

---

## Foundry Advisory Committee - Meeting Notes

Friday, January 8, 2021

8:00 – 9:30 a.m.

Via Zoom Meeting

---

*FAC Members in Attendance:* Mark Tang, Jason Slavick, Marie Saccoccio, Joyce Chen, Jamie Sabino, 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, Danielle McDonough

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

### Design and Construction Update

Bob Garner from the City of Cambridge provided a construction update. Concrete installation in the main building is completed. Structural steel will start being installed, which is expected to be completed in March. After that, floor slabs will be installed, starting with the third floor and working down.

Masonry work has started, including installation of bricks to repair and restore some areas. Stefanie Greenfield of architects Cambridge Seven noted the incredible craftsmanship of the steel installation crew; they are working very carefully not to disturb the historic structure.

The narrative for the Women's History Plaque is completed, but the plaque won't be completed without images from the National Archives. The Archives remain closed due to COVID-19, but the project team expects that restrictions to lift in time to complete the plaque. When it is possible, the Cambridge Historical Commission will work with Cambridge Seven to select historic images for the plaque.

Stephanie Couch of the Foundry Consortium asked about the final landscaping plans. Stefanie Greenfield noted that permanent structures in the side yard were reduced late in the design phase to enable greater programmatic flexibility in the yard and to reduce cost. The yard is 25 feet wide and runs the length of the Foundry building. The yard's landscaping includes three trees, and some built in planters and benches.

The Foundry project is still on track to be substantially complete by May 31, 2022. Construction updates can be found on the [City Manager's Foundry page](#) and on the [CRA's website](#).

### Foundry Consortium Nonprofit Update

Stephanie Couch gave an update on the Foundry Consortium nonprofit. The job description for the Executive Director is complete and many people have been contacting her to find out when the process will start. The job search will officially kick off in early February. It is a rolling

process with interviews expected to start in March. This timeline is designed to ensure the new Executive Director is on board approximately one year prior to the building opening, but not earlier, as the Foundry Consortium has limited funds to support staffing prior to the building opening. Once the building is occupied, office rents and, to a much lesser extent, fees for community use space will support the building's operations.

The Foundry Consortium Board of Directors is thinking about the systems that will need to be in place before the building opens. They are also thinking about the role they can play to meet the Foundry's goals, such as developing a robust internship program, training youth on how to run the kinds of spaces that will be in the Foundry. They have also started talking to local nonprofits about potential partnerships and what they will need to run programs at the Foundry. The Board is working to put plans into place, but not get ahead of work that may be best done by the new Executive Director.

Foundry Consortium board member Peter Crawley noted that the board has been thinking about how to align the efforts of various entities to avoid redundancy and enhance collaboration. This includes considering the role of the FAC and how the Foundry may partner with other current or future cultural sites, such as BioMed, Volpe, and the Cambridge Multicultural Arts Center around marketing and programming.

### **Discussion with Sal Zinno & Andrea Windhausen of BioMed Realty**

Sal Zinno and Andrea Windhausen of BioMed Realty gave a presentation on the project that BioMed will be developing at 585 Third Street in Kendall Square. The council voted 9-0 in favor of the project in December of 2020.

The project is a mixed use 525,000 square foot commercial building with community space on its lower levels. BioMed has been developing the arts component of the project since 2018, including conversations with many arts organizations and collecting data on needs. As so many arts spaces have been lost in recent years, BioMed hopes their project will help to fill gaps. The mission they developed for the community space is to:

- Create a transformative space for the arts
- Focus on BIPOC leadership, experience and culture
- Provide opportunities for Cambridge's creative sector and residents from all walks of life; be easy, approachable and welcoming
- Reflect the rich diversity of Cambridge

The community space includes:

- 250-300 seat theatre
- 15,000 square feet of indoor public space
- 1 acre of outdoor space

The building will also include a small retail restaurant with affordable food. The building was designed by CBT Architects, and is meant to look like a building for the arts, different from the office buildings nearby. The design includes a gold curtain wall and a lot of glass, enabling people outside to see into the indoor spaces, including the theatre.

They envision this community space being used for performing arts, classes, farmer's market, and a range of other public gatherings. BioMed is also thinking about partnerships with schools,

apprenticeships, and ensuring a mix of activities to attract every kind of participant. They are now in a process to identify an operator for the theatre, which will be managed independently from the remaining office space in the building. BioMed may continue to financially support the community space to ensure its success in maintaining operations for the long term, including in providing free or low cost space for events that are accessible to all.

It was noted by contrast that the Foundry holds 4 maker spaces, demonstration kitchen, meeting rooms, gallery space, artist work space, fitness/dance rehearsal room, and a multi-use performance space of up to 150 seats, filling a gap for smaller performances.

Sal and Andrea noted that the arts benefit from clusters and they are interested in exploring collaborations with the Foundry that would activate both sites. For example, hosting a large event at the BioMed theatre, coupled with an educational talk or related smaller performance at the Foundry. Andrea noted that the City will benefit from a range of different performance spaces that will allow arts groups to grow while staying grounded in Cambridge. This includes spaces at the Dance Complex, the Foundry and their new building.

Members of the public noted that common insurance requirements often undermine small businesses' ability to take advantage of space, even when it is provided for free or a low cost. Dan Marshall of the CCCA suggested that BioMed offer specialized insurance designed to cover all groups using the space, instead of requiring each group to get their own insurance. The BioMed representatives noted that no insurance will be required for short term use of the space. If insurance becomes cost prohibitive, BioMed can cover that cost. They will create a clear policy on this for the future. They noted that they are learning about the areas where they need to focus attention to ensure the space is accessible for all – both for groups putting on events and community members coming to participate in events.

Jason Slavick of the FAC noted that BioMed should ensure that the theatre floor can accommodate heavy items, that it has a sprung floor for dance, and that it includes curtains to block light. These kinds of choices will affect the types of groups who can use the space.

Peter Crawley, a Foundry board member, asked how to ensure that there isn't competition among customers and funding between the Foundry and the BioMed site and other arts facilities, and how to ensure that there aren't richer and poorer facilities. He suggested that the CRA or City help to coordinate conversations between the many sites coming online, including Foundry, BioMed, MIT/Volpe, the Dance Complex, and the Cambridge Multicultural Arts Center.

A member of the public suggested that each site should have its own distinct brand.

Those gathered agreed that this conversation should continue in order to see collaboration between the Foundry and the BioMed site, and other sites. Stephanie Couch of the Foundry Consortium board has talked about creating a cultural district that could share marketing and perhaps even an online reservation platform. These are the kinds of ideas that parties will continue to explore in coming months and years.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:34 am.