

## Foundry Advisory Committee

### Meeting Notes

Friday, February 10, 2023, 9:30 am

In person at the Foundry and via Zoom

*Current FAC Members:* Jason Slavick, Michael Shia, Richard Thal, Lauren O’Neal (*Absent:* Sangeeta Prasad)

*Future FAC Members to be confirmed:* Connie Chin, Ruben Mancha (*Absent:* Barbara Thomas)

*CRA Staff:* Tom Evans, Kathryn Madden, Hema Kailasam, Matthew Heller-Trull

*Foundry Consortium Staff:* Diana Navarrete-Rackauckas, David Siegel, Nikoi Coley-Ribeiro, Jenna Schlags, Olivia Fone; Katie Sudano (TS&E)

*Foundry Consortium Board Members:* Stephanie Couch, Selvin Chambers, Peter Crawley, Betsy Bard, Polly Carpenter, Kim Walker-Chin, Kellyanne Mahoney

*City of Cambridge Staff:* Claudia Zarazua

## Agenda

1. Introduction (Kathryn Madden)
2. Introduction of existing and new FAC members (members introduce themselves)
3. Usage and Revenue Reporting Data (Diana Navarrete-Rackauckas)
4. Mechanisms for FAC feedback and guidance (discussion)
5. Updates and Next Steps

## Introduction

Kathryn welcomes everyone to the meeting and gives a brief overview of the structure of how the Foundry works. The Foundry Consortium has a board and staff that are responsible for managing the building, ensuring that programming serves the established mission of the Foundry. This space has been created through the efforts of the City of Cambridge and the CRA. The Foundry Advisory Committee (FAC) has been in place since 2015 and serves as the eyes and ears of the City and the CRA, advising on the fulfilment of the building’s mission in accordance with the governing documents.

## Introduction of existing and new FAC members

Members went around the room in person and virtually and introduced themselves.

## Usage and Revenue Reporting Data

Diana presents the usage data from the fourth quarter of 2022 (October-December). The building officially opened on October 8, 2022, so the data doesn't yet represent a full quarter. She explains that everyone here has a dual purpose in both their official role relative to the Foundry but also as a community member, and all are invited to take part in the events and programming. (The usage report is attached.)

### RESERVATIONS

- Many of the reservations are weekly so even though there might be only about 100 reservations from different entities, there are over 1,000 activation points that are derived by then.
- The few times that reservations are rejected are because either the requested time is outside of operating hours, or the event exceeds the capacity of the space.
- A majority of the reservations come from organizations and individuals who fall in the lowest income bracket.
- About 60% of reservations are coming from entities in Cambridge. The remainder come from Boston, Somerville, and Malden.
- Movement and performance arts are the program types that are reserved the most.
- Adults are the largest user group, followed by all ages, then youths, then seniors.

### USE HOURS

- December usage hours are skewed because the building was closed the last week of the month, although in the future they expect more demand for social events during the holiday period.
- Shop 6 has the most usage hours – used by organizations engaging in youth programs.
- Dance Studio is the second most used shop.
- There have been some time conflicts but Logan Lopez, Program Coordinator, has been good about moving people around in order to accommodate as many people as possible.

### REVENUE



- 94% income came from community reservations while 6% came from corporate reservations
- Revenues have been doubling each month since they've been open.
- Shop 6 and the STEAM set have the highest revenue. Even though the dance studio has one of the highest uses, it does not bring in the highest revenue due to the sliding scale reservation system.

## **COMMUNITY OUTREACH**

- Have been able to work with over 60 organizations so far.
- Have received helpful constructive feedback that have allowed for improvements of the space and programming
- People who have come in have felt excited about the use of the space.
- Currently working with 44 volunteers who come in at least once a month. Maker space volunteers get free membership to the maker spaces.
- Many people come in when they don't have programming or stay long after their programming ends, and some later try different programs.
- Members have been helping other members obtain new skills and work collaboratively.

## **SURVEY FEEDBACK**

- Users appreciate availability for community organizations and members of the community
- Networking through word of mouth is important in attracting people to the Foundry

## **LESSONS LEARNED**

- The Foundry Consortium has been working to simplify the reservation system and make the sliding scale rates more transparent.
- The Foundry Consortium needs to adapt some of their communications to be more accessible to peoples with disabilities such as vision impairment.
- Outreach and personal connections create the strongest bonds.

- The Foundry will need to be able to adapt to reflect the needs of the community over time.

