



Regular Board Meeting of the Cambridge Redevelopment Authority

Wednesday, December 13, 2023 at 5:30 p.m.

Pursuant to Chapter 2 of the Acts of 2023, this public meeting was conducted remotely with remote participation options.

APPROVED Meeting Minutes

Meeting Files

- [Notice and Agenda](#)
- [Draft Minutes of CRA Board Regular Meeting on November 15, 2023](#)
- [Draft Design Review Meeting Notes from June 7, 2023](#)
- [Draft Design Review Meeting Notes from October 10, 2023](#)
- [Letter to the Energy Facility Siting Board supporting Greater Cambridge Energy Program](#)
- [Staff Program Report](#)
- [Foundry Office Lease Memo](#)
- [Proposed 2024 CRA Budget](#)

Presentations

- [Fiscal 2024 Budget Presentation](#)
-

Opening Statement

At 5:30 p.m., Ellen Shore, CRA Operations Director, said that Pursuant to Chapter 2 of the Acts of 2023, this public meeting is being conducted remotely with participation options at the start of this meeting, and possibly at other times during the meeting, at the discretion of the chair. She then explained how to provide public comment. Board materials can be found on the CRA's next meeting webpage (www.cambridgeredevelopment.org/next-meeting). This meeting is being recorded, including all video, audio, and QA messages.

Call Roll

Board Vice Chair Conrad Crawford called the regular meeting. A roll call of Board members and the Executive Director was taken.

Chair, Kathleen Born – present
Treasurer, Christopher Bator – absent
Assistant Treasurer, Barry Zevin – present
Lauren Reznick - present
Executive Director, Tom Evans – present

CRA staff members were also present. Mr. Crawford said that because this is a remote meeting, all votes will be taken by roll call and that Mr. Evans will repeat the responses of each member present.

Public Comment

No public comments were offered.

Minutes and Meeting Notes

1. Regular Meeting Minutes: November 15, 2023

No comments were offered.

A motion was moved by Ms. Reznick to accept the minutes of the regular meeting of the Board on November 15, 2023. A roll call was taken by Mr. Evans.

Chris Bator - absent

Kathy Born – yes

Conrad Crawford – yes

Lauren Reznick – yes

Barry Zevin – yes

The motion carried

2. Tabled from November 15, 2023 - Design Review Meeting Notes: June 7, 2023 & October 10, 2023

No comments were offered.

A motion was moved by Ms. Born to put the meeting notes from the Design Review meetings on June 7, 2023 and October 10, 2023 on file. A roll call was taken by Mr. Evans.

Chris Bator - absent

Kathy Born – yes

Conrad Crawford – yes

Lauren Reznick – yes

Barry Zevin – yes

The motion carried.

Mr. Evans said that these notes will be used for the design review of the Center Plaza, which could occur in the beginning of next year.

Ms. Born noted that members of the Design Review committee had met to view the mock-up for 121 Broadway. Mr. Evans explained that onsite VMU reviews are not formal meetings. It was noted that Joel Smith, CRA Project Manager, is further reviewing some design elements of the façade of the new residential building with CDD. Mr. Smith confirmed that review is ongoing with Boston Properties and the discussions have been amicable.

Communications

3. Letter from the CRA Executive Director to the Energy Facility Siting Board in support of the Greater Cambridge Energy Program

Mr. Evans said that the Energy Facility Siting Board (EFSB) is nearing the end of their review for the substation project and the associated line routing. At the very end of the public review process, the campus planners at MIT raised concerns about the route of the lines going from the substation south, via Vassar Street. He emphasized that Vassar Street is a City street. At a recent City Council hearing, a unanimous motion was passed supporting the Eversource project as planned. Mr. Evans said that it was important for the CRA to make a statement and to notify the CRA board of the specific impacts of the MIT-proposed alternative routes. Specifically, the line routing alternatives would travel through both Grand Junction Park and Galaxy Park, the latter of which would involve complications with the Red Line. It is unclear if their alternative is even technically feasible. Of further concern is the delay which would occur in delivering the necessary energy to the community and providing the streetscape and pedestrian-bike facilities that the CRA has promised and designed.

Mr. Evans added that other inputs from DPW and other City staff were given urging the EFSB to move quickly on the original route that Eversource entered. He noted that there was one routing line adjustment made based on significant community concerns but that occurred about a year ago.

Ms. Born said that although MIT states that the original route is going through the heart of the MIT campus, Vassar Street is not the center of the MIT campus. MIT has acquired most of the property on Vassar Street but it is a public street. Mr. Evans confirmed. He also noted that MIT made improvements to the street over a decade ago at their own expense and there is a special arrangement for maintenance of the streetscape. MIT does have a significant amount of campus utilities on Vassar; however, the right of way is the City's to control.

