Regular Meeting  
Cambridge Redevelopment Authority  

Wednesday, November 18, 2015, 5:30pm  
Robert Healy Safety Center, Cambridge Police Station  
125 Sixth Street  
Community Room  

DRAFT MEETING MINUTES  

Call  
CR A Chair Kathleen Born called the meeting to order at 5:45 PM. 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, Mr. Christopher Bator, and Mr. Conrad Crawford. Ms. Born also introduced CRA staff members – Mr. Tom Evans, Ms. Ellen Shore, Mr. Jason Zogg and Ms. Kathryn Madden.

Public Comment  
Ms. Heather Hoffman commented on the proposed MXD zoning. She agrees with Mr. Kaiser in that the process that produced this zoning is better than the Volpe zoning process. She is dismayed that the MXD and Volpe parcels are being looked at separately even though they abut each other. Construction of buildings close to the 6th Street extension would create shadowing and canilization of this linear park. She urged the CRA to work with the City Council, the Community Development Department, and the Planning Board to prevent such undesired results for the community. She thanked the CRA for producing economic information about the Volpe site and asked that it be made available to the public. Ms. Hoffman also stated that the Grand Junction Path was shown in yellow on a Landline (the Metro Boston Greenway Network) map she got at a MAPC Inner Court Committee meeting indicating that it is under way with funds available. This path will enhance the area making it a better place to live area. Mr. Evans will distribute a copy of the map to the board.

Public comment was closed.

Minutes  

1.  Motion: To accept the minutes of the Regular Meeting of the CRA Board on October 21, 2015  
Ms. Drury gave written corrections to Ms. Shore and moved to adopt the minutes as amended.

The motion was unanimously adopted.
Communications

2. Memorandum Transmitting Revisions to the Kendall Square Urban Renewal Plan and MXD Zoning Petition to the City Council and Planning Board

Mr. Evans stated that the memo is from the CRA to the Ordinance Committee and the Planning Board and proposes changes agreed upon at the last CRA Board meeting as well as clarification of other issues.

The letter will be placed on file.

Mr. Evans passed out two other correspondences into the record. The first one is an email memo from Mr. Kaiser about the EIR. The second memo was sent to the Planning Board, which relayed a copy to the CRA, regarding noise on commercial buildings in Kendall Square since it is relevant to the CRA petition.

The two letters will be placed on file.

Reports, Motions and Discussion Items

3. Report: Monthly Staff Report to the Board – Part I

Mr. Evans explained that most of the report will be covered later under agenda items in the meeting. A contract for a four firm scope submission for GIS services and mapping assistance was offered to Sasaki. This will be a web-based, interactive tool with the potential to create public links to the viewer. The CRA hopes to have some functionality by this year. Mr. John Hawkinson mentioned the City’s existing model of Kendall Square. The CRA is looking at the history of Kendall Square and would include the City’s data. The tool under development could be further enhanced with other data. Mr. Zevin suggested that the CRA exercise some control measures on data input.

The CRA audit is waiting on the audit completion of the Cambridge Retirement System. The CRA budgets on a cash basis model. However, a new GASB requirement states that all defined benefit plans (CRA, Cambridge Housing Authority, the Cambridge Schools, etc.) throughout the state that are not fully funded show this liability which is included in an accrual basis model. The CRA auditors are urging an accrual basis model. The CRA will work with the CRA auditors for a resolution. Mr. Evans stated that the CRA is not in any violation. The CRA OPEB funding is another liability.

The CRA calendar for 2016 hinges on the MXD zoning results. If the results are favorable, the calendar will be filled with design reviews and programmatic elements for the goals of the Kendall Square Urban Renewal plan.

Mr. Evans did not have an update from Boston Properties on Ames Street but stated that a permit had not yet been issued. Ms. Born stated concerns with the changed renderings of the building that Stantec showed at the last Board meeting. Mr. Evans explained that CDD staff has some discretion to send designs back to the Planning Board if it determines that they deflect too much from the initial proposal. The Planning Board did not consider the “fingers” (staggered extent of vertical pieces) to be a significant change. Mr. Evans didn’t know if the transition from steel to concrete would merit another review. Mr. Zevin said that the CRA should examine the current design
working documents as soon as possible. Mr. Evans stated that the Ames project should be an agenda item in December. Ms. Madden suggested having a CDD staff advocate at the CDD meeting. Mr. Drury suggested that a CRA Board architect should attend the CDD public meeting.

