



Ellen Shore <eshore@cambridgeredevelopment.org>

Re: Virtual CRA Annual Board Meeting 2/16/22 at 5:30p

1 message

Stephen Kaiser <skaiser1959@gmail.com>
To: Ellen Shore <eshore@cambridgeredevelopment.org>
Cc: tori.kim@mass.gov, alexander.strysky@mass.gov

Mon, Feb 14, 2022 at 1:20 PM

To : The Board of the Cambridge Redevelopment Authority

From : Stephen Kaiser, 191 Hamilton Street, Cambridgeport

SUBJECT : COMMUNICATIONS for CRA Annual Meeting on February 16, 2022
regarding :

- **Motion:** To enter into Executive Session to consider terms of a potential real estate transaction with MITIMCO for Parcel Six of the KSURP. (Meeting Agenda, Other Business)

On January 28, 2022, the Secretary of Energy and Environmental Affairs issued a certificate of NO EIR for the Volpe Exchange Redevelopment Project (EEA #16468), on the basis that segmentation was a concern but could not be determined. MIT indicated they did not wish to submit an EIR and claimed that traffic was not a legal issue of concern according to MEPA regulations. The Secretary did indicate that segmentation remained an issue in the event of possible acquisition of the 5,890 s.f. CRA parcel.

The Secretary stated that “The transfer of the parcel from the CRA to the Proponent would be a Land Transfer subject to MEPA jurisdiction because the CRA is an Agency created or acting in accordance with M.G.L. c. 121A. ... The Proponent should consult with the MEPA Office regarding the need for future MEPA review of proposed activities on the CRA parcel.” Also, “the project also exceeds mandatory EIR review thresholds for transportation at 301 CMR 11.03(6)(a)(6) and 301 CMR 11.03(6)(a)(7)” for traffic generation and new parking spaces. Currently, subject matter jurisdiction does not exist for traffic, because no state traffic permits or funding are proposed. (emphasis added)

She specifically addressed the issue of segmentation : “The MEPA regulations include anti-segmentation provisions to ensure that project Proponents do not evade, defer or curtail MEPA review by segmenting one project into smaller ones that, individually, do not meet or exceed MEPA thresholds.”

“If and when development plans become apparent on the CRA parcel, and prior to the transfer of the parcel from CRA, the Proponent should consult with the MEPA Office regarding the need for additional MEPA review, which will include an evaluation of whether

the entire project, when including the CRA parcel, would meet or exceed any new review thresholds.”

The Secretary was not specific as to the form the consultation would take between MEPA and the proponent, but it would likely involve a Notice of Project Change. Such a procedure would be similar to the NPC that CRA filed last year for its 800,000 s.f. addition to the MXD District. The Board may remember that I raised the issue of unresolved traffic issues from the size and multiplicity of new development in the Kendall Square area. The outcome of CRA's NPC was a lack of resolution of traffic issues by either the CRA or MEPA. The land transfer from CRA to MITIMCO may appear to be small, but the implications for subject matter jurisdiction (traffic) would be significant.

As I see it, both MIT and the CRA are confronted with a sea of cars in the future and are also out to sea in identifying ways to resolve the matter effectively. Indeed, both are in the same boat. Given the extraordinary dimensions of traffic growth for the No-Build case, the question becomes : how can any increase in traffic from the CRA (800,000 s.f.) and MIT (3 million s.f.) sites be absorbed when congestion levels are so extraordinarily high ?? The change to include the CRA parcel draws the Authority back into joint action with the city of Cambridge, MEPA, MITIMCO, and hopefully all developers in the Kendall Square area to rethink their situation. They must abandon the polluter’s logic – the dangerous but common escape of assuming any new increment of overload is very small compared to the overwhelming levels of infrastructure overload created by everybody together -- so let it be allowed. All wish to be relieved of their moral responsibility. All claim they are but a tiny part of the bigger problem, rather than members of a larger social group in search of a solution.

Wetlands mitigation works in a different way. Those who fill in wetlands must provide mitigation, indeed equal compensation. There are no allowed prayers to be released from obligations of compensation because their impact is small. The lawyers refer to this as "de minimis" while other observers might say "death by a thousand cuts." CRA and MIT so far has failed to admit that they are seeking to release future increases of traffic out into a roadway system that is overloaded almost beyond imagination. Their traffic consultant refuses to admit this situation with candor and professionalism. They will not admit to the inadequacy of our highway infrastructure, not will they identify ways to correct the modal imbalance in public transit service.

Correcting road congestion deficiencies is neither easy nor inexpensive. But a different situation confronts us in matters of transit mitigation. In Boston at the end of World War II, subway trains were entering Harvard Station every minute-and-a-half. Today’s peak period schedule for Red line trains is eleven-minute headways. In other words, transit service to Harvard station in 1945 was seven times more frequent than it is today. The world’s shortest headways occur in Moscow – a minute-and-fifteen-seconds. Moscow trains arrive nine times as frequently as today's Red Line.

An obvious question is how over the past 75 years did our society allow this to happen? The MEPA submissions of the CRA and MIT admit nothing of the gridlock on our streets,

nor how dramatic have been the service losses in Boston transit, especially in the past five years. CRA and MIT both used the same transportation consultant to propose the tired old boilerplate about mitigation --spilled out from computer memory -- when real-world problems loom over all of us today.

How difficult is it to make vast improvements in the Red Line ? Simply find out what they did in 1945 and copy their methods. One does not need to invent a new plan. It has been done already. Can we improve on it? Possibly, but probably not by more than ten or twenty percent. I would settle for 1945 performance, any day. MIT's refusal to offer significant, practical solutions to our everyday transportation problems is astonishing for a technical institute with an otherwise world-wide positive reputation.

The City of Cambridge, the CRA, MIT and all developments in the Kendall Square area, including the Volpe Center, must jointly come together to identify the realities of our traffic and transit decline and need for practical mitigation. MEPA regulations require the consideration of impacts and mitigation. MIT mitigation includes \$7.5 million for the City of Cambridge to recommend or make transit improvements. Here is the focus, the vehicle for improvement. An unspecified gift to the City could mean the money will be squandered in the bureaucracy. A much more vital activity is research and planning. Kendall Square may be the single site in the Commonwealth most in need of candor, imagination, and professional integrity to bring about transportation solutions. CRA, MIT, the City of Cambridge, Boston Properties, the Kendall Square Association, the Volpe Center and others generally in the East Cambridge area should contribute to this effort in a spirit of neighborly cooperation and leadership, and not in evasive muddling to avoid practical responsibility.

Stephen H. Kaiser
191 Hamilton Street
Cambridgeport
Citizen Engineer and Historian

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On Fri, Feb 11, 2022 at 2:00 PM Cambridge Redevelopment Authority <eshore@cambridgeredevelopment.org> wrote:



NOTICE OF PUBLIC MEETING

Pursuant to the Massachusetts Open Meeting Law, M.G.L. c. 30A, §§ 18-25, notice is hereby given of a meeting of the Cambridge Redevelopment Authority (CRA)

**(Virtual) Annual CRA Board Meeting
Wednesday, February 16, 2022 at 5:30 PM**

CRA Board meetings are being held remotely in accordance with Section 20 of Chapter 20 of the Acts of 2021, signed into law on June 16, 2021. Members of the public can participate in meetings online or by telephone as provided below. Additionally, members of the public may provide comments on proposed agenda items by 5:00 PM the day of the meeting to planning@CambridgeRedevelopment.org.

Click link: <https://tinyurl.com/y342vuwe>
or **Join via telephone** at 1-301-715-8592

Webinar ID: 839 9677 0911
Passcode: 943834

MEETING AGENDA

The following is a proposed agenda containing the items the Chair of the CRA reasonably anticipates will be discussed at the meeting. *Supporting material can be accessed on the [Next Meeting](#) page of the CRA website at least 48 hours prior to the start of the meeting.*

Call Roll

Public Comment

Minutes

1. Motion: *To accept the minutes of the Regular Meeting of the Board on January 19, 2022 **

Communications

2. Written communications received since the publication of this meeting notice.

Administrative Actions

3. Election Of Officers (Born)
4. Draft 2021 Annual Report (Evans) *

Development Program Activities

5. Property Management Contracts Update (Kailasam) *
 - Motion: *Authorizing the Executive Director and Chair to enter into a three (3) year landscaping maintenance services contract with Brightview Landscapes, LLC to service CRA-owned open spaces in Kendall Square.*
 - Motion: *Authorizing the Executive Director and Chair to enter into a three (3) year contract with Cambridge Snow Management for snow removal and de-icing services of CRA-owned open spaces in the Kendall Square area and [99 Bishop Allen Drive](#)*

6. Foundry Update (Schwarz)

Other Business

At 7:30 PM, the Board will enter into Executive Session to discuss matters related to Parcel Six within the Kendall Square Urban Redevelopment Plan.

- Motion: To enter into Executive Session to consider terms of a potential real estate transaction with MITIMCO for Parcel Six of the KSURP.

If the Board has concluded all of the business set forth on the regular agenda by the starting time of the Executive Session, the Board will not reconvene in open session thereafter.
Adjournment of CRA Board Meeting

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UPCOMING MEETINGS:

- Regular CRA Board Meeting – 5:30 PM on March 16, 2022

Other 2022 CRA meeting dates can be found [here](#).

The Cambridge Redevelopment Authority is a "local public body" for the purpose of the Open Meeting Law pursuant to M. G. L. c. 30A, § 18. M. G. L. c. 30A, § 20.

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