

Foundry Advisory Committee Meeting Notes

Friday, July 12, 2019, 8:00 – 10:00 a.m.

At: Cambridge Police Department, 125 Sixth Street, Cambridge

FAC Members in Attendance: Marie Soccoccio, Jamie Sabino

CRA, City of Cambridge, Foundry Consortium: Erica Schwarz (CRA Staff), Ellen Shore (CRA Staff), Michael Black (City of Cambridge), Robert Garner (City of Cambridge), (Taha Jennings City of Cambridge), Stephanie Couch (Foundry Consortium), Betsy Boyle (Foundry Consortium), Zoe Vanderschmidt (Foundry Consortium), Katherine Shozawa (Foundry Consortium), Sue Cusack (Foundry Consortium), Barry Zevin (CRA Board),

Members of the Public: Bradley Vernatter, Meghan McGrath, Liz Werby, Steve Imrich, Graham Wright, Sage Carbone, Jean Appolon, Fred Fantini (Cambridge School Committee), Adria Katz, Carol Watkins, David De Celis, Stefanie Greenfield, Justin Crane, Jen Guillemain, Fabrizio Gentili, Karin Keane, Jennifer Mathews, Carole Bellew and others not represented on sign in sheets.

1. Updates

FAC member selection process

Taha Jennings, Cambridge Budget Director and representative of City Manager's office, noted that the City received over 40 applications to fill 2 open FAC seats. Staff from the City Manager's Office and CRA are reviewing applications and scheduling interviews, after which the selection team will make recommendations to the City Manager and CRA Executive Director. The goal is to retain a balance of perspectives and backgrounds on the committee.

Nonprofit formation & Staffing Model

Stephanie Couch, Executive Director of Lemelson-MIT, a lead entity in the Foundry Consortium noted that her team has a final draft of bylaws for the new nonprofit that is being formed and is in discussions to finalize a set of board members. They are on target to have the nonprofit formed and running by November.

The Foundry Consortium is also developing a fiscal and fundraising plan to support staffing that will be required in advance of the building opening. The goal is to hire perhaps an Executive Director and administrative person to start in advance of the building opening. Once the building is open, rents from upper floors will help sustain the staff needed to run the community uses on the first floor.

The selected consultants for property management: Artisan's Asylum and TSNE/Mission Works are advising on building operations. The Foundry Consortium is continuing to analyze its staffing model and may internally hire staff to manage day to day facility management for the building, while also holding property management contracts for specific technical needs.

2. Survey Results to Date: Community Programming Interests

Katherine Shozowa of Lesley University, a Foundry Consortium Member, gave a presentation on the community outreach that has been done to date. That presentation and a handout provided at the meeting are posted on the CRA's Foundry website in the FAC meetings section.

She noted that the outreach team has had 213 individual meetings, 63 small group meetings and has collected 89 paper and online surveys during those meetings and at community events such as the River Arts Festival. This outreach was focused on what kinds of activities or opportunities would bring people to the Foundry and what would keep them from coming.

The outreach team was racially diverse, including people who are Black, White and Asian. The outreach was conducted with youth, elders, community organizations, those in performance arts, immigrants, church members and a range of others.

The survey responses reinforce that a widely shared goal for the Foundry is to create a space where new community connections can be forged and fostered.

The following two questions and their responses were highlighted:

1. What would prevent you from coming to the Foundry?

Answers: culture and climate, lack of ability to get to the Foundry or lack of affordable parking

2. What would bring you to the Foundry? (open ended responses)

Answers: Wanting to meeting new people, learn about other cultures, learn about Cambridge history

Katherine noted that Lesley University has selected visual artist Candy Chang as a visiting artist. She will be conducting a participatory art project for the Foundry that will kick off in September. The artist will hold an event for the project on October 25th, 2019 from 8 – 11 am; location to be announced. The project will include stickers that will be posted in a public space that read: "I Wish This Was...", which members of the public can fill in with their own ideas.

It would be ideal to post the stickers close to the Foundry. Cambridge Construction Manager Michael Black said that they may be able to affix some plywood to the project's construction fence for the project. The adjacent residential project is nearing completion and the City plans to set up its Foundry construction site in September.

David DeCelis asked if the stickers could be translated into other languages and asked if the survey was conducted in multiple languages. Katherine agreed that translating the stickers was a good idea to pass on to the artist. She noted that the survey was conducted in Spanish and Portuguese, as well as in English.

Regarding the survey results about parking, a member of the public noted that it will be important for the Foundry to have shuttles or other services to help people get to the site.

Members of the public suggested that more outreach be conducted with senior populations. Suggestions included outreach to Millers River and Truman Apartments, the Porter Square Neighborhood Association, Cambridge Neighbors, and the Council on Aging.

There was some discussion of fundraising for the Foundry Consortium before the building opens. Marie Soccoccio noted that several Cambridge developments are now moving forward that will contribute funds for community benefits. If the Foundry Consortium nonprofit is established, perhaps some of those funds could be applied to the Foundry.

Additional conversation focused on a range of issues including identifying if existing corporate shuttles could serve the Foundry, expanding ways to access the Foundry online, how community groups will reserve space at the Foundry and how the Foundry Consortium nonprofit will track use of the space.

3. Design and Construction

Stefanie Greenfield of Cambridge Seven Architects presented a slide show of the Foundry schematic designs. These designs will adjust over time, and also become more detailed. The ethos of the design is to open up the building with a community hall, and create a space that allows visitors to view much of what is happening in the building.

Stefanie showed a slide of the first floor, which includes 4 maker spaces, a café and demonstration pantry, dance and fitness room, four multi-purpose rooms, artist workspace, artist in residence space, performance space and “back of house” areas, such as those for the utility transformer and trash room. She also showed slides illustrating the second and third floors, which are mostly market rate and reduced rate office space, views of the landscaping, and the new addition that will replace the existing addition. Stefanie noted that there is consideration of making most of Rogers Street one way to create a safer drop off area and a more pedestrian friendly space around the Foundry entrance.

A short conversation ensued, including about the location of the Jukebox public art installation, the size of the fitness room and if the larger multipurpose room could also have a floor suitable for dance and fitness, the demonstration pantry, which will allow for catering companies to warm and plate food for events, and the final materials for the interior, which will be robust, to allow for art to be mounted on them.

Cambridge Construction Manager Michael Black noted that the Design Development phase of the designs would be done by the end of September, around which time the City will hold community meetings.

The meeting adjourned at 9:47.