

Office of Outdoor Advertising
Public Meeting

August 12, 2021

11:00 AM

State Transportation Building

10 Park Plaza

2nd Floor

Boston, MA 02116

(via Webinar)

Present:

John Romano, Executive Director

Office of Outdoor Advertising, August 12, 2021

1 P R O C E E D I N G S

2

3 JOHN ROMANO: Good morning, everybody.
4 My name is John Romano. I am the Director of Outdoor
5 Advertising for MassDOT. We are here for our August
6 12, 2021 Office of Outdoor Advertising hearing. Sorry
7 we're starting a few minutes late.

8 This meeting is being held virtually by
9 the June 16th Act extending certain COVID-19 measures
10 adopted during the State of Emergency, which runs
11 through April 1, 2022.

12 We are running this hearing by Zoom
13 platform.

14 Please note that this meeting is being
15 recorded, and we have our stenographer in attendance
16 who provides a transcript of the hearing, of the
17 meeting, as always.

18 This meeting is accessible to people
19 with disabilities and individuals with limited English
20 proficiency. If you filed a request to be available
21 today and did not receive it, please contact MassDOT's
22 Office of Diversity and Civil Rights at 857-368-8580
23 or massdot.civilrights@dot.state.ma.us.

24 Please note that accessible versions of

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1 the meeting materials have been previously posted to
2 the OOA website and will be referred to in the
3 meeting. A link to these documents is also posted in
4 the Q&A box. That's what we were working on and why
5 we're late in starting.

6 We are going to try to run this meeting
7 as close to our regular Outdoor Advertising hearing as
8 possible and it will be run in the same manner. I
9 will go through the agenda. The sign-in sheet,
10 obviously physically can't be signed, but by signing
11 up with the webinar, we will have a list of those who
12 are in attendance based on that. So, that will be the
13 sign-in part of the agenda.

14 On the screen, we will have the agenda
15 momentarily. What we will do is I will go through
16 each item. I will ask the questions of the
17 proponents, just like I do in the hearing when we are
18 in the office in-person at 10 Park Plaza.

19 Just so you know, everybody in the
20 public is currently muted and their cameras turned
21 off. If you would like to speak at some point during
22 the meeting when public comment is requested, you
23 should use the raise your hand function, which will be
24 described shortly. You can also put your questions or

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1 comments in the Q&A box.

2 You will have a chance to make
3 comments, just like you do in the regular public
4 hearing as we do at 10 Park Plaza. So, we will,
5 obviously, do the same type of thing.

6 Also, please note that you can provide
7 comments in writing to us by email as always.

8 For anybody who may be new, we do not
9 make any decisions at this actual hearing. Every item
10 is taken under advisement and decisions are made
11 usually within a few weeks, sometimes as early as a
12 week, but we will give time for write-in comments
13 through our email address, which is
14 OOAInformation@dot.state.ma.us.

15 You can send your comments in writing
16 there.

17 Also, we will have public comment at
18 the end of each item as we always do and then a final
19 chance for overall comments at the end of the agenda.

20 But we are going to start the meeting
21 now. As you can see on the screen, this is the August
22 12 public meeting for the Office of Outdoor
23 Advertising. And there's information there with the
24 Web ID, the passcode, and the dial-in number.

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1 Gerry, can you go to the next page?

2 This is some Zoom webinar platform

3 controls.

4 The little microphone symbol is your

5 dropdown menu for your microphone and speakers.

6 The camera box is a little rectangle,

7 if you would, which allows you to ask a question or

8 share a comment. That's the Q&A.

9 The hand signal is the raise your hand.

10 And the telephone, if you cannot access

11 the internet or have technical problems, you can call

12 into the meeting at 1-301-715-8592. Our Meeting ID

13 Number is 81369515358. The passcode is 000660.

14 Okay. Next, Gerry?

15 This is just a reminder to use the

16 raise your hand function to be unmuted for verbal

17 questions.

18 Use the Q&A feature to submit written

19 questions.

20 Please state your name before asking a

21 question. We ask that you make only one question at a

22 time, limited to two minutes so we can enable all to

23 participate.

24 If you are on the phone and you want to

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1 ask a question, dial *9. The host, which is Gerry
2 Kelleher, will call out the last three digits of your
3 phone number and then unmute your audio when it's your
4 turn to speak.

5 Okay. With that, we will move on with
6 the hearing.

7 Gerry, if you could put the agenda up?

8 GERARD KELLEHER: Yeah. Sure will.

9 JOHN ROMANO: Okay. We already talked
10 about the sign-in.

11 The first item on the agenda will be
12 the minute approval from July 8th.

13 Are there any comments, questions about
14 the June 8th regular session minutes of the Office of
15 Outdoor Advertising?

16 (No response.)

17 GERARD KELLEHER: I don't see any hands
18 raised.

19 JOHN ROMANO: I don't see any hands
20 raised.

21 And do we see any comments, Gerry, in
22 the Q&A? I don't. We just have the original one. No
23 open questions. Okay. With that, we will mark the
24 minutes approved.

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1 Okay. So, the first item on the agenda
2 after the approval of the minutes is an application
3 for a new license. That is going to be Bradford Rehab
4 Associates LP, 25 Railroad Square, Haverhill, MA.

5 Is there anybody here from the
6 proponent?

7 (No response.)

8 JOHN ROMANO: I do not hear any. The
9 contact is Michael Arcidi. And they're from
10 Haverhill.

11 It appears that everything is in order
12 paperwork-wise. Their W-9 is in. Their payment has
13 been made. Their application is in order.

