

Foundry Advisory Committee

Meeting Notes

Friday, July 8, 2022, 9:30 am via zoom

FAC Members in Attendance: Lauren O-Neal, Sangeeta Prasad, Jason Slavick, Michael Shia, Richard Thal (*Absent:* Carole Souza, Kathleen Williams)

CRA Staff: Tom Evans, Kathryn Madden, Cecelia Cobb; *Board member:* Barry Zevin

Foundry Consortium Staff: Diana Navarrete-Rackauckas, Nikoi Coley-Ribeiro, Logan Lopez, Jenna Schlags, David Siegel, Olivia Fone

City of Cambridge: Robert Garner, Claudia Zarazua

Cambridge Seven in Attendance: Stefanie Greenfield, Danielle McDonough

Other Participants: Elisa Hamilton, Carol Watkins, Heather Hoffman, Jamie, Sabino, John Hawkinson

Next Steps/To Do

Nikoi Coley-Ribeiro, Foundry Consortium Community Manager, encourages the FAC members and all participants to connect with him around the following questions (email at nikoi@cambridgefoundry.org).

- Who should we be reaching out to as supporters and facilitators of opening week programming?
- Who should we be reaching out to as participants and guests of opening week programs?
- Are there any key outreach and engagement strategies or critical success factors you believe we should keep in mind when trying to reach folks in this community?

A directory with contact information and links are attached.

The next FAC meeting will be in October 2022 (tentatively October 14, second Friday of the month, at 9:30 am). One agenda item might include the introduction of the office tenants. Tom Evans suggested that we might meet at the Foundry, depending on the status of COVID at that time.

Presentations and Discussion

Welcome

Tom Evans welcomed everyone. The Foundry Advisory Committee (FAC) members and those leading discussions (CRA, City, Cambridge Seven, and Foundry Consortium (FC)) introduced themselves.

Design and Construction Update

Bob Garner from the City of Cambridge showed recent project photos and provided a construction update. Among other tasks, they are currently sealing the concrete floor, conducting fire alarm and elevator inspections, and commissioning the building. Furniture and equipment is continuing to arrive. The new floor in the performance space will be installed by August 1; it is a sprung floor that will be painted black. The final sign-off on the building – the Certificate of Occupancy – is expected the week of July 25, 2022.

Elisa Hamilton, the Jukebox artist, was welcomed and gave an update on the status of the Jukebox installation. The “Nook”, which is the space set aside for the Jukebox on the first floor, is still being prepared; she is finishing up details on the Jukebox and expects to have it installed this month. The first 25 stories will be released this Tuesday, July 12, 5:30 pm, at an in-person event at the Cambridge Library. Elisa encouraged everyone to come; more details are available here: <https://cambridgepl.libcal.com/event/9327286>.

Operational Update

Introduction to the Foundry Consortium Team

Diana Navarrete-Rackauckas, Executive Director, was pleased to announce that she now has her team in place and asked each to introduce themselves. The [Foundry Consortium website](#) provides the full background and interests of each team member.

- **Nikoi Coley-Ribeiro** is the Community Manager; Nikoi started 6 to 7 weeks ago and is actively reaching out to community members and partners.
- **Jenna Schlags** is the Director of Finance & Operations, and in the last four weeks since she began, she has been setting up the operational structures and financial systems.
- **David Siegel** is the Maker Space Manager and began three weeks ago. He will oversee the maker spaces, ensuring safety and managing inventory, among other.
- **Logan Lopez** is the Program Coordinator and began two weeks ago; they will be responsible for managing all programs, including scheduling, answering questions before and after events and programs, and working with Nikoi and Diana to bring more people into the space and expand the audience.

Diana emphasized that it will be an Opening *Week* (not day), including

- Saturday, September 10, 10 am to 8 pm: like a block party
- Sunday, September 11, 11 am to 6 pm: more events and activities but with a shorter schedule
- Monday to Friday, September 12 – 16: open throughout the day, but with specific activities planned for 8-10 am and 3-8 pm, mimicking expected usage in a typical week.

The Opening Week program will include workshops, maker space training, artist vendors, community art making, performances, and information tables for Cambridge Organizations.

There will be an emphasis on making together, working collaboratively. In response to a question, Diana noted that a call will be going out next week to invite Cambridge Organizations to apply to host a table.

Community Outreach

Nikoi Coley-Ribeiro described some of the initial outreach efforts. The FC are working to reach communities in the immediate area of the Foundry as well as the broader community. They are also considering who needs access to this space based on its mission, a perspective that goes beyond geography. Nikoi emphasized that it would be very helpful to hear suggestions from FAC members and others regarding groups and people to connect with (*Next Steps*).

