



Regular Board Meeting of the Cambridge Redevelopment Authority

Wednesday, November 16, 2022 at 5:30 PM

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, this meeting was held virtually via Zoom

APPROVED Meeting Minutes

Meeting File

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Opening Statement

At 5:35 p.m., Ellen Shore, CRA Operations Director, said that on July 16, 2022, Governor Baker signed a law which extended the remote meeting provisions of the Open Meeting Law until March 31, 2023. In accordance, tonight's CRA board meeting is being held remotely. There will be opportunities for public comment at the start of this meeting and at the discretion of the chair. Ms. Shore explained the steps to provide public comment. Board meeting materials can be found on the CRA's next meeting webpage. This meeting is being recorded, including all video, audio, and QA messages.

Call Roll

Chair Kathleen Born called the regular meeting of CRA Board. A roll call of Board members and the Executive Director was taken.

Vice Chair Conrad Crawford – absent, will be joining later
Treasurer Christopher Bator – absent, will be joining later
Asst. Treasurer Barry Zevin - present
Asst. Secretary Margaret Drury – present
Executive Director Tom Evans - present

There is a quorum to start the meeting. CRA staff members are also present. Ms. Born said that because this is a remote meeting, all votes will be taken by roll call and the Executive Director will repeat the responses.

Public Comment

No requests for public comment were offered.

Minutes

1. Review of October 19, 2022 Minutes

No comments were offered.

A motion was moved by Ms. Drury to accept the minutes of the Regular Meeting of the Board on October 19, 2022. A roll call was taken by Mr. Evans.

Chris Bator – absent

Kathy Born – yes

Conrad Crawford – absent

Margaret Drury - yes

Barry Zevin – yes

The motion carried.

2. Review of October 13, 2022 Design Committee Meeting Notes

No comments were offered.

A motion was moved by Ms. Drury to accept the meeting notes of the Design Review Committee on October 13, 2022. A roll call was taken by Mr. Evans.

Chris Bator – absent

Kathy Born – yes

Conrad Crawford – absent

Margaret Drury - yes

Barry Zevin – yes

The motion carried.

Communications

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

No communications were received.

Administration Items

4. Monthly Staff Report

Mr. Evans introduced new hires, Kyle Vangel, Director of Projects and Planning, and Matthew Heller-Trulli, Senior Asset Manager.

Christopher Bator joined the meeting.

Mr. Evans summarized the staff report in the board packet. He added that, last week, the Broad Institute M1 expansion Infill Development Plan special permit was approved by the Planning Board.

Ms. Born started a discussion regarding the Planning Board's rejection of the proposal for the 125 Broadway Biogen hydrogen tanks that was previously approved by the CRA Board. Mr. Zevin said that he had written a letter to Ms. Born and Mr. Evans voicing his anger with the rejection. Mr. Evans said that he does not know how the applicant will respond. Ms. Born said that parallel review processes should have a link between them.

5. Third Quarter 2022 Financial Report

Hema Kailasam, Director of Finance and Operations, summarized the third quarter financial report. The market continues to be volatile. In the third quarter, the S&P was down almost 5%. There has been substantial progress in the close-out of the Bishop Allen renovation project. Year-to-date, almost the entire construction budget cost has been paid. A drop in CRA assets, shown on the balance sheet, reflects the cash payments, especially to the City for the Foundry, as well as the drop in the investment portfolio. As for Bishop Allen, income is tracking well with the estimated budget. Expenses for this project are well below the projected expenses so far this year. A small reserve for the building will be moved to a capital reserve account at the end of this year.

Projects and Programs

6. 300 Binney Street Building Design Modification

Cecelia Cobb, CRA Project Planner, summarized the memo in the board packet. Jeff Lowenberg, from Boston Properties, introduced the team on this project- Brett Lambert from Stantec Architects, Mark Allen from HGA Architects, and Steven Adler from Sasaki. A presentation was made to the Board.

Ms. Born said that she and Mr. Zevin had seen a version of this presentation at the October 13 design review committee meeting. Some changes have been made since then.

Mr. Zevin said that the lower penthouse enclosures are fine. He noted the tightness of the loading dock and questioned the ability to back up a truck there. Mr. Lowenberg said that studies with VHB confirmed the space is adequate. Ms. Drury liked the building shape. Ms. Born said that this enlivens the corner. She agreed that the two planes of the mechanical area are fine, as this is what medical lab buildings look like.

Mr. Crawford, agreed with Ms. Born regarding the refinement of the exterior of the building. This corner hasn't had much attention. He is pleased that the design committee's concerns have been addressed. He asked the team to explain how their design relates to other elements on the street and across the street. Mr. Lowenberg said that the team has been focusing on the parcel but CRA staff have tasked his team with a more global look at the streetscape. Mr. Crawford asked if the pocket park on Galileo, and possibly the Bright Horizons playground, could be made accessible to the public.

Mr. Zevin said that removing the very awkward connector between 125 Binney and this building is wonderful. It opens up the possibility of carrying this connection across Galileo, if it can be done safely. He added that this streetscape reads as a parkway in a very urban space. There was a discussion regarding the curve of the street and further talks with the City.

Ms. Born asked if a parallel Planning Board approval process was needed. Mr. Evans did not think so because this building was never subject to a special permit. Ms. Born asked Mr. Lowenberg to keep the CRA updated on their permitting process and whether a Planning Board hearing becomes necessary for any reason.

A motion was moved by Ms. Drury, to approve the proposed design modification to the office building at 300 Binney Street within the Kendall Square Urban Redevelopment Project area. A roll call was taken by Mr. Evans.

Chris Bator – yes

Kathy Born – yes

Conrad Crawford – yes

Margaret Drury - yes

Barry Zevin – yes

The motion carried.

7. Broad Discovery Center Signage Program

Fabiola Alikpokou, CRA Senior Planner, summarized the memo in the board packet. She introduced Namrata Sengupta, from the Broad Institute. Ms. Sengupta explained that because the main entrance door is not directly on Main Street, it is not included in this street signage proposal. The request for a sign and/or logo on the front door has been relayed to the Broad's space planning and facilities team. That element will be shared with the CRA but her understanding is that this would not require CRA signage approval.

Mr. Evans clarified that the addition of the Discovery Center sign on the door, at the scale that is being shown tonight, would not trigger board review, but he would like CRA staff to review it. Ms. Sengupta explained that there are other centers within the building so the placement of logos is not her decision. She noted that the sandwich board sign is also not included in this presentation. From the design review meeting, she got the sense that it is okay to continue to use the sandwich board even after the permanent window signs have been installed.

Ms. Born said that she would be very happy if the building looks as vibrant as it does in the image.

Mr. Zevin said that the design mirrors what is going on in the Koch lobby across the street at MIT. He is still not thrilled with the white lines. He added that the white arrows are so similar to the white lines that they might be too subtle. Ms. Sengupta proposed proceeding as is and then reevaluating after the installation.

A motion was moved by Ms. Drury to approve the proposed signage and wayfinding for the Broad Discovery Center at 415 Main Street within the Kendall Square Urban Redevelopment Project area.

A roll call was taken by Mr. Evans.

Chris Bator – yes

Kathy Born – yes

Conrad Crawford – yes

Margaret Drury - yes

Barry Zevin – yes

The motion carried.

8. Update on CRA Strategic Plan

Kathryn Madden, CRA Strategic Planner, gave an overview of last month's Strategic Plan discussion with the CRA Board, which addressed the introduction, vision, mission, context, and external activities chapters of the document. These five chapters were also distributed to and discussed at the Strategic Advisory Group (SAG) on November 4, 2022, which Ms. Born, Mr. Crawford, and Mr. Zevin also attended.

Ms. Madden said that some of the major takeaways from the SAG meeting were that the plan should focus on how the CRA decides future projects, how it will avoid duplicating the work of others, the issue of partnerships, the role of the CRA as a convener and thought leader, and incorporating DEI (diversity, equity and inclusion).

Ms. Madden said that tonight's discussion is about internal operations; financial considerations; and learning, growth and engagement. She used a PowerPoint presentation to guide the discussion. She spoke about the key themes of the plan. Throughout the process, while the plan was being developed, aspects of it have been implemented. She expects this document to be finalized in March 2023.

With respect to internal operations, the primary topics are supervision and mentoring, project management, office systems, and the board structure. She said that there has been turnover in the last year but staff is now ramping up with two recent hires and two more open positions. The size of the current staff compared to eight years ago underscores the change from being a start up to being a more mature organization. She spoke about the chart of staff functions on page 3. In 2021, a senior management team (Executive Director, Director of Projects and Planning, Director of Finance and Operations) was created to reduce the number of direct reports to the Executive Director. Together, the senior management team oversees the running of the organization. A "Go-No-go" project intake process was identified in 2021 to document the basic information about a potential project that the Board would need to decide if staff should pursue the project. Ms. Madden added that senior management needs to also access if there is enough staff capacity and adequate skill sets needed. As our assets increase and our projects become more complex, the importance of contract management becomes ever more critical.

Mr. Bator said that while it is important for the Board to know the pros and cons and to get a recommendation on future projects, there are instances when a very time sensitive decision is needed to direct the staff on whether more research should be pursued before a "Go-No-go" decision can be made. Ms. Madden noted that basic facts about the project could still be documented and presented to facilitate the Board discussion, even at a preliminary level.

Ms. Madden spoke about staff retention and the importance of professional development, learning on the job, providing a culture for differing points of views, and the prioritization of staff reviews.

Office systems is another part of the internal operations – financial software, record keeping, information technology, writing policies, and the incorporation of the DEI action plan, which the staff have been working on for the last 12 months. There are 125 action items on the DEI action plan, but the implementation of these needs to be prioritized.

Regarding the Board structure, the strategic plan should identify a strategy for future Board leadership development and succession to ensure the CRA's long-term success. The Foundry Advisory Committee and the Strategic Advisory Group have allowed the CRA to gain various perspectives, but they also have expanded the pool of people who understand the work of the CRA.

Ms. Madden then discussed the Board fiduciary's responsibility. CRA assets are now \$65 million including cash, investments, a loan portfolio, long-term account receivables, a building, and land. Its liabilities include short-term accounts payable, long-term pension, medical benefits, the Foundry's 50-year operating lease, and the 99 Bishop Allen mortgage. The growth in assets from 2012 is substantial.

Mr. Bator said the hardest decision for the Board will be making judgements between expending large amounts of its assets on immediate projects versus maintaining assets in such a way that the CRA can do important, crucial things in the future. His view is to do wonderful things but preserve some ability for the future.

Ms. Madden said that about \$100 million is expected over the next decade from the Eversource development project. There are KSURP obligations through 2035, Foundry operations obligations at least through 2072, and the Bishop Allen building, which the CRA owns. The question is how best to use the money and available tools to maximize impact. She noted that it is possible to leverage impact with borrowing. Ms. Madden stated four financial scenarios. The CRA has many projects, which spend-down our assets. For instance, the capital investment for the Foundry and Bishop Allen drew down our assets, although the intent is that their operations will be self-sustaining. Looking at revenue generating projects is something to consider. Ms. Madden spoke about the set of financial principles to help guide the work going forward.

Mr. Crawford suggested the addition of seeking federal or foundation funding to increase revenues.

Mr. Bator expressed concern that that the current number of Board members will be too small to handle the number of decisions that will be needed as the staff and projects increase. Mr. Vangel said that the Tulsa Development Authority expanded their Board to a larger group for project review and discussion, while retaining the mandated five-member structure for formal votes.

With respect to the Strategic Plan section on learning, growth and engagement, Ms. Madden emphasized the importance of partnerships and long-term relationships, including those with Forward Fund grantees, nonprofits, and other organizations.

Ms. Born said that there are some places where the CRA needs to be invited by the City government or the City's executive branch. Ms. Born feels that the CRA currently distributes funds from its assets with an eye towards equality. She suggested editing page 18 so that the column of partners is more general as opposed to calling out specific names of nonprofits.

Ms. Madden spoke about the work that was done to create the SAG, which was established for a one-year duration. Since a year has passed, Ms. Madden brought up the question of keeping this group active, assuming the members want to stay in the group, until the plan is finalized. She added that a large amount of staff time has been invested in getting this group up to speed to understand what the CRA does, and that leadership development is an important aspect of this initiative.

Mr. Drury said that she would need recommendations from staff about whether to extend the SAG for any amount of time as she hasn't had much contact with most of the group members. Mr. Bator agreed. He doesn't feel there is an immediate short-term need. Ms. Born said she needs to think more about this. Ms. Born noted that committees often go on for too long and that having an end date is helpful. Ms. Madden said that terms are in effect for the Foundry Advisory Committee so that there is mandatory turn-over. This allows for leadership development and new perspectives. In response to a question, Ms. Born said that the City is currently offering stipends for members of some boards and commissions; Mr. Evans clarified that stipends are included in the advertisements for the BZA and the Planning Board. There was a conversation about keeping the SAG going for some period of time.

Mr. Bator said that given the investment in time to form the group, he suggested that asking for at least another year makes sense. He added that he would like some communication between the group and the Board. Ms.

Madden said that the SAG was specifically put together as a way to get access to a broad and diverse base of the community. It also creates a pool of people that are knowledgeable about the CRA.

Mr. Bator said that it is an obligation of this CRA board to allow for change in membership in a thoughtful, orderly way, which preserves institutional knowledge while bringing in new ideas. Ms. Madden said that this Board, as a group, should be thinking about possible future nominations, even if the city is going to control the process.

Ms. Madden said that the SAG member advertisement said that the SAG will advise the CRA on issues related to the strategic plan and its implementation, and will help support the CRA's relationship with the Cambridge community so that the CRA's work is equitable, responds to local needs, and reaches a diverse population. She said that the value of the SAG is with external projects and how the CRA is engaged in the community. She recommended that the SAG be asked to stay involved until the strategic plan is done, which would be sometime in March 2023. The plan is written and just needs to incorporate some important Board decisions.

Ms. Madden and the senior management team will be meeting regularly to create a work plan to share with the staff. This will then be presented to the Board within the next few months, with a final document in March 2023.

Ms. Born started a discussion regarding the reasons why this process is taking longer than the last planning process. The Board agreed the plan is very thoughtful.

Mr. Evans urged the Board to send Ms. Madden any comments to the written document.

A motion was made by Ms. Drury to adjourn the meeting. A roll call was taken by Mr. Evans and each member's vote was repeated.

Chris Bator – yes

Kathy Born – yes

Conrad Crawford – yes

Margaret Drury - yes

Barry Zevin – yes

The motion carried.