

Office of Outdoor Advertising
Public Meeting

February 8, 2018

11:00 AM

State Transportation Building

10 Park Plaza

2nd Floor

Boston, MA 02116

Present:

John Romano, Executive Director

Office of Outdoor Advertising February 8, 2018

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

2

3 JOHN ROMANO: Good morning, everyone.

4 My name is John Romano. I'm the Director of Outdoor
5 Advertising for MassDOT. We are here this morning for
6 the February 8th public hearing.

7 If you have not already done so, there
8 is a sign-in sheet on the table to the left. There
9 are also agendas there. I do want to call to your
10 attention that the agenda has been slightly revised
11 and the items for Haymarket Station and the vent grate
12 at Park Street have been removed from the agenda at
13 this time.

14 AUDIENCE: Sorry? Say that again
15 please. What's removed?

16 JOHN ROMANO: There were three
17 locations for Haymarket Station and a vent grate on
18 Tremont Street for Park Street. Those have been
19 removed off the agenda.

20 AUDIENCE: Permanently?

21 JOHN ROMANO: At this time.

22 AUDIENCE: You have 128 Tremont Street
23 and Tremont at Winter. Those are still on or not?

24 JOHN ROMANO: Yeah, everything that's

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1 on the new agenda.

2 Okay. We are going to review -- there
3 was also copies of the last January hearing meeting
4 minutes there. Are there any questions or concerns
5 for the meeting minutes?

6 (No response.)

7 JOHN ROMANO: Seeing none, we will mark
8 those approved.

9 Okay. Today's agenda. The first item
10 up on the agenda is the Massachusetts Bay Transit
11 Authority. It's an application to become a licensee
12 of the Office of Outdoor Advertising in the State of
13 Massachusetts.

14 Is anybody here to represent the T on
15 this issue? Please state your name for the record.

16 EVAN ROWE: Evan Rowe.

17 JOHN ROMAN: Thank you, sir.

18 Okay, Evan. We've reviewed all of the
19 paperwork, applications submitted, W-9, and also
20 payment. There appears to be no issues with the
21 paperwork at this time. Do you have anything that you
22 would like to add to that application?

23 EVAN ROWE: No, that's fine.

24 JOHN ROMANO: Are there any questions

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1 or comments from the general public?

2 Yes, ma'am. Please state your name.

3 RACHEL THURLOW: Hi. Rachel Thurlow,
4 Hancock Street.

5 Are you assuming this role because the
6 Clear Channel contract has ended?

7 EVAN ROWE: I'm sorry?

8 RACHEL THURLOW: Are you becoming a
9 licensee because Clear Channel is no longer the MBTA's
10 billboard operator?

11 EVAN ROWE: There is a number of
12 reasons that we want to do it. It's not --

13 RACHEL THURLOW: Okay. Just generally,
14 the conflict with the MassDOT as billboard regulator,
15 any -- has a legal opinion been issued on this?

16 JOHN ROMANO: There's no conflict.

17 Any other questions? Yes, ma'am?

18 SUSAN PRINDLE: Does this constitute an
19 approval --

20 JOHN ROMANO: Please state your name.

21 SUSAN PRINDLE: Susan Prindle from Back
22 Bay.

23 Does this constitute an approval of the
24 application?

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1 JOHN ROMANO: It does not.

2 SUSAN PRINDLE: Okay. We're still
3 going to get a hearing on that?

4 JOHN ROMANO: This is the hearing.
5 Okay. I just want to state upfront before I finish
6 this. All items on every agenda at this hearing,
7 whether it's today, or past, or going forward, are
8 taken under advisement. There are no decisions made
9 at this hearing for any of them, whether it's a
10 license application, a permit application. We hear --
11 we go through a series of questions. We get comments
12 and feedback from the proponent and from anybody else
13 who wants to speak. And then it's taken under
14 advisement. No decisions --

15 SUSAN PRINDLE: Will that system change
16 if this license is granted?

17 JOHN ROMANO: No, no, no. It has
18 nothing to do with it. That's just in general across
19 the board that's how it works. I just want to let
20 people know that no decisions get made at this
21 hearing.

22 Okay. We will take that under
23 advisement and we will get back to you.

24 The next item, Item B, Applications for

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1 Permits. Outfront Media, LLC has 12 applications in
2 various locations on MBTA stations throughout the City
3 of Boston for digital urban panels. I am going to
4 take these both individually and as a group. So, I'm
5 going to do Aquarium together, Arlington Station
6 together, you know, as a group as we go through these.

