



Regular Board Meeting of the Cambridge Redevelopment Authority

Wednesday, November 15, 2023 at 5:30 p.m.

Pursuant to Chapter 2 of the Acts of 2023, this public meeting was conducted in a hybrid format with in-person and remote participation options.

APPROVED Meeting Minutes

Meeting Files

- [Agenda and Notice](#)
 - [Draft Minutes of the Regular Meeting of the Board on October 18, 2023](#)
 - [Draft Design Review Meeting Notes from June 7, 2023](#)
 - [Draft Design Review Meeting Notes from October 10, 2023](#)
 - [Monthly Staff Program Report](#)
 - [Third Quarter Financial Report](#)
 - [Proposed 2024 Board Meeting Dates Calendar](#)
 - [2023 Forward Fund Status Report & Presentation](#)
 - [Foundry Advisory Committee \(FAC\) Annual Foundry Report](#)
 - [Bishop Allen Renovation Closeout Report](#)
 - [CRA Diversity Equity and Inclusion Action Plan](#)
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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. The meeting was also viewable live on Facebook by going to CRA's Facebook page at www.facebook.com/CambridgeCRA. She then explained how to provide public comment. Comments on Facebook cannot be entered into public comment and cannot be responded to by the CRA. Board 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

Board 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 – present
Treasurer Christopher Bator – present
Asst. Treasurer Barry Zevin – present
Lauren Reznick - present
Executive Director, Tom Evans – present

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

Public Comment

No public comments were offered. Ms. Born said that comments would be accepted at other times.

Minutes

1. Review of the Minutes of the Regular Meeting of the Board on October 18, 2023

A motion was moved by Ms. Reznick to accept the minutes of the Regular Meeting of the Board on October 18, 2023 and place them on file. A roll call was taken by Mr. Evans.

Chris Bator - yes

Kathy Born – yes

Conrad Crawford – yes

Lauren Reznick – yes

Barry Zevin – yes

The motion carried

2. Design Review Meeting Notes: June 7, 2023 and October 10, 2023

Mr. Zevin said that he sent substantive amendments and corrections to the design committee minutes after they were posted. Ms. Born said that since all board members have not seen the amendments, the agenda item and motion was tabled to a future Board meeting. Mr. Evans said that staff will repost updated design review notes.

Ms. Born noted that there will be an onsite review of the visual mock-up unit (VMU) for the new residential tower project. The VMU is located off of Ames Place, behind 75 Ames Street.

Mr. Bator started a discussion about the entire Board voting on accepting minutes of a subcommittee. He said that these should be accepted by the subcommittee, made available to the whole Board, and placed on file. Ms. Born said that the CRA Board has voted on design review notes in the past. Mr. Evans said that the procedure is similar to that of City Council. Ms. Born said that posting the notes memorializes what happened at the meeting. Ms. Born added that these design review meetings were prescribed by the special permit that was granted to the CRA.

Communications

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

No other written communications were received.

Administration Items

4. Monthly Staff Report

Kyle Vangel, Director of Projects and Planning, summarized the staff report in the board packet. He explained that the map on page 2 shows routes under consideration in the Grand Junction Transit Feasibility study. The route goes through Cambridge, from North Station to the future West Station. The potential for extended service connecting the Grand Junction to Lynn is also being studied.

Regarding the Margaret Fuller Neighborhood House (MFNH) development project, Mr. Vangel said that in the beginning of this year, MFNH announced a change in their programmatic direction, discontinuing their after-school program. This resulted in changes in the programmatic and space needs of the organization.

Mr. Zevin noted that there hasn't been visible progress on the Red Line headhouse site for the past few weeks. Mr. Evans said that he would get an update for the Board.

Mr. Zevin said that the extension of Monroe Street from the DOT's new building onto the Loughrey Walkway is basically ready to be activated, except for a bench that needs to be moved and about 20 square feet of concrete that needs to be poured. The security perimeter of the Volpe is complete. There was a discussion of the next steps. Mr. Evans said he would get a more precise timetable.

Mr. Evans said that staff is releasing another RFP related to CRA's search for affordable housing sites but this RFP will also seek potential partnerships to meet some or all of the housing obligations. He noted that there is a hearing of the Health and Environment Committee of the City Council next week to discuss MIT's objections to the Eversource transmission routing along Vassar. The CRA has been asked to attend and testify at that hearing on behalf of the broader Eversource project. Ms. Born asked Mr. Evans to send the meeting time and instructions for attendance.

