

Regular Board Meeting
Cambridge Redevelopment Authority

Wednesday, July 18, 2018 5:30pm
Robert Healy Public Safety Center / Cambridge Police Station / Community Room
125 Sixth Street, Cambridge, MA

APPROVED Meeting Minutes

Call

Chair Kathleen Born called the regular meeting to order at 5:37 p.m. Other Board members present were Vice Chair Margaret Drury, Treasurer Christopher Bator, Assistant Treasurer Conrad Crawford, and Assistant Secretary Barry Zevin. Executive Director Tom Evans and other CRA staff members, Ellen Shore, Jason Zogg, Carlos Peralta, Alex Levering, and summer intern Alex Rogala were also present.

The meeting is being recorded by CRA staff and a member of the public.

Public Comment

There were no requests to comment.

The motion to close public comment was seconded and carried unanimously.

Minutes

1. Motion: To accept the minutes of the Special Meeting of the Board on April 25, 2018

2. Motion: To accept the minutes of the Regular Meeting of the Board on May 9, 2018

Ms. Drury noted that her name and her approval should be added to the roll call vote regarding the Foundry Consortium in agenda item #1 of the April 25, 2018 meeting.

There were no other comments.

The motion to accept both sets of minutes and place them on file was moved and carried unanimously.

Communications

3. June 7 & 27, 2018 -- Correspondence from Department of Housing and Community Development regarding Urban Renewal Regulations and Annual Report requirements

Mr. Evans said that over a year ago, draft regulations were received from DHCD. Staff level comments regarding those regulations were made and shared with the Board. One regulation stipulated that annual reports were to be provided in January. Staff wrote a letter explaining that this timeframe would be difficult to achieve for various reasons and that a February submittal had been the CRA practice. The finalized regulations included exceptions to the January submittal with DHCD approval. This letter from DHCD is that approval for the CRA to continue providing its annual report to the CRA Board, the City and DHCD in February.

The motion to place the communication on file was moved and carried unanimously.

4. June 18, 2018 – Vinfen Thank You Letter regarding 2018 Forward Funds

The motion to place the communication on file was moved and carried unanimously.

5. June 22, 2018 -- Cambridge Community Center Thank You Letter regarding 2018 Forward Funds.

The motion to place the communication on file was moved and carried unanimously.

Reports, Motions, and Discussion Items

6. Presentation: Innovation Space Program Plan proposal for 255 Main Street, MXD Infill Development Concept Plan, Kendall Square Urban Renewal Project Area

Mr. Evans said that this item is being pulled from the agenda because the materials were not made available within the 48-hour window for notification. The project manager is not present. This will be put on the agenda for the next meeting.

The motion to place the discussion on the table for the next meeting was moved and carried unanimously.

7. Proposal: Workforce Development Research Project

Motion: Authorizing the Chair to enter into agreements with the City of Cambridge and the UMASS Donahue Institute to conduct demographic and employment research related to inform workforce readiness programs for Cambridge residents.

Mr. Evans introduced Sue Walsh, Assistant Director for Adult and Family Services for Human Services for the City of Cambridge. Mr. Evans explained that it has been over a year since the idea first arose that workforce development should be part of the goals for the Foundry. This topic was recently brought up during appointment hearings for City Council. Historically, the CRA had a series of workforce development programs, with a concentration on training youth in construction and other trades, which gradually grew into the Just-A-Start nonprofit organization. It seems appropriate for the CRA to re-invigorate this focus.

The niche for the CRA is tying workforce development and the Kendall Square economy, which is appropriate to the Foundry and to the Innovation Space aspect of the Infill Development Concept Plan. For a successful program, more data is needed to analyze the talent-gaps in the current population against the requirements for employment in the local tech companies. The UMass Donahue Institute (UMDI) has done baseline work on economic development issues for the Envision Cambridge process. Data collection and analysis, as well as holding focus groups with potential employees and potential employers, will provide information to get unemployed or underemployed people into high quality jobs. The proposal states that the CRA and the City would work in partnership and draft an MOU to co-fund the research project for \$16,000 - \$17,000. There is \$40,000 in the budget for this type of work. The MOU and the scope are not finalized but Mr. Evans asked for approval to move ahead.

Ms. Walsh said that although labor market data is available and workforce development programs do exist, the current system suffers from skills mismatches and gaps. This is an exciting partnership to meet the City's goals through the Envision Process and CRA's goals to implement the Innovation Space in the Kendall Square community. Demographics and the economy have changed in the last five years. Mr. Evans added that this topic has also become a focus of the KSA and expects them to be very helpful in connecting with employers.

