



## MEMORANDUM

**To:** CRA Board

**From:** Erica Schwarz

**Date:** July 17, 2019

**Re:** Margaret Fuller Neighborhood House Designer Selection

## INTRODUCTION

Earlier this year the Cambridge Redevelopment Authority (CRA) and the Margaret Fuller Neighborhood House (MFNH) signed a Cooperation Agreement in order to pursue a redevelopment project (Project) that will:

- Supply mixed-income housing for the Cambridge community.
- Apply the value of undeveloped land owned by MFNH (Parking Lot) to expand the organization's capacity, and strengthen and grow programs.
- Strengthen MFNH's immediate and long-term financial position and improve its community-serving facilities.

The Project will potentially include:

- New construction mixed-income housing.
- New program facilities, including upgrades to the youth program facility, food pantry facility and related amenities.
- Improvements to the existing historic house where MFNH administrative offices and other program space are located.

## CONTRACT SCOPE

The CRA, working with staff and board members from MFNH, held a qualifications-based procurement process to select a qualified design firm to support the Project. The selected firm would be retained to conduct a feasibility study (including studying existing conditions, conducting visioning and planning with the CRA and MFNH, generating conceptual design options and providing cost estimates). The firm selected will then work with the CRA and MFNH to finalize full project scope and move through a design process to finalize construction drawings and provide support with construction administration for the potential Project.

## RFQ PROCESS

Date	Activity	Additional Detail
April 24 – May 13	Public Notice	Notices Posted to Central Register, Boston Globe, and on CRA website. Emails also sent to firms showing prior interest in CRA projects and to firms identified by the MFNH as potentially suitable
May 3 and May 17	Site Visits	18 firms represented at site visits
May 28, 2019	Response Deadline	15 responses received
June 13 – 18	Interviews	6 firms selected to interview by a selection committee that included CRA staff and MFNH board and staff: BH+A, Cambridge Seven, DREAM Collaborative, RMD, The Narrow Gate, Studio G
June 20 - 24	References contacted	References were called for the top two selections

## SELECTION RECOMMENDATION

The selected designer was desired to have significant experience designing for the range of project uses (housing, childcare, social services, nonprofit office space) as well as in historic preservation. Successful respondents also had to demonstrate strength in planning and facilitating public meetings, working with stakeholders on internal decision making, environmentally sustainable building design, and construction administration.

The Executive Director designated a Selection Committee consisting of CRA staff, and staff and Board members of the MFNH (Tom Evans, Erica Schwarz, Selvin Chambers, Alex Veloria, Sam Seidel).

Six firms were invited to interview with the Selection Committee. Following the interviews, the Selection Committee ranked the following top three choices:

1. Studio G
2. The Narrow Gate
3. DREAM Collaborative

Although the Selection Committee believed each of the three finalists could perform the work for the Project, Studio G was selected at the first choice for this project due to the following characteristics:

- Their depth of experience in the primary project uses: affordable and market rate housing, childcare, community center and social service space, nonprofit office space, and historic preservation.

- Being mission driven: they only work on projects for the social good; they have a deep understanding of mission driven projects, and can strategically address nonprofit projects' budgetary limitations.
- Their demonstrated expertise and success in planning and facilitating public process and internal decision making with stakeholders
- Their expertise in sustainable "green" building, and knowing how best to prioritize sustainability goals in the context of budget constraints.
- Their creative designs, which demonstrate sensitivity to a range of programmatic goals.

## CONTRACT TERM

The CRA will initially engage Studio G to conduct a Feasibility Study. As contemplated in the RFQ, if the Project moves forward, the CRA plans to contract with Studio G to develop schematic designs, design development drawing and construction documents. The designer would be expected to continue on the Project through the end of construction. Construction is estimated to be completed in 2022 or 2023, depending on how the Project is phased and how swiftly the CRA can assemble the various financing and revenue sources that will be vital for the Project.

## CRA BOARD MOTION

*Authorizing the Executive Director and Chair to negotiate and enter into a design services contract with Studio G to conduct a feasibility study and further to prepare design documents and conduct construction oversight for a potential phased development of housing and community facilities at 71 Cherry Street.*

## EXHIBITS

Exhibit A: RFQ for Designer Services at 71 Cherry Street

Exhibit B: Proposal from Studio G