

Special Meeting
Cambridge Redevelopment Authority

Wednesday, December 1, 2015, 8:00am
Cambridge Redevelopment Authority
255 Main Street – 4th Floor
Cambridge, MA

DRAFT MEETING MINUTES

Call

CRA Chair Kathleen Born called the special Board meeting to order at 8:08 a.m. The meeting was recorded by the CRA Office Manager and one other in attendance. Other Board members present were Ms. Margaret Drury, Mr. Barry Zevin, and Mr. Conrad Crawford. Mr. Christopher Bator was participating remotely due to geographic distance. Ms. Born also introduced CRA staff members – Mr. Tom Evans, Ms. Ellen Shore, and Mr. Jason Zogg.

Public Comment

Mr. Steve Kaiser asked for clarification of the documents that were handed out. Mr. Evans noted that another document with very recent changes will be distributed in the meeting.

Mr. John Hawkinson felt that the coming changes could have been posted sooner.

Public comment was closed.

Motions and Discussion Items

1. Update: Kendall Square Urban Renewal Project and MXD Petition

Motion: To approve revisions to the Tenth Plan Amendment to the Kendall Square Urban Renewal Plan

Motion: To instruct the Executive Director to submit a second set of revisions to the zoning petition to the City of Cambridge for changes to Article 14 of the Cambridge Zoning Ordinance – Cambridge Center Mixed Use District (MXD)

Mr. Evans distributed two correspondences. The first correspondence was a certificate from the Secretary of Energy and Environmental Affairs about the adequacy of the MEPA document. The CRA was asked to submit a Notice of Change document clarifying the mitigation program, specifically the KSTEP program. The timeframe is six months for the CRA to come to an agreement with the State and the City regarding transit funding. This

will include a public review of the document. The second communication contains the notes from the Ordinance hearing that were received last week from the Clerk and frames today's discussion.

The other documents include the current active petition for the MXD revisions and the corresponding two chapters of the urban renewal plan.

The three main issues that came out of Ordinance Hearing discussions centered on innovation space, retail planning, and housing. The housing program involves affordable housing, middle income housing, a desire for family units, and a discussion of condo versus apartments.

Regarding innovation space, Mr. Evans proposed that the GFA exemption be contingent on a five percent (5%) set-aside of the space utilization to be offered at a below market rate. Additionally, an incentive to build more innovation space than the required ten percent (10%), up to twenty percent (20%) of the new commercial space, may qualify for the GFA exemption if built and maintained as Innovation Space with the set aside. The CRA and the City will need to create the process to qualify individuals or companies for the proposed below market-rate innovation space program. This process would not be part of the zoning.

To address the retail planning issues, ideas similar to a requirement placed upon the Alexandria Planned Unit Development along Binney Street were used. As part of Infill Development Concept Plan, the CRA proposed adding a requirement for a detailed retail management plan that will include annual reviews and reports to the CRA for monitoring the success of the project area in reaching the goals.

The third topic addresses the housing program. The CRA proposes to match the most aggressive affordable housing program currently written in the zoning code (currently 17% for affordable housing and 3% for middle income housing), while keeping the provision that the inclusionary housing percentage in the MXD and KSURP would be superseded by an increase in the inclusionary housing requirements citywide. The CRA proposes to include a minimum requirement for 5% of units with three or more bedrooms. In addition, the Infill Development Concept Plan would include a discussion about housing tenancy and efforts to provide a mixture of units.

A discussion occurred regarding the definition of innovation space and the benefit of having this space in Kendall Square. Mr. Evans noted that the specific characteristics of innovative office space are listed on page 5 of the petition. A newer concept of ground floor retail innovation space can be addressed in special permitting. In response to Ms. Drury, Mr. Evans explained that the CRA must develop a screening and selection process to validate applicants as part of a special permit process of any new development. In response to Ms. Born's question, Mr. Evans stated that the concept of innovation space came out of the K2 plan and is used in other land policies in the City besides the MXD. If a new definition is needed, the use definition would affect all 3 zoning areas – MIT, MXD, and Volpe.