14 So, we will -- does anybody have any
15 comments or questions on this application?

16 (No response.)

17 JOHN ROMANO: I don't see any hands up,
18 Gerry.

19 GERARD KELLEHER: I don't see any.

20 JOHN ROMANO: Okay. So, we will take
21 this under advisement.

22 Okay. The next one on the agenda, this
23 is a permit transfer from Coriander, Inc. to 345
24 Boylston Street Nominee Trust. They are transferring

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1 two permits, 2009013 and 2009014, 1030 Morrissey
2 Boulevard, Boston, MA.

3 Is anybody here from either of the
4 parties?

5 (No response.)

6 I'm not seeing anybody.

7 Okay. These are a simple transfer of
8 ownership.

9 Chris, did you do the inspection on
10 these?

11 CHRISTOPHER CHAVES: I did, John, yeah.

12 JOHN ROMANO: Okay. Can you give me a
13 field report on the inspection?

14 CHRISTOPHER CHAVES: Yeah. These are
15 existing two-sided static billboards facing the
16 southeast expressway, north and south. It's a
17 conforming board. There are no issues with this
18 transfer. Nothing in the area has changed. There are
19 no issues with this transfer.

20 JOHN ROMANO: Okay. Are there any
21 comments or questions from folks in attendance at this
22 time?

23 LYDIA QUICK: Excuse me, John. I'm
24 seeing a raised hand from Maria Lyons.

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1 JOHN ROMANO: Okay. One second. Okay.

2 Gerry, can you --

3 GERARD KELLEHER: Yes, I unmuted her.

4 Maria, go ahead.

5 JOHN ROMANO: Maria, go ahead.

6 MARIA LYONS: Thank you, Mr. Romano.

7 I just have a question. Is this the --

8 I believe this is the billboards on top of the Maaco
9 area where the Enterprise Cars. And when that
10 billboard went up, it was supposed to be a premises
11 billboard. And then I think they filed for an
12 application to have it be a commercial billboard. And
13 there was a huge question about whether it was too
14 close to another billboard, but that question was
15 raised too late so it all got thrown out and they got
16 their billboard. But when it comes for a transfer, do
17 those things get reconsidered?

18 JOHN ROMANO: No, a transfer is just a
19 transfer of ownership. Nothing changes as far as, you
20 know, I mean we review them to make sure if there is -
21 - if there were any nonconformities, which according
22 to our inspection there is none, the nonconformity
23 would just transfer from one owner to the other. But
24 we do not -- we do not do anything different with

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1 that. This is just an ownership transfer.

2 MARIA LYONS: Okay. But if it was too
3 close to another billboard, would you reconsider it?
4 I just want to know how the process works. I'm sorry
5 to waste your time.

6 JOHN ROMANO: Oh, no. You're not
7 wasting our time at all, Maria. That's what we're
8 here for.

9 If it had been too close, we would
10 identify it as a nonconforming structure, and that
11 nonconforming identity would transfer with the
12 ownership of the board.

13 MARIA LYONS: Okay. All right. Thank
14 you.

15 JOHN ROMANO: I also see a hand up from
16 Rachel Thurlow.

17 Gerry, can you please unmute Rachel?

18 GERARD KELLEHER: Jason? I turned it
19 over to Jason. Can you unmute?

20 JASON BEAN: Yes, give me a second.

21 GERARD KELLEHER: The
22 participants/attendees.

23 JASON BEAN: Okay.

24 GERARD KELLEHER: You got it? Go

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1 ahead.

2 RACHEL THURLOW: Thank you. Sorry.
3 Just a quick question. So are you saying if it's
4 nonconforming you can transfer it?

5 JOHN ROMANO: Yes, a transfer is just a
6 transfer of ownership. They're not doing anything
7 else. They're not changing anything with the board.

8 RACHEL THURLOW: Okay. But it was just
9 reported as conforming?

10 JOHN ROMANO: Yes.

11 RACHEL THURLOW: All right. So, again,
12 permits are just licenses. They shouldn't be
13 transferable if it's nonconforming. Just pointing out
14 the obvious.

15 Thank you.

16 JOHN ROMANO: So, they're not. So, a
17 permit is not a license. Licenses are not
18 transferable. Permits are transferable.

19 RACHEL THURLOW: I understand it's not
20 a license under the legal terms to get the license.
21 But, thank you.

22 JOHN ROMANO: Okay. Thank you for your
23 comments.

24 Any other comments?

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1 Maria, do you have another one or did
2 you just not put your hand down?

3 MARIA LYONS: Oh, I'm sorry. I just
4 put it down.

5 JOHN ROMANO: All right. I just want
6 to make sure we got them all.

7 All right. Seeing no other questions,
8 we will take this under advisement.

9 Thank you.

10 Okay. Next, this is also a permit
11 transfer. One second. This is Mansfield Outdoor, LLC
12 transferring to Shout Outdoor, LLC. These are Permit
13 Numbers 2013013 and 014. They are both on Newbury
14 Street in Peabody, Massachusetts.

15 Is anybody here from either company?

16 (No response.)

17 JOHN ROMANO: I'm starting to get a
18 complex today. No one is here.

19 Okay. So, all the proper paperwork is
20 submitted and payments.

21 Marc, did you do this inspection or
22 Chris? I forget.

23 CHRISTOPHER CHAVES: I did, John.

24 JOHN ROMANO: Okay, Chris, can you give

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1 me your field report on this?

