controls to reduce energy use further. Ultimately, this proactive tune-up will lower energy bills and keep the building running smoothly without the massive expense of a full equipment replacement.
- L. Ferriss asked whether the ICA has considered expanding the humidity and temperature ranges by a couple of degrees to reduce energy consumption.
 - P. Rodríguez answered that the ICA has partnered with the curatorial department to introduce flexible temperature and humidity settings for the building. While the adjustments are modest, even a two percent shift delivers notable energy savings for the climate control system. To safeguard the artwork, these environmental changes must be introduced gradually over a 24-hour period rather than all at once. These new guidelines are already being implemented to help safely reduce overall energy use.
 - L. Ferriss asked whether the ICA has calculated the energy consumption savings resulting from these changes.
 - P. Rodríguez answered that, since the reduction is fairly new, the calculations are not yet ready. By June 30, the ICA should have more data to calculate the energy saved.
- L. Ferriss asked whether, as part of knowledge sharing with other museums, the ICA has considered sharing information about the decarbonization and resilience measures it is implementing.
 - K. Gifford answered that the ICA plans to share its energy-saving strategies with other mid-sized museums once new grants are secured and the building automation system updates are complete. This effort builds on a previous presentation with the Green Ribbon Commission regarding operational protocols. Because mid-sized cultural institutions face unique

challenges compared to larger museums like the MFA or the Met, sharing these practical solutions will provide highly valuable insights to peers across the field.

- G. Latimore asked when the HVAC update study will be completed.
 - P. Rodríguez explained that the ICA has already begun a facility study, which is scheduled to be completed by June 30th. This study will point out exactly where the building is losing energy, how to tune up the existing climate systems, and where to find the biggest utility savings. The final findings will serve as a direct roadmap for the next phase of the project, which will focus on making the necessary physical repairs.
 - D. Vasquez added that the BERDO team plans to share an update on the study's results with the Board by March 1st, 2027. This specific deadline was chosen to align with the existing reporting timelines already required for the Zoo and Aquarium's special conditions. Grouping these dates together makes it much easier for staff to track the deadlines and progress for the City's various approved hardship compliance plans.
- G. Latimore asked how the estimated cost of deaerobionization upgrades compares to the cost of building the new building when the ICA originally moved to the Seaport.
 - K. Gifford answered that the ICA's previous fundraising campaign secured \$65 million over five years to construct the current building, which opened in 2006, based on designs from around 2002. At that time, architectural plans did not account for modern sea-level rise and climate resiliency data, meaning the building would be constructed differently today. Fortunately, the designers placed most of the heavy mechanical equipment on the top floor, which protects it from flooding. The team is now studying how to relocate the remaining first-floor mechanical equipment to fully adapt the structure to today's climate risks.
- R. Stovell commented that he encourages the ICA to hire local and women/minority-owned businesses to do the upgrade work.
 - J. Regis responded that Atlas, a women-owned business, was proud to collaborate on this decarbonization planning and implementation process. While the ICA does not currently have a formal policy regarding diverse suppliers, leadership is eager to discuss how it can expand outreach and include more diverse businesses in future large-scale projects.

- H. Farooqi asked if the ICA has any official policies or practices regarding equitable workforce development.
 - K. Gifford answered that while the ICA does not yet have a written policy, it actively prioritizes hiring local vendors, such as using Boston and East Boston services for watershed and cleaning needs. The team is highly interested in formalizing this commitment and is asking if the City can share an existing policy template or handbook example. Having a proven blueprint would enable the organization to adopt and implement an official local hiring policy easily.
 - P. Rodríguez added that the ICA is actively working with its HR department to integrate minority-owned enterprises into its operations. The museum has already transitioned its watershed contract to a small business and plans to shift its ongoing plumbing and electrical work to local, diverse vendors. The upcoming facilities report from Atlas, due June 30th, will provide a clear roadmap of upcoming projects, offering a prime opportunity to expand the use of these local contractors.

5:48 pm: Chair J. Boatright opened a public comment period.

5:49 pm: Chair J. Boatright closed a public comment period.

4:58 pm: Board Member S. Ellis made a motion to approve the Institute of Contemporary Art's short-term Hardship Compliance Plan application with standard conditions, and City Staff recommended special conditions. Board Member G. Latimore seconded the motion. All board members in attendance (7) voted in favor. The motion carried at 5:50 pm.

Second Agenda Item: Discussion on Proposed BERDO Regulations Update

5:51 pm: C. Diezmartínez presented information about the proposed 2026 BERDO Regulations updates.

6:00 pm: Board Q&A Session

- S. Ellis asked for an explanation of the retirement deadline for MA Class Renewable Energy Credits under BERDO.
 - C. Diezmartínez explained that under the proposed updates, RECs from the second quarter of 2026 are the final batch eligible for 2025 compliance. Because the trading window closes on December 15, 2026, building owners must purchase and retire these RECs by that date. While regulations

generally allow 30 days to submit new documentation to the City of Boston, all proof of retirement must be handed in no later than December 31 of that year.

Third Item: Approval of Meeting Minutes.

6:06 pm: The Review Board voted to approve the [April 13 Meeting Minutes](#). Board Member G. Latimore made a motion to approve the meeting minutes. Board Member H. Farooqi seconded the motion. All board members in attendance (7) voted in favor. The motion carried at 6:11 pm.

Fourth Agenda Item: Administrative Updates

6:11 pm: D. Vasquez shared the following updates:

No new submissions for flexibility measures received.

The BERDO team communicated to building owners that the reporting deadline has been extended to August 15, 2026.

The last BERDO In-Person Workshop this year will be on May 5 in Roxbury at the Bruce C. Bolling building.

The first Equitable Emissions Investment Fund Information Session was on April 15, and the slide deck and a Zoom recording are available on boston.gov/berdo-fund. There is also a Q&A log on the BERDO Fund website that records all questions received about the Fund so far this year.

The BERDO team is planning on joining Built Environment Plus at the Massachusetts Apartment Association Expo on May 7. BE+ has an exhibitor table there, and staff plan to join to raise awareness of BERDO and the resources we offer.

The BERDO team proposed forgoing the May 11, 2026, Review Board meeting due to a lack of agenda items.

The next meeting is scheduled for May 27, 2026.

Meeting Adjournment

6:14 pm: Board Member H. Farooqi made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Board Member G. Latimore seconded. All board members in attendance (76) voted in favor. The motion carried at 6:14 pm.