Call

The meeting was called to order at 5:42 p.m.

CRA Chair Ms. Kathleen Born introduced herself and other CRA Board members and CRA staff. CRA Assistant Treasurer Mr. Conrad Crawford was absent.

Public Comment

Mr. Stephen Kaiser – Mr. Kaiser commented on the numerous articles in the papers and was puzzled by the article on Kendall Square article, which focused on traffic without any mention of the transit potential in the area. He attended the MEPA scoping meeting last Thursday, along with representatives from organizations including the CRA, Boston Properties and MIT, which was pleasantly uncontentious and constructive. The MEPA process will be helpful to the CRA Board and with only a single EIR required, he believes the basic document only needs an added section on transit. He was pleased to learn of MIT’s involvement in a substantial and thorough peak-hour pedestrian count but feels that more transit capacity analysis is needed. He is hopeful for Volpe’s involvement. He is encouraged by the current collaboration in Cambridge. On another subject, Mr. Kaiser asked for an explanation of how Amendment #10 will affect the CRA income in the monthly financial. Mr. Evans said that he would address this question in Executive Director’s report.

There was a unanimous agreement to close Public Comment.

Minutes

1. Motion: To accept the minutes of the Regular Meeting of the CRA Board on April 15, 2015

   There were no comments and the minutes were unanimously approved and will be placed on file.

Communications

2. April 17, 2015 Letter To David Mohler of MassDOT regarding the Grand Junction Path
Mr. Evans stated that this letter to MassDOT emphasizes that although we are moving forward on a path concept on CRA property, the CRA is supportive of future transit capacity and a multiuse corridor.

The letter will be placed on file.

Reports, Motions, and Discussion Items

3. Report: Monthly Report to the Board of the Executive Director

As the semester ended, two interns have completed their work at the CRA. A new intern Aline Reynolds will be starting in June for the summer. We continue planning our office space revamping and furnishings with the goal of being able to host larger meetings in the office. We are getting a reliable internet line installed because the current bandwidth is insufficient for our workplace.

As we look forward in the calendar, there are potentially two meetings in June. One will be for the Foundry and the other will be heavy focused on Kendall Square work. We also plan to bring to the Board some finalized design work for the Ames Street project and the award of a contract on the Grand Junction project.

On May 14, we had our public scoping meeting with VHB and Boston. There continues to be a lot of ‘back and forth’ with MEPA since their analyst is new to the project and it’s quite unusual to have an old EIR with continuous MEPA updates over time. We expect some comments from the City and, possibly, the Charles River Watershed Association. The discussions related to open space programming include infrastructure for the area especially storm water, and the possibility of having the CRA play a broader role in soft programming of the open space outside the MXD District. The Pork Chop area definitely needs to be activated which would also create a link to the nearby areas. There’s been an ongoing process with the property owners and the KSA regarding the wayfinding kiosks and their locations. We hope to bring a design concept and their outing to the Board soon. Some way-finding signs are already in place in Tech Square and along Binney.

The Grand Junction is focusing on coordination with the MBTA. We are hoping to go out to bid in next couple of months followed by construction in late summer or early fall. Depending on timing, plantings may need to wait until the following spring. DPW has taken an active role helping us get to a bid package. Continued construction management oversight by Halverson might be required depending on who is awarded the low bid. There’s a lot of coordination with DPW on the Ames Street Residences to deal with the major design challenge of moving the complex infrastructure while maintaining current service to the surrounding area. The Green Garage work is in process but this is a separate project. Main Street is also undergoing construction. The goal is to be done by September. On the multi-managed Sixth Street Walkway (Boston Properties does snow removal, the City does Trash removal, and the CRA does repairs), we want to repair the current benches. The City is piloting ten or so solar-charging, industry-sponsored benches and we are also working with Biogen to install some of them on that Walkway. Installing WiFi on Sixth Street is being investigated.

The report will be placed on file.
4. Report: Monthly Financial Update

Looking at the charts in the financial report of the first four months of the year, Mr. Evans stated that our expense budget is on track. About one third of most budgeted expenses were spent in the first third of the year. As mentioned in the past, the CRA income this year depends on when the permit is pulled for the Ames Street’s retail component. To answer Mr. Kaiser’s question that was asked during Public Comment, the income relative to the additional one million square feet is somewhat negotiated by development agreements but it would be an 8-digit number for the CRA, if approved. A majority of our personnel costs were due to the work involved with the KSURP, Foundry and Grand Junction. Some small shifts of a few items in our budget might be needed in our mid-year budget analysis. There seems to be a growing responsibility with the Eco-District. Our lawyer fees are growing but these costs are helping to increase our revenue. As Mr. Crawford had addressed in a past meeting, we should re-evaluate the budget item for outreach.