2 CHRISTOPHER CHAVES: Yes. This is,
3 again, a two-sided static monopole facing Route 1 in
4 Peabody. It is a conforming billboard. There are no
5 issues, again, with this transfer of permit.

6 JOHN ROMANO: Any comments or questions
7 on this application from anybody in the audience?

8 (No response.)

9 JOHN ROMANO: I am not seeing any.
10 Okay. I will take this one under advisement as well.

11 Next on the agenda, so these are
12 applications -- these are 40 applications from the
13 MBTA. I'm going to do them in two batches.

14 Marc, you need to mute.

15 CHRISTOPHER CHAVES: Marc, you're
16 unmuted.

17 JOHN ROMANO: Marc. Thank you. Sorry.

18 These are 40 applications. These are
19 existing pieces of street furniture. Okay? And they
20 were under contract with the MBTA by J.C. Decaux, and
21 Intersection Media took over the contracts. So they
22 are repermitting them under Intersection Media. And
23 they are not new structures. Every one of these are
24 existing and have been existing for many years. So,

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1 there are no new locations in these. These are just a
2 new company that's under contract with the MBTA. So,
3 each one of these has been reinspected by my
4 inspectors. And each one of them are in the exact
5 location they were previously done.

6 So, I am not going to go through these
7 one by one. I am going to do them in two batches. I
8 will read the locations. If someone has a particular
9 question about a location, you can ask it. But I --
10 so the way I'm going to do it is there are six in
11 Boston, 17 in Chelsea, one in Quincy. So, those 24,
12 I'm going to do at one time.

13 Notification for these 24 locations was
14 sent to the mayor and the clerk of each of those three
15 cities on July 13, 2021 by my office.

16 Inspection was done on each of those by
17 my team of inspectors. And I will have, in this case,
18 I will have Chris Chaves -- Jason, excuse me -- Jason
19 Bean talk generally about all of these. But I am
20 going to read each of the locations very quickly just
21 so people know where they are. They are all listed
22 individually on the agenda, but I am still going to
23 read them.

24 So, the first set, Boston, is:

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1 MBTA Sullivan Station, Maffa Way and
2 Washington Street.

3 The second one is Sullivan Station,
4 Maffa Way and Washington Street.

5 The first one was Permit 2021SF001.
6 You may notice the new nomenclature of adding the "SF"
7 in between the numbers, SF being street furniture.
8 Okay. So, we decided to add that to help clarify the
9 difference between a piece of street furniture and a
10 regular billboard.

11 So, the next one is 2021SF002, also at
12 Maffa Way and Washington Street.

13 The third one, 2021SF003, also Maffa
14 Way and Washington Street.

15 The fourth one, SF004, same location.

16 MBTA Sullivan Station, SF005.

17 The last one, MBTA Sullivan Station,
18 SF006.

19 In Chelsea, we have 350 Broadway Street
20 SF007.

21 200 Arlington Street, SF008, also in
22 Chelsea.

23 266 Broadway, F009.

24 944 Broadway, F010.

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1 816 Broadway, F011.
2 708 Broadway, F012.
3 48 Washington Ave., F013.
4 154 Chestnut Street, F014.
5 Sorry, there's 17 of them in Chelsea.
6 1000 Broadway, F015.
7 1 City Hall Ave. in Chelsea F016.
8 45 Spruce Street, Chelsea, F017.
9 350 Washington Street, Chelsea, F018.
10 154 Chestnut Street, F019.
11 200 Arlington Street, SF020.
12 603 Broadway, SF021.
13 1 City Hall Ave., SF022.
14 855 Broadway Street, SF023.
15 650 Broadway, SF024. That's Everett.
16 548 Broadway, SF025, Everett.
17 Oh, sorry. I went too far. We're not
18 doing the other ones. The last one is for Quincy. My
19 apologies. MBTA Quincy Adams outside of Station Bus
20 Number 1, SF040. So, that's the 17 in Chelsea, six in
21 Boston, one in Quincy.
22 Is anybody here from Intersection
23 Media?
24 RACHEL BELL: Hi, John. Yes.

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1 JOHN ROMANO: Hi. How are you?

2 RACHEL BELL: This is Rachel Bell.

3 There are many of us who have joined under her name.

4 So, she's also here, too.

5 JOHN ROMANO: Okay. So, Rachel, so

6 thank you for being here.

7 Rachel, could you just spell your name

8 for the stenographer, please?

9 RACHEL BELL: Sure. It's Rachel, R-a-

10 c-h-e-l. And the last name is spelled B as in boy, e-

11 l-l.

12 JOHN ROMANO: Okay. Thank you.

13 Is there anybody here representing any

14 of the three municipalities that I noted, Boston,

15 Chelsea, or Quincy?

16 (No response.)

17 JOHN ROMANO: Hearing or seeing none.

18 Are any abutters present for any of

19 those cities or towns of the locations that I read?

20 (No response.)

21 JOHN ROMANO: I'm not seeing any.

22 Anybody from the District Office on any

23 of these?

24 (No response.)

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1 JOHN ROMANO: None.

2 Traffic Operations is not applicable
3 because these are not digital.

4 Other notifications are not applicable
5 for street furniture.

6 Also, so in each case with these, we
7 have received sign-off from the city or town, Boston,
8 Chelsea, and Quincy.

9 Is that your understanding, Rachel?

10 RACHEL BELL: Yes, sir.

11 JOHN ROMANO: Yes. And we have for
12 each application, I have the appropriate sign-off. I
13 reviewed each application in Boston, Chelsea, and
14 Quincy. They have each been appropriately signed off.
15 I have received those. So, thank you.

