



City of Cambridge

IN CITY COUNCIL

June 26, 2017

**NEIGHBORHOOD & LONG TERM PLANNING,
PUBLIC FACILITIES, ARTS & CELEBRATION
COMMITTEE MEMBERS**

Councillor Nadeem A. Mazen, Chair

Councillor Dennis J. Carlone

Councillor Leland Cheung

Councillor Jan Devereux

Councillor David P. Maher

The Neighborhood and Long Term Planning, Public Facilities, Arts and Celebrations Committee held a public hearing on Wednesday, June 7, 2017 beginning at 12:33 p.m. in the Sullivan Chamber for the purpose of discussing the reappointment of Kathleen L. Born to the Cambridge Redevelopment Authority (CRA) for a term of five years (Attachment A).

Present at the hearing were Councillor Nadeem Mazen, Chair, Councillor Carlone, Councillor David Maher, Louis DePasquale, City Manager, Lisa Peterson, Deputy City Manager, Iram Farooq, Assistant City Manager for Community Development, and Deputy City Clerk Paula M. Crane.

Also present were Kathleen L. Born, Chair, D. Margaret Drury, Vice Chair, Tom Evans, Executive Director, Cambridge Redevelopment Authority, and Robert Winters.

Councillor Mazen convened the hearing and welcomed members of the CRA. He spoke about the accomplishments of Kathleen Born as well as her commitment to the CRA which comports with the strategy of the CRA.

Ms. Born stated that it has been pleasure to serve as a member and Chair of CRA for the last five years. She stated that five years ago there were appointments of four of the City-appointed members of the CRA. She noted that it was an exciting process of re-creation. She said that the CRA is solidly established as a partner to the City and it has been her honor to serve. She introduced D. Margaret Drury and Tom Evans and stated that they look forward to moving forward as a partner with the City in several redevelopment ventures.

Councillor Maher commented that having served with Ms. Born on the City Council, he knows her deep commitment to the City of Cambridge as well as the commitment of the former City Clerk D. Margaret Drury. He stated that from his observation, this was a Board that had been somewhat neglected. He said that what we saw in the appointment of the four members was the creation of a dynamic board that has been extremely responsive to the public and to the mission of the CRA. He stated that the CRA has done a terrific job under the leadership of Ms. Born. He said that the CRA Board as it is today is an example of how to be transparent and involving of the community. He said that it is testament to the CRA leadership that the public will often state how pleased they are with the operation of the Board. He stated that this is a clever appointment and he has not been disappointed.

Councillor Carlone stated that he agrees with Councillor Maher and he thinks the quality of the CRA is to be applauded. He said that in particular, reaching out and listening to the community earns the CRA an A-rating in his opinion. He stated that this means a great deal. He stated that he appreciates that Ms. Born does not hold back on her opinion which is important because it is a perspective that isn't necessarily also present at Board meetings. He said that Ms. Born wants things to be better and in many Boards, they become complacent over time. He said that the CRA is being made better which is very rare. He stated that Ms. Born is a dedicated person who believes in the end result as well as involving the community and its' residents. He stated that as with any large development, issues arise but the CRA tries to solve these issues in a progressive, honest way. He endorsed the appointment of Ms. Born.

Councillor Mazen stated that he has worked with CRA and he has seen the best of grace under pressure. He stated that the information contained in Ms. Born's Curriculum Vitae (Attachment B) and the CRA's Sixtieth Annual Report that were provided to the Committee (Attachment C) is full of data and evidence of the success that his colleagues have referenced. He stated that there is a challenge when balancing a public and community interest with the necessity of partnering with real estate developers and others. He asked about aligning and balancing both the corporate interests and partners and moving beyond the way that this has been done in the past. He questioned what the balance feels like. Ms. Born responded that she learned on the City Council that oftentimes when it seemed that there were conflicting goals, there was the ability to come up with common interests. She said that the most recent development in the City which is generally, but not always, undertaken by larger real estate interests may be more complex but are easier to deal with because the larger interests have learned from their history in urban development that making a good public space benefits both the development and the public. She stated that inexperience with smaller developers are more likely to have the impression that the bottom line is all that counts.

