



Regular Board Meeting of the Cambridge Redevelopment Authority

Wednesday, March 20, 2023 at 5:30 p.m.

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

DRAFT Meeting Minutes

Meeting Files

- [Notice and Agenda](#)
- [Draft Minutes of the 2024 Annual Meeting](#)
- [Draft Minutes of 2023 Executive Sessions regarding Property Acquisitions](#)
- [Correspondence from Bryan Koop regarding Cambridge Energy Project](#)
- [Monthly Staff Program Report](#)
- [Monthly Financial Report](#)
- [2024 Forward Fund Grant Memo](#)
- [Signage Proposal for 300 Binney Street](#)

Presentations

- [Communication from Stephen Kaiser 3.18.24](#)
-

Opening Statement

At 5:35 p.m., Ellen Shore, CRA Operations Director, said that pursuant to Chapter 2 of the Acts of 2023, this public meeting is being held in a hybrid format with in-person and remote 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 are located 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 Chair Conrad Crawford called the regular meeting. A roll call of Board members and the Executive Director was taken.

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

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

Public Comment

Heather Hoffman, 213 Hurley Street, said that she was happy to see the return of the in-person setting. She noted that remote participation is possible even if one only has a touch-tone phone and she offered to show others how

to accomplish this. Referring to the letter from Boston Properties about Eversource's energy project, she said that the City of Cambridge plans to use tons more energy. She said that she has faith in the CRA to look into the future and do actual planning, and not pretend that this is something that can be ignored.

Mr. Crawford thanked Ms. Hoffman. He agreed that the significant amount of square footage that is being created will generate a great demand for electricity. He appreciates the staff's continued tracking of the process.

No other comments were offered.

Minutes and Meeting Notes

1. Annual Meeting Minutes: February 21, 2024

No comments were offered.

A motion was moved by Ms. Born to accept the minutes of the Annual Meeting of the Board on February 21, 2024. 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. Executive Session Meeting Minutes from 2023 regarding the potential purchase of property for affordable home ownership development

Ms. Born commented that these minutes reveal the deliberate consideration and rational process of that potential purchase, even though it did not have the fruitful outcome of acquiring and renovating that building. The staff and the consultants selected by staff were terrific. The minutes transparently show the care that the CRA puts into its transactions, either potential or realized. She thanked the staff and fellow Board members.

Mr. Crawford agreed and seconded the endorsement. He added that it is an indication of the CRA's capacity to vet and approve purchase opportunities. The learning will be brought forward with other opportunities in front of the CRA. He thanked all.

A motion was moved by Ms. Born to place on file the meeting minutes from the CRA Executive Sessions on May 13, 2023, June 21, 2023, August 23, 2023, and September 13, 20, and 28, 2023. A roll call was taken by Mr. Evans.

Chris Bator - yes

Kathy Born – yes

Conrad Crawford – yes

Lauren Reznick – abstained, as she was not a Board member at that time

Barry Zevin – yes

The motion carried.

Communications

3. Letter from Bryan Koop to Governor Healy regarding the East Cambridge Energy Project received on 2.22.24

Mr. Evans said that the CRA continues to await the decision from the Energy Siting Board regarding the Eversource substation and its line routing. It seems that the decision-making process has been slightly delayed based on the alternative routing inquiry from MIT. At this point in time, all the information from the City, MIT, and Eversource (the applicant) has been filed. This letter was submitted to represent the importance of the project from the viewpoint of the project partner, Boston Properties, which is building the Eversource vault. The substation project is very much underway, but is at risk if the Siting Board does not agree to the routing of the lines. Mr. Evans

noted that the substation location itself is not of critical concern at this time. He will keep the CRA Board abreast of any news from the State.

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

Mr. Crawford said that the CRA received an email from Stephen Kaiser. Mr. Evans said that in the email, which was received after the agenda was posted, Mr. Kaiser's initial comment about holding hybrid CRA Board meetings is well received. The other comment in Mr. Kaiser's letter inquired about the Grand Junction Study. Mr. Evans said that Mr. Kaiser is correct in that the study was funded by Boston Properties (BXP) as a mitigation for the development related to the Eversource project. Staff is still receiving and reviewing the materials from the consultant. The goal is to report to the Board in the next month or so.

Regarding the letter from BXP, Ms. Born said that she was impressed by the restraint shown, as it didn't mention the organization that is opposing the routing and holding up the process. She is unsure how long this can go on. She emphasized that the letter was dated a month ago. She is happy that Mr. Koop wrote the letter.

Mr. Evans said that, as of last week, the BXP development team had not received any response from the State, neither from the Governor's office or from the Siting Board. Although the CRA submitted a letter at the end of last year, which relayed the CRA's commitment to the project as proposed, he didn't expect a response. He agreed that it is key that members of the private business community spoke to why these projects are so important for Kendall Square to the Governor's office and administrative leadership.