16 Do you have anything that you would
17 like to add to any of the applications at this time in
18 those three towns/cities?

19 RACHEL BELL: No. Thank you.

20 JOHN ROMANO: Okay.

21 JASON BEAN: Hey, John, we have a
22 raised hand, Rachel Thurlow.

23 JOHN ROMANO: Okay. We'll get to you,
24 Rachel. Thank you. We're not taking comments at this

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1 point.

2 Jason, can you give your inspection?

3 JASON BEAN: Yes. As John explained,
4 that these were all existing structures. Here's an
5 example, which we'll get to here. Actually, I'll give
6 you one from Chelsea. Sorry. Bear with me for a
7 second here.

8 So this is an example of the batch that
9 John just read through. This is an existing
10 structure. And they all got new numbers with the SF
11 to signify street furniture.

12 And, John, there are no issues with
13 these. They do have some exemptions to parks and
14 spacing. So, at this time, there's no issues with
15 these for this batch.

16 And so as you see in the picture, this
17 is what they look like, a general idea of all of them.

18 Thank you.

19 JOHN ROMANO: Okay. Thank you, Jason.

20 Okay, at this time, Rachel, you can --
21 we're taking public comment now in general on all 24
22 of these applications. So Rachel, go ahead.

23 RACHEL THURLOW: Thank you.

24 I would just like to point out that the

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1 cumulative effect of these signs on the public space
2 is an abomination. And I would ask the MBTA and its
3 partners to consider being better neighbors in the
4 future.

5 Thank you.

6 JOHN ROMANO: Thank you for your
7 comment.

8 Okay. Any other questions, comments,
9 or concerns on these?

10 (No response.)

11 JOHN ROMANO: Okay. Seeing none with
12 this batch, we will take this batch under advisement
13 and get back to you, Rachel.

14 We will now do a similar exercise. In
15 the same fashion, we will go through 12 of these in
16 Everett and four in Malden.

17 So, again, Rachel, just for the record,
18 your name for the stenographer.

19 JASON BEAN: I need to unmute her.
20 Give me one second, please.

21 JOHN ROMANO: Okay.

22 JASON BEAN: What was her last name,
23 Rachel?

24 JOHN ROMANO: Rachel Bell.

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1 RACHEL BELL: I'm sorry. There are
2 multiple Rachels. Otherwise, I would have --

3 GERARD KELLEHER: They're all signed in
4 under the same name.

5 JASON BEAN: Yeah.

6 RACHEL BELL: Yeah, so it's Rachel, R-
7 a-c-h-e-l, and the last name is Bell, B-e-l-l.

8 JOHN ROMANO: Thank you, Rachel.

9 So these are now for -- we have permits
10 for Everett and there's four in Malden:

11 650 Broadway, SF024.

12 548 Broadway, SF025.

13 563 Broadway, SF026.

14 390 Broadway, SF027.

15 335 Broadway, SF028.

16 405 Broadway, SF029.

17 405 Broadway, SF030.

18 2401 Revere Beach Parkway, SF031.

19 2402 Revere Beach Parkway, SF032.

20 88 Main Street, SF033.

21 418 Broadway, SF034.

22 888 Broadway, SF035.

23 Then we go into Malden.

24 It's Malden Center Station, SF036.

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1 These in Malden are all at Malden
2 Center Station. So, they are SF035, 36, 37, and 38,
3 and 39.

4 Okay. So those are the 16 in those two
5 cities.

6 Are there anybody representing Everett
7 or Malden here today?

8 (No response.)

9 JOHN ROMANO: Okay. Seeing none.

10 Are there any abutters here of those
11 two cities with these locations?

12 (No response.)

13 JOHN ROMANO: Okay. Not seeing any.

14 Anybody here from the MassHighway
15 District Office?

16 (No response.)

17 JOHN ROMANO: Not seeing any.

18 Traffic Operations is not applicable as
19 these are static.

20 Again, abutter notice is not applicable
21 for street furniture.

22 And, also, again, Rachel, same
23 question. All 16 of these applications were signed
24 off by the appropriate person in the City of Everett

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1 and the City of Milan, is that correct?

2 RACHEL BELL: Correct.

3 JOHN ROMANO: Yes. And we did review
4 each of your applications. And we did make sure that
5 each one of them were appropriately signed by the
6 appropriate person with the appropriate box checked
7 off on the application for each one. So, thank you
8 for that.

9 With that, I will ask my inspector,
10 again, to just give -- Jason, give a quick review of
11 these from the field.

12 JASON BEAN: Yeah. Thank you, John.

13 This is an example in Everett at 650
14 Broadway. It will face Broadway. So, you can see in
15 the picture, these are all existing structures, and
16 also getting a new application number with the SF
17 regarding the street furniture.

18 As with street furniture, there's some
19 exemptions with parks and spacing. And so this -- all
20 these sites here have no issues.

21 And I think that's it. Thank you very
22 much.

23 JOHN ROMANO: And, as you note on
24 these, many of these are bus shelters, you know, so

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1 they serve, obviously a public purpose. They're not
2 just an advertising panel out there. They're an
3 actual bus shelter in many locations. Some of them
4 are just advertising panels, but many are bus
5 shelters.

6 JASON BELL: It was all shelters.

7 JOHN ROMANO: Yeah. Rachel, is there
8 anything you would like to add to these applications
9 at this time?

10 RACHEL BELL: Not at this time. Thank
11 you.

12 JASON BEAN: John, we have a question
13 and answer from John Bookston. "Did MBTA inform OOA
14 that there is an electric billboard within 1,000
15 feet?"

