

**Regular Meeting
Cambridge Redevelopment Authority**

Wednesday, May 21, 2014; 5:30pm
Cambridge Police Station
125 Sixth Street
Community Room

FINAL MEETING MINUTES

Present

Kathleen Born (Chair), Margaret Drury (Vice-Chair), Christopher Bator, Barry Zevin, CRA Executive Director Tom Evans, CRA Strategic Planner Kathryn Madden, CRA interns Chris Colley and Rosabella Alvarez-Calderón, CDD Director of Community Planning Stuart Dash

Audience sign-in sheet/public comment sign-up for entry into record.

Call to Order: Kathleen Born called the meeting to order (5:45).

Public Comment

John Hawkinson

Mr. Hawkinson thanked the board for conducting open design review committee process. It provides opportunity for public to see proposed projects before they become quite final. CRA is moving toward more transparency than before, which is a good thing.

Steve Kaiser

Mr. Kaiser commented that he had hoped to be in position to support the strategic plan but that it becomes more difficult in light of current conditions. He noted that the previous evening's Planning Board discussion of New Street development had not gone well and is concerned that the Planning Board is moving ahead without fully responding to citizen comment. He suggested that citizens trying to work positively through City apparatus might do well to consult lawyers, and that CRA might avoid activity in the Alewife area because neighbors there have had a difficult experience with the Planning Board, which could impact the ability of CRA to be trusted by citizens. Mr. Kaiser also advised CRA to avoid major activity in the Central Square area. One parcel that was identified makes sense because it is boarded up and small, but the K2C2 process never completed a traffic study and is now discussing zoning. He expects CRA will have to stay away from the Courthouse redevelopment because of litigation. Mr. Kaiser had difficulty accessing and using the coUrbanize web site and may need to do communications in writing instead. He further commented that he was pleased to see engagement from Biogen representative and reiterated interest in seeing CRA apply its successful approach in Kendall area elsewhere in Cambridge. He urged CRA to look into Red Line operations and potential improvement, noting a more open stance exhibited by the current state secretary of transportation.

Public comment closed.

Acceptance of minutes:

Motion: *To approve the minutes of most recent regularly scheduled meeting of the Cambridge Redevelopment Authority (CRA) on April 16, 2014*

Vote: *Approved. All in favor.*

Communications

The Chair noted items in the packet: a letter of support from the East Cambridge Planning Team and Stephen Kaiser email regarding CRA strategic plan.

Motion: *To place on file*

Vote: *Approved. All in favor.*

Design Review Update on Ames Street Residential Project

Mr. Evans reported on the meeting held immediately prior, which was part of a pilot effort to have open Design Review Committee discussions on major projects. The Ames Street residential project has been discussed by the board a number of times, but this was the first time the committee saw a whole-building presentation with a more detailed discussion of design process. The presentation included ground floor treatment and skyline view. The Design Review Committee response was positive, acknowledging the building's residential flavor and the opportunity to make a new, contemporary mark on the Kendall Square streetscape & skyline.

The retail component, and how it will be impacted by the eventual occupant, is still under discussion. The group had some discussion of materials and how the base level façade would relate to the tower. The process is moving along pretty well and they anticipate a complete design presentation (including wind, shadow study) to full board at the next meeting.

Ms. Born commented that it has been heartening to be part of this process, which is a model for what should be done in the city. Mr. Evans noted the design team's skill in breaking the building's mass and in considering the view of the building from different perspectives. Mr. Zevin commented that it has been a serious and rational design review process, and refreshing in the sense that it doesn't always happen that way.

Biogen Idec Sign

Ms. Born noted a difference between material in the board packet and material distributed on line, in that the sign was reduced in size. Biogen's representative confirmed that the sign was 20% smaller than originally proposed and that the need for the sign driven was driven by the operational necessity to identify their manufacturing facility. The proposed sign is consistent with Biogen's other signs on Broadway, and it is set back on Binney Street but is sufficiently visible to announce to drivers that deliveries are to be made there. The group discussed the actual address of the location and changes to the numbering scheme that will more accurately connect to street addresses.