The report will be placed on file.

5. Report: Forward Fund Results Report:

To “unveil” the grantees, Mr. Zogg distributed the report at the meeting rather than including them in the packet. The CRA Board was not involved in the decision process of awarding the grants. There was an impartial jury making the selection. The first few pages of the report are not new to the Board and have been on the CRA website. Page 4 lists the selection committee members which shows the wide cross-section of various departments in the City that could be involved in the projects selected – Public Works, the Cambridge Arts Council, Inspectional Services, the Housing Authority, the Kids Council, Recreation Department, Economic Development, CDD, and Mr. Zogg. There were 18 proposals and the committee selected 7 projects, granting almost $40K in Capital Grants and/or Planning & Design Grants. The map in the report shows the location of the projects. Mr. Zogg has met with each grantee – Community Arts Center, Margaret Fuller Neighborhood House, Area 4 Neighborhood Group, EMW Bookstore, Green Cambridge Inc., Friends of the Grand Junction Path/Livable Streets Alliance/Working with Toole Design, and Just-A-Start Corporation. The document explains the projects in more detail, including their implementation schedules. This document will be placed on the website. The wording on the contract is being finalized with our lawyer and we will then get signatures of the project’s representatives. The contract specifies a mid-course review with outcome reporting to be included in the CRA annual report. We asked them to incorporate the CRA logo into their project to acknowledge us. The Board was very pleased. Mr. Bator suggested a press release or some kind of ceremony. Mr. Evans noted that the committee provided good feedback regarding the evolution of this pilot project which will be used for future rounds.

The report will be placed on file.

6. Update: Foundry Demonstration Project

Ms. Madden provided an update on the Foundry. At a public hearing on May 4, the City Council voted to dispose of the Foundry as a long-term leasehold to the CRA, including a diminution of some
of the requirements for the disposition. The City Council also voted to approve the Demonstration Project Plan and to allocate $6 million for capital improvements to the building. The CRA staff and City staff are now in the process of negotiating a lease. The lease terms, which were attached to the Disposition Report, are already in place, so much of the work has been done. We are putting legal language around those lease terms while concurrently writing the draft of the developer Request for Qualifications (RFQ). When the City Manager approves the lease, it will come before the CRA Board. Depending on the timing, the CRA vote could occur at the June 24th Board Meeting. The City DPW is in the process of hiring a contractor to remove the interior partitions, many of which have been damaged by water; we are waiting to hear the specific schedule for this but anticipate that it will be done this summer. The CRA had input into the demolition scope with the intent of opening up the building floor plan to show its possibilities. The contractor will test for any incidental materials that need to be remediated, such as window caulking or asbestos, and will also prepare a set of as-built plans. We plan to hold a pre-bid event for interested real estate developers, operators, and potential tenants. Ms. Madden distributed an announcement, which is seeking members for the seven-member Advisory Committee, which the City just posted. The governing documents for the Advisory Committee are the Demonstration Plan. Mr. Evans added that we are seeking members now but the actually legal document that forms a committee is the lease. We hope to have the RFQ out by the end of June or early July, submittals by mid-August, and then select the short list during September. The Request for Proposal (RFP) process would occur in the fall with the intention of selecting a Development Entity by early 2016.

7. Discussion: CRA Re-Branding and Logo Proposal

Mr. Paul Hornschemeier from Ambit presented the logo, which he modified using comments he received at last month’s Board meeting. As requested, he made the logo look more like a C, thinned the C and worked with the hash-lines. Mr. Hornschemeier handed out the booklet that explains the story of the logo. The Board felt that it required more tweaking. There was much discussion and suggestions offered. Mr. Evans noted that the logo would be nice to have for the Foundry RFQ. Mr. Zogg added that a new letterhead, business cards, etc. are waiting for the logo to be approved. In the interest of time, two Board members will work with CRA staff and Mr. Hornshemeier to refine the logo to make the “C “stronger”. Mr. Hornshemeier will send some revisions to Mr. Zogg for distribution beforehand.