Ms. Reznick asked if the CRA had a position on the topic. Mr. Evans explained that the CRA's design purview and area of concern is the plaza and how it affects the buildings and the streetscape immediately across the street. As the transmission lines travel through the Kendall Square Urban Redevelopment Plan Area, the CRA is interested in the impacts those may have on the streets. Broadway has five transmission lines coming in. MIT's proposal is that one of these lines should be routed along the Grand Junction right-of-way rather than under Vassar Street. MIT's main concern is the impact on its steam plant, which is between Vassar St. and the Grand Junction tracks. The Grand Junction route was never studied carefully, and is deemed problematic by Eversource. The CRA has been urging the state Energy Facilities Siting Board to approve the project. This last-minute MIT proposal is creating another delay. The CRA's main concern is that the State approve this project. If delayed, many of the public benefits that the CRA has been working on, such as the streetscape improvements on Broadway and on Binney, and the completion of the Center Plaza, which must happen after the substation is installed, would also be delayed. The most impactful delay is compromising Eversource's ability to provide electricity to Kendall Square. The City and Eversource have said that this project needs to get online as soon as possible. There has been extensive public discussion about this project for a long time.

Mr. Zevin suggested distributing the link to the Energy Facilities Siting Board Eversource petition. Mr. Evans put this link in the chat: <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/greater-cambridge-energy-program>

5. Third Quarter Financial Report

Gardy Laurent, Director of Finance and Operations presented highlights of the third quarter financial report.

Ms. Born clarified that CRA investments are in US Treasuries and in securities included in the Massachusetts Legal List of Investments. Many of the state-listed stocks are the so-called Blue-chip stocks. They are highly performing and stable US corporations. This is a very low-risk portfolio. Mr. Bator added that the market has turned up this month.

6. 2024 Board Meeting Dates

Ms. Shore presented a calendar with the proposed 2024 Board meeting dates. Most board meetings fall on the third Wednesday of each month, except for April and June. There is a date for an August meeting although this can be canceled if the Board decides one isn't needed.

As for location, there is a possibility of holding hybrid meetings in the Foundry. Ms. Born noted that the success of hybrid meetings for participants is highly dependent on technology. Ms. Shore said that the CRA has purchased equipment for this very purpose. Ms. Born suggested doing an inventory of various boards and commissions in the City and coming to the Board in December with the findings. Mr. Evans added that every public board is allowing for remote Board participation so that a quorum need not be in one place. Although remote participation of the public is less the concern of the law, it has shown to increase public participation. Mr. Evans said staff will do an inventory of various boards and commissions.

Ms. Reznick supports the option to have remote public participation. She didn't have a strong opinion regarding Board member location.

Ms. Shore read a statement from Heather Hoffman in the chat regarding the methods used by some City Boards.

Ms. Shore will send calendar invites to all for the proposed meeting dates.

[Projects and Programs](#)

7. 2023 Forward Fund Status Report

Joshua Croom, CRA Project Planner, summarized the report in the Board packet. The Forward Fund is a grant program that was created in 2015, which invests development fees generated in the Kendall Square Urban Redevelopment Area into projects of nonprofit organizations and community groups in greater Cambridge. The fund provides financial assistance for capital infrastructure projects to help maintain the quality, efficiency, and accessibility of nonprofit organizations that provide important services to the community. The Forward Fund also supports feasibility studies that give funds to organizations to study the scope and budget needs for capital infrastructure projects. He gave details of Capital Infrastructure grants and the Feasibility Study grants.

He spoke about the make-up of the selection committee and the criteria used to select grant recipients.

Mr. Croom said that three organizations received Capital Infrastructure grants. One grant for \$100,000 was awarded to the Community Art Center (CAC) for bathroom renovations and a podcast studio. Erin Muirhead McCarty, the Executive Director of the CAC spoke about this project and thanked the board. Mr. Bator was pleased that this project was chosen by the selection committee.