Motion: *To approve the design and installation of the proposed new Facility Identification Sign for Biogen Idec*

Vote: *Approved. All in favor.*

Report of the Executive Director

Mr. Evans walked the board through his monthly report, noting contracting and staffing activity to build staff capacity to move forward as part of strategic planning initiative. He is recommending a real estate consultant based on RFP response and interviews, and has signed an agreement with Ellen Shore to take on the office management position. The Kendall Square Association (KSA) has moved to a new location in the Genzyme Building that will provide street visibility. CRA will continue to collaborate closely with KSA.

Staff will follow the 30B process to look into more long term office space for CRA. The parameters of the RFP will define where they end up going—it's necessary to consider whether it is vital to stay in the Urban Renewal Plan area. There is a cost to it, but CRA is still actively managing projects in that area. Because of the expense, the board would have to be behind the idea of staying in the area.

The internal control policy has been revised since last month & sent to auditors for feedback. Staff will meet with the Treasurer to review before bringing to board next month for adoption in time for the new office manager to do bookkeeping. Fieldwork for the 2013 audit will begin mid-summer and it is important to adopt internal control policy before the audit is underway to demonstrate CRA's response to their recommendations. The procurement policy will soon come before the board.

There is now increased transparency in the design review process and they will make sure to follow open meeting law. The first open review meeting was held immediately before this meeting, but the best time slot moving forward is still to be determined.

Look at the forward calendar for the board, keep in mind summer plans; there is a fair amount of business coming forward in June but July and August may be more flexible. A working draft of the strategic plan has been circulated. The Foundry project has been busy with meetings with City staff to look at governance, logistics, programs, and outreach to the community. A public meeting will be held in June at the Cambridge Multicultural Arts Center.

Regarding the outdoor advertising hearing for the proposed electronic billboard, Mr. Evans reported that they intended to address statements of fact regarding the proximity of the billboard to open space uses. He further noted that no one has studied the impact of these types of billboards in urban settings (a concern of the City's Traffic, Parking & Transportation department). Clear Channel withdrew their application at the hearing and there was no testimony. The billboard, which has a long permit period, will remain as is for now.

There have been generally positive discussions with the MIT Coop regarding plans for both the store and food court area. They will come before the board next month, and hope to reorganize the store, open up at least one more Main Street entrance, and possibly create event/community space in the basement. They would prefer to establish a master lease with a food retailer that has more expertise with that specialty, as book operations are handled by Barnes & Noble. They hope to complete work by the fall semester, but have not yet finalized design or begun permitting process. Mr. Evans reported that he has asked them to look at pedestrian circulation, which has been

blocked by the food court closure, pushing all traffic through the Marriott lobby. A short term solution may be possible. Signage is currently outdated.

Board members discussed design possibilities, such as access to the new arcade area, and logistics related operating hours and locking of doors. Mr. Evans noted that there is no easement through the food court space—it is a straight lease with Boston Properties. Board members expressed interest in widening the window of pedestrian access through the space. Mr. Evans noted that the foot traffic and interest in MIT-themed merchandise has been beneficial for the Coop, which has, in turn, been actively assisting with general information and directions.

The Main Street project bids were opened and construction is planned to start in a month. The farmer market was moved to the plaza, which seems to be working very well. The plaza concert series has started and it is the first instance of branding the Kendall Center. There is still a need to discuss rooftop programming more thoroughly with Boston Properties.

Mr. Evans reported that the ribbon cutting for Broad Institute has occurred that morning to coincide with Broad's 10-year anniversary. They are still finishing public improvements for CRA. The celebration for 17 Cambridge Center/300 Binney is scheduled for the following week. There was a ribbon cutting for steam connection from the Vinolia plant in Kendall to the steam system in Boston, an interesting symbolic connection for both cities involving conversation about moving steam back & forth ("green steam"). Cambridge's plant is cogeneration (combined heat & power)—the thinking in terms of that plant & district energy systems is very much in line with sustainability thinking.