Councillor Mazen stated that it is important to understand who, on the real estate development side, struggles when reaching for the higher gains. Councillor Maher stated that the leadership that was exhibited during the original Alewife re-zoning when there was interest by the City and neighborhood groups to look at the environment impact was amazing. He noted that there were many buildings built 50 years before that time along the riverbanks and it took some real thinking about how to get rid of those buildings. He said that there was a long and protracted process with an experienced developer and an owner who wanted to make a profit. He stated that in the end, it was a win/win and noted that today, the site is vastly different. He explained that although a few of the buildings are slightly larger than some would like, much was accomplished via give and take. He said that in the end, the environment was brought back to wetlands and this was attainable under the leadership of Ms. Born.

Ms. Born stated that the CambridgeSide Galleria is another instance in which the private real estate interests came together with the City to create a spectacular urban space which benefited both the developer and the community.

Councillor Carlone said that at the Route 2/Discovery Park site he was the master planner that was brought in. He said that a master planner was necessary to get a PUD. He stated that even with great work, there must be follow through and added that environmentally, this project was a major step forward.

Councillor Carlone noted that when the new CRA appointments took place five years ago, there seemed to be more reaching out to the community and residents. He noted that there was a dramatic shift that helped the connection with the surrounding community which made a huge difference in that it wasn't just numbers or square footage, it went beyond that. He added that connections are vitally important.

Councillor Mazen stated that one of the hardest things to achieve in projects is equity which is a combination of real community outreach and real job training as well as creation and placement. He asked Ms. Born about the CRA plans to include a deep, unwavering commitment to outreach and job training in view of how intrinsically difficult these things have been. Ms. Born responded that this is the #1 question facing the city in the future. She stated that we all know that many of the jobs that are being

created are specialized jobs that require specialized training. She stated that the CRA has, as part of its mission and activities from the time of its founding, a job training element. She stated that currently, job training activities are coordinated with the Department of Human Services. She said that there are more educational institutions that can provide education for entry and mid-level jobs. Councillor Mazen said that pipelines get people there by degrees and he said that his hope is that the Community Benefit Fund will address this issue. Ms. Born stated that as part of development, there will be a requirement for a commitment of dollars and/or programs that will benefit the Cambridge young people. She said that there are people already in the Cambridge workforce whose current positions and jobs are not optimal for the Cambridge economy. Mr. Evans said that he has been doing a lot of work on this issue. He said that the CRA is now a partner with Just-A-Start. He stated that as an implementer of space and development, the CRA is in the best position to create physical capital improvements and that is a future that they continue to look at. He stated that they are working at upgrading innovation space in Kendall Square.

Councilor Carlone said that he has often thought that through PUDs, the City can set a standard where companies connect to the locals. He stated that this could be a standard condition wherein programs are set up in the neighborhoods with yearly check-ins. He stated that this can be easily done and suggested that this be a discussion for the future. Councillor Mazen stated that he was impressed with the work of Akamai in this area. He stated that the City, the Kendall Square Association, Akamai, businesses, and universities want to do the right thing. He said that a professional organization would be beneficial in order to align forces with the CRA. He stated the importance of being knowledgeable and being able to “hit the ground running.” He asked whether someone can do this groundwork to start a public conversation. He stated that monthly gatherings could be the vehicle that drives this conversation forward. He said that someone has to begin this conversation and he hopes it will be the CRA. Ms. Born replied that if she hears a request for the CRA to be more involved in this area, it would be happy to do so.

Councillor Maher stated that solving this issue is complex and it is not just the job of the CRA- it is the job of the City, the School Department, and many others. He noted that when he spoke at Akamai at a Girls Who Code event, he was surprised that there was only one Cambridge student in attendance which is an embarrassment. He added that he is the product of a Cambridge working class family and noted that there were many people he knew that had ties to MIT and Harvard because their parents or family members worked for these institutions as groundskeepers or in support services. He stated that these types of jobs no longer exist as they are farmed out currently. He stated that this is a change that is happening in the City of Cambridge and something must be done to stop this from happening. He stated that the City should do more to force the hands of the larger institutions and companies to keep jobs in-house. He stated that this must be a community conversation. Councillor Maher added that the Cambridge Works program is a wonderful program but it is serving way too few people.