7 I will take comments collectively at
8 the end of all of them. As I said, there are no
9 decisions made at this hearing, but we will go through
10 them as a group. We will show the locations up on the
11 screen. And then instead of having people maybe
12 repeat the same comments at each one, we'll take them
13 as a group. Certainly, if there's a specific station
14 or location that your comment is about, you can state
15 that.

16 We do ask, as the meeting is being
17 recorded, that you state your name for the record.

18 So, with that, I am going to go
19 through. So, Aquarium Station, two locations, State
20 Street and Old Atlantic Ave. They are Applications
21 Number 2018002 and 003. Notice was sent by my office
22 to the Mayor and the City Clerk on January 9, 2018.

23 Is the applicant present?

24 JOHN MAHONEY: John Mahoney from

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1 Outfront Media.

2 JOHN ROMANO: Is there anybody here
3 representing the municipality?

4 (No response.)

5 JOHN ROMANO: Seeing none.
6 Are there any abutters to this specific
7 location?

8 (No response.)

9 JOHN ROMANO: None.
10 Is anyone here from the Highway
11 District Office?

12 (No response.)

13 JOHN ROMANO: No.

14 Traffic operations, as these are
15 digital urban panels, we had our Traffic Department
16 review them. I know Ted Massey is here in the back of
17 the room.

18 TED MASSEY: Yeah, we reviewed this
19 location and no traffic study is required.

20 JOHN ROMANO: At this time, so I have
21 not received any written comments in support or
22 opposition to this particular location.

23 Mr. Rowe -- excuse me -- Mr. Mahoney,
24 have you guys received anything for this particular

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1 location?

2 JOHN MAHONEY: We have received
3 nothing.

4 JOHN ROMANO: Okay. I'm going to have
5 my inspector give us a quick field report on just
6 Aquarium Station.

7 CHRISTOPHER CHAVES: Thank you, John.
8 As you mentioned, there is two
9 locations within this station.

10 JOHN ROMANO: Sorry, Chris. Please
11 state your name for the record.

12 CHRISTOPHER CHAVES: Oh, Chris Chaves,
13 field inspector.

14 There are two locations within this
15 station, both -- one on either end of the station
16 affixed to the entrances of Aquarium Station. There
17 are no CMR issues with the street furniture
18 designation.

19 JOHN ROMANO: Okay. Great. As I
20 mentioned, I'm going to hold public comment at the end
21 after we go through all of these and you can address
22 specific locations.

23 Okay. Thank you.

24 Mr. Mahoney, anything you would like to

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1 add at this time to these particular locations?

2 JOHN MAHONEY: No, sir.

3 JOHN ROMANO: All right. Then we will
4 take these -- so, I'm going to reserve any statement
5 about taking them under advisement until we go through
6 the whole group. We'll put those aside.

7 The next locations are Arlington
8 Station. There are four locations proposed. And they
9 are all on Boylston Street. They are Permit
10 Applications Number 2018004, 005, 006, and 007. The
11 applicant is the same, Mr. John Mahoney, correct?

12 JOHN MAHONEY: Yes, sir.

13 JOHN ROMANO: Is there anyone here
14 representing the municipality where the sign is
15 proposed?

16 (No response.)

17 JOHN ROMANO: None. Are there abutters
18 here for this specific location? I know there are
19 several, so I'm going to ask that we hold the comments
20 till the end, if that's okay, as I said before.

21 Is anyone here representing the
22 District Office?

23 KATE BELL: Yes.

24 JOHN ROMANO: Please state your name

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1 and --

2 KATE BELL: Kate Bell, representing
3 City Councilor Josh Zakim.

4 JOHN ROMANO: I'm sorry. I mean our
5 Highway District.

6 KATE BELL: Got you. Sorry.

7 JOHN ROMANO: But that's okay, Kate.

8 KATE BELL: Just making sure.

9 JOHN ROMANO: Teddy Massey from our
10 Traffic Office.

11 TED MASSEY: Yeah. We reviewed these
12 locations, and no traffic study will be required.

13 JOHN ROMANO: Okay. John, have you
14 received any comments in support or opposition to
15 these?

16 JOHN MAHONEY: We haven't received any
17 comments.

18 JOHN ROMANO: I can tell you that I
19 have received many, probably close to 50 or more. And
20 I bet as we're here, I'm still getting emails to our
21 account. What we do with those letters is I am not
22 going to read each individual one of them. We will
23 make copies of them and they will be given to the
24 stenographer and they will be incorporated as part of

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1 the public record for this hearing as part of the
2 transcript that will get posted online.

