



Staff Report to the Board *April 15, 2020*

Administration

The CRA office has been working remotely since , with a few incidental visits to the office to process checks, water plants, and pick up equipment. The Link is officially closed but tenants still have building access. Staff managed the transition to home-based offices quite well, having already issued laptops for nearly all staff with remote server access previously established. Meetings with staff, partners and consultants have been conducted on multiple remote platforms. Remote participation has been successfully used for two public forums, the CRA Design Review committee and the East Cambridge Planning Team, before the April “regular” Board meeting.

The CRA has received over 30 applicants for the Project Planner position, and initial screening has identified many qualified candidates. This position will help with the growing workload in Kendall Square and other projects under development. The CRA also seeks to expand its community outreach efforts for all relevant projects, and deepen the staff’s graphic and data technical capacity across many projects.

Forward Calendar

1. Revised Internal Controls
2. Revised Personnel Policy / Employee Handbook
3. City / CRA Workforce Development Report
4. Sweetgreens Signage Proposal
5. Cambridge Trust Investment Report
6. Foundry Term Sheet

Margaret Fuller Neighborhood House

The real estate financing consultants from the joint venture of Traggorth Companies and Stone Soup Collaborative have analyzed a set of potential development budgets for an MFNH program space improvement project.

The budget options were informed by the program needs identified by MFNH and initial massing work done by Studio G Architects, but also by how much income a housing development could generate. The analysis showed clearly viable budget options for the project. The largest income source for the MFNH program space improvement project will be from the housing development on their site, followed by modest amounts of subsidies, perhaps to include state and federal historic tax credits.

The Project Committee, made up of CRA staff, MFNH staff and MFNH Board members, is continuing to refine the project scope. Studio G has developed two significant project options with differing levels of scope for the MFNH program space that the committee will soon review.

When the committee identifies the project scope and budget that appear to meet all project goals, presentations will be made to the MFNH and CRA Boards of Directors.

Foundry

The City has updated cost estimates from WT Rich. The CRA, Cambridge Seven, and the City have been reviewing them and identifying some areas where costs may be reduced. The CRA has met with members of the Foundry Advisory Committee (FAC) and its property management consultants to get specific feedback regarding technical equipment needs for certain elements of the building program. With construction halted, it is unclear what to forecast as the the date for project completion.

The Foundry Consortium Board's Executive Search Subcommittee is now holding regular meetings with Search Consultants, Ann Silverman and Paula Anzer. With the consultants, the Subcommittee outlined a timeline and developed specific plans for all aspects of the search. To date, the Foundry Consortium Board, FAC members and CRA staff have given input about their goals and priorities for the new Executive Director via an online survey. The Subcommittee and the consultants will draw from that data to finalize a job description. Once the job description is finalized the committee will consider what timeline will make sense for the marketing period and start date. The goal is to ensure that the executive director does not start more than 12 months before the Foundry is expected to open.

The CRA will soon sign a contract with Anne Columbia to serve as the broker for the office space in the Foundry. CRA staff have shared a set of lease terms with the Foundry Consortium Board, who will review and vote on them in May. The lease terms will become the basis for the full sublease between the CRA and Foundry Consortium.

KSTEP

On March 23rd, the CRA hosted the Kendall Square Transit Enhancement Program (KSTEP) Quarterly Working Group meeting virtually using Zoom. The meeting consisted of working group members from the CRA, City of Cambridge, the MBTA and MassDOT. The group discussed a funding proposal to conduct research on Kendall Square employee shuttles, submitted by the Volpe National Transportation Systems Center (Volpe) and the Kendall Square Association (KSA) through their Transportation ADVANCE program for \$10,000. The KSA's role through the ADVANCE will collect data on Kendall Square employee shuttle operations, passenger information, and data collection procedures to provide to Volpe for analysis. Volpe will then study opportunities to integrate and/or coordinate shuttles to provide better, faster, more reliable, and more flexible service, that will also be easier and cheaper for companies to operate. The working group provided feedback on the funding proposal, and once updated will vote on the proposal.

Rindge Neighborhood - Vision for Improved Connectivity

Over the last few months, CRA Staff have worked with Gamble Associates to complete site analysis and review existing conditions of Rindge Neighborhood. This area is home to Just a Start's Rindge Tower and future Rindge Commons Development project, and many other residents, most of whom live in affordable housing. Bounded by Alewife Brook Parkway, the North Cambridge Cemetery, the Fitchburg Rail Road and Rindge Avenue, the area is in need of a vision for improved connectivity.

The next step in the project is to engage with local stakeholders, including landowners, residents, and city and state agencies, to refine our understanding of desire lines, and to collaborate on initial concepts. CRA staff are also working with a representative from CoUrbanize to create a community facing website to adapt to our current working and living environment, and collect input virtually



Workforce Development Report

CRA staff have received a final draft of the workforce development report completed by the UMass Donahue Institute. We will be reviewing the report with our partners in the City of Cambridge. The final draft has been updated with a preface to acknowledge how the COVID-19 crisis may affect the issue. The next step will be to coordinate with the City and with UMass to identify the best plan for rolling out the report, including presenting the data to the CRA and City Council.