Ms. Drury expressed excitement for the project. In response to Mr. Bator, Mr. Evans said that forming focus groups would take time. There was a discussion of capturing data in a still-changing environment. Ms. Walsh noted that the effort would refine the data already known regarding the population segments listed on Page 3 of the report. There was an explanation of the "Cliff Effect" mentioned in the memo, which is when one is no longer eligible for public benefits because of employment but the low pay of the job is not adequate. In response to Mr. Crawford, Mr. Evans said that the number of focus groups depends on the number of industries. There was a discussion on past efforts and already existing data. Mr. Zevin noted that current jobs might not exist in the future.

Ms. Born suggested considering people in their mid-to-late 40s who want to change careers as well as people who “took a break” from their careers to raise children.

The motion authorizing the Chair to enter into agreements with the City of Cambridge and the UMASS Donahue Institute to conduct demographic and employment research related to inform workforce readiness programs for Cambridge residents was moved and carried unanimously.

8. Update: 88 Ames Street Residential

Motion: Authorizing the Executive Director and Chair to issue a Certificate of Completion to Boston Properties for the 88 Ames Street Project on Parcel 4 of the Kendall Square Urban Renewal Area.:

Motion: Approving the temporary leasing signage proposal for 88 Ames Street for a term no longer than 6 months.

Mr. Zogg said that the first item is related to the Certificate of Completion. In the past, for each individual project in the urban renewal area, the CRA has issued a Certificate of Completion and a GFA certificate. The Certificate of Completion says that Boston Properties is in accordance with the Urban Renewal Plan and has completed its obligations in accordance with the Development Agreement and that the building and all the public improvements associated and promised with the building have been completed; or they can provide a letter of credit from a bank that allows them to finish the public improvements after the Certificate of Completion letter has been signed. The motion authorizes the Executive Director and the Chair to take a tour of the building at a later date to ensure completion to the CRA's satisfaction and then provide a Certificate of Completion. All Board members will be invited to attend the tour when it is viable.

David Stewart, of Boston Properties, gave an update. The first half of the building was delivered in June. The goal was to deliver the second half in early August. Floors 13 through 20 will be delivered in mid-August and the last two floors will be ready in late August or September 1st. The street work, including the bus stop, will be done in September. He expects another temporary certificate of occupancy from ISD. The full certificate of occupancy from ISD requires a certificate of completion from the CRA. As done with the past two buildings, there has been a scope of site work at the end when the contractors are leaving that is included in the letter of credit from the bank. The tour can take place late August or early September. Mr. Stewart said that the labor market is tight slowing the completion of construction. In response to Mr. Zevin's concern regarding the nicks and scrapes on the exterior façade, Mr. Stewart said that these will be addressed after the major work is done. Mr. Stewart said that the Pioneer Way is scheduled for completion in early September, the same timeframe as the street. He added that the paving work had slowed down since people are moving into the building. Mr. Zogg added that the bike parking facility is almost done but the signage is still to come. There will be a letter of credit for unfinished exterior work and public improvements. As part of the walkthrough, the punch list will be scrutinized.

The motion authorizing the Executive Director and Chair to issue a Certificate of Completion to Boston Properties for the 88 Ames Street Project on Parcel 4 of the Kendall Square Urban Renewal Area was moved and carried unanimously.

Ms. Born said that second item relates to the temporary leasing signage proposal. Mr. Zogg explained that this motion is coming to the Board because this signage proposal cannot be approved by staff as the temporary timeframe is greater than three months and the size is greater than 20 square feet.

Keir Evans of Boston Properties summarized the proposal. One component of the proposal is a sign along the mechanical rooftop penthouse of the building and the other component wraps signage around the street level columns. He noted that site signage is a powerful mechanism to attract people to a site. The signage before May along the Jersey barrier directing traffic to the leasing office on 90 Broadway was very effective. Once that barrier was removed, visits decreased significantly. The website is also printed on the signage. There is a need to retain interest in order to lease the second half of the building. Once people see the building, they like the product, so there is a need to get people to the building. The high building sign can be seen from Storrow Drive to draw

people to Kendall. He added that once the street signage disappeared, many people thought that the building was fully leased.

Mr. Zevin noted that the picture shown was taken with a long lens. He was skeptical about the actual visibility of the text from Storrow Drive. He added that the entire penthouse sign is hardly visible from ground level. Although he wants the building leased quickly, the cost of the sign seems wasteful. He feels the column wraps, especially the color, are undignified. He gave some other suggestions. Mr. Stewart emphasized that this is temporary signage for a maximum of six months.

Ms. Drury said that the CRA's signage guidelines strongly disfavor rooftop signs. Even though it is temporary, she would not approve it. She said that the column ground-level signage would be acceptable for six months.

The column wraps are 15 feet high. The penthouse sign is about 30-feet tall by 40-feet wide.