4. Written communications received since the publication of this meeting notice.

No other communications were received.

Administration Items

5. Monthly Staff Report

Kyle Vangel, CRA Director of Projects and Planning, highlighted portions of the staff report included in the Board packet. He introduced Sabrina Nunez-Diaz, who was recently hired as CRA Finance Manager. Ms. Nunez-Diaz provided a brief review of her professional background.

With regards to the Forward Fund Capital Infrastructure Grants, he noted that the Selection Committee is comprised of CRA and City staff, and will meet this month to review and allocate funds amongst the applicants. The recipients in this second round will be introduced to the CRA Board next month to highlight their projects, as was done with the previous round of grantees.

Mr. Zevin asked about the Grand Junction Transit Study that no longer appears on the calendar. Mr. Evans said that there are many parties involved and he wants to be sure that all parties are ready to present this publicly. Mr. Evans said that the document may be ready in January to present to the various stakeholders, including the CRA Board.

Mr. Crawford asked about the working relationship with the MBTA office of real estate. Mr. Evans said that every project has its own dynamic with the assigned project manager. The Kendall/MIT Headhouse project is moving forward, but took a very long time. There have been many complications for the T related to construction and safety, in light of the issues that have been publicly flagged. When the FTA started providing more scrutiny over MBTA construction projects, some of the projects that are proximate to the T, although not really necessarily in contact with trains, had to go through additional training protocols. With the CRA work in the Rindge area, there has been progress on mapping and locating the proposed path. Mr. Vangel added that he was excited to learn today that the survey team received its license from the MBTA to help push along the project. This will enable the CRA Ridge Connectivity study team to take the next steps in conducting a survey along the MBTA's land there.

Projects and Programs

6. Tabled from November 15, 2023 - Foundry Third Floor Office Tenant Lease

Matthew Heller-Trulli, CRA Senior Asset Manager, said that the CRA has been working for the past year to lease out the 8,000-square foot suite on the third floor of the Foundry. In August, the Board approved leasing the front 4,000 square feet to Olema Oncology. Recently, a LOI was signed with Lemelson-MIT to occupy the other 4,000 square feet of office space. Lemelson-MIT, a national leader in STEM education, was instrumental in the creation of the Foundry Consortium, which runs the community space in the Foundry. STEM education is a component of the Foundry's mission and the Foundry Advisory Committee had noted a need for more of this within the building.

Mr. Heller-Trulli showed the floor plan which outlined the location of the space. Staff have been working with Cambridge Seven, the architect for the Foundry renovation project, on a subdivision to allow construction of two independent suites and a second egress corridor. Staff is currently undergoing a public procurement process with the hopes of getting Lemelson-MIT into the space in the beginning of 2024.

Mr. Zevin said that the construction cost in the motion seemed expensive and wondered whether a cost consultant should be hired to advise on reasonable cost expectations. He also questioned a notation on the drawings regarding a sound-insulating slab. Mr. Heller-Trulli Matthew said that the sound-insulating slab is already in

existence. The note on the drawing might be calling out where the demarcation line is between the isolation slab and the concrete slab. There is no work included in this project to add or change that slab in any way. Mr. Evans noted that there is acoustical isolation work that was amiss. The chase in the corner provided a sound transmission path from the theater. Additional soundproofing around that wall is planned. Mr. Evans did not know why this was not covered in the original work.

Mr. Evans said that the motion does not include a contractor's name because a contractor has not been selected. Assuming bids come in and they are qualified, the lowest bidder will get the contract. There is no other level of analysis. There are other alternatives being carried that aren't shown in the bidding. The add-alts are taken in order that they are numbered, with this project only having one alternate. Hopefully, there is room in the budget to do additional work but that won't be known until the bids come in. He also noted that the drawing does not show the large amount of required sub-contractor work, such as data rewiring and reorganizing the HVAC.

Mr. Crawford asked about timing for the third floor to be completely occupied. Mr. Evans said that the goal is the end of winter – early spring.

A motion was moved by Ms. Born (by hand wave) authorizing the Executive Director and Chair to enter into a lease agreement with Lemelson-MIT for approximately 4,030 square feet of office space within the Foundry building, 101 Roger Street. A roll call was taken by Mr. Evans.

Chris Bator - absent

Kathy Born – yes

Conrad Crawford – yes

Lauren Reznick – yes

Barry Zevin – yes

The motion carried.