3 We do have Andrew Bettinelli from
4 Senator Brownsberger's office who provided us with a
5 letter. And I know that Andrew would like to read
6 that into the record, so I'm going to allow him to do
7 that now.

8 ANDREW BETTINELLI: Sure.

9 JOHN ROMANO: Thank you, Andrew.

10 ANDREW BETTINELLI: Yes. So, my name
11 is Andrew Bettinelli. I'm Senator Brownsberger's
12 Chief of Staff. I have a letter signed by Senator
13 Brownsberger, Senator Boncore, Representative
14 Livingstone, Representative Michlewitz, and
15 Representative Rushing. And I'll just read the letter
16 now.

17 "We are writing to oppose the outdoor
18 advertising permit applications by Outfront Media,
19 LLC, especially regarding the panel located within the
20 Back Bay Historic District and those proposed for
21 Arlington Street and Tremont Street. The proposed
22 'digital urban panels' would not be in harmony with
23 the visual character of the neighborhood. The
24 proposed panel placements also are immediately

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1 adjacent to the Boston Common and the Public Garden,
2 two of the most visited parks anywhere. We should not
3 allow digital urban panels to interfere with the
4 beauty and enjoyment of these parks.

5 To protect the historic character of
6 the neighborhood, we urge you to deny the
7 application."

8 JOHN ROMANO: Thank you very much.

9 ANDREW BETTINELLI: Thank you.

10 JOHN ROMANO: I know that Elizabeth
11 Hunt from Rep. Rushing's office is here. Would you
12 like to speak at this time?

13 ELIZABETH HUNT: I think he got it all.

14 JOHN ROMANO: Also, from Councilor
15 Zakim's office, we did receive a letter in that group.
16 Would you like to say anything?

17 KATE BELL: Sure. I won't go through
18 the entire letter just because you already received
19 it. But we would just like to reiterate the
20 Councilor's --

21 JOHN ROMANO: Could you just state your
22 name again so he can --

23 KATE BELL: Sorry. Yeah. Kate Bell
24 representing City Councilor Josh Zakim.

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1 I'm just going to reiterate the
2 Councilor's opposition to the installation of these
3 digital urban panels at the Arlington, Back Bay, and
4 Park Street stations in the strongest terms. They
5 clearly violate the Back Bay Architectural Commission
6 Commercial Guidelines as well as appear to violate
7 MassDOT's own regulations on outdoor advertising,
8 considering that all are within 300 feet of public
9 parks.

10 So, I would just reiterate his
11 opposition to this.

12 Thank you.

13 JOHN ROMANO: Thank you very much for
14 your comments.

15 Okay. And, again, we will get to all
16 of your comments when we get through the bunch here.

17 Chris, did you do these as well? So,
18 Chris Chaves, my inspector, will go through his
19 report.

20 CHRISTOPHER CHAVES: Thank you, John.

21 As you mentioned, there are three
22 locations on Arlington Street facing Boylston, one on
23 Berkeley facing Boylston, all affixed to entrances or
24 exits from the Arlington Station. Again, with street

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1 furniture, there are no issues with CMR.

2 JOHN ROMANO: Okay. Thank you, Chris.

3 Okay. So that is numbers 4, 5, 6, and
4 7.

5 So, next we are going to go with Back
6 Bay Station. There are four locations: Columbus Ave.
7 at Clarendon, Application 2018008; Clarendon at
8 Columbus, 2018009; Dartmouth Street, 2018010; and
9 Dartmouth Street, again, 2018011.

10 As with all the previous applications,
11 notice was sent to the Mayor and the City Clerk by my
12 office on January 9, 2018. I am going to go through
13 all four locations for Back Bay Station at the same
14 time.

15 Again, Mr. John Mahoney representing
16 the proponent.

17 Is there anybody here from the
18 municipality? I don't know if anybody came in from
19 the city.

20 (No response.)

21 JOHN ROMANO: No. Are there abutters
22 present here today for this location?

23 Is anybody here from the Highway
24 District Office?

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1 (No response.)