Ms. Born asked for the point in the schedule at which the non-issuance of the permit will either halt the construction or start putting wrinkles in the timetable. Mr. Evans replied that Eversource would mostly likely say that it is starting to affect their timetable now as far as being able to deliver energy on time. The issue relates less to the construction of the substation vault than to the lead times for ordering equipment. These transformers are not something that can be bought off-the-shelf. He believes that they are not able to start procuring machinery until they have an approved site. He explained the intertwined nature of the various components of the project but that the excavation for the substation will probably continue to move forward through the siting process. He doesn't think anyone has entertained the notion of what to do with a hundred-foot hole in the middle of Kendall Square if a substation isn't going into it. He thinks the assumption is not a matter of whether a substation can go there, but rather a matter of when. He believes that Eversource may need to take interim measures to deal with the electrical supply if the timeline slips further.

Mr. Crawford asked if Eversource has communicated its anxiousness or concern to the Energy Facilities Siting Board or any other approving authority. Mr. Evans said that this is a huge deal for Eversource and they are invested in this solution as a cutting-edge approach to urban substation design. They are in a tough position as they are mandated to provide delivery of electricity as a regulated utility but they do need to get approvals. They have to be patient and follow the process. He wasn't sure if or when additional costs would appear due to another level of analysis. Eversource has done a full, detailed analysis of an alternative routing site, the Grand Junction route, which had possibly taken nine months of additional analysis in order to land on that as a procured route. At this point in time, he didn't know whether Eversource had started any analysis of the Vassar Street route proposal. It's a political process and a regulatory process for Eversource. He added that Eversource had put out a very conservative timeline knowing what analysis work was initially involved and this new proposal has pushed past that timeline.

Relating back to Mr. Kaiser's letter, Mr. Crawford spoke about an article in the Globe regarding a state agency which created an inhospitable environment next to the BU Bridge about a year ago in response to a fire. The CRA's involvement with the Grand Junction Railroad as a commuter corridor and a community space should be cognizant of the surrounding communities.

Kyle Vangel, CRA Director of Projects and Planning, responded that the Grand Junction Study is looking at the corridor as a holistic community asset, studying how the transit can coexist with the planned community path.

Administration Items

5. Monthly Staff Program Report

Mr. Vangel highlighted items in the Staff Program Report included in the Board packet.

Ms. Reznick said that she attended the City Council hearing for the discussion regarding the City Lots Study. She is excited about the potential partnership between the CRA and the City CDD in developing these lots. The study was very well done; the ideas were well collated. At the hearing, she heard two major concerns raised by the counselors that somewhat overshadowed the study. One concern was about the study's community engagement that was reflected in the report and how it played out. The other concern was possibly a very recent announcement regarding the partnership of the City with the folks who run Starlight Square. It was unfortunate that these two issues captured the attention of the city counselors at that hearing. During the public comment section of that meeting, most of the folks attending were actually there to speak about the eviction assistance program. All the comments from the public were positive about the City Lots Study and its conclusions to advance the building of more affordable housing in these areas. Ms. Reznick said that she had a very positive perception of that public engagement. She lives near the Central Square library and enumerated the various way that she had been notified of the project. There have been a large number of studies of Central Square in the past 44 years. There has been a lot of process and community engagement involved to get here. She agrees with the mayor that time is of the essence. She hopes this moves forward. She mentioned that there might be another look at the City Lots Study with a subcommittee of the council and asked staff if that date was known so that she could attend and offer comments. She feels that the City Lots Study is recommending what the public is asking for - affordable housing on these lots, public space, cultural space, using the affordable housing overlay district in the way that it was intended to be used.

Mr. Vangel said that he has been in communication with the City on this and the timing of the committee meeting has not been finalized. The tentative thinking is two weeks from now, so the week of April 1st. Staff will keep the Board apprised when the date is finalized.

Ms. Born thanked Ms. Reznick for that positive message and for following this. She didn't attend the meeting, although she has been following the Central Square issue over the years. The City has the opportunity and the momentum to do something with parking lots and make them into a more productive asset for Cambridge. She hopes the process is not delayed because of some people's frustration about art and a public performance space. She is all for public performance space but housing is the most urgent need in this city. There will be a way to find a seasonal performance space in new development in Central Square.

Mr. Zevin said that the City proposals that he last saw make that performance space at least partially closed. He is astonished that people think it is okay to burden neighbors with the sound and noise of a space that is open to the air. That should be completely unacceptable.