Mr. Zevin suggested a more modest incremental approach, using the mailroom windows and the aluminum panels facing Mead Hall's outdoor space on Broadway. Ms. Laura Sesody from Boston Properties said that the leasing department feels that the Broadway side already has adequate signage on the temporary leasing office. The leasing department would like more exposure to Main Street traffic.

Mr. Evans suggested the window space between the Food Court and the T head-house. Ms. Sesody said that there would still be a request to have signage in the front of the building. Mr. Zevin suggested the back of the building facing the roof garden since it can be seen from the plaza. Advertising on a blimp, Red Line T-cars, and the Metro paper were suggested.

Mr. Bator said that even though the rooftop signage would be temporary it is plainly inconsistent with CRA's position. He wondered whether this is just the common go-to approach for leasing companies and not sure it is absolutely necessary. Mr. Stewart agreed to start with the incremental approach.

Mr. Stewart said that by the end of June, there were 92 applications for the 244 market rate units in the bottom 12 floors of the building. Eight-six percent of the units are one bedroom or less which is consistent with the leasing. Eighty percent of the tenants are 35 years old or under. There are a few tenants in the 55+ range. Many of the applicants work in the neighborhood. Thirty-eight percent are graduate students. Mr. Stewart said that the leasing targets have been met for the most part until June. Leasing is seasonal and June should have been a good month but it was not. Vester and Dumpling Daughters are opening too late to increase foot traffic.

The discussion moved to focus on the street signage. The street columns are vinyl wraps. There was a choice of either six or ten wraps. Mr. Stewart said that vendors will be occupying the retail portion from right to left along the street level of the building. Mr. Evans suggested wrapping ten columns and removing them as the vendors occupy their spaces.

A motion approving the temporary leasing signage proposal at street level only for 88 Ames Street for a term no longer than 6 months was moved and carried unanimously.

Mr. Zevin grudgingly approved the motion.

Ms. Sesody will bring signage for the Food Court passage way to CRA staff for review.

9. Report: Recommendations for House Doctor Landscape Design Services

Motion: Authorizing the Executive Director and Chair to negotiate house doctor contract(s) with (selected firm) to providing landscape design and planning consulting services.

Ms. Levering spoke about the recommendation for two landscape design house doctor consulting teams who would work with the CRA on an on-call as-needed basis. The teams were found through an RFQ process. There are a number of small landscape projects accruing in Kendall Square. Presently, there is a desire to redesign the interstitial grassy areas on Parcel 3, working with various landowners, to give the area a more cohesive identity.

The on-call contracts would be for a 3-year term. Qualification requirements noted in the RFQ included landscape architect certification, a certified civil engineer, demonstrated experience designing and programming public parks, designing around multi-modal transportation systems, and directional and wayfinding signage design experience. The memo outlines the process used. Fourteen strong applications were received, three interviews were conducted, and references were called. Two teams stood out. The first team is Mikyoung Kim Design who partnered with Nitsch Engineering for civil engineering and Anna Farrington Designs for wayfinding. The second team is Landworks>Studio who partnered with VHB for civil engineering and Roll Barresi Associates for wayfinding. These two teams had all the necessary qualifications as well as significant experience designing small interstitial spaces and urban areas. Both have worked with public and private entities. Although these are both small teams, she had confidence that each would be able to meet the needs of the CRA. Mikyoung brought energy and creativity and proficiency in incorporating ecological elements. She and her partners are Women Business Enterprises and Mikyoung is also a Minority Business Enterprise. Landworks has worked in Cambridge with MassDOT, CDD and the City's DPW. They are currently designing Parcel 1 as part of MIT's NoMa project. VHB has significant experience designing around multi-modal systems.

Mr. Evans added that Mikyoung is working with Cambridge Seven on the Foundry.

In response to Mr. Bator's concern about the size capacity of the teams, Ms. Levering said that having two contractors will benefit the CRA if there are timing issues.

Ms. Levering gave credit to intern Alex Rogala for his help with the process.

The motion authorizing the Executive Director and Chair to negotiate two house doctor contracts, one with Mikyoung Kim Design and one with Landworks>Studio, to providing landscape design and planning consulting services was moved and carried unanimously.

10. Staff Report and Quarterly Financial Update (Mr. Evans)

Mr. Evans said that the auditor's field work was completed at the end of June. Mr. Evans was on vacation at this time so some follow-up work is still needed. Staff is in the process of adding personnel to help with the Foundry, workforce development, and the innovation space component.

The CRA has engaged with the Community Art Center to add another youth-based installation on the other half of the fence on Parcel 6. The pop-up park was showcased as part of a WCVB Chronicle TV episode. The food truck season has been doing very well this season. Mr. Tamole had to drop out since he is going to be doing some wholesale business. Ms. Shore added that the area is available starting mid-November.