16 JOHN ROMANO: I'm not sure how that's
17 relevant to these applications, so we'll get back to
18 that question.

19 Does anybody have any questions
20 relative to these applications?

21 (No response.)

22 JOHN ROMANO: Great. Seeing none, we
23 will take these all under advisement and we will get
24 back to you.

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1 Now, the last item on the agenda, or
2 new items I should say. We have an application from
3 the Massachusetts Bay Transit Authority. This is
4 Permit Number 2021D015, D016, 274 Southampton Street,
5 Rear.

6 So, notice was sent -- so, this was
7 originally going to be heard in June. It got
8 postponed at the proponent's request. And so notice
9 was resent to the mayor and the clerk of the City of
10 Boston, July 12, 2021.

11 Is the applicant present?

12 ELIZABETH WINTERS RONALDSON: Yes,
13 Elizabeth Winters Ronaldson.

14 JASON BEAN: John, we have a raised
15 hand from -- let's see here -- Martyn Roetter. Pardon
16 me if I --

17 JOHN ROMANO: We will get the public
18 comment at the appropriate point in the hearing.

19 Okay. Is there anybody here
20 representing the municipality where the sign is being
21 proposed?

22 (No response.)

23 JOHN ROMANO: So, before we get to
24 abutters and to others, I'm going to -- I want to

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1 explain something that's going to probably help
2 clarify some of the questions, and will probably
3 generate some more, which is fine, as it is what it
4 is.

5 So this morning, I received a bunch of
6 questions about how we could be accepting the
7 application for a board that's near another existing
8 board that's less than 1,000 feet away. There is no
9 other existing board that's 1,000 feet away. This is
10 that board. The MBTA jumped the gun and built this
11 board before they were permitted to do so. So, the
12 digital board that you all see out there near the
13 storage unit is this application. So, there's only
14 one board. Okay?

15 So, I hope that answers the question
16 that was put in the chat about why is there a board
17 that's less than 1,000 feet away from this
18 application. I hope that answers Rachel's question
19 and Maria's question this morning about why is there a
20 board that's out there that's not on our map. The
21 board's not on the map because it's this board and it
22 hasn't been permitted yet.

23 At some point later on, if the MBTA
24 wants to comment on why they jumped the gun and built

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1 the board, then can. You guys can ask all the
2 questions you want about that. I'll do my best to
3 answer them. But that is the reason why there is a
4 board out there that's not on our map, because it's
5 not permitted yet. That's why it's not listed on our
6 board with a permit number because it hasn't been
7 issued the permit numbers yet. Okay? And so we are
8 proceeding.

9 The MBTA is looking to get that board
10 permitted. They know that they jumped the gun on it.
11 That has been corrected internally with the MBTA and
12 with MassDOT. And we are attempting to move forward.
13 And I know that's not the greatest situation, but we
14 will treat this as if the board, you know, wasn't
15 there. And if it turns out that this board cannot be
16 built, you know, is not permitted correctly, we will
17 deal with that going forward.

18 So we will answer your questions
19 shortly. And there is time for abutter comment at the
20 end. We will take all your comments and all your
21 questions, and either myself or the MBTA will do our
22 best to answer them.

23 Elizabeth is here from the MBTA and
24 we'll do our best to answer those.

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1 So but that is why people think that,
2 and I didn't want people to think that I wasn't
3 answering them. But I was going to answer it at this
4 time, regardless of whether you asked it or not. So,
5 that the situation that is presented with me, and we
6 are going to move forward with that.

7 So, with that stated, are there any
8 direct abutters to this?

9 (No response.)

10 JOHN ROMANO: Okay. I don't see any
11 direct abutters.

12 Is there anybody from the MassHighway
13 District Office?

14 (No response.)

15 JOHN ROMANO: Is there anyone present
16 from MassDOT Traffic Operations?

17 (No response.)

18 JOHN ROMANO: I do have a memo from the
19 State Traffic Engineer's office. And, as the MBTA has
20 been notified, it will be required to do a traffic
21 study for this for our consideration. A traffic study
22 will be done -- the pre-studies are done typically
23 with a year -- the previous year's previous data that
24 basically request the study. However, due to COVID,

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1 over the last year, year-and-a-half, any traffic
2 studies that we requested, we are asking them to use
3 2019 data before that. And so their traffic -- we
4 will spell that out for them.

5 I can re-explain this to you if you
6 have any questions, but we will get you that later
7 tomorrow. And you will be required to analyze data
8 prior to 2020 because COVID-related traffic will not
9 suffice. And that's coming straight from the Traffic
10 Engineer's Office. So, we will get you the required
11 traffic study information.

12 Okay. Lizzie, these are questions for
13 you, as the MBTA, to answer.

14 Was certified mail notice to abutters
15 sent out by you at least 30 days prior to submitting
16 your application to my office?

17 Can you guys unmute Elizabeth Winters?

18 JASON BEAN: Yes, I'm trying to.

19 ELIZABETH WINTERS RONALDSON: I'm not
20 able to answer that question but can happily touch
21 base with you offline.

22 JOHN ROMANO: You don't know if you
23 guys sent out abutter notices?

24 ELIZABETH WINTERS RONALDSON: We did.

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1 I can confirm we did.

