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Lambda Alpha Boston hosts Land Economics Weekend April 26-27

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The city has seen a new resurgence of commercial real estate development, with over 22 new project starts in 2012, and at least 37 approved developments for 2013. The Boston Chapter of Lambda Alpha International recently had the opportunity to share evidence of this continued growth with land use professionals from around the world, as the Boston Chapter hosted the 2013 Lambda Alpha International Spring Land Economics Weekend April 26-27. Land Economics Weekends are held twice each year in cities around the world, and include tours of projects of interest within the host city.

Members of the Boston Chapter arranged for more than 100 LAI attendees and guests to learn about several recent projects of note in the fast-expanding economic environment of downtown. Friday's activities started with a Downtown Crossing Walking Tour, under the informative stewardship of Andrew Grace of the Boston Redevelopment Authority (BRA) and Douglas Meyer of the Downtown Boston Business Improvement District.

The Walking Tour gave the Boston Chapter the opportunity to show off the city's new Hostelling International Facility on Stuart St., the recent Opera House renovations, and apartment construction at Avalon at 45 Stuart, Millennium Place and Kensington Place, as well as the site of the new mixed-use Millennium Tower now underway at the site of the prior Filene's Department Store.

The Walking Tour was followed by a bus tour of the Innovation District narrated by Martina Toponarski and Nicole Fichera, BRA experts on development in that area. Friday afternoon was capped off by a boat cruise around Boston's Inner Harbor showcasing Boston's Seaport District, narrated by James Doolin of MassPort and David Carlson, AIA, executive director of the Boston Civic Design Commission of the BRA.

On Saturday, Fenway Park was the scenic venue for a ballpark tour of history, legend and architectural renovations, followed by a presentation by Peter Sougarides, executive vice president of Samuels & Associates, highlighting Samuels & Associates' development of the Fenway Triangle, Landmark Center, and other completed and planned projects for the Fenway area.

Our Fenway Park visit was followed by a bus and walking tour of the multi-use Longwood Medical Area led by Marilyn Swartz-Lloyd, president and CEO of MASCO (Medical and Academic Scientific Community Organization, Inc.) including views of National Development's 350,000 s/f research facility, future research site of Boston Children's Hospital, the Center for Life Sciences, and the Merck Research Laboratories.

Officers of the Boston Chapter and key arrangers of Boston's Land Economics Weekend included Gary Leach, Senior Vice President at Eastern Bank, David Kirk of Kirk & Company, Roger Blood, Senior Associate at Oliver Wyman, Inc. and John Griffin, Esquire, of Greenberg Traurig, LLP.

The Boston Land Economics Weekend concluded with a dinner at The Union Club and a talk by Peter Meade, director of the BRA.

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