2 JOHN ROMANO: Traffic? Teddy?

3 TED MASSEY: Yeah, Ted Massey, Traffic.

4 We reviewed these locations and no
5 traffic study will be required.

6 JOHN ROMANO: Okay. Thank you, sir.

7 John, again, any written comments in
8 support or opposition?

9 JOHN MAHONEY: No, Mr. Director, we've
10 received no comments.

11 JOHN ROMANO: Some of the comments that
12 we received in the stack that I told you, some are all
13 of these in general and some specific. So, this is
14 included in a couple of those, but no specific ones
15 that I think for this. I haven't read through every
16 single comment at this point. But, again, they'll all
17 be put in with the record of this hearing.

18 Chris, you've got these, too, right?
19 So, Chris Chaves, can you give your inspection report?

20 CHRISTOPHER CHAVES: Yes. As you
21 mentioned, there are four locations. Two of them are
22 at the Columbus-Clarendon Street portion of Back Bay,
23 and there are two facing Dartmouth Street, at 145
24 Dartmouth Street. All are affixed to entrances of the

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1 station. No CMR issues with the street furniture.

2 JOHN ROMANO: Thank you, sir.

3 Okay. Now, we're going to go to the
4 last two items on page three, which are -- these are
5 128 Tremont Street, Park Street Station, and Tremont
6 Street at Winter Street, also Park Street Station.
7 These are Applications 2018015 and 016.

8 Again, as with all of the other
9 applications, notice was sent to the Mayor and City
10 Clerk on January 9, 2018 by my office.

11 Again, Mr. Mahoney, John Mahoney, is
12 the applicant.

13 Is anybody here from the city?

14 (No response.)

15 JOHN ROMANO: No. Any abutters present
16 for these? Okay. There is one, two, a couple of
17 people. Okay. So, I'm going to put several again.
18 Okay.

19 Is anybody here from the District
20 Office?

21 (No response.)

22 JOHN ROMANO: Mr. Massey, traffic
23 again.

24 TED MASSEY: Yes. We determined no

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1 traffic study was required in this location.

2 JOHN ROMANO: Okay. Again, Mr.
3 Mahoney, you have not received for or against?

4 JOHN MAHONEY: I have not.

5 JOHN ROMANO: As I've stated earlier,
6 we have received many, a big stack. We will include
7 all of them with the transcript for the record of this
8 hearing.

9 And, Jason Bean, my inspector, is the
10 one who inspected these.

11 JASON BEAN: Yeah. Thank you, John.

12 As with the other ones, these are
13 digital panels. They're street furniture affixed to
14 station entrances. At this time, there's no issues
15 that we can find.

16 JOHN ROMANO: Thank you. So, what I'm
17 going to do is, first of all, Mr. Mahoney, anything
18 you'd like to add to the applications?

19 JOHN MAHONEY: No, sir.

20 JOHN ROMANO: Next, as with electronic
21 advertising, there are several issues, several
22 requirements in the CMR with electronic boards that
23 there can be no moving. Displays must be up for a
24 minimum of ten seconds and they have to be instant

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1 changes. There can be no animation on any of these.
2 And, you know, there are a handful of other
3 requirements under electronic permits that you are
4 required to follow these, and we expect those all to
5 be followed in these cases. And, as we do with all
6 our billboards, our inspectors keep an eye as well as
7 the general public on those, and we will, if there are
8 any issues. Do you have any questions with any of
9 those requirements?

10 JOHN MAHONEY: We understand and we
11 have no questions.

12 JOHN ROMANO: Okay. So, just one more
13 statement I want to make and then we will get to
14 comments from the general public.

15 I just want people to -- as my
16 inspectors referred to, based on a legal opinion from
17 MassDOT general counsel, these digital urban panels
18 are considered street furniture and not electronic
19 billboards. And so they are reviewed under the --

20 (Audience laughter.)

21 JOHN ROMANO: They are reviewed under
22 the street furniture purpose of the CMR. So, that's
23 not -- I'm not here to debate that issue today.

24 AUDIENCE: Could you explain it though?

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1 AUDIENCE: Can you make public
2 Stephanie Pollack's interpretation?

3 JOHN ROMANO: Eileen, can you do that?

4 EILEEN FENTON: Yes, we can make the
5 letter available.

6 AUDIENCE: Can you explain just what's
7 the difference?

8 AUDIENCE: Yeah.

9 EILEEN FENTON: I can briefly say that
10 counsel has opined that the head houses at these
11 various locations fit within and are of like kind and
12 function to other street furniture structures, such as
13 bus shelters. So, they fit within the legal
14 definition under the regulations of street furniture.

15 RACHEL THURLOW: Federal Highway signed
16 off on that because every other definition is for
17 removable, not fixed street furniture.