Questions/Discussion

- *Jason Slavik: is the FC reaching out to Cambridge Art community? Yes, the FC has a list of many groups, but it would be helpful to have everyone's suggestions (see Next Steps).*
- *Michael Shia: Will there be fliers and outreach to East Cambridge, to reach the many people who helped launch this project at the outset? Yes, the FC is planning on mailers and dropping off/posting information in local organizations, such as the Margaret Fuller House. School will have started so the FC will also send information home with school children.*
- *Sangeeta Prasad: How are we reaching out to local people; except for the people directly involved in the project, there were not a lot of local residents at the ribbon cutting? As a new organization, the FC feels that the best way to reach residents is through the existing local organizations who know their own constituencies. They are building these connections, including connecting to those living in housing communities. They will be scheduling informal open houses to hear more about community interests; they need to hear this directly. It will be easier to hold these open houses and invite different groups in once the space is finished and safe to occupy.*
- *Claudia Zarazua, the new Director of Arts and Cultural Planning, City of Cambridge: Claudia noted that she is working in the City Manager's office, collaborating closely with Jason and the Cambridge Arts Council, and is interested in learning more from the FC and being involved as they plan activities.*
- *Jason Slavik: Suggest old school approach of posting flyers to light poles, which grabs attention when walking in the neighborhood of the Foundry, especially for free activities; reminder to reach out to all neighborhoods, not just East Cambridge, and that residents in North Cambridge would benefit in particular.*
- *Sangeeta Prasad: Reminder to reach new residents as well, especially as communities are changing; underscores the effectiveness of physical, visual presence around neighborhoods.*
- *Stephanie Greenfield, Cambridge Seven: Have the artists been selected? Will they be setting up their spaces? Will the maker space manager help built out the spaces?*

These artists will have their own constituencies, expanding the outreach. The FC noted that the two artists-in-residence will begin in January 2023; they will be setting up a process for selection, working to ensure transparency and openness to the public, including a role for community participation in the selection process.

- *Michael Shia: Will the artists-in-residence be teachers, will this be part of the expectations of their appointment?* The FC said that is the hope, which will be incorporated into the Request for Proposals, that the artists' roles would include some aspect of teaching and working with the community. The FC also wants them to convey what it's like to be an artist, with the ability at times to watch them work, testing new techniques, etc.
- *Sangeeta recommended updating an email contact list and sending direct links to documents before meetings (Next Steps).*
- *Stephanie Greenfield, Cambridge Seven, offered suggestions in an email about how spaces might be used: community dinners – set up the atrium with long table and host community dinner or host outdoors; have a local community member showcase a family recipe or teach a cooking class; The Point/Multipurpose Room at level 2 – this could be set up for September opening as local artist gallery and/or can be used for other gallery showings; Textile Room – have a local community member showcase quilt making or other heritage sewing interests.*

Office Leasing Update

Tom Evans gave an update of the status of office leasing. The office suite size of ~2,000 to 4,000 sf has been the most in demand and the three suites of this size are leased, with tenants moving in in August. One space is rented at below market rate. The 8,000 sf space is still available; Newmark, the brokers, feel confident that once the building is open and people can see the space, there will be interest. The three tenants to date are Break Through Cancer, Deep Gymnastics, and Break Through Boston; perhaps at the next FAC meeting, these organizations can introduce themselves and talk about their mission and work. The goal has always been that the office tenants would be part of the life of the building.

Questions/Discussion

Richard Thal inquired about the lease up schedule, recognizing that the financial projections always included contingency for vacancies in the first year; at what point will there be cause for concern? Tom noted that we will be at ~50% vacancy at start-up and hopes to be fully leased by early 2023; we will be leaning on some of the operational reserves in the meantime. It's been a challenging year as return to office plans keep changing as the effects of COVID continue to linger. Jason Slavik asked if the CRA is thinking about breaking up the 8,000 sf space into two suites. Tom has talked to Newmark about this, but the broker remains optimistic for now, especially with some recent interest in the space.

Other Business

Two of our FAC members, Richard Thal and Jason Slavik, have finished their terms and are staying on until replacements can be made. The City Council is changing the policy for appointments so this has slowed the reappointment process but Matt Nelson at the City is working with the CRA on this effort.

John Hawkinson was disappointed to learn that the maker spaces in the Foundry would not include basic tools for metal working and milling, say to fix a bicycle, tools that would be out of reach for the ordinary citizen to own. Michael Shia noted that there is a network of maker spaces in the area, and the Foundry was always intended to be just one of many – and a small one at that. Foundry just doesn't have the space for everything. Michael suggested that the Artisans Asylum would be a better option, with 52,000 sf of maker space in their new facility and a dedicated metal shop. The new facility will be opening around the same time as the Foundry. With a new executive director who just began, Artisans Asylum is actively building relationships with the same communities as the Foundry. They complement each other. Tom Evans noted that it was a conscious decision several years ago to program the metal working space for jewelry, since this was seen as more of an entry point especially for younger populations and across genders.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:35 am.

Contact List and Links

[FAC webpage HERE](#): 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](#): 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. Be sure to check it out regularly.

Org.	Title	Name	Email
CRA	Executive Director	Tom Evans	tevens@cambridgeredevelopment.org
CRA	Strategic Planner	Kathryn Madden	kmadden@maddenplanning.com
CRA	Project Planner	Cecilia Cobb	ccobb@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