

Foundry Advisory Committee - Meeting Notes

Friday, July 10, 2020

8:00 – 10:00 a.m.

Via Zoom Meeting

FAC Members in Attendance: Marie Saccoccio, Joyce Chen, Jamie Sabino, Jason Slavick, Carole Sousa, Richard Thal

CRA Staff in Attendance: Tom Evans, Kathryn Madden, Erica Schwarz

City of Cambridge and architects Cambridge Seven in Attendance: Robert Garner, Justin Crane, Stefanie Greenfield

Because this was a remote meeting, the CRA did not otherwise take attendance.

CRA staff member Erica Schwarz started the meeting at 8:05 am.

Construction Update

Bob Garner from the City of Cambridge noted that Demolition on the Foundry started in December 2019 and went through mid-March, when it was halted due to COVID-19. Demolition work resumed on June 1st with COVID-19 precautions in place and will continue through July. The timeline looking forward includes removing the floor slab in July, excavating the foundation in August, structural steel, roof and masonry repair in the fall, and interior work starting in early 2021. The construction is scheduled to be completed by the end of calendar year 2021.

Residents can follow the project's progress on the City's Foundry page:

<https://www.cambridgema.gov/Departments/citymanagersoffice/thefoundry>

As well as on the CRA's Foundry project site:

<https://www.cambridgeredevelopment.org/foundry>

The City soon expects that the project will go before the Planning Board in mid to late August. Various City departments are now preparing memos in advance of the City's presentation to the planning board. The CRA and Foundry Consortium will publicize the date once it's known.

Foundry Consortium Update

Foundry Consortium Board President Stephanie Couch shared that the Foundry Board of Directors hired Tracy Jean-Chronberg as the interim Program Manager. Tracy is a Cambridge resident with a graphic design, tech and start-up background.

The Foundry Board has been advancing work on its internal systems, including forming a governance committee that has developed procedures for new board member nominations, including assessing the current board to identify any gaps that should be filled. The Board has also partnered with the CRA to engage consultant Ann Silverman to support the search for the Foundry's executive director. That search is expected to start advertising for the opening in late summer 2020, to ensure the new executive director is in place approximately one year before

the Foundry opens to the public. The job opening will be advertised widely, including to the CRA and Foundry Consortium's lists. If any members of the public have ideas of potential candidates or others they'd like to receive the job opening directly, please share that contact information with Tracy at: Tracy@CambridgeFoundry.org

FAC members discussed the timeline. It was identified that if the building is targeted to complete construction in December, the building will not likely be able to be open to the public until at least January 2022. The Foundry Consortium and CRA will coordinate with the City regarding opening, and will consider when office tenants can move in and when the building will open to the public with programs in place.

FAC members expressed concern regarding COVID-19's impact on office rental income, which is meant to support a significant percentage of the Foundry's operating costs. Office space may be of less value unless it provides a specialized space or a business has a very specific need for office space that is relevant to its work.

Stephanie noted that the Foundry's strength is that it is designed for flexibility. The Foundry Consortium and CRA will continue to seek advice from the FAC as the pandemic and construction move forward, to consider any shifts that must be made in advance of opening to ensure the building's programmatic and financial success.

There was a question about how the Foundry will engage diverse audiences when it opens. Erica noted that the executive director job opening prioritizes candidates who have demonstrated commitment and success in creating inclusive community spaces and engaging otherwise underrepresented populations. Stephanie Couch noted that the Foundry Consortium is considering hiring guides from otherwise underrepresented groups who can help shape the Foundry's culture and programmatic offerings in order to ensure the space is welcoming and engaging for all.

CRA-Foundry Consortium Sublease

Erica Schwarz noted that the CRA and Foundry Consortium signed a set of lease terms in May that will help create the basis for the sublease that the Foundry Consortium will have for the site. The lease terms were posted to the CRA's Foundry page in advance of the meeting and were shared on screen during the meeting.

The lease will also be based on other governing documents, including the Foundry Demonstration Plan, the CRA's master lease with the City of Cambridge and a set of Performance Metrics that Erica put on the screen during the meeting. She noted that these had not been posted ahead of time but will be posted after the meeting.

The performance Metrics outline the kinds of data that the Foundry Consortium will need to report on annually, and analyze, and which should inform the annual business plan that they will be required to provide the FAC, City and CRA annually.

There was a question about if the Foundry will offer virtual programming. It is likely that there will be virtual programming, but the Foundry's future staff will carry that out.

FAC members had no feedback about the lease terms. Feedback on the performance metrics included:

- Summary of outreach activities to underserved communities needs to be part of the performance metrics
- Clarify that the demographic reporting should be on both the program participants and on the leadership of the entity providing the program.
- Add more clarity on the reporting of which groups receive free/low cost or market rate fees

Design Update

Stefanie Greenfield of Cambridge Seven Architects shared a slide show of the final designs. Those slides will be posted to the CRA's Foundry - FAC webpage.

The slides showed an overview of the site plan, including pavers that will help draw visitors from the intersection of Rogers and Third Street to the Foundry building.

Stefanie noted that the interior plans are unchanged from earlier meetings. There are very few fixed element on the first floor – except for larger equipment and some built in amenities -- to allow for maximum flexibility. The office space on the second and third floor easily break down to allow for 4 or more tenants. Renderings were shown of signage for the building, including a numbering system for labeling community use rooms.

The overall look of the interior is black steel, light plywood, and glass. There is a lot of opportunity for the community to make it their own via painting of murals or other additions.

On one side of the main entryway, there is a wall that will host an exhibit on the historical significant of the Foundry to the women's labor rights movement. FAC member Marie Saccoccio is working with the Cambridge Historical Commission on that project.

Elisa Hamilton, artist of the Jukebox art installation coordinated by Cambridge Arts gave an overview of the design for Jukebox nook, which she has worked on with Cambridge Seven. COVID forced Elisa to redesign all of her outreach plans, but she will soon launch a website and kick off a series of virtual public meetings to inform the kinds of stories that the community wants to hear from the Jukebox and to start collecting stories. She welcomes input at: Hello@FoundryJukebox.org

The Foundry's design will support COVID safety. The filters for most of the first floor are a MERV 14 level, which is what is used in hospitals. The rest of the building is now designed to be at MERV 8, but Cambridge Seven is studying if they can increase that figure. Additionally, each room has its own HVAC zone, so air from one room won't be going through the rest of the building. The building is also large enough to create one-way traffic patterns

Announcements

The Next FAC Meeting is scheduled for Friday, October 9th at 8:00 am.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:43 am.