8. Update: Ames Street Residences

Mr. Ben Lavery stated that the Planning Board approved the project just less than two months ago. The Planning Board design requires that you take things through a Schematic Design (SD) level although Mr. Lavery feels that the exterior building envelope and ground floor are beyond the SD level. Boston Properties is working on the Design Development (DD) drawings. A local architect company, Ad Inc., who was taken over by Stantec, has been added as an architect of record. FX Fowle is still involved. The design development process usually takes four months and Mr. Lavery expects the development design to be ready for CRA Board review in September. The civil engineer VHB has been working on the utility design portion of the project which includes coordinating the relocation of gas and electrical lines, a transformer, 3 gas mains as well as a significant sewer. The intent is to start the utility work in September and proceed until the weather gets bad. We should be able to start the building in earnest in the first quarter of 2016 but the demolition would start in
February. The loading dock needs to be temporarily placed on Pioneer Way while the utility work is being done so Pioneer Way will be the last part of the project to come on-line. Boston Properties has had conversations with retailers for a pharmacy and a grocery store but retailers don’t want to commit until the project is more advanced in time. Mr. Lavery stated that there might be the need for flexibility on the second floor but it wouldn’t change the design of the building. Ms. Born emphasized that the CRA Board likes the renderings they were shown and wouldn’t want the additional architect to jeopardize them. Mr. Lavery stated that the bike facility design would be part of the DD package. Mr. Lavery agreed to investigate pedestrian circulation through the garage that might be stressed as a result of the Ames Street project. Mr. Evans added that the pedestrian traffic would change when the Coop reopens.

9. Update: Kendall Square Urban Renewal Plan
   b. Implementation Plan Framework

Mr. Evans stated that the MEPA document is currently out and public comments are allowed until Friday. A week later we should get some scope direction from MEPA. The MEPA document has helped inform some of the implementation plan framework. Since the March workshop where the last version of the KSURP Amendment was distributed, we received comments from Foley Hoag, Whitehead, several CRA Board members, Boston Properties, and the City. Looking at the table of contents, areas of potential changes are highlighted. The first line that was changed is in the introduction which reemphasizing the historic language has been modified or removed. The first policy change is in the fifth objective on page 2 where we added multi-family housing rather than just mixed-use. Mr. Zevin noted a duplication of the word housing, which Mr. Evans will remove. The next change relates to the definition of GFA and what counts against commercial GFA. On page 9, language was added to allow an exemption for GFA of space that is being credited as open space. This relates to public space and the winter garden concept. The Google lobby, for example, is not counted against the GFA but is treated as public space, not as commercial space. We want to make sure that all these types of spaces function as public space. Mr. Zevin requested that the wording on page 9 with regards to roofed/unroofed and enclosed/unenclosed balconies be made consistent in the two paragraphs in Section 305(a). Mr. Zevin questioned the document’s notion of open space just as a place where people can sit with greenery. He feels it should be an area that can be seen from the inside and from the outside. The winter garden is an active public space but it doesn’t meet the second objective. Mr. Zogg added that feedback from the Connect Kendall Square competition meetings stressed quality of open space over quantity of square footage. Mr. Zevin would like the space between buildings to be taken into account. Ms. Born explained that the city is getting denser and that we need an equivalence to Central Park as well as areas that can substitute for open space.

Ms. Born noted that the word “is” on Page 18, Section 2, should be removed to read “The CRA may set conditions on the level of enhancement necessary...”. Mr. Zevin noted on Page 14, the last line of Section 1, the word “than” should be replace with “that.” Ms. Drury noted on Page 18, number 2, the second sentence needs to be corrected so that “Table One” is not duplicated. Ms. Born asked
that the language in this document be kept in-sync with that of the City’s zoning ordinance when mentioning roofed/unroofed/enclosed.

Mr. Evans explained the changes on Page 14 which attempt to clear up the confusion about the numbers of square footage. Boston Properties agreed to adding language that states that variances are not counted as the GFA so the numbers can be synchronized with the zoning code. This provides one set of commercial numbers consistently across this document. This wasn’t problematic for Cambridge Center 7 which has that variance. However, it will now be different than the historic numbers. There’s still a question of whether to delete the footnote but we do need to clarify why the number changed. It’s at 29,100 square feet.

The other highlights in this section added headings to make it clear that there are three different regulations on development – the cumulative GFA, aggregate GFA and the Floor Area Ratio. Boston Properties and Whitehead legal teams have looked at the numbers and there have been discussions about the meaning of the wording. We will need to convert this into zoning language.

On Page 17, there’s a highlighted change that clarifies the middle-income housing unit exemption from GFA. In regards to the section on building heights, Mr. Zevin encouraged that a shadow study be done to confirm that increasing the height limit along Binney would not cast shadows onto the East Cambridge residential blocks. Mr. Evans stated that engaging greater urban design capacity into the project is being discussed with Boston Properties. Mr. Evans said that the section on building heights states that a certain distance from Broadway will be allowed to go above 350 feet in height but that the question still remains of whether going up in height on Broadway should be counteracted with going down in height on Binney. Mr. Zevin reinforced his concern about testing the shadows created by the total 24,000 square feet stated in the document. Mr. Evans explained that the shadow issue involves the floor plate square footage as well as the maximum plan length. He agreed to investigate further.