2 JOHN ROMANO: I do have copies of the
3 post office receipts. You did send them.

4 ELIZABETH WINTERS RONALDSON: Thank
5 you.

6 JOHN ROMANO: And I do have a copy of
7 the letter.

8 Have you received any written comments
9 in support or in opposition of your application?

10 ELIZABETH WINTERS RONALDSON: Not
11 personally.

12 JOHN ROMANO: I can tell you that my
13 office has received letters of opposition from several
14 community groups, several individuals, and the
15 following elected officials: City Councilor Frank
16 Baker, City Councilor Ed Flynn and Kenzie Bok; State
17 Representative David Biele; Senator Nick Collins; and
18 I believe that's it for elected officials.

19 I am not going to go through and read
20 all of the letters, but I have every letter that
21 everybody sent me, every email, including all of the
22 ones that were sent this morning. They're all part of
23 the file for this application, and we will get those
24 to the stenographer and they will be part of the

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1 record for this application.

2 As far as special permit or variance,
3 as we both know, the MBTA is exempt from local zoning
4 and did not need a special permit or variance from the
5 city of Boston. Is that correct?

6 ELIZABETH WINTERS RONALDSON: That's my
7 understanding, yes.

8 JOHN ROMANO: Do you have anything else
9 you would like to add to your application at this
10 time.

11 ELIZABETH WINTERS RONALDSON: Nothing
12 else to add. Thank you.

13 JOHN ROMANO: Chris Chaves, my
14 inspector, can you please give your report?

15 CHRISTOPHER CHAVES: Yes, thank you,
16 John.

17 This is a two-sided electronic
18 billboard facing the southeast expressway. There are
19 two businesses within 500 feet of this location.
20 Also, there are no other electronic signs within 1,000
21 feet on either side of the roadway of this location,
22 as well as no statics within 500 feet. This location
23 meets the field criteria for the electronic sign.

24 JOHN ROMANO: Okay. Great. Thank you.

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1 So, now with that, one second here, we
2 will take public comment. I know I see a bunch of
3 hands raised. Let me see. Okay. I am going to try
4 to go in the order that we had seen them before. So,
5 I know earlier, Marty Roetter had his hand up. So
6 let's go with Marty first. Martyn Roetter. Martyn,
7 go ahead. Martyn, can you hear us? He's unmuted.
8 All right. We'll come back to him.

9 How about John Bookston?

10 Gerry, can you make sure they're all
11 unmuted? They say they're unmuted. You can't hear
12 me?

13 GERARD KELLEHER: I don't know. I
14 flipped it back from Jason, and I don't have the
15 unmute capability. Do you want to take it back,
16 Jason?

17 JASON BEAN: All right. Hold on.

18 JOHN ROMANO: Can you hear me, Gerry?

19 GERARD KELLEHER: Yeah.

20 JOHN ROMANO: All right. Jason, can
21 you try and unmute?

22 JASON BEAN: Yeah.

23 JOHN ROMANO: All right.

24 JASON BEAN: What was the -- who's the

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1 guy we're after right now?

2 JOHN ROMANO: Martyn Roetter.

3 Let's try Rachel. Are you unmuted?

4 RACHEL THURLOW: Hi.

5 JOHN ROMANO: Yeah, I can hear Rachel.

6 RACHEL THURLOW: Yeah, okay. Yeah, I
7 can hear you. Hi, again.

8 Why is this billboard on in advance of
9 getting a permit? You have a practice generally
10 elsewhere that billboards would be turned off while
11 these things are cured. So that's my first question.

12 Secondly, the fact that one MassDOT
13 agency is seeking a cure from another MassDOT agency
14 here is highly inappropriate. This needs to be
15 retracted. There's too many conflicts of interest
16 here to make this even tolerable.

17 Three, why wasn't this included in the
18 notice on the agenda that they just put this up, and,
19 you know, just in August? That's unconscionable.

20 Next, why is the MBTA and everyone else
21 so focused on this area? We have serious light equity
22 issues in the Dorchester/South End issue. This area
23 is inundated. The whole area looks like crap. And
24 this is all on you.

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1 The MBTA can go put digital billboards
2 a mile south of Milton, three miles north in
3 Winchester, head out the 95/90 interchange. There's
4 some great spots for digital billboards elsewhere.
5 Please consider them. This is unconscionable.

6 I really ask you, MBTA, to look at your
7 practices. This is just terrifying. And you please
8 need to stop. Thank you

9 JOHN ROMANO: Thank you, Rachel.

10 At the end of the comments, so,
11 Elizabeth, from the MBTA, I'm not sure if you want to
12 comment at all. I will give you an opportunity either
13 in between or at the end. It's up to you. I don't
14 know. You may not want to say anything. You're not
15 required to. But I will give you an opportunity if
16 you want to make any comments.

17 So let's try Marty or John Bookston.
18 Are you able to speak now?

19 JASON BEAN: Yeah, we've got Martyn
20 Roetter coming up right now.

21 JOHN ROMANO: Okay, Martyn.

22 MARTYN ROETTER: All right. Can you
23 hear me now? Thank you very much, John. I appreciate
24 it.

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1 JOHN ROMANO: Yes. Sorry about the
2 delay there, Martyn.

3 MARTYN ROETTER: No, no problem. Thank
4 you also for explaining the situation legally and with
5 respect to the distance between this billboard and any
6 others.

7 Nevertheless, I would like to make the
8 point, I don't think the MBTA appreciates the
9 intensity, breadth, and depth of opposition, not to
10 the MBTA, but to digital billboards, in residential
11 areas throughout Boston. And that gets -- it gets me
12 to a basic point here. What the MBTA is risking by
13 pursuing this initiative is, first of all, that, of
14 course, it creates in the minds of those of us who
15 look at digital billboards, the threat that this will
16 be a precedent for digital billboards to spread like
17 kudzu throughout Boston. And that is terrifying.
18 They're entirely inappropriate in areas where they
19 will affect residents and residential buildings. They
20 are not a simple upgrade from existing static
21 billboards. Their impact is very, very different.
22 It's like comparing automobiles to horseless
23 carriages.