18 JOHN ROMANO: Excuse me. If you're
19 going to speak, you need to raise your hand so I can
20 acknowledge you. And you need to identify who you are
21 so that we can get it on the record.

22 Yes?

23 RACHEL THURLOW: Rachel Thurlow in
24 Boston.

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1 So, every other street furniture
2 definition in transit law speaks to removable street
3 items, mainly equipment things. The station head as
4 street furniture is quite inventive. We would
5 definitely like to see Stephanie Pollack's reasoning
6 for this and also Federal Highway's signoff.

7 We understand DOT is in a tough spot
8 being the billboard proliferator and regulator.

9 JOHN ROMANO: Thank you. Okay. So I'm
10 going to try to do this as reasonable and as logical
11 as I can, trying to get some -- in some type of order.
12 So, I will ask that you state your name and the
13 particular -- you don't have to state the application,
14 but just whether it's Park Street, you know, Back Bay
15 Station, Aquarium, whichever station it is that you're
16 speaking on. Or, if it's all of them, you can say all
17 of them, just so we know what you're referring to.

18 I'm going to start on my left over here
19 and I'm going to go front to back. I ask that you
20 speak, you know, stand up and speak loud so that we
21 can get your conversation recorded. We will take any
22 statements. And I'd just ask that you just keep your
23 comments relatively brief, but I will allow you to
24 make your comment.

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1 So, if you want to speak here, please
2 just raise your hand and I'll call you in a logical
3 order. Just raise your hand if you want to speak.
4 Okay. We'll start right here with you, ma'am.

5 VICKI SMITH: Hi. My name is Vicki
6 Smith. I'm president of the Neighborhood Association
7 of the Back Bay. We represent 2,000 members. We've
8 been around for about 60 years. And we strongly
9 oppose the installation of these signs at Arlington
10 Street.

11 The initial meeting that I went to said
12 that there -- well, they say there are four signs.
13 They are on both front and back, so it really is eight
14 signs, and that they actually would flash every 15 --
15 if I have this right -- every 15 to 90 seconds, so
16 that they are, in fact, kind of moving.

17 So, we strongly oppose them. The Back
18 Bay Architectural Guidelines are clear on the
19 inappropriateness of a structure like those proposed
20 by the MBTA. Box signs with backgrounds that are
21 illuminated are inappropriate. Illumination shall be
22 static, steady burning. Animated or flashing effects
23 are inappropriate as are televisions, projection
24 screens, LED, or any future technology which

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1 incorporates movement.

2 So, thank you very much.

3 JOHN ROMANO: And we did receive your
4 letter. It's in the comments that we have. So, I do
5 have that.

6 Thank you.

7 Yes, sir.

8 GREG GALER: Good morning. I'm Greg
9 Galer. I'm executive director of the Boston
10 Preservation Alliance. We sent in a letter as well.

11 JOHN ROMANO: Yes.

12 GREG GALER: The Alliance represents
13 dozens of organizations and over 100 businesses
14 throughout the City who partner with us to try to find
15 thoughtful evolution of the City, allowing the City to
16 change but respecting the City's unique character.

17 The Alliance opposes providing the MBTA
18 with carte blanche to install the proposed signs in
19 historic neighborhoods without dialogue with
20 interested parties and those in the Boston Landmarks
21 Commission who, in particular, oversee the Back Bay
22 Architectural Commission -- the Back Bay Architectural
23 District. We're particularly concerned about those at
24 Arlington Street. And we want to understand the

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1 proposal for Park Street as well. We understand there
2 was a change this morning. But we want to really
3 understand what's proposed.

4 As you've heard, the signs are truly in
5 violation of the architectural guidelines for the Back
6 Bay. Everyone else proposing signs in the Back Bay
7 District needs to follow those rules, and we feel the
8 MBTA, particularly as a public agency, should be
9 exemplary in their outreach and willingness to listen
10 to concerned citizens rather than deaf to it.

11 MassDOT rules, the CMR rules which
12 apply to signs, which I guess you said don't apply
13 here, but I just wanted to point out those rules note
14 that the permit shall be granted for a sign which the
15 Director determines would not be in harmony with or
16 suitable to the surrounding area, would not
17 significantly be damaging to the visual impact. It
18 references the physical, environmental, cultural and
19 historical, and architectural characteristics of the
20 neighborhood.

21 So, we see no reason why the T can't
22 accomplish that in a manner sympathetic to the broader
23 goals. We're just asking for a discussion with the
24 community. We think there's a compromise and a

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1 dialogue that is going to occur, and both these things
2 can be met. But we really ask for these not to be
3 approved currently until these dialogues can occur.