A motion was moved by Ms. Reznick authorizing the Executive Director and Chair to enter into a construction contract, with a to-be-named General Contractor, valued at approximately two hundred and eighty-five thousand dollars (\$285,000) for office renovations within a portion of the third floor of the Foundry Building, 101 Rogers Street. A roll call was taken by Mr. Evans.

Chris Bator - absent

Kathy Born – yes

Conrad Crawford – yes

Lauren Reznick – yes

Barry Zevin – yes

The motion carried.

7. Operation and Capital Budget for 2024

Gardy Laurent, CRA Director of Finance and Operations, gave a high-level summary presentation of the CRA 2024 annual budget. A more detailed report is included in the Board packet. Mr. Laurent said that creating a budget was a team effort and thanked the CRA staff for their contributions. The 2024 budget report looks different than those of past years. With CRA's operations and financial activities becoming more complex, this report tries to present a budget that is easy to read and understand.

Mr. Laurent presented the \$9.5 million 2024 CRA Consolidated Budget, which incorporates the budgets for CRA's General Fund, Bishop Allen, the Foundry, and KSTEP. Mr. Laurent explained the breakdown of the consolidated budget into five organizational functions. Each expenditure has a funding source, an organizational function, and an expense category. He then stepped through the CRA General Fund, Bishop Allen, and Foundry budgets.

Mr. Evans said that at the meeting with Mr. Laurent, the Treasurer, the Assistant Treasurer and himself regarding this budget, Treasurer Mr. Bator, who is absent tonight, was comfortable and pleased with the enhanced structure.

Ms. Born asked for a better understanding of the separation of labor costs – staff versus consultants. Mr. Laurent said that the detailed budget report, that is part of the Board packet, shows how much is being attributed to staff and how much is attributed to the various professional services.

Mr. Zevin said that he and Mr. Bator were shown a more granular set of tables that dove into exactly what goes into each of the broader categories. Mr. Zevin thought that Mr. Bator might have thought that the granular view was overkill but Mr. Zevin said that it might answer Ms. Born's question. Mr. Evans confirmed that those tables are in the Board packet report, not in this presentation, and look like the budget materials shown to the Board in past years.

Ms. Reznick said that she was confused as to how things got rolled up into the organizational function categories. The labels in the Board packet report didn't seem to line up with the labels of the color-coded Consolidated Budget by Organizational Functions diagram in the presentation. Mr. Laurent explained that the organizational function graph in the presentation comprises and consolidates everything in the CRA General Fund, Bishop Allen, Foundry, and KSTEP. The appendix provides a more detailed list of items. With respect to permanent staff salary versus professional services, the table in the appendix shows an increase of \$306,000 within Salary and Wages. This includes increased staff and a 3.5% COLA for all staff. The money for professional services and consultants is not part of Salary and Wages; it is part of Program Administration. She said that the graph in the presentation crosscuts not only the CRA General Fund, but also the Bishop Allen and the Foundry staff expenses and consolidates those numbers.

Mr. Crawford asked if the Enterprise software that is being researched would address these issues. Mr. Laurent explained how the Enterprise software addresses other items.

Ms. Reznick noted that FY23 is about \$900,000 under budget. She asked if there were other reasons besides open staff positions that weren't filled. Mr. Evans said that the easement purchase for Rindge did not get executed in FY23. This expense is in FY24 under the CRA General Fund, Extraordinary Expenditures, Real Estate Acquisitions. This is planned for the spring.

Mr. Evans said that most of the extraordinary expenses, except for some design contracts that are already underway, will require Board approval. Staff will come to the Board to enter into an easement agreement or make a retail space purchase. Other routine administrative expenses can be done on staff level approval. There are checkpoints before big expenditures are made, even if the amount is included in the budget.

There were no other comments.

A motion was moved by Mr. Zevin approving the proposed CRA budget for 2024. A roll call was taken by Mr. Evans.

Chris Bator - absent

Kathy Born – yes

Conrad Crawford – yes

Lauren Reznick – yes

Barry Zevin – yes

The motion carried.

At 6:40 p.m. the Board had concluded all of its scheduled business.

Other Business

Mr. Crawford said that there is an Executive Session to discuss negotiations related to the production of affordable home ownership housing units. Since the agenda says this is to start at 7:00 p.m., there will be a 20-minute break. Mr. Vangel will send a Zoom link for 7:00 p.m. to the Board and staff.

A motion was moved by Ms. Reznick to enter into Executive Session to consider terms of potential real estate transactions in support of affordable housing development at 7:00 p.m. A roll call was taken by Mr. Evans.

Chris Bator - absent

Kathy Born – yes

Conrad Crawford – yes

Lauren Reznick – yes

Barry Zevin – yes

The motion carried.