Mr. Crawford asked about the Potter Street walkway connection. Mr. Vangel explained that staff are working with MITIMCO, the owner of the Volpe site, on a temporary connection that will be completed in the coming months. This will remain in place until a more permanent connection can be implemented as part of the larger multi-site plan that is being produced by MITIMCO. Mr. Crawford said that he happy to see progress on the "super-block."

6. Monthly Financial Report

Gardy Laurent, Director of Finance and Operation, summarized the financial report in the Board packet. As of this month, the CRA has received one payment from Boston Properties for \$47 million dollars of the \$67.5 million that was outstanding as of January 31, 2024. He noted that the Bishop Allen building is fully rented, with nine nonprofit tenants. Staff continue to address water and moisture issues in that building. Regarding the Foundry, the final construction cost to split the third-floor space into two tenant spaces is \$280,000 more than the \$300,000 budget approved by the Board in November 2023. There is a motion to address this overage.

Mr. Bator said that the significant income from development fees was immediately invested upon receipt and allocated in accordance with a prearranged plan into the market in accordance with CRA rules and limitations.

Mr. Crawford noted that the City Manager's office announced today that the City of Cambridge, of which the CRA is a component, received its 25th straight year of a AAA-bond rating from all three rating agencies. He thanked staff for the contribution that is being made by the CRA.

A motion was moved by Mr. Bator, to reallocate \$280,000 from the Foundry Operator Support budget to the Foundry Capital Improvement budget line for the completion of modifications to Office Suite 3B creating a new Suite 3C to accommodate a new tenant with a lease start date of April 1, 2024. 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.

Projects and Programs

7. Update on the 2024 Forward Fund Grant Program

Joshua Croom, CRA Project Planner, said that he helps administer the program with Alexandra Levering, CRA Senior Project Manager, who is not present tonight. The Forward Fund is a CRA grant program that takes resources which are acquired from development in Kendall Square and appropriates this to nonprofits in greater Cambridge for capital infrastructure improvements. There are two parts of the program - a Feasibility Study Grant and a Capital Infrastructure Grant. He summarized his memo in the Board packet, which has recommendations for the program for 2024. He summarized the memo in the packet. This year's program is very similar to last year's, with an added provision which allows the inclusion of the cost for community engagement as part of a Feasibility Study Grant application. Mr. Croom discussed ideas for outreach that are listed in the memo, some of which are new this year.

Mr. Crawford said that he is a big fan of the Forward Fund and its ability to help organizations financially. It also allows the CRA to partner more closely with organizations, helping them build project management capacity and organization performance. He thanked staff for their work.

Mr. Bator said that the Forward Fund is very near and dear to his heart. This flagship effort of the current Board realizes and enacts the CRA's role as a citywide redevelopment authority, not solely Kendall Square centric. It is appropriate to spread some of the great wealth that comes out of Kendall to needs across Cambridge. He is impressed to see the sophistication and refinement of this program over the past years. The CRA has the financial capacity to significantly increase the amount invested, adding more staff if needed. He thinks this is among the most important things the CRA does. It is important that the word gets out. He thanked Mr. Croom and staff.

A motion was moved by Mr. Bator authorizing the Executive Director to initiate a new cycle of Forward Fund capital infrastructure and feasibility study grants for nonprofit organizations, consistent with the authorized budget of \$500,000 for this year's program. 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.

8. MXD Signage Review

Joel Smith, CRA Project Manager summarized the memo in the Board packet. He introduced Jeff Lowenberg from Boston Properties who spoke about the signage proposal for the Broad Institute.

Mr. Lowenberg said that this is the third building for the Broad Institute in the MXD. The branding is consistent with its other buildings, at 415 Main Street and 75 Ames Street. He explained the location and make-up of the four exterior signs being proposed for the 300 Binney Street building.

Mr. Crawford noted that that corner of the district is starting to come together with Moderna's new building, with the Binney Street Park, and now with this building.

Ms. Born noted that the proposal is understated in comparison to other proposals. It speaks of an institution which is very self-confident. Mr. Lowenberg said that the Broad has visibility in the district in other buildings. Mr. Lowenberg said that the work done inside those buildings is anything but understated and he is very happy and proud to have them here in Kendall Square.

Mr. Zevin agreed with Ms. Born and complimented Mr. Lowenberg on a very well thought out technical implementation.

A motion was moved by Ms. Born approving the Signage Proposal from the Broad Institute at 300 Binney Street, Parcel Two of the Kendall Square Urban Redevelopment Plan. 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.

Other Business

The 7:00 p.m., the Board had concluded all of its scheduled business and would not reconvene in open session after the Executive Session.

A motion was moved by Ms. Reznick to close the adjourn the public meeting and enter into Executive Session to consider terms of potential real estate transactions for commercial property for affordable community-based retail program. 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.

Mr. Vangel stated that he will send new Zoom links to the Board and Staff for the Executive Session which will start at 7:10 p.m.