Mr. Crawford is concerned that the definitions might unintentionally provide a way for larger commercial tenants to gain access to space that is geared for smaller independent businesses. In the last round of CRA edits, banking and financial institutions were prohibited from ground floor retail. Activated bank lobbies blur the use category definition. The CRA is proposing a plan without any mandates or prohibitions except for goal setting that goes into the special permit process and also includes an annual update reporting back

to the CRA for monitoring retail in the area. This follows suit with other projects done by Alexandria and MIT. Mr. Evans restated the GFA exemption if 25% of that space is populated by local independent retailers. Mr. Zevin feels that the MXD is the least likely place for a grocery store compared to the Volpe or MIT zoning areas. He added, that retail, like open space, should be considered Kendall wide. Ms. Born said that a retail plan sets a model, even though it's not multi-zoning district wide. She added that the CRA is fortunate to have a national company with deep experience in complex retail design as the designated developer.

The discussion moved to affordable housing. In response to Mr. Crawford, Mr. Evans stated that 17% is the highest percentage found in neighboring zoning language except for MIT which uses 18% but has a density bonus on middle income. Mr. Crawford questioned whether the HR&A analysis confirms that the CRA is pushing the upper level of economic feasibility although the City Council is pushing for more. Mr. Evans confirmed that the CRA is slightly ahead of a city-wide inclusionary process that is looking at these numbers. Ms. Born stated that the percentage will float upwards if the City percentage moves upward. The CRA has not asked HRA to run a 17-3 model. There was a discussion about the inclusionary and affordable numbers of Boston and Somerville. Mr. Evans suggested having more discussions with the City to evolve the requirements.

Ms. Drury wants as many three-bedroom apartments as possible, even if they are market-rate since they will, at least, be part of the structure. Mr. Evans stated that the language mentions accommodating families with children and suggested that creating nearby family-oriented amenities would help families settle into the area. Mr. Evans stated that there is no limit on micro-units. In response to Mr. Crawford, Mr. Evans stated that the housing market will regulate whether there is a need for luxury market units. Ms. Born stated that the changes were in response to the City Council. Except for the affordable housing policies, she doesn't want the CRA to micromanage the housing makeup. Ms. Drury felt strongly about the need for family housing units and the CRA could advocate for half of the 5% to be affordable.

The meeting was opened to public comment.

Mr. John Hawkinson suggested replacing "and/or" with "and" or "or" on the last line of section 1.4.c of Innovation Space. He also emphasized that the City's Economic Department does focus on retail.

Mr. Steve Kaiser did not have any issues with the proposed zoning but requested clarification on the changes to the urban renewal plan. Mr. Evans explained that the 4-page document only contains the most recent of all the changes made to the urban renewal plan. Mr. Kaiser did not think that Mass+Main was a good reference for zoning. Somerville is also not a good precedent. Mr. Kaiser commented on an acoustical issue in the CRA conference room.

Ms. Heather Hoffman mentioned that pushcart vendors are an excellent model of innovation retail space. Another example of models for providing small areas to start up retail businesses are stalls such as those in the Boston Public Market. Ms. Hoffman feels that the size of a building matters and is annoyed when large spaces are not calculated in the GFA (and therefore the FAR) for whatever reasons. Ms. Hoffman also commented on how Boston Properties approaches housing and would like them to act more like Alexandra who have looked at their entire proposed development as a financial whole. The housing

should be the cost of being a decent neighbor. Antisocial thinking should not be rewarded in our zoning since this zoning is the blueprint which relates how we want our city to be. Good open spaces will increase the value of the community although it may not be valuable to the investors. Similarly, good housing makes commercial and retail spaces more attractive to tenants. Mr. Zevin shares the interest to know the true physical representation of all the GSA. Mr. Evans stated that the CRA could look into the form view. Mr. Ben Lavery mentioned that Boston Properties has done some of the work and he offered to share the numbers with the public shortly.

Ms. Born closed the public comment portion of the meeting.

Mr. Evans suggested the motions in the agenda be replaced at this time with a more flexible motion, which would allow Mr. Evans some latitude to make further revisions, if necessary, to the matters discussed this morning. All changes would come before the Board at the regular scheduled meeting on December 16 for final approval.

The Board then discussed the schedules of the CRA Board, the Ordinance Committee and the City Council hearings. They discussed the various versions of the petition and the wording to use for the new motion.

The motion was moved to *authorize the Executive Director to prepare revisions to the Tenth Plan Amendment to the KSURP and changes to Article 14 of the Cambridge Zoning Code with the latitude to make modifications consistent with the principles set forth in the 12.01.15 memorandum. Such revisions shall be brought before the Board at a regularly scheduled meeting for approval.*

The motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Evans noted that the Ordinance meeting is being held on December 3. The December 9 date on the agenda is incorrect.

Adjournment

Ms. Born motioned to adjourn the meeting.

At 9:44a.m., the motion to adjourn carried unanimously.