

Regular Meeting
Cambridge Redevelopment Authority

Wednesday, July 17, 2013; 5:30pm

Cambridge Police Station

12 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, CR Planning Consultant

Kathryn Madden, CRA Design Consultant Larry Bluestone, Assistant City Manager for Community

Development Brian P. Murphy

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

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

There being no public comment, Ms. Born moved to the minutes.

Acceptance of minutes:

Motion: To approve the minutes of most recent regularly scheduled meeting of the Authority

o June 19, 2013

Vote: Approved. All in favor.

Communications

- o Correspondence dated July 1, 2013 from Thad Tercyak

Mr. Evans commented, with respect to documenting history of CR and recognizing Robert Rowland, that he has been in touch with both Tercyak and Rowland, and that both are interested in writing a brief history of CRA and want to present something to the board in September (proposes moving Rowland motion to September business). Both are interested in doing recorded interview for multimedia history of CRA. Draft history is expected after Labor Day.

Ms. Born suggested exploring documentation via the Cