

Staff Report to the Board: January 17, 2024

Personnel and Hiring Updates

The CRA will be holding a staff retreat in the first quarter of 2024. We view this retreat as an opportunity to build camaraderie amongst our growing team and discuss our approach to achieving key organizational goals for 2024. We will be discussing next steps in the implementation of our Strategic Plan, holding a facilitated discussion regarding how to draw on our personal strengths in the workplace, and participating in a team-building activity. We plan for a staff retreat to become an annual event on our calendar.

Forward Calendar

- 2023 Annual Report
- KSURP Innovation Space Report
- Margaret Fuller Neighborhood House 2024 Memorandum of Understanding

Project Updates

Foundry Construction

The CRA publicly bid out the construction project to complete the subdivision of the office space on the third floor of the Foundry with final bids due on December 22nd. GVW was the lowest bidder and the CRA will be moving forward with the project with them as the General Contractor. The kickoff meeting for the construction project occurred on Thursday, January 11, 2024. The CRA expects the construction project to begin as soon as permits are issued with the goal of substantial completion of work by April 1st.

East Cambridge Tree Planting

Green Cambridge worked throughout the fall to ramp up its staffing capacity and outreach efforts related to tree planting in East Cambridge. The fall planting season, which ended in early December, allowed the team to plant 15 trees in total. They have entered into a new partnership with Enroot in November that will roughly double the number of tree planting crew members in the future. Green Cambridge is now focused on outreach to bolster interest for the Spring planting season and is in the process of launching a postcard campaign that will be sent to every resident in East Cambridge. They currently have 18 sites signed up as potential tree planting locations. The CRA and Green Cambridge are planning to host a public tree planting event at Grand Junction Park in April to align with Earth Day celebrations.

MFNH Development Project Update

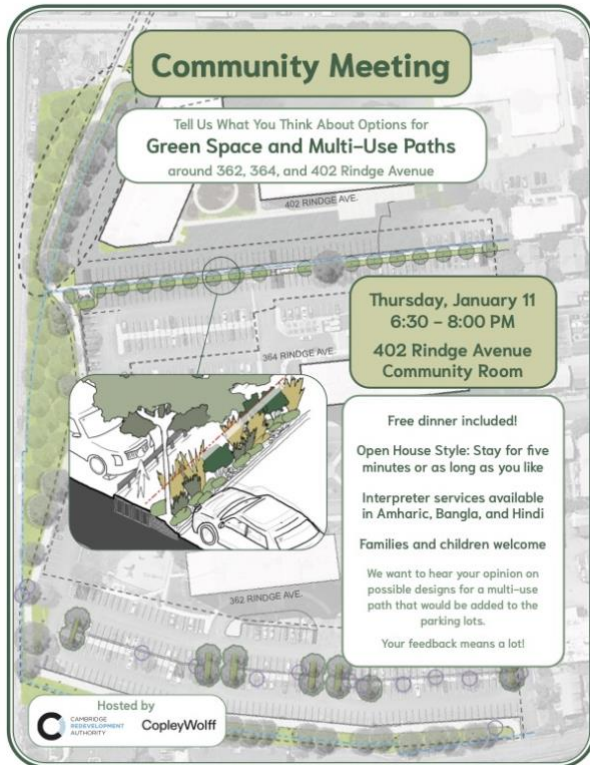
The CRA continues its discussions with the Margaret Fuller Neighborhood House (MFNH) for the delivery of an affordable housing and historic renovation project on its site. On December 28, the CRA presented revised concepts for the development to MFNH's Board, and is currently drafting a revised Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) reflecting the proposed development timeline, preferred development concept, and the financial and operational responsibilities of the two organizations. CRA staff anticipate that the MOU will be ready for presentation and discussion with the Board in February.

Rindge Connectivity Update

On Thursday, January 11, the CRA hosted a community meeting at 402 Rindge Avenue. The community meeting was facilitated in an open house format, and included material translated to Amharic, Bangla, and Hindi, in addition to English. CRA staff facilitated the meeting, along with staff from the Copley Wolff consultant team.

The CRA received approval in December to complete survey work on MBTA property. This survey information will enable designs to progress for portions of the multi-use path project. Staff hope this work will be completed by February, pending MBTA flagger availability.

CRA and City staff have worked closely to align the circulation goals of this design work and the City's Bicycle and Pedestrian Crossing of the Fitchburg Commuter Rail line.



Kendall Public Lobby Exhibits

CRA staff have been collaborating with Mayor Denise Simmons, the Cambridge Museum of History and Culture, the Cambridge Arts Council and Boston Properties (BXP) to plan a three-exhibit series in the Kendall Public Lobby. Following successful events in 2023, the upcoming exhibits in 2024 will focus on Black History Month in February, LGBTQ+ Month in June, and Hispanic History Month in September. The research and designs for the exhibits will be curated by the Cambridge Museum of History and Culture and its team. Each month will include an inaugural event with a keynote speaker. The unveiling of the Black History Month exhibit in the Public Lobby will be scheduled with an opening event in early February. The exact date and time will be determined within the next week.