24 I'll note, by the way, with respect to

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1 traffic, that already traffic at some times, and in
2 some places, has reached basically pre-pandemic
3 levels. So the threat to public safety that is one of
4 the consequences of digital electronic billboards will
5 certainly be there as soon as it, you know, if it
6 indeed becomes approved, whether or not or for however
7 long the pandemic continues, at least in its current
8 state.

9 Now, the MBTA is suffering already from
10 a number of hits to its reputation. In fact, I saw a
11 slogan the other day, which was along the lines of if
12 the green line doesn't get you, the digital billboards
13 will. So, I really urge the MBTA to think seriously
14 about its reputation. It seems to me that its pursuit
15 of digital billboards violates its mission, which is
16 to provide benefits to the communities for whom it
17 provides services. This does not for all the reasons
18 that I and many others have said. So, I really urge
19 the MBTA to withdraw this application and to make it
20 quite clear that, in fact, it will not be pursuing
21 other applications at other places throughout Boston,
22 including in the neighborhood where I live, where it
23 has property that enable it to say, "Oh, we're exempt
24 from municipal zoning regulations," which are quite

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1 explicit in what they say about where electronic
2 billboards are to be allowed and where they are to be
3 prohibited.

4 Thank you very much.

5 JOHN ROMANO: Thank you, Martyn.

6 Okay. So, let's next go to John
7 Bookston, and then we'll go to Maria Lyons.

8 John?

9 JASON BEAN: It says that he's using an
10 older version of Zoom, so I need to make him a
11 panelist. Is that okay?

12 JOHN ROMANO: Yeah, sure.

13 JASON BEAN: John, you're on.

14 JOHN BOOKSTON: Can you hear me now?

15 JOHN ROMANO: We can hear you, John.

16 JOHN BOOKSTON: Thank you.

17 The first question that comes up about
18 you're saying that MBTA jumped the gun means that you
19 have an obligation to enforce the law, which says they
20 are not allowed to have a billboard that's not
21 approved by the OOA.

22 Second, I would ask the OOA to have an
23 investigation. If MBTA jumped the gun on this one,
24 they may well have jumped the gun on other locations.

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1 And I believe that a public record should be made of
2 the locations where MBTA electronic billboards are
3 located and whether or not they had your permission.

4 In the meantime, there is no question
5 that this billboard is currently illegal, will be
6 illegal until a traffic study is done and the OOA has
7 an opportunity to either approve or disapprove it.
8 And, in the meantime, it should be blank, whether that
9 means covered with a tarpaulin or turned off.

10 Thank you very much.

11 JOHN ROMANO: Thank you, John, for your
12 comments.

13 We'll go to Maria Lyons next. Can you
14 unmute her, please?

15 JASON BEAN: Yeah.

16 MARIA LYONS: Hello. Thank you. A
17 couple of things. I'll try to be very quick.

18 I'm not a resident of that particular
19 area. I am a resident of Dorchester. But I drive
20 that area every day to and from work. And it's
21 beginning to look like a Las Vegas Strip. I mean it's
22 just these signs are totally distasteful, ugly, the
23 colors, everything. What happened to beautify
24 America? What happened to Boston being a world-class

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1 city? This doesn't look like a world-class city. So
2 I'm hoping that this board will refuse all further
3 digital billboards because they're just making our
4 city look totally ugly. This is one of the
5 entranceways in and out. And I hope and pray that you
6 don't continue this down into Dorchester. You know,
7 somebody said, "Why can't you go here, and there, and
8 there?" You know, have you tried putting one of these
9 up in Hingham center or Scituate Center? I'd love to
10 see how that goes.

11 But so the other point, I'm glad
12 there's going to be a safety study because driving
13 these roads, I hope the safety inspectors drive it
14 back and forth and back and forth because it's
15 treacherous. There are multiple entrances and exits.
16 There are dedicated exits that people need to get away
17 from. There are entrances to HOV lanes and exits from
18 HOV lanes that people need to get away from. So the
19 whole time you're traveling from, say, I come off the
20 exit from the turnpike to Columbia Road, cars are just
21 going back and forth across the road from right to
22 left to left to right. And the same thing in the
23 morning going the other way. It is a treacherous
24 piece of roadway. And these digital billboards are

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1 distracting. That's why they make money because they
2 distract you. So it's a safety issue and an aesthetic
3 issue. They should not be there.

4 And I noticed that billboard before
5 school ended -- I'm a teacher -- in the spring. And I
6 thought where in the world did that come from? And
7 somebody told me, "Oh, it's MBTA. They can do
8 anything they want." And so I kind of forgot it, and
9 then I wasn't traveling on the road all summer. But
10 so I'm not surprised that this is the one that this
11 permit is coming up.

12 But this is -- this is unconscionable.
13 It shouldn't have happened, and they should be told to
14 take it down.

15 Thank you very much.

16 JOHN ROMANO: Thank you, Maria.

17 Next, we'll go to Susan Eastman and
18 then Ford Cavallari.

19 JASON BEAN: I'm not seeing -- there
20 she is. Okay, Susan.

21 SUSAN EASTMAN: I'm actually all set.
22 It was a mistake. Sorry about that.

23 JASON BEAN: No worries.

24 JOHN ROMANO: Thank you.

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1 All right. Next is Ford.