4 Thank you.

5 JOHN ROMANO: Thank you, sir.

6 Anybody else on my left here? Okay.
7 This ma'am right here.

8 SUSAN PRINDLE: Hi. My name is Susan
9 Prindle. I've lived in Back Bay for longer than I'd
10 like to remember. I am a big fan of the T. I'm on
11 the T all the time. I'm a trolley card holder. I'm a
12 user. And I wouldn't jump the turnstiles if I could,
13 but I can't.

14 I would like to speak about the
15 applications 8004 to 8007, Arlington Street, Berkeley
16 Street.

17 I can't support the proliferation of
18 backlit advertising signs in a historic district and
19 adjacent to our historic parks. These resources are
20 invaluable as well, as well as the T. They are what
21 make Boston, Boston. They are what brings people to
22 our city to learn about our history and to enjoy the
23 beauty of our open spaces and architecture. Once they
24 are compromised, they cannot be restored.

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1 You've heard that the proposed
2 billboards from Outfront Media are designed to provide
3 real-time information to riders. That's partly true.
4 But the real purpose is to provide revenue through the
5 sale of advertising space through large 56x31 backlit
6 screens. I am 60 inches tall. So, if you put me
7 sideways, I'd be about the same size as what you're
8 planning. These screens are as wide as I am tall,
9 with moving advertisement and lights. They are
10 completely inappropriate in a historic area, and
11 specifically prohibited by the Back Bay Commission
12 guidelines.

13 While the T claims that these screens
14 will enliven the streetscape, many of us believe they
15 will instead detract from it by overwhelming it with
16 visual clutter. We believe there are alternative
17 sites within the station that could achieve the T's
18 objectives without negative impact. And we would like
19 the applicants to explore this option with us. Unless
20 you can deny the current application, they will not do
21 so because we have asked.

22 I understand that many letters have
23 been submitted. I'd like to point out one from Joseph
24 Cornish, the director of design review of the Back Bay

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1 Architectural Commission. He writes:

2 "The proposed panels are clearly
3 contrary to both the guidelines and the mission of the
4 Back Bay Architectural Commission... and will negatively
5 impact the historic setting of the district, as well
6 as the following nearby or individual/pending
7 landmarks: Public Garden, Arlington Street Church,
8 the Berkeley Building, and the Paine Furniture
9 Building."

10 He, too, requests that the application
11 be denied.

12 I hope the Board will deny this
13 application and encourage the applicant to seek a
14 solution inside the station where the information can
15 be provided to those who need it without damage to our
16 historic streetscapes and parks.

17 JOHN ROMANO: Thank you. Ma'am, and
18 then the gentleman in the back.

19 JANET HURWITZ: My name is Janet
20 Hurwitz. I'm an architect and have lived and worked
21 in Back Bay for over 35 years. I've completed at
22 least 30 projects within the District. I've also
23 taught a course in historic preservation at
24 Northeastern and am very familiar with both the local

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1 preservation laws and the national laws.

2 I'm just going to say that I strongly
3 oppose these panels as being blatantly in conflict
4 with the guidelines of the District and the principles
5 of the historic preservation laws. I understand that
6 the MBTA feels that they are exempt from normal review
7 process, which we rely on, like the Back Bay
8 Architectural Commission. However, I think it should
9 be everyone's responsibility, including the MBTA, to
10 act as stewards of this unique area.

11 I also want to say that I'm confused
12 about the Berkeley Street sign because there is no
13 entrance on Berkeley; it's closed. So, that's purely
14 advertising. I don't understand that one.

15 Thank you.

16 JOHN ROMANO: Thank you.

17 Sir, in the back?

18 CHRIS MEYER: Hi. Chris Meyer. I live
19 at 165 Tremont, so I'm an abutter to the Park Street
20 location, which is what my comment is about. I would
21 see this installation from my window.

22 I have a question for Outfront, which
23 is do they distinguish between installations in
24 historic districts and elsewhere because it seems to

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1 me, if not, I don't know what a historic district
2 designation means or what it is for.

3 My wife and I recently returned from
4 Hong Kong and Shenzhen in China. And, there, in
5 addition to all kinds of signs, many of them lit,
6 stores can broadcast sound in the street as part of
7 their advertising. And it's quite an unpleasant
8 experience, at least if you're not used to it and
9 maybe if you are.