The Cambridge Community Center (CCC) was funded for gymnasium roof upgrades and insulation. The CCC received grants in 2018 for a commercial kitchen and in 2019 for a building modernization project. They repurposed \$50,000 of those funds towards Covid relief. The CCC is awarded a 2023 Grant of \$46,150 and will reallocate its remaining grant funds from its 2018 and 2019 to this project, for a total of \$96,150. Darrin Korte, Executive Director of the CCC, spoke about their renewed focus as a climate resilience hub. He thanked the CRA for its flexibility with the reallocation of funds. Mr. Crawford was excited to hear of the resilience hub as an outgrowth of discussions regarding Cambridge's climate resiliency and energy usage. He encouraged Mr. Korte to be a model for the City.

The third grant of \$12,000 was awarded to Just-A-Start (JAS) for their Linwood Court bike shed beautification project. Emelia Misail, JAS Philanthropy Manager, spoke about her organization and grant. She expressed her gratitude for the award.

Mr. Croom gave a brief overview of the Forward Fund budget for 2023 for both the feasibility studies grant and the capital infrastructure improvements grant.

Mr. Bator emphasized that this program shows that the CRA has a Cambridge-wide focus, although its long history, which predates the current Board, was entirely Kendall-centric. As these projects come to fruition, he asked the recipients to come back to the Board with their end results.

8. Annual Report on Foundry Operations

Mr. Heller-Trulli, CRA Senior Asset Management, said that this is the first year that the Foundry Advisory Committee (FAC) is reporting to the CRA board, as designated in the governing documents. Of the six community members on the FAC, Sangeeta Prasad and Jameson Johnson were present. Mr. Heller-Trulli said that the FAC's mission is to provide community feedback to the CRA so that the Foundry may be adapted over time as needed.

Speaking on behalf of the FAC, Ms. Prasad outlined the role of the FAC, which has been evolving from focusing on construction to that of operations, and will continue to evolve. The FAC wants to ensure that the Foundry is an asset to the community in terms of being financially viable, as well as a place where the community can enjoy all of its facilities. She noted that the Foundry Consortium also has a board. Ms. Prasad highlighted topics discussed during the year regarding the Foundry's finances, programming, access and usage, and volunteer programming. Ms. Prasad gave a high-level summary of the 2023 budget versus actuals. Tenant income is almost at the budgeted amount but expenses were almost double that budgeted. She highlighted the sources of the community revenue.

Jameson Johnson said that the FAC has been discussing ways to align the Foundry mission with programming to maximize the space utilization and revenue. A space utilization chart showed that the overall utilization percentage has been under 60%. Another graph showed utilization by reservation type. More space is used for movement and performing arts. Ms. Prasad said that the lack of parking and limited transit access make it harder for seniors to get to the Foundry. Ms. Johnson listed some recommendations for the CRA and the Foundry staff, as well as recommendations for the FAC's governance.

Mr. Crawford said that he continues to be excited about the space. He thanked the FAC members and Diana Navarrete-Rackauckas, the Foundry Consortium Executive Director, for all of their work in activating this space, attending meetings, and answering hard questions. He continued that it's been an unconventional time to launch a community space post-pandemic and given the current state of the commercial real estate market. Mr. Crawford asked for more information on the usage of the makerspaces. He encouraged continual clarification of the Foundry governance as a way to build relationships among the CRA, the FAC, the Foundry Consortium and the City. It is important to hear what people are thinking and get people involved.

Ms. Navarrete-Rackauckas thanked the FAC for their work and recommendations on how to move forward. To answer Mr. Crawford's question regarding makerspaces, she said that there are currently 81 makerspace members. She can compile the demographics to be shared. These spaces are being used most often for workforce development programs, but members also use them. The strongest portion of the volunteer program is tied directly to the makerspaces, with 12 of the 81 members being active makerspace volunteers that work with the makerspace manager. There have been many conversations to figure out what people need and want, especially around affordable price points.

Mr. Crawford asked about the difference between the Foundry makerspaces and other makerspaces. Ms. Navarrete-Rackauckas said that conversations are occurring to cross-promote what can be done in one place and not another, and to pipeline people through the different spaces and the different types of learning that are available. The Foundry has very specialized equipment. The Foundry tries to be as beginner friendly and as diverse as possible in terms of membership and volunteers.

Mr. Zevin said that it would be helpful to collect data on the usage of each makerspace as opposed to one large catch-all shop category. He noted issues with the labeling of the reservation type categories. Ms. Navarrete-Rackauckas said that a new booking system that was brought online in August will help to resolve these issues.