2 JASON BEAN: Okay, Ford, here you go.

3 FORD CAVALLARI: Great. Hi. Thank
4 you, Director Romano and everyone else. My name is
5 Ford Cavallari. I'm the Chair of the Alliance of
6 Downtown Civic Organizations, which is the alliance of
7 the ten largest neighborhood associations downtown
8 Boston.

9 And there have been a lot of good
10 comments made, but I just have to get this off my
11 chest. The MBTA jumping the gun and lighting this
12 billboard well before any process is sort of an
13 allegory of the relationship that the MBTA has
14 deteriorated into with the neighborhoods of Boston.
15 Many of us who have been in Boston for a long time
16 really want to have an excellent urban transit
17 authority, like London has, like Singapore, even New
18 York City, that's focused on urban transit. Instead,
19 we have an authority that seems to be hell-bent on
20 putting electronic billboards and whatever else they
21 can put on their own lands, totally going around
22 Boston's city process for zoning, which one can argue
23 they have the legal right to do. But as a neighbor,
24 they're not doing a very good job, as Martyn Roetter

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1 said, about getting their reputation any higher.
2 Indeed, most of us look at the MBTA not as an
3 excellent urban transit authority but as a
4 deteriorating substandard provider of diesel-only
5 commuter train, by the way, the only top 10 commuter
6 rail market on the East Coast that has no
7 electrification. And it is ironic, indeed, that this
8 billboard sits on right of way of the Fairmont Line,
9 which is a rail line, which should have been
10 electrified years ago, that should be providing high-
11 quality, high-acceleration, urban transit for folks in
12 the Dorchester community and in a community of color,
13 90 percent population of color in those communities.
14 And sure enough, the MBTA does nothing for that
15 community, but rather decides that they want to take
16 advantage of the fact that they own the right of way,
17 and that they want to put an electronic billboard up.

18 We, the downtown organizations, are
19 tired of this behavior of the MBTA. And we're going
20 to start getting extremely vocal about it because we
21 think the organization is worse than broken at this
22 point.

23 So my request is I think it's illegal,
24 obviously, that they lit the billboard up. I think

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1 all of the revenues that have been gathered from that
2 electronic billboard need to be put in an escrow
3 account. I think some authority, perhaps the Attorney
4 General, needs to spearhead that. And we need to put
5 those revenues aside. There should be punishment and
6 there should be sanctions because the fact that the
7 MBTA, which, you know, as Rachel has pointed out, is a
8 sister organization of your (static on phone line)
9 under MassDOT rules is something that we really need
10 to get to the bottom of.

11 We're angry. We think that this
12 billboard on the merits shouldn't be there. But the
13 fact that they just decided to light it up, because
14 they can roll over OOA because they think they always
15 can, really pisses us off, and it should piss you guys
16 off, too.

17 JOHN ROMANO: Thank you very much for
18 your comments.

19 Any other last comments?

20 LYDIA QUICK: Excuse me, John. I'm
21 seeing in the Q&A session there is a question from
22 Rachel Thurlow.

23 JOHN ROMANO: Yeah, I see Rachel. I'll
24 wrap up.

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1 LYDIA QUICK: Thank you.

2 JOHN ROMANO: Thank you, Lydia.

3 Before we go, Elizabeth from MBTA,
4 Elizabeth Winters Ronaldson, do you want to make any
5 comments before we wrap up?

6 ELIZABETH WINTERS RONALDSON: Thank you
7 all for your comments. No comments for me.

8 JOHN ROMANO: Okay. Thank you.

9 So, before we wrap up, just a last
10 question on this. Rachel asked whether or not we will
11 -- I will direct the board as is to be shut off. I
12 can't answer that question at this time. I don't know
13 whether it will be shut off or not. It's a good
14 question, Rachel, but I can't make that commitment at
15 this time, but I will take that under advisement.

16 RACHEL THURLOW: You're the director.

17 JOHN ROMANO: Thank you for reminding
18 me that.

19 So, Elizabeth, we will take this
20 application, along with all the comments, under
21 advisement. By tomorrow, we will get you the
22 information on the traffic study. So, we will take
23 this one under advisement. Thank you all very much
24 for your comments.

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1 Okay. The next item on the agenda was
2 we have an application for a renewal of the unlicensed
3 outdoor permit for the Pan-Mass Challenge.

4 Any questions on that? That's Item
5 E.1.

6 (No response.)

7 JOHN ROMANO: Not seeing any hands
8 raised on that.

9 Last item, For the Record - Actions
10 taken since the last public hearing. There's a bunch
11 of them. Any questions or comments on any Item 4?

12 (No response.)

13 JOHN ROMANO: I am not seeing any.

14 Last but not least, any further public
15 comment on anything on today's agenda?

16 (No response.)

17 GERARD KELLEHER: No hands raised.

18 JOHN ROMANO: No hands raised. Okay.

19 With that, we will adjourn the meeting
20 at 12:05. Thank you all very much. I appreciate your
21 time and your help. Have a great day, everyone. See
22 you next month. Thank you all.

23 (Whereupon, the proceedings were
24 concluded on August 12, 2021, at 12:05 p.m.)

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C E R T I F I C A T E

I, Judith Luciano, do hereby certify that the foregoing record is a true and accurate transcription of the proceedings in the above-captioned matter to the best of my skill and ability.

Judith Luciano

Judith Luciano

**All names not provided were spelled phonetically to the best of my ability.