10 We've become used to a lot of
11 advertising in our lives. People estimate tens of
12 thousands of messages per day are received. And, my
13 wife and I were walking on Boylston Street opposite
14 the Public Garden and remarking on how special it is
15 that Boston has environments that are free of that
16 kind of intrusiveness and that that's part of Boston's
17 special character.

18 So, I would find that materially
19 negative on daily life to take Frederick Olmsted's
20 park and put lit advertisements in it. And I would
21 ask the Commission how this could possibly serve the
22 public interest.

23 JOHN ROMANO: Thank you, sir.

24 Anybody standing up in the back to the

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1 left? Yes, ma'am. Please state your name.

2 JANET TIAMPO: Janet Tiampo, Boston
3 resident.

4 My concern with the Park Street and
5 Arlington Street stations is that I feel like over the
6 last six months or so there is literally and
7 figuratively a shadow coming over our parks. We are
8 slowly chipping away at the beauty and the nature and
9 the history of our parks. And I feel like this is
10 just one more step that brings us further away from
11 their essence.

12 JOHN ROMANO: Thank you.

13 Yes?

14 ALICE MURPHY: Alice Murphy. I've
15 lived in the Back Bay for over 20 years.

16 I just have a short comment. I am
17 opposed to all of these signs for the reason of
18 reducing visual clutter and increasingly escalating
19 the demand because the more we become blind to
20 advertisements, the more you have to up your game.
21 And it will just continue to escalate.

22 I also point out that there are
23 wonderful apps for getting real-time information about
24 transportation, which I have used in this and other

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1 cities. So, I don't really see why everybody needs to
2 have this information flashed at them on the street
3 level.

4 So, I would just suggest that we look
5 at other options for transmitting this information and
6 prioritizing it, where it doesn't show.

7 JOHN ROMANO: Thank you, ma'am.

8 Okay. I'm going to go to my right
9 here. Ma'am, go ahead.

10 PAMELA HUMPHREY: I'm Pamela Humphrey.
11 I've lived in the Back Bay for 30 years.

12 I'm very opposed to all of these kinds
13 of signs in this historic city, not to mention that it
14 violates a gazillion other rules and regulations
15 regarding the historic district and how we treat it.

16 I think that it is -- you know, we are
17 being besieged by visual images constantly, noise.
18 You go into stations, you go into stores, you go into
19 everything. And, you know, if you take a look at the
20 impact on people's brains, their sense of wellbeing
21 and psychology, there's another piece to this as well.
22 So the question, you know, so there's another piece to
23 that. It's not just the fact that it's ugly and it
24 defies the rules and regulations that we've so

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1 carefully put into the city to try to protect its
2 normal character, but there are also issues around the
3 impact on your health and wellbeing. So, there are
4 plenty of studies about that if you wanted to bother
5 to look it up.

6 If the issue and the -- if the issue is
7 that you want to provide information to travelers on
8 the MBTA, there's no good reason to put it outside in
9 the middle of an historic district. You ought to put
10 it inside the stations because that's where people are
11 going to look for information.

12 I think -- this is a slight aside is
13 that the thing that is so upsetting to me about what's
14 going on in Boston right now, the unbridled
15 development that's taking place in this city is
16 absolutely out of control. It's changing, permanently
17 changing the character of the city. Transportation
18 issues are a huge -- we have no infrastructure for
19 better transportation to handle the crowds that are
20 being brought into the city as a result of the
21 construction. The Copley Square development, Boston
22 Properties development, is going to bring 3,200 people
23 into the city. You can't even find a place for the
24 buses.

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1 So, I mean it's just -- this is just
2 one piece of this creeping, creeping outcome of
3 changing the fundamental character of the city without
4 any long-term vision for it. Mayor Walsh talks about
5 2030. 2030, it's over by 2030. We have no vision for
6 development in the city and how to handle it. It's
7 all piece-by-piece by piece. And it's totally and
8 completely inefficient. And I think that there are
9 things that are going on in the city, whether it's
10 advertising or whether it's development, that is going
11 to destroy the character of the city. You know, we're
12 going to turn into New York.

13 So, if you like New York, I suppose
14 that's okay. But if you live in Boston, you're here
15 for a whole variety of reasons, but one of them is
16 because of the livability of the city. And we're
17 slowly but surely turning it into a major metropolis
18 on this island piece of property in order to get
19 whatever it is you think you want to get. Tax dollars
20 are great, but I think thoughtful development in an
21 historic city is doubly important, at least for
22 Boston, because we are so unique.