Ms. Reznick said that she toured the Foundry building earlier this week. It is an inspiring space, and she had several ideas. As more people see the space, they will want to come back. She appreciated the presentation and recommendations. She asked for clarification regarding the volunteer program. Ms. Prasad said that the FAC believes there should be a formal volunteer program, but buy-in from the Foundry Consortium is needed to implement it. Ms. Navarrete-Rackauckas clarified that there are volunteers. Most volunteers work in the makerspaces as a certain amount of training is needed to ensure safety. There are also general volunteers that help set up for events, at the box office, at the welcome desk, and currently there is a technically trained volunteer consulting on the lighting system. Another idea that may be implemented shortly is using volunteer teachers to teach classes that could then be free.

Ms. Reznick felt that there were people in the community who would offer their expertise to teach a class. She asked if there was a budget for materials. She also asked how the cost of a class was determined. Ms. Navarrete-Rackauckas said that the cost of the class tries to cover materials plus a small stipend for the teaching artists. Paying people for their expertise is a component of the workforce development goal of the Foundry, as well as not undercutting other local spaces that are providing similar classes.

Ms. Reznick said that there might be opportunities with the City and their fix-it workshop program. Ms. Navarrete-Rackauckas said that a fix-it clinic occurred at the Foundry during the Cambridge Science Festival. There is a lot of city partnership type programming. In fact, right now, the Community Development Department is meeting at the Foundry hosting a workforce development class on purchasing and leasing retail space.

Ms. Reznick asked if there was a bus line or shuttle service that runs down the street and whether a stop could be added at the Foundry. Perhaps partnering with a private business could also be investigated to help with access. Mr. Zevin said that the EZ Ride bus goes down Binney Street which is a block away and perhaps only signage is

needed. However, their schedule is mostly during rush hour. Ms. Navarrete-Rackauckas said it would be a dream to have those buses go to local senior centers and bring folks to the Foundry for programming. Mr. Evans said that there have been conversations with EZ Ride and the City about using KSTEP funds to expand their hours of operation to run all day and to continue being free.

Ms. Born thanked everyone who spoke tonight. It is always good to hear ideas for continued growth in a number of different ways. She has followed the Foundry for almost 15 years and she knew this would be an evolutionary process. There have been no major hiccups. Everything about the Foundry has exceeded her expectations.

9. Foundry Third Floor Office Tenant Lease

Mr. Evans said that a signed offer letter from the proposed tenant has not been received so the request for authorization to enter into lease negotiations will be tabled.

10. Bishop Allen Renovation Close-Out Report

Mr. Heller-Trulli introduced the CRA's Owner's Project Manager, Tim MacKay, from STV, who led the Bishop Allen renovation project. This project can finally be closed out after its opening in December 2021.

Mr. MacKay gave a presentation of the project, which included the project timeline, a review of the project's goals and milestones, a fiscal review, and the lessons learned.

The building at 99 Bishop Allen Drive was purchased in October of 2019. The project team immediately moved into a feasibility study with the architect, Silverman Trykowski Associates (STA). That lasted until March 2020 when the pandemic hit. The original design phase was supposed to end in August 2020, but due to COVID, it was pushed to December. Construction started in March 2021 and was substantially complete in December of 2021. Since then, STV has been in conversations with the city trying to close things out with the fire department. The permit can be closed-out although the fire alarm devices in the lobby will be revised per the request of the Cambridge Fire Department. The water issue in the basement is being addressed.

One project goal was accessibility. The old building was very segmented, with lots of small rooms and a maze of corridors. Ramps now exist at both the front and rear of the building and the elevator has been made accessible while still using the existing shaft. Reusing as much infrastructure as possible greatly reduced the costs. The building is now fully accessible.

Another project goal was sustainability. Reducing the reliance on fossil fuel by installing a centralized, fully electric heating and cooling system has decreased utility usage. During an interim phase, the project was closed out but had not yet commissioned the solar panels, so the electrical bills were significantly higher. With the commissioning of that system there has been a reduction in the electrical prices.