Reconstruction work is nearly done on the Grand Junction Park after Veolia's work. This round of construction has added more interest to the north end of the park. The Sixth Street Walkway is under construction. An incredible amount of staff time has been spent coordinating the last-minute Brammer/Biogen utility construction needs. Maintaining the an October completion date has been challenging. The goal is to close the Walkway for the shortest duration possible. In response to Mr. Crawford, complaints stopped in the 2nd week when the construction signs were put up on either sign of the Walkway explaining the improvements. Mr. Evans said that it was brought up at the ECPT meeting because the detour signage wasn't clear and other construction was blocking the detour route. There hasn't been much on social media. Staff is working with Denise Simmons regarding an honorary plaque for the bike path.

In response to Ms. Born, Mr. Evans said that the Sixth Street Walkway had been a back entrance to companies that abut the Walkway but that is not true any longer. The buildings were designed when Sixth Street was a street. The master plan's superblock concept had park spaces also functioning as utility access points. Mr. Evans has made it clear that this Walkway is a public space and cannot be a constant rotating construction site. Staff is trying to hold the line (presently with Brammer/Bio) that utilities cannot be run under any paths that the CRA is building. Staff is doing its best to make sure nothing is under the flexi-path material. There are, however, longstanding utilities under the concrete pathway. Ms. Born emphasized the need to ensure that the Walkway is not used as a construction site during redevelopment of the Volpe site.

Mr. Crawford noted that the steam utility covers on the Walkway are very hot. Mr. Evans will look into alternative coverings.

There is a coordinated review meeting with the Planning Board on Tuesday, July 31 for the second phase of the Infill Development Concept Plan. When the ECPT met, it was noted that the changes do move the massing away from the neighborhood, but the impact on the rooftop garden and plaza need to be examined. Detailed materials for the July 31 meeting are not ready. Mr. Zevin would like them to be available for review the week before the meeting. Ms. Born wants at least 48 hours in order for her, as well as the public, to consider all materials from the petitioner, as well as any reviews from City staff or CRA staff.

The MIT Coop Food Court is closed but Mr. Evans has coordinated with Boston Properties to keep the passageway open for a portion of the day.

Many of the 2018 Forward Fund recipients are quickly moving their projects along but there are some that are moving slowly. The Spacesuit project is not happening because the artists have moved on to other things.

With respect to the budget, the large income amount for the Ames Street development rights is in process. This is slightly increased since it includes a larger commercial area than initially expected. There was one payment in 2016 for the anticipated commercial square footage. There will be annual payments for 11 years for the residential. Most expense lines are tracking as expected for a halfway point. Insurance expenses are front loaded and paid in full in January. The pension payment to Cambridge Retirement is paid in full mid-year. The expenses for the Transportation line item will increase once the last invoices are received from Alta. This project is now completed. There will be increased legal expenses regarding the Foundry sublease and a workforce development MOU. Although an RFP for on-call real estate consulting services was released, a decision has not been made since various lines of business have not been pursued. Hopefully by September, a recommendation will come to the Board. As noted, most of the 2018 Forward Fund recipients have finalized their paperwork and have received their first-half payments. There will be a very large payout to the City in the fall for Foundry design services. The major project expenses are in Transportation (streetscape design with Alta), Open Space (basic landscaping plus the reconstruction on the Grand Junction due to Veolia's work, although this is being reimbursed), the Forward Fund disbursements, and the Foundry. There may be some budget adjustments coming if the thresholds are approached.

The concept of a temporary bank trailer on Parcel 3 was introduced as part of the evening's design review discussion. Also discussed were the topics of wayfinding, signage, and aesthetics. The most principled decision that will need to come to the Board is whether the trailer can be there at all since its proposed location is part of the protected open space for the 75 Ames Street Broad building. There has been a trailer on that site for most of the last five years for construction projects of the Broad and Ames Street. However, a trailer for a bank is considered retail with, possibly, a different threshold. Bank of America current location in the clock tower building on Main Street is being redeveloped by MITIMCO and its future space on Ames Street is not ready yet. Bank of America wants a site in Kendall Square to maintain continuity in services for their customers. Although Parcel 6 was mentioned, that site lacks electricity and plumbing. Mr. Bator said that their trailer should be upscale and they should also invest in site improvements when they leave.

A date for an August Board meeting was discussed. Ms. Drury, Mr. Crawford, and Mr. Zevin are available on the 8th and the 15th. Mr. Bator will need to check on his availability. Ms. Born said that the 8th would be better. Ms. Shore will check to see if the Police Station room is available on the 8th. The items on the agenda would be the Innovation Space, Bank of America trailer and possibly signage for Cava at 88 Ames Street.

Adjournment

The motion to adjourn was seconded and carried unanimously at 7:33 p.m.