

**Regular Meeting
Cambridge Redevelopment Authority**

Wednesday, October 16, 2013; 5:30pm
Cambridge Police Station
125 Sixth Street
Community Room

DRAFT MEETING MINUTES

Present

Kathleen Born (Chair), Margaret Drury (Vice-Chair), Christopher Bator, Conrad Crawford, Barry Zevin Executive Redevelopment Officer Tom Evans, Counsel Jeffrey Mullan, CRA Planning Consultant Kathryn Madden, CRA Design Consultant Charles Redmon, Assistant City Manager for Community Development Brian P. Murphy, David Stewart for Boston Properties (Ames Street project)

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

Call to Order: Kathleen Born, called the meeting to order (5:35).

Public Comment

There being no public comment, Ms. Born noted that comments from Heather Hoffman, who was unable to attend the meeting, were available on the table for attendees to review. Written materials related to comments entered into record.

Acceptance of minutes:

Motion: To approve the minutes of most recent regularly scheduled meeting of the Authority on September 18, 2013

Vote: Approved. All in favor.

Communications

- Letter from Carol O'Hare of 9/28 regarding several issues
- Letter from Heather Hoffman

Motion: To place communications on file.

Vote: Approved. All in favor.

Report of the Executive Redevelopment Officer

Mr. Evans reported that CRA's first intern Chris Colley is now on board; he is studying at Harvard Graduate School of Design (policy/real estate development/urban planning) and will work approximately 15 hours a week for 6 months. In the process of preparing the office for his arrival, records were sent to Iron Mountain for storage. His project work will include documentation of

Cambridge Center, consolidating available information, and exploration of options for the lot at Third and Binney for potential development of an RFP.

Board discussion of opportunities for interns to assist with CRA projects and operations.

Mr. Evans also reported on progress with respect to CRA historical/archival work and the possibility of an intern to help with that activity. He also described work around marketing and identity for CRA, including website development, thanking CDD for hosting CRA on its web site for this interim period and for staff assistance with posting CRA material. A preliminary version of new CRA site was displayed, illustrating work in progress.

The chair observed the need to correct term listing for the vice chair to reflect 5 year term.

Discussion of opportunities to leverage other activities via internet/social media and link to other topical information. Mr. Evans noted the desire to be present on City web site but also to have new CRA site be first thing to show up in Google search.

Attorney Mullan noted the reciprocal need to tie the new CRA site back to easily link to the City web site.

With respect to archival records, Mr. Evans reported that they have been pulling material from Iron Mountain to obtain specific details regarding project activity such as Harwell Homes development and the filling in of the canal. The ability to access information on ongoing basis is important.

Finance committee met in September regarding action items to implement by fiscal year-end in order to correct management letter issues from audit. This includes looking at positions to fill and contracting services in accordance with prescribed procedures, as well as items related to procurement, financial policy and banking.

Mr. Bator (Treasurer) remarked that he and Mr. Crawford have been pleased with this progress, which demonstrates that CRA is moving quickly and aggressively to resolve audit issues and strengthen operations.

Mr. Crawford noted that much work has already been done to address issues, although the report's list includes everything in detail

Mr. Bator pointed out the goal to have Mr. Evans and Ms. Madden working on substantive matters, rather than administrative detail.

Mr. Evans directed members to the forward calendar to track future agenda items, noting that the November meeting will be held at MIT and other meetings at the Police Station until otherwise noted. He also reported that the childcare center and playground are open at 17 Cambridge Center. The roof deck is also open, but visitation is low.

Motion: *To place the Executive Redevelopment Officer report on file.*

Vote: *Approved. All in favor.*

Trial Balance; CD Schedule/All Cash and Cash Flow

Mr. Evans reported that spending continues at about 150,000 below budget forecast (referring to supporting documents). CRA continues to move toward larger surplus because forecast predicted larger spending. He will recommend taking on some small property projects. Regarding CD & cash schedule, Mr. Evans has been working with CDD staff to reconcile and properly report interest payments. He suggested that CRA may want to look at other appropriate investment strategies given low interest rates.

Motion: *To place reports on file.*

Vote: *Approved. All in favor.*

Strategic Planning Discussion

Ms. Madden walked board members through the planning documents, discussing strategic issues as they relate to setting objectives. Discussion of mission and its component parts, as well as vision and operating principles. Also discussed strategy framework categories and related objectives, measures, targets and initiatives, suggesting that committee structure may be appropriate to set targets.

Attorney Mullan noted the importance of terminology and to think of the full range of people who have a stake in the outcome of CRA activity.

Additional discussion of layout of financial objectives, internal process objectives, staffing and workflow, learning and growth, and community outreach.

Ms. Madden reviewed the timeline for strategic planning process, noting that the community meeting would likely be held in early January.

Mr. Redmon noted that information on redevelopment activity in other communities may be helpful to show things people might not have thought about.

Attorney Mullan observed that a great strengths of CRA is its financial resources, and that there is opportunity to leverage in order to do more good in the city, perhaps providing assistance to associations to do things where there may be a resource gaps. Financial management and sustainability are critical. Example provided of Philadelphia Redevelopment Authority Arts program in making substantial impact.

Mr. Bator reiterated the need for revenue stream to do work in community and looked forward to having a menu of projects for board consideration.

Mr. Evans pointed out examples where community groups apply for funds based on RFP process and use funding to leverage other needed resources, so that fairly limited redevelopment authority funding achieves significant results.

Mr. Murphy encouraged CRA to work through the City, noting exceptions for filling gaps such as programming open space and grants for activities such as block parties.

Mr. Evans cautioned that places without capacity may need investment the most, resulting in a public responsibility to look at areas that may not have as many community resources for potential activity.

Mr. Murphy reported that the Community Development Department is now looking closely at demographic data to examine instances of poverty in Cambridge despite resources that have been directed to address. There is opportunity to develop innovative pilot projects for specific interventions. Mr. Bator noted the role that public money has in problem solving.

Mr. Evans explained the need for Ms. Madden's services during extended community outreach and launch of initial programs, thru February 2014.

Motion: *To authorize the Executive Redevelopment Officer to extend the employment contract for Kathryn Madden for four months in order to conduct additional community outreach and planning.*

Vote: *Approved. All in favor.*

Discussion: Ames Street Housing Financial Considerations

Mr. Evans provided context for discussion with chair noting that Madeline Timmons, legal counsel for Boston Properties, has joined the meeting for this item. Mr. Evans introduced Mr. Murphy for a description of the Ames Street parcel disposition process and project background so that the board can discuss issues related to the parcel's financial viability.

Mr. Murphy reported that the related zoning has been filed and provided the following key progress points:

October 9: RFP advertised for land disposition (specifically for housing)

Friday, November 8 at 10 a.m. opening of proposals

Community meetings have been scheduled to discuss criteria/parameters, etc. & overview of RFP. The first community meeting on land disposition on 10/23 at Police Station at 6pm.

Nov 12 - community meeting on land disposition; 7pm hearing on zoning.

Nov 19 - City Manager report on disposition

December 16 or 23 - vote on land disposition & Zoning.

Petition expires January 20 - want to tie up by calendar year end. Tight timetable; much action in next several weeks. The City is very excited about getting housing on Ames St; it has been a priority of the Council for quite some time, and it ties to K2 goals of enhancing the urban environment.

In response to the chair's question about what CRA can do to be helpful in terms of presence and advocacy, Mr. Murphy noted that the Ames Street project ties in with CRA priority to advance housing, in line with City Council goal. There are different approaches to valuing property in this process. From the City's perspective, the Ames Street housing would enhance the MXD and take the site to a new place in terms of how the street works in the environment (more pedestrian scale; mixed use that is desirable).

Ms. Born expressed the desire for conversations regarding CRA's role in a successful project and readiness to work with the City. She was also interested in the response to criticism suggesting that it was obvious that housing could not have been built on this site without rezoning. Mr. Murphy reiterated the positive impact of a successful housing project, noting that it is appropriate to rezone to achieve community goals.

The board discussed additional aspects of the project and accompanying street reconstruction, requesting that Mr. Evans monitor important dates and communicate back to board

Mr. Stewart then addressed the board regarding the project from Boston Properties perspective, reminding members of specific details to achieve the creation of new residential units and affordable units within the project (200,000 sf residential - about 240-250 units with 30-32 affordable units based on current projection & mix). Micro-units are possible as a way to increase unit count. Roughly 9,000 ft of retail well help activate the street and create good pedestrian environment.

Boston Properties will start design after zoning and land disposition approved, then go through design review. Could start construction as early as fall 2014 (22-24 month process) and deliver units in summer of 2016. Boston Properties aims to deliver units at best time for lease-up. Mr. Stewart reminded the board of the benefits of housing on this site. The plan could also provide a completely new street between Main and Broadway and tie into newly completed work. The project would increase retail and provide a connection from Third to Main. Real estate property taxes would generate approximately \$500,000 a year; the project would provide a good package of benefits for area.

However, when Boston Properties looked more closely at costs (everything required to get ready to build), infrastructure costs had risen to a point beyond what a multifamily urban high-rise can afford to carry. Project costs are tied to CRA in two areas (development rights and street infrastructure), and Boston Properties is asking CRA to contribute \$1 million to close the financial gap to make this project feasible to develop as planned. Because the RFP must be submitted by November 8, they would like a term sheet for cooperative agreement in place by November 7—there can be no contingencies on the bid or it will be rejected by the City.

Mr. Evans noted technical correction necessary in urban renewal plan to allow proposed nonresidential development.

Mr. Bator commented on the desire to see wonderful architectural statement and Mr. Stewart responded that Boston Properties has engaged an architect that will bring something new to the area; BP prefers not to spend money in places where people can't see its impact. Additional discussion/questions regarding connections, bicycle facilities, and details/design goals for the project.

Ms. Born noted that the Boston Properties request for CRA cooperation offers the potential to make CRA more of a stakeholder with the ability to help shape various elements of the project and achieve broad urban design goals.

Mr. Crawford cautioned the group to look closely at the housing and consider who will be living in the development, as well as its impact on the real estate market and broader community.

Attorney Mullan observed that while there is as yet no specific design, Boston Properties has determined a price point; he asked if BP would in a position to guarantee delivery of the project and assume risk for costs above the million requested of CRA. Mr. Stewart replied in the affirmative, noting that if they can lower street infrastructure costs, the gap (and thus the financial request from CRA) would be less; the request is capped at a million.

In response to the chair's question regarding determination of infrastructure costs Mr. Stewart replied that Boston Properties would be willing (if CRA contribution is directed to street) to share information regarding all costs of the street. Additional discussion of street improvement costs and comparative work.

The board thanked Mr. Stewart for his presentation.

Infrastructure updates (One Cambridge Center):

Mr. Evans reported that work continues on Main Street streetscape design and exploration of the restaurant proposal including discussion with Boston Properties and Cambridge DPW regarding appropriate location. There have also been initial conversations with the MBTA regarding headhouse signage and navigation to the secondary T entrance, as well as resolution of issues related to the proposed Microsoft blade sign, which was perceived as competing for visual space on that corner.

Short discussion of issues and potential solutions related to the blade sign.

Motion: To table the matter of the blade sign, pending additional work to resolve.

Vote: Approved. All in favor.

Kendall Square Open Space Report

Mr. Crawford reported fruitful conversation with committee members to connect their work to CRA's work, and noted that getting more input from the community would help them make the kind of tactical interventions discussed in strategic planning. A walk of the area has been scheduled to discuss issues. This process is a great opportunity for CRA to cultivate connections and attract more people to its meetings.

Mr. Evans updated the board regarding CRA parcels. CDD staff have taken on Grand Junction rail/trail as a major project but are interested in getting an early part of it moving forward. They have looked at CRA sections and options to proceed with initial technical work. They are also looking at the connection to Somerville and design of the Green Line Extension as it relates to pathway connection.

Mr. Evans reported additional work for Greenscape: a dead tree on Sixth Street and interim improvements to tot lot site to make gazebo accessible complete limited park work in the form of low-grade paving and stair work.

Mr. Evans recommended extending the contract Fay Spofford Thorndike for the traffic report in order to tie up twenty year data set and write conclusive study. This work would also include a look at prior work done related to the pathway and an assessment of what it would take to get the path to next step.

Attorney Mullan commented on the vision and potential of the rail/trail project, and the opportunity it provides to make incremental progress toward larger CRA objectives, noting the value of spending quality time on this effort.

Motion: *To authorize the Executive Redevelopment Officer to amend the landscaping contract with Greenscape Landscape Design to provide for an additional \$10,000 of work including tree removal and interim improvements to the former Tot Lot site.*

Vote: *Approved. All in favor.*

Motion: *To authorize the Executive Redevelopment Officer to extend the Engineering Contract with Fay, Spofford, and Thorndike for one-year to complete the 2014 Annual Traffic Count, prepare a 20-year longitudinal report on Kendall Square and to update Grand Junction Trail proposal.*

Vote: *Approved. All in favor.*

Motion: *To adjourn the regular meeting and enter into executive session for the purpose of considering the Ames Street project.*

On Roll Call Vote: *Approved. All in favor.*