Due to time constraints of Ms. Madden, Mr. Evans requested to pause the staff report for agenda item #5


Five of six teams that submitted to the RFQ were shortlisted to receive the RFP. The CRA staff has been drafting the RFP with advice from CRA consultants, HR&A and Foley Hoag. Ms. Madden passed out a handout that included the RFP Table of Contents and a draft evaluation grid, as well as the Project Vision and Objectives from the Demonstration Plan.

The CRA staff met with the Foundry Advisory Committee this morning, November 18, to review the RFP draft selection process and evaluation criteria. The Advisory Committee brings diverse perspectives that enrich the process. Based on their comments, the CRA staff will work to achieve better alignment with the evaluation criteria and the project Vision and Objectives, as well as the project requirements and submission requirements. The staff also wants to be able to incorporate new knowledge of the project based on ongoing public process last spring with the Planning Board and City Council meetings and responses to the RFQ. The draft framework for the evaluation criteria, shown in the handout, is broken into three broad topic areas – project understanding and concept, experience and capacity, and financial plan. For each subtopic, there are rating categories: highly advantageous, advantageous, not advantageous, and unacceptable. A decision was made not to assign detailed points but use a more qualitative metric given the nature of the project. Mr. Evans added that these rankings are based on the Inspector General’s guidelines for discretionary RFP submissions instead of points. Since there will be trade-offs in project decisions, each team is unlikely to rate highly advantageous in all areas. Ms. Born asked whether the designated developer will be able to turn the lease over to another entity; this kind of turnover could be a concern. Mr. Evans responded that the sublease will address this potential. A draft sublease will be attached to the RFP. Mr. Evans noted that this sublease will be negotiated with the developer before signing.

One of the topics of discussion is how to evaluate sustainability, since the City already rigorously evaluates all projects based on the City’s ordinances. Mr. Evans noted that a higher level of sustainability in the design submission could trigger a higher ranking in the “exceptional design for creativity & flexibility” category. In evaluating the category, “maximizes public benefit,” a project would be ranked not advantageous if they just provide the minimum 10,000 square feet required by zoning. The Foundry Advisory Committee members inquired about the meaning of “degree of inclusivity.” Staff needs to determine how much clarification is needed so that the application is not a guessing game but also not prescribing solutions. The handout indicates the draft subtopics and proposed weighting, although additional input could alter these slightly in the final document. The proposed ground rent will be one of the criteria but there are many factors to take into account besides the highest bidder.

Staff visualizes the selection process to have several steps. The Foundry Advisory Committee, the staff, and consultant team would look at the submissions first and provide comments. The submissions would then go to the Foundry Selection Committee. In all cases, reviewers will review the nonfinancial submittal first and then the financial submittal. A shortlist is anticipated, in which
case these teams would then be interviewed thus providing more information. The Foundry Selection Committee, with advice from the Foundry Advisory Committee, staff, and consultants, would use the same grid to re-rank the short list. Ms. Born stated that this is similar to the State’s Designer Selection Board. The next step for CRA staff is to finalize the draft and get City input to create a final document. Mr. Evans clarified that the Advisory Committee is providing comments in the selection process, but is not expected to achieve a consensus or rank the submissions. After all evaluations, the Selection Committee will recommend a development entity to the CRA Board to approve, and this decision will go to the City Manager for approval.

Mr. David Downing, an applicant for the Foundry, introduced himself. Ms. Madden stated that the Foundry building will be open for teams to tour the building during the first weeks in December. The CRA is trying to make a clear RFP so that the teams can succeed. In response to Mr. Downing’s question, the process must go through City of Cambridge Zoning Article 19, which would also review any expansion of the building envelope. A parking issue would go through the Zoning Board of Appeals process. The goal is to get the RFP issued by the end of December 2015 or early January 2016.

This agenda item ended and the discussion moved back to complete the staff report.

3. Report: Monthly Staff Report to the Board – Part II

The EcoDistrict conversation about what should be accomplished continues. Other cities in the program are in the same situation. In response to Mr. Crawford, some other ecodistrict groups are located in Boston, Washington DC, Atlanta, Detroit, Austin, and Denver. The range of projects that the districts are discussing have a wide range - storm water management on a district scale, GSA bidding, district energy, branding, wayfinding, etc.