## DISCUSSION

### FAC Member Discussion

- How will the outdoor space be activated once the weather improves
  - *The Foundry Consortium is working on how the indoor-outdoor usage can work with programming and room reservations.*
- How does the budget work and is there funding coming from outside grants or only office space?
  - *Revenues come from the office rents, CRA management subsidy, memberships, reservations, full building rentals, sponsorship, and donations. It's important for the FAC to understand how the financial management relates to the programming and usage. For instance, we need the revenue from the vacant space on the third floor to be rented at market rate in order to subsidize the community programming on the first floor.*
- A summary of community partners would be helpful.
  - *The Foundry Consortium could list those that choose to advertise their programs on social media and other public facing media; other users have a right to privacy when they rent the space.*
- What are the largest challenges and where can the FAC be of most help?
  - *Challenges are how multifaced the demands are on the staff. It's been helpful to be able to ask the community of users for help and that these groups can have agency in creative solutions related to the operation.*
- In what ways was it helpful to put together the document for this meeting? Was it a burden or helpful to be able to reflect on the data? Charts related to the budget would be helpful.
  - *Some of the data was easy to mine while other took more time to develop. A challenge is hoping that the numbers tell the true story about the goings on in the spaces. It's hard to quantify all of the interactions and activation of the space simply through numbers and charts, since a lot of the experience is qualitative.*
- Would it be possible to collect race and ethnicity data going forward.
  - *The Foundry Consortium optionally collects race, ethnicity, and LGBGTQ+ data for members signing up for the maker space, and they also ask program providers who is being served by their programs. While this information is valuable, on the other hand, there is sensitivity to not increase barriers to*

*participation through data collection. The FC is working to refine the data points on who uses the building.*

- Is there a development plan, including future grant writing?
  - *There are conversations at the Foundry Consortium board level of how the space can maintain and increase its level of community programming through grants and donor support.*
- Regarding memberships, the Foundry Consortium could consider a Foundry-wide membership in the future, especially to build loyalty and a donor base.
- What is the status of the remaining office lease on the third floor office?
  - *The CRA has been looking into options to subdivide the space, since leasing the smaller offices has been more successful in this particular market and at this time.*

#### Members of the Public and Staff Comments

- Only a small amount of usage was by seniors, while seniors were the ones who fought to save the building. Could more seniors be engaged in the programming?
  - *There may be a COVID effect that seniors are not getting out or that organizations are not offering more senior programming. The CRA would have to approve any decorations and considerations have to be given to the many religious traditions and diverse users of the building.*
  - *It was noted that the Cambridge Library has programs for seniors and a waiting list for many of these. We should look at connecting to the library to see if those instructors would be interested in working on programming at the Foundry.*
- It's impressive to run 17 rooms and engage 44 volunteers in the first months of start-up. The Foundry Consortium is to be commended on their work so far in activating the space and running a large community center. Would it be possible to capture more data on the individuals who are utilizing the space both as usage data and networking for other programming. An alternative way to deliver programming is for the Foundry Consortium to hire the teachers and charge the students and be the liaison between the two. This builds up your email list.
  - *The Foundry Consortium has looked into this model, and it may be something to consider in the future as they fine tune the level of programming in the space.*
- The Foundry is one of the few spaces that offers a sliding scale, which offers more equity.
- Could you say more about the memberships?
  - *There are 8 art studio spaces available, 7 are occupied. For the maker spaces, there are 21 members on board, with 50 in review. People have the option of*

*signing up for access to one specific workshop or for access to all the workshops.*

## Mechanisms for FAC feedback and guidance

- How do we communicate outside of the FAC quarterly meetings?
  - *The FAC is a public body and is subject to the State open meeting laws. As such, the FAC members may not meet and discuss outside of the public FAC meetings, which need to be publicly posted.*
- It's important that FAC members spend time at the Foundry, and ideally participate in some programs if possible. The FAC also represents the community voice, so FAC members should have an ear to the ground regarding community interests and suggestions that could be helpful to the Foundry Consortium.
- Any FAC communications, questions, or suggestions should be directed to Matt Heller-Trulli (mheller-trulli@cambridgeredevelopment.org). These ideas can become the basis for future FAC meeting agenda items.

## Updates and Next Steps

The next FAC meeting will be in May. Matt will send out a poll to gauge dates that will work best.

Suggested topics for the next meeting agenda could be:

1. Roles and responsibilities of the FAC, Foundry Consortium, CRA, and City
2. Community outreach, comments, and Council input
3. Partnerships
4. Budget as it relates to usage and programming, including the sliding scale

### Contact List and Links

[FAC webpage HERE](http://www.cambridgeredevelopment.org/foundry): (www.cambridgeredevelopment.org/foundry) The CRA has a web page dedicated to the Foundry Advisory Committee, including the current list of **FAC members**. It also includes agendas, minutes, and meeting handouts for current and past meetings.

[CRA/Foundry webpage HERE](http://www.cambridgeredevelopment.org/foundry-advisory-committee): (www.cambridgeredevelopment.org/foundry-advisory-committee) The CRA Foundry page has information on construction, leasing, operations, as well as a compendium of all documents related to the Foundry.



[Foundry Consortium webpage HERE](#): this site is evolving to include information about reservations, spaces and events. Consider following the Foundry on [Instagram](#). Be sure to check these sources regularly to follow the programs and activities.

<b>Org.</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Email</b>
CRA	Executive Director	Tom Evans	tevens@cambridgeredevelopment.org
CRA	Senior Asset Manager	Matthew Heller-Trulli	mheller-trulli@cambridgeredevelopment.org
FC	Executive Director	Diana Navarrete-Rackauckas	diana@cambridgefoundry.org
FC	Community Manager	Nikoi Coley-Ribeiro	nikoi@cambridgefoundry.org
FC	Director, Finance & Oper	Jenna Schlags	jenna@cambridgefoundry.org
FC	Maker Space Manager	David Siegel	david@cambridgefoundry.org
FC	Program Coordinator	Logan Lopez	logan@cambridgefoundry.org