Councillor Mazen stated that whenever job training is done he would like to see metrics, even if they are disappointing. He stated that when we are honest about what is happening and which programs are doing well, we will have fodder for exactly the types of conversation that need to happen.

As it relates to the Foundry, Councillor Mazen stated that his hope is that somehow the CRA can find a partner who will pay Class-A and because they can make a Class-A use out of Class-B space, we can maximize the benefits and the portion of the community benefit space. He stated that there is a little worry that if we don't start at maximum, it will only get more difficult.

Councillor Carlone stated that his private office is directly across from the Foundry. He noted that the Foundry can easily be hidden by the new building on Third Street. He said that there needs to be strong connection between park design, the sidewalk and the Foundry presence.

DC stated that there will be three times the amount of 90 degree days in the future and the big changes will be a dramatically larger amount of air conditioning required. He said that expensive glass buildings are being developed and it is ludicrous to him. He stated that all of these facades will have to be rebuilt. He said that this issue should be part of design review and recommendations. He stated that there were some discussions on design review and he has heard very little design review comments. He asked Ms.

Born her thoughts on design review capabilities. Ms. Born responded that design review responsibility lies with the Community Development Department and although she appreciates what is being said about climate and energy, there are LEED requirements that must be met. Councillor Carlone stated that he supports Ms. Born's reappointment but added that the CRA is representing the public and the City has sustainable goals. He said that he questions whether these goals are being met.

Councillor Mazen asked Ms. Born about the needs of the CRA Board into the future as it relates to complimentary expertise. Ms. Born responded that she believes in timing for public officials and she would not be intending to seek another term on the CRA Board as she believes that turnover is a healthy thing. She stated that former City Manager Healy had wisdom when he appointed the CRA Board with staggering terms. She stated that the CRA is a good mix of expertise. Councillor Mazen asked if there is something new needed that perhaps has not been relevant in the past. Ms. Drury stated that the conversation suggests that job training and the ability to bring that sector closer would be a good skill. Mr. Evans added that the CRA Board functions as a policy-setting body that then seeks out skill-sets. Ms. Born said that for this particular board, it is more a question of values that align with the Board's mission of social equity more than specific skills. She noted that the current CRA Board has a real commitment for social justice and equity of opportunity.

Public comment began at 1:32 p.m.

Robert Winters stated that he has known Ms. Born for 25 years and he wholeheartedly supports this appointment. He stated that there is now a notion of trust with the CRA. He stated that one of the greatest luxuries that a citizen can have is the ability to trust that the CRA will do a great job on the City's behalf. He said that he has a tremendous sense of trust that the CRA is acting on the City's behalf.

Public comment closed at 1:33 p.m.

City Manager DePasquale stated that understands the importance of appointing good people to the Boards and Commissions. He stated that he has known Ms. Born for over forty years. He noted that she is a smart leader who listens and knows the City. He added that she is a people-person and is great to work with. He said that Ms. Born's commitment and love for the city is second to none. He thanked the CRA for the important work that it has, and will continue, to do.

Councillor Mazen made the following motion:

WHEREAS: That the Neighborhood and & Long Term Planning, Public Facilities, Arts and Celebrations Committee confirm the recommendation of City Manager Louis DePasquale to reappoint Kathleen L. Born to the Cambridge Redevelopment Authority for a term of five years with a favorable recommendation.

The motion passed on a voice vote of three members.

Councillor Mazen thanked all those present for their participation.

The hearing adjourned at 1:35 p.m.

For the Committee,
Councillor Nadeem Mazen, Chair
Neighborhood and Long Term Planning, Public Facilities, Arts and Celebrations Committee