With respect to Volpe, the CRA, in conjunction with the City, presented a chart-formatted quick analysis done by HR&A to the Planning Board. The cost for this work was split 50/50 with the City. If requested, the CRA can do further analysis but there are roadblocks since GSA demands are not understood nor are the soil conditions, for example. Without such information, it is difficult to set a site price. Mr. Evans added that data projections for building projects usually have a 10-25% contingency depending on the size of the project. There’s also risk and uncertainty when projecting a project for 8-20 years. Since HR&A has done many of these large projects, Mr. Evans feels that their evaluation is reliable. If scheduling permits, the HR&A representative would be a preferred presenter of the data to the City Council Ordinance Committee. Ms. Born is pleased that the CRA is associated with this quantitative analysis. Mr. Evans added that the CRA was asked to evaluate the current zoning feasibility. There are 14 or so developers interested in the site even though a big financial hurdle exists, which is asks a developer to build a 20% inclusionary office space with no income, having that be the highest end-unit, and building it first. Creative site planning would need to occur.

By unanimous consent, the report was placed on file.

4. Update: Forward Fund Program

Mr. Zogg referred to the table in the board packet which outlines the grant types, grantee names and their projects, the amounts dispersed and remaining, the status and anticipated completion dates of the projects. He noted that 50% of all but one of the Capital Grants have been dispersed thus allowing those grantees to start their projects. The other 50% will be dispersed upon the
completion of their project. At this time, he had no update on the Six Little Free Libraries project. All the Planning and Design Grants have been dispersed in full.

Mr. Zogg shared some of the Jury’s thoughts about the process. The jury shied away from requests if the grant money was only a small percentage of a larger financial project or didn’t have a dedicated end result. The Jury deliberated granting funds to applicants for semi-public buildings. There were a number of proposals that involved infrastructure or renovation work. Although the goal of the Forward Fund was to fund innovated ideas, there weren’t many applications from entrepreneurs, independent artists and inventors. Many applications came from neighborhood groups. The Jury also discussed requests to fund private independent urban planning projects, as well as funding public art, in particular murals. The Jury thought that creating a theme for the next round (i.e., storm water innovation, sustainable landscape innovation, retail entrepreneurship, etc.) could help focus applicant ideas.

The Board discussed ideas for next year’s fund. They suggested advertising the grant to various departments at MIT, other universities, and high schools, such as Rindge & Latin School. Mr. Zogg suggested increasing the total dollar amount from $40K to $60K. Mr. Bator suggested appropriating a larger amount but without a commitment to award it all if unnecessary. Mr. Evans suggested providing smaller gap financing to complete “important” projects. Mr. Bator would like the CRA to include funding projects that serve those in need regardless of their innovativeness. Mr. Zogg mentioned the Jury’s suggestion of three grant categories to target the different audiences – infrastructure capital grant, experimentation capital grant, and a planning/design grant. Ms. Born suggested increasing the total amount and allow the Jury to decide how to accomplish the split for each round. There was a discussion about awarding grants for public art that would activate an area. The Board didn’t feel it necessary to exclude previous awardees from getting future grants. Starting the process earlier in the year and enforcing funds to be used by the year’s end was recommended. Another idea was to select an underserved location and address funds for its improvement. Mr. Bator added that the funds should be marketed citywide. Mr. Zogg will take the Board’s feedback and come back to the Board with a proposal.

6. Update: Grand Junction Multi-Use Path Project

Motion: Authorizing the Chair to Enter into a Contract with Stantec for final soil clean up activity and documentation as the environmental Licensed Site Professional (LSP) for the Grand Junction Project.

Mr. Zogg stated that the traffic signal boxes, fire alarm control cabinet at Broadway, the bike pad, irrigation controls, backflow preventer, and drinking fountain base have been moved. To resolve a design change in the re-used granite medians at the ends of the shared use path, some rework was required as well as purchasing some additional grey smooth cut granite. The concrete forms for the irrigation control, the backflow preventer, and the bike pad are completed. The remaining concrete for the new sidewalks along Main and Broadway are being poured and scored in the next few weeks. KBI FlexiPave will then finish the porous pathway, the large granite stones will be placed in position, and onsite engraving should occur before Thanksgiving. After that, work for this year should be mostly complete. Next spring, the contractor will put several inches of topsoil across the site, complete the plantings and trees, put the final top coarse of asphalt on the 14-foot shared use path, and paint the lines. To signify this completion, some ribbon-cutting ceremony will be arranged. Mr. Zogg will arrange a walk for the Board.
Financially, the project is on target except for some line items. Tree removal is over-quantity. FST estimated 41 trees but the demolition plans labeled 50 trees. In addition, six additional trees were removed on the porous path because of tree root issues and ten trees were removed along the old fence that FST had not included because they assumed they were bushes although many had a diameter of trees. There was overspending on stump removal because the city-arborist required stump grinding instead of stump pulling in order to protect the London Plain trees. The underestimate for the disposal of background soils is being investigated. Change orders will be needed to transfer six trees that are being donated by Boston Properties from Ames Street, as well as for the additional grey granite purchased for the median work. Mr. Zevin stated that the work of FST needs to be more closely scrutinized.