Mr. Evans updated the board on the Kendall Ecodistrict, which is looking to hire a project manager and consultant for a district energy study. Many details are still to be determined regarding governance and operation of ecodistrict, including relationship to KSA and potential plans for business improvement district. Mr. Evans also updated the board regarding work with the Community Compact for a Sustainable Future, a citywide sustainability initiative. CRA has been asked to take a board seat on the steering committee. The Compact focuses on sustainability leadership and collaboration, and includes nongovernmental entities and major landholders and employers. Discussions have been centered around energy and waste, looking at voluntary initiatives and sharing of best practices. Governance issues have been the initial priority.

Mr. Bator asked about the CRA contribution component, and Mr. Evans explained that the expectation is that corporate entities will provide larger financial contributions than government and nonprofit entities. The Compact structure brings key players together to collaboratively innovate on sustainability issues (e.g. how can labs be more energy efficient), thereby strengthening Cambridge's desirability. Ms. Drury asked about the Compact's relationship to the City's climate vulnerability assessment and other related work and what it would mean in terms of infrastructure for resilience. Mr. Evans explained that the structure was still being formed and implementation of measures still to be determined.

Mr. Evans reported the theft of the solid metal access panel to the Octahedron sculpture owned by CRA and stored on its property at "Little Binney" and Galileo Galilei Way; a police report was

submitted and the opening has been secured to prevent further damage. Staff is researching information related to the past and future of the sculpture.

Expenditures Report for April 2014

Mr. Evans noted the intention to provide a brief monthly financial update and a quarterly recalibration with the budget. Professional services/legal fees, which had gone from a high to lower level, are starting to increase due to project-related activity (as opposed to administrative issues). Discussion of assigning costs to specific programs and projects. Mr. Evans reported forward progress with internal controls and noted that the regular balance sheet is not yet ready for presentation because they are still integrating interest related to CDs into the new financial system.

Professional Services Contract for Real Estate Consulting Services

Mr. Evans reported that the RFP for services was issued in March and proposals received in April. Responses were received from seven firms, of which three were interviewed by the selection committee (Attorney Mullan, Kathy Spiegelman, Mr. Evans). HR&A Advisors emerged as the recommended choice; while not a local firm, they are in a position to bring ideas from outside the Commonwealth that will be helpful in thinking about complex issues like the Foundry. They have been involved with two similar projects and their national expertise will be helpful. The team presented an interesting array of projects, demonstrating the firm's ability to work with complexity and creative financial transactions, and to move projects from concept to completion. The team focused on a New York area project that was financially complex, showing a tool that demonstrated financial impacts of various project decisions to analyze feasibility. The proposed principal-in-charge has depth of experience with retail and the creation of lively destination areas. The selection committee felt strongly about this proposal. Ms. Born asked about compensation for Ms. Spiegelman's services and Mr. Evans explained basis for determining her rate.

Motion: Authorizing the Chair and the Executive Director to enter into a professional services contract for real estate consulting services for an amount not to exceed \$60,000

Vote: Approved. All in favor.

Discussion: Community Fund Proposal

Mr. Colley updated board members on evolution of the fund proposal since its initial presentation in February. The proposal, as it has developed, would entail a three-pronged program of capacity grants, capital grants, and low-interest loans. Information gleaned from supporting research was distributed to the group. Mr. Colley noted the operational distinctions between grants and loans, with loans being more sustainable but more costly and complex to administer. Different models for structuring loan programs and achieving loan management capacity were discussed.

Mr. Evans noted the fundamental principles for use of the fund: there should be a public benefit to investment a form of physical improvement, with further parameters to be determined. Mr. Bator asked about solicitation of funding requests and Mr. Evans explained initial thoughts regarding public advertisement and making connections with existing projects seeking funding streams, such as filling "gaps" for public art or façade renovation. The method of marketing will largely determine

what requests come in. The group discussed the set-up process for the fund, development of evaluation criteria, and the timing and feasibility of implementation.

Ms. Drury suggested a phase-in scenario. Mr. Bator was concerned that CRA not cut off creative ideas before achieving full administrative capacity for the Fund. Ms. Born suggested that they focus initially on grants complementary to those already being made, thereby piggybacking on other organizations overseeing funding. Discussion of project fit with CRA mission, potential scenarios, geographic service areas, and currently-known projects seeking funding. Ms. Born noted that CRA's Fund activity could lead to larger partnerships in administering community benefit funds. General discussion with audience members, including potential funding of housing retrofits for seniors and universal design.

Mr. Colley noted that the funding application would set up the proposed approach to executing project. Mr. Evans advanced the concept of being a funder of funders, and the possibility of working with an appropriate nonprofit manager of the fund if banks are unwilling to partner. CRA may have to write a scope and put out RFP for services; if costs are within the threshold, it could be done on a pilot basis. Mr. Evans pointed out options for execution and award decisions. CRA could screen applications and someone else could administer money, depending on board preference regarding issues of control.

Mr. Bator raised the question of priorities and considering situations where needs are not being served by existing organizations. Ms. Madden shared her experience working with the Watertown Community Foundation's distribution of small grants, distributed through nonprofits, with selection done by community volunteers. She gave examples of projects selected, pointing out the importance of ensuring that funds are handled by a financially responsible entity and not a private individual. She recommended starting small to test the process.

Board members further discussed start-up parameters, timing, initial dollar commitment, community outreach, and potential partners and projects. The consensus was to continue conversations and development work necessary to advance a pilot initiative.

Discussion: Draft CRA Strategic Plan

Ms. Madden distributed a one-page strategic planning summary. Board members commented positively on the quality of the document, and Ms. Madden noted the careful work with staff in crafting a framework for the organization to move forward.

Mr. Evans reviewed progress of community outreach and Ms. Born noted the importance of connecting with neighborhood groups over the coming weeks, with the goal of accepting the strategic plan at the July board meeting.

Ms. Madden walked the board through a review and update of strategic planning work, beginning with internal operations and role, through learning and measurement of progress. She expressed the hope that this will be used as a reference document that can be used as a checklist to evaluate

progress. Board members commented on roles, goals, presentation (text and visuals), and possible additions for the final document.

Mr. Williamson (audience) encouraged CRA to use multiple methods of communication to make the public aware of the strategic planning process, and Ms. Born noted the board's ongoing interest in broadening outreach.

Discussion: Parcel Six Interim Use Plan

Mr. Colley presented the board with a proposed concept for interim use of Parcel 6 at the corner of Third and Binney streets, adjacent to the Volpe site. Staff have evaluated various temporary uses (3-5 year window) for this parcel and have arrived at this recommendation of a storage container marketplace. Mr. Colley provided successful examples of this use on a variety of urban sites, creating low cost commercial space and activating/beautifying the designated area. He provided a general sense of initial startup costs and steps necessary for implementation (including market management), and provided a list of questions for board consideration in order to inform next steps.

Discussion included the possibility of partnering with Kendall Square Association or others. Attendees commented in favor of this use as a community development and community building tool—a potential generator of jobs for members of the community and a more flexible option for vendors who might prefer short-term venue.

Mr. Evans emphasized that CRA would not make money and this use will require some up front infrastructure investment (5 digit figure likely). Ms. Born asked staff to report back to the board with more detail on operating costs, including water and electricity. Mr. Evans noted that initial discussions with City staff were positive regarding this use and that staff will draft a scope of services for market management and examine possibilities for winter use of the site as well as “off-grid” potential for market operation.

Motion: To adjourn (8:41)

Vote: Approved. All in favor.

Next Meeting:

- June 18, 2014 at the Cambridge Police Station 1st Floor Community Room

Respectfully submitted: Peggy Kutcher, City of Cambridge Community Development Department