23 JOHN ROMANO: Thank you.

24 (Applause)

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1 JOHN ROMANO: Anybody else on the -- go
2 ahead.

3 JANE DIMITRY: My name is Jane Dimitry.
4 I've lived in the Back Bay since 1993. So, I'm not
5 good at math.

6 But I'm opposed to any digital signs in
7 Boston. And I'm not so eloquent. Frankly, I think it
8 cheapens the look of the city of Boston, especially
9 the Back Bay, which is historic. I don't see why the
10 signs can't be in the stations themselves.

11 And, you know, I'm for the MBTA. I'm a
12 complete advocate. We need more public
13 transportation, not less. But to get revenue from
14 this, this is not the way to do it.

15 JOHN ROMANO: Thank you.

16 Anybody else on the right here? Ma'am,
17 go ahead.

18 LESLIE ADAM: My name is Leslie Adam.
19 And I am the Board chair of the Friends of the Public
20 Garden. We are an organization that has an unusual
21 private-public relationship with the city of Boston
22 and we care for these three historic parks: the
23 Common, the Public Garden, and the Commonwealth Avenue
24 Mall.

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1 And one of the things that is really
2 special is that our members or supporters are not just
3 people who are adjacent. We represent 31 states here
4 in the Union and over 140 communities in the state of
5 Massachusetts.

6 These are very, very important parks,
7 not only for our city, but for our history nationally
8 in the United States.

9 The Friends of the Public Garden would
10 like to express our strong opposition to the proposed
11 illuminated electronic billboards at the Arlington
12 Street and Park Street Massachusetts Bay
13 Transportation Authority stations. The application by
14 Outfront Media should be denied because these
15 billboards -- these digital billboards intrude on and
16 negatively impact the character of our landmark
17 historic parks and surrounding neighborhoods. The
18 location and digital illumination of this outdoor
19 advertising is in violation of MassDOT's own
20 regulations for signage because it is within 300 feet
21 of two landmark historic parks. The Back Bay
22 Architectural Guidelines emphasize the
23 inappropriateness of illuminated signs within the
24 historic district.

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1 We strongly urge the Office of Outdoor
2 Advertising to deny this application from Outfront
3 Media and require them to work with residents and
4 neighborhood stakeholders to find an acceptable
5 solution. There are opportunities for indoor
6 placement of panels that can achieve the MBTA's
7 advertising and informational goals without the visual
8 and light pollution of the current proposal. Given
9 the revenue projections, the negative impact of these
10 signs amount to selling Boston's public and historic
11 landscapes for a pittance.

12 Thank you.

13 (Applause.)

14 JOHN ROMANO: Anyone else on the right
15 side?

16 (No response.)

17 JOHN ROMANO: Okay. Seeing none, John,
18 anything you want to add to your applications?

19 JOHN MAHONEY: No, sir.

20 JOHN ROMANO: MBTA, anything you want
21 to say at this time?

22 AUDIENCE: He wants to add that he's
23 not doing it, withdraw the application.

24 JOHN ROMANO: Okay. With that, as we

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1 do with all applications, or permits, licenses,
2 amendments, or any such, we will take this all under
3 advisement. We have all of the comments. If there's
4 something in writing that people were reading that
5 they haven't already submitted that you would like to,
6 you can leave them here with me or you can give them
7 to Lydia, my assistant. We do have our Outdoor
8 Advertising email. You can still email comments in.

9 So, we will take this all under
10 advisement. And we will -- Mr. Mahoney, we will get
11 back to you. And the T will make sure that people
12 know what the decision is.

13 We have Item C is applications for 2018
14 Renewal of Outdoor Advertising Licenses and Permits;
15 also, Item D for Unlicensed Permits. Are there any
16 questions, comments, concerns on those listed?

17 (No response.)

18 JOHN ROMANO: Seeing none, those are
19 approved.

20 Item 4 is for the record, actions taken
21 since the last public hearing. They are listed. And,
22 also, so there's a new license, permit transfers, and
23 application for unlicensed permits. Any questions,
24 comments, concerns?

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1 (No response.)

2 JOHN ROMANO: Seeing none.

3 With that, any other questions,
4 comments, or concerns?

5 (No response.)

6 JOHN ROMANO: Seeing none, the meeting
7 is adjourned. Thank you all and have a great
8 afternoon.

9 Whereupon, the proceedings were concluded on
10 February 8, 2017 at 11:40 a.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.