Mr. Zevin is very concerned that the height calculations of a building exclude mechanical floors and areas of the building not occupied by humans. There will be discussions with the City regarding this issue. Ms. Born would rather this be part of a building’s design review. Mr. Evans agreed to do more investigation on the high tower issue, which is only applicable to residential buildings.

The next section is retitled from Space Use Allocation and Development Intensity to Open Space Requirements. This is a continued conversation stating that if you can’t create open space on your site, you must contribute to open space elsewhere within ½ mile. This concept will help with the Grand Junction Path. On Page 18, Section 2, in addition to deleting the word “is,” Ms. Born suggested that the CRA should have full discretion on the conditions regarding the level of enhancement. Changing the word “may” to “will” could accomplish that. Mr. Bator suggested also removing the phrase “in order for.” Mr. Evans said that the Open Space Requirement is trying to provide exceptions to a very confusing formula process. This section could be rewritten with a simpler solution that sets an overall district requirement of open space over 100,000 square feet with everything being qualitative with a design review. We need to check the impacts before making the change.
With respect to the affordable housing section on page 22, Mr. Evans stated that we don’t want to emphasize the inclusionary housing ordinance. We want this to be a GFA-based rather than unit-based metric to encourage larger units. The City supports this. Ms. Born questioned the need to specify the exclusion of Ames Street in this section. Mr. Evans explained that this requirement is for new residential buildings but since Ames Street hasn’t officially begun construction, its status is not clear. In order to give Ames Street a certificate of completion, it would need to conform to the standards as stated. Mr. Bator suggested stating the exclusion in a footnote. Mr. Evans suggested moving this to the Ames Street exemption section. Ms. Born urged that the language be made very clear regarding the percentage of affordable housing. The intent is that it can’t go below 15%. A suggestion was made to define the term “final net.”

On Page 23, Section 2 of Middle Income Housing, our lawyers suggested the addition of “exceed 80%” which clarifies the 80%-100% range. In Section 412, Innovation Space, we are trying to solve the situation where decisions have been made before this document is finished, namely the Whitehead situation. It’s challenging to impose a new regulation on this parcel, since it has already gotten an entitled through zoning exemption. The added language on the bottom of the page, ensures that the developer could bring in a single overall operator of the space rather than have a multitude of little one-month leases. The language in the K2 plan regarding innovation space will hold. The concept of innovation retail/office and possibly innovative commercial space is being removed from the amendment. This issue might be addressed in a programmatic sense. The design review would make the decision of what is innovation space.

On Page 26, Section 416 is an insertion to cover the Whitehead. Mr. Zevin wants this section removed because it allows Whitehead to remove its open-space. Mr. Evans responded that the Whitehead’s zoning petition is now the law and we are required to include it. Ms. Born reads this section as special interest language. Mr. Drury agreed with Mr. Zevin and objects to the phrase “remedy a gap in the urban street edge.” As instructed by the Board, Mr. Evans agreed he will edit the page.

Page 29, Section 504, MXD Concept Plan, was well received by the Board. The word “approve” was changed to “prepare” requiring CRA resources to write the concept plan for regulating developers in this area. The plan would need to be approved by the City’s Planning Board. Ms. Born suggested changing the word “plan” to avoid confusion with the Urban Renewal Plan. Ms. Born would like to revisit the word “facilitate” and the phrase “pale in comparison” found in the first paragraph of the Introduction at the beginning of the document. Ms. Drury added that the intent of the sentence should be made clearer. The CRA has been responsible for many changes but there’s many more changes have occurred that were not due to the CRA.

Mr. Evans presented a prototype of an implementation plan. With the financial benefit that the CRA would get from an approved amendment, we want to show how we can address community needs in the area. The ideas in the chart came from conversations with many groups, public meetings, as well as feedback from the K2 plan, and the MEPA/EIR process. It also includes the human resources required and cost range. Any action or commitments would require the CRA Board’s approval.
10. Update: Parcel Six Temporary Use Alternatives

The City has had a change of heart about food trucks. Food trucks are self-contained and require no electrical services. The procurement process would need to be investigated. Two trucks would fit in the space. The Board was interested in this possibility. The current contractor would be instructed to leave the site as agreed in the contract. The timing needs to be evaluated since the contractor is working on the Main Street project.

At 8:47 p.m., a role call vote of the Board was taken to convene in executive session for the purpose of discussing correspondence from Special Counsel regarding a past personnel matter. The Board will not convene after the executive session.

  Mr. Zevin - yes
  Ms. Born - yes
  Ms. Drury - yes
  Mr. Bator – yes
  Mr. Conrad - absent