In order to finish the project, MIT requires certification that all new topsoil being brought to the site is clean. Closing the DEP file will cost $24,050, which includes this additional requirement from MIT.

The motion authorizing the Chair to enter into a contract with Stantec for final soil clean up activity and documentation as the environmental Licensed Site Professional (LSP) for the Grand Junction Project was unanimously approved.

7. **Update: Kendall Square Urban Renewal Plan Amendment, MXD Petition, and KSURP Implementation Plan**

Mr. Evans explained that a CRA goal is to produce a roadmap for Kendall Square’s future above and beyond the new development. In other words, list the non-zoning, non-building elements that the CRA should take on in Kendall Square. A CRA implementation plan would list the mitigation measures stated in the EIR as well as other Board priorities and track them in a public document to be reviewed by the Board on a regular basis. Beyond the Foundry and finishing the Grand Junction, the programs the Board would like Staff to prioritize in the coming year will influence the 2016 budget.

In response to Ms. Born, Mr. Evans listed examples of mitigations to include in the implementation document. Some topics from the MEPA document are neighborhood based storm water improvements, resiliency improvements of the Kendall Square plaza to prevent T-station flooding, bicycle infrastructure improvements, a redesign of MassDOT identified high hazard street intersections. Other types of mitigations include innovative retail program and scholarships for innovation, etc.

Mr. Evans stated that he would have a better idea of future projects of the CRA once the Ordinance Committee meets on Thursday. The Urban Renewal Plan has no expiration date. The MXD petition expires December 23.


Mr. Evans referred to the chart. He noted that the CRA is on track except for income. A reimbursement was recently submitted to MIT for $350,000 for the Grand Junction work. Other income is dependent upon the permit being pulled for Ames Street. As for expenses by project, the Grand Junction has jumped to the most expensive due to the capital improvements. Legal expenses are also over-budget due to project activity. The contract with special council is closed.

9. **Discussion: Draft 2016 CRA Annual Budget**
CRA Treasurer Mr. Bator and Assistant Treasurer Mr. Crawford have evaluated a draft of the budget. Depending on the result of the MXD petition, the CRA would hire an additional staff member which increases the salary line item and related expenses as retirement, insurance, medical, computer, etc. Ms. Madden will remain a special employee and take the CRA through Foundry developer selection and then any future work would be done as a contractor.

The 2016 budget for office expenses is less than that of 2015 since the office renovation is completed. The purchase of a new conference table and chairs is expect to be done in 2015. In the Property Management grouping, the snow budget is hard to predict. Mr. Evans envisions higher landscaping costs due to Grand Junction Park maintenance. With regards to the Professional Services grouping, the bottom line hasn’t changed but there is a different distribution. The soil contract will be spent in 2016. The CRA will hire landscape architects rather than engineers to be the lead design of any future parks. There is a need for continued engineering work for Kendall Square traffic. The CRA is investigating the use of an archivist service to do a significant amount of organizational work for all CRA files – electronic and hardcopy, and help create a records management policy. CRA insurance policies are being evaluated. Most of the Grand Junction work has been expensed in 2015 and possibly only $90,000 will be expensed in 2016. Forward Fund is budgeted for $60,000 but could change based on previous conversations in tonight’s meeting. Foundry Funds would be allocated in the budget to show developers are commitment to the project.

10. Discussion: Proposed Calendar for 2016 CRA Board Meetings

All regular board meetings will meet on the third Wednesday of the month except for the months of February and April. The CRA will meet on the fourth Wednesday in February and the second Wednesday in April. The 2016 dates are January 20, February 24, March 16, April 13, May 18, June 15, July 20, August 17, September 21, October 19, November 16, and December 21. The August meeting will be scheduled with the option to cancel.

The calendar was unanimously accepted by the Board.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 8:57 p.m.