



BOSTON CITY COUNCIL

Committee on Planning, Development, and Transportation
Sharon Durkan, Chair

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REPORT OF COMMITTEE CHAIR

October 24, 2025

Dear Councilors,

The Committee on Planning, Development, and Transportation was referred the following dockets for consideration:

Docket #1353, Message and order for the confirmation of the reappointment of Norm Stembridge as a member of the Zoning Board of Appeal, for a term expiring May 1, 2028.

Docket #1354, Message and order for the confirmation of the appointment of Rob Steinberg as a member of the St. Botolph Architectural Conservation District Commission, for a term expiring June 20, 2026.

These matters were sponsored by Mayor Michelle Wu and were referred to the Committee on July 9, 2025.

Docket #1412, Message and order for the confirmation of the appointment of Celina Barrios-Millner as a Member of the Zoning Board of Appeal, for a term expiring May 1, 2028.

This matter was sponsored by Mayor Michelle Wu and was referred to the Committee on August 6, 2025.

Summary of Legislation

Docket #1353 is an Order regarding the reappointment of Norm Stembridge of 27 Gaston Street, #1, Boston, Massachusetts 02121, as a member of the Zoning Board of Appeal for a term expiring May 1, 2028, provided that members may continue to serve until a replacement member is appointed. Norm Stembridge is a neighborhood mayoral appointee and will serve as a primary member.

Docket #1354 is an Order regarding the appointment of Rob Steinberg of 246 W. Newton Street, Apt. 1, Boston, MA 02116 as a member of the St. Botolph Architectural Conservation District Commission for a term expiring June 20, 2026.

Docket #1412 is an Order regarding the appointment of Celina Barrios-Millner of 66 Crest Street, Boston, MA 02132, as a member of the Zoning Board of Appeal for a term expiring May 1, 2028, provided that members may continue to serve until a replacement member is appointed. Celina Barrios-Millner is an at-large mayoral appointee and will serve as an alternate member.

Information Received at Hearing

The Committee held a hearing on Thursday, October 23, 2025 to discuss Dockets #1353-1354 and #1412. The Chair explained that these dockets were for various appointments to the Zoning Board of Appeal and the St. Botolph Architectural Conservation District Commission. The Chair introduced Norm Stembridge, Rob Steinberg, and Celina Barrios-Millner who provided testimony regarding their appointments.



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Mr. Stembridge stated that he hopes that his reappointment is a way to continue his service to the City of Boston as a neighborhood mayoral appointee and it would be an extension of the volunteer work that he has done in the neighborhood of Roxbury combatting the negative impacts of urban renewal and displacement. He stated that he will stay clear of any conflicts real or perceived, and will listen strongly to the Inspectional Services Department, the City of Boston Planning Department, residents, and advocates to come to the best decisions that he and the board can make. When asked to describe his philosophy on zoning and land use in Boston, Mr. Stembridge highlighted the need for zoning reform and ongoing neighborhood rezoning efforts to combat the City's housing and affordability crisis. Regarding granting zoning variances, he stated that he will very carefully consider all factors involved especially where it will have impacts in neighborhoods that have historically experienced disinvestment.

Mr. Steinberg discussed his possible appointment to the St. Botolph Architectural Conservation District Commission by showing his appreciation to serve the City by enhancing the livability of the St. Botolph neighborhood while protecting historical preservation through the Commission. He stated that he graduated from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology obtaining a Masters Degree in Construction Management and a Masters in Business Administration. He has spent more than a dozen years as a construction project manager and discussed his understanding of the building trades and architectural cohesion. Mr. Steinberg discussed St. Botolph's history and architectural characteristics by highlighting the impressive artisanal mason work of the buildings in the neighborhood and the importance of preserving these characteristics.

Ms. Barrios-Millner discussed her possible appointment by emphasizing her past professional and advocacy work in the City of Boston. As a resident of Boston for the past 23 years, Ms. Barrios-Millner started her career as a community organizer which has brought her to all corners of the city and shined a light on Boston's rich resources and opportunities as well as disparities and uneven access to those resources. Following this work, she joined the City of Boston in various capacities including in the Office of Immigrant Advancement, Director of Equity and Inclusion under the Office of Economic Development implementing the City's Supplier Diversity program, and oversaw the Boston Employment Commission. Currently she is serving in the Urban Institute, a public research institution that is based in Washington D.C., stating that through this work she can bring insights of what other municipalities are doing through zoning efforts and inclusionary practices. She also serves on the Boston Landmarks Commission and the Highland Park District Architectural Commission. Ms. Barrios-Milner stated she will not only bring her own vision and values from her lived experience in the City of Boston but will also strongly take into account recommendations from the City's zoning and building experts as well as from the community.

Committee Chair Recommended Action

As Chair of the Committee on Planning, Development, and Transportation, I recommend moving the listed docket from the Committee to the full Council for discussion and formal action. At this time, my recommendation to the full Council will be that this matter **OUGHT TO PASS**.

Sharon Durkan, Chair
Committee on Planning, Development, and Transportation