Tenant space improvement was a third goal. The rear parking had flooded with the smallest rain. Site improvements dealt with the drainage. A giant recharge chamber under the rear parking lot now handles the majority of stormwater on site. Exterior space was created for cars and bike storage. The tenant spaces were reimagined but the historic and unique features were kept, especially along the front façade. Community spaces were revitalized and new spaces were created to foster tenant interactions. The waterproofing was improved with a masonry restoration. Preservation was a key element for the project. In 2022, the building was awarded a Preservation Award from the Cambridge Historic Society. The building is at 100% capacity. A project goal from the start was to retain the existing tenants.

Mr. MacKay gave a fiscal summary of the project. The CRA Board approved a budget of \$11.3 million for this project. To date, the cost is \$11.19 million. \$330,000 was received in grants from the Cambridge Historic, and another \$16,500 in rebates from Eversource for the electrical upgrades that were undertaken. He discussed the major cost drivers that were listed in the presentation. Contingency costs were built into the budget for the project. He spoke about the lessons learned from the project.

Ms. Born thanked Mr. MacKay. Mr. Mackay said that the vision of the Board to preserve this as a nonprofit space resonated with the entire project team. Ms. Born said that the designers, consultants, and the construction

manager were a good team. The surprises were par for the course with a building this age. She is delighted with the outcome, the design, and the quality of construction. Mr. Zevin said that he feels the same way.

Ms. Born asked if the water infiltration in the building has been solved. Mr. Evans said that this is still an issue for one tenant in the basement. Various things are being tried to avoid tearing up the sidewalk again and building more concrete walls. Mr. Evans said that GVW was a very good general contractor. They were very patient with the changes, and responsive and thoughtful as the CRA needed to make a lot of decisions in the moment regarding the new discoveries. He noted that some of the subs were problematic, however. There was a discussion regarding the use of a contract manager at risk in the future.

Ms. Born noted that un-mortared stone walls are expected to leak. It is necessary to keep the water away from the building. Mr. Evans said that a lot of infrastructure was done to reroute the water around the building. His theory is that the infrastructure may have changed how water is moving around the building because there is now moisture where there had not been moisture before. A lot has been done to seal up the ground surface. He added that the city is going to be working on Bishop Allen Drive in the near future to deal with stormwater for The Port and as part of the sewer separation project, so that might affect things as well.

Mr. Mackay said that as part of this project, flood barriers were added at both the front and rear ramps as well as at the alley between the building and the adjacent church. Flash flooding is mitigated by having this infrastructure in place.

11. CRA Diversity Equity and Inclusion Action Plan

Mr. Vangel said that the CRA has been developing this plan over a number of years and views this as a living document. The work is never done. It is a fundamental lens and framework to a lot of the CRA's internal processes and external work. He started with the history of the project and the initial development of the DEI Action Plan. He discussed several key action items that have been implemented from the DEI Action Plan. Mr. Vangel spoke about the refinement of the plan in 2023 and going forward into next year. He noted that there are six-, 12-, and 24-month timelines for action items with assigned staff leads. He highlighted strategies and priority action items related to internal policies and procedures; new Board members; people and programs in the community; workplace culture and staff development; and data collection and organization.

In response to Ms. Born's question about Inspector General training, Mr. Vangel explained that the Office of the Inspector General has a variety of public purchasing and procurement trainings.

As an aside, Mr. Vangel noted that staff is working with nine students from the Kennedy School of Government and the Graduate School of Design at Harvard University to explore allocating a portion of funding from the Forward Fund towards green building projects. Ms. Reznick ask if the internships are paid or unpaid. Mr. Vangel responded that the CRA's philosophy and commitment is for students undertaking internships to get paid or get course credit.

Ms. Born said that the plan is a good model for other institutions. Mr. Evans said that he and Erica Schwarz, who no longer works at the CRA, were instrumental in getting the KSA focused on this issue for the Kendall community. The CRA was an initial sponsor of the KSA's Inclusion Drives Innovation training. At a recent KSA Board meeting, a discussion occurred about the decreased participation from companies, possibly due to more organizations doing their own internal training and putting in their own DEI action plans. The City is engaged in its own process, which staff will review.

[Adjournment of CRA Board Meeting](#)

At 8:42pm. a motion was moved by Mr. Crawford to adjourn the meeting. A roll call was taken by Mr. Evans.

Chris Bator - yes

Kathy Born – yes

Conrad Crawford – yes

Lauren Reznick - yes

Barry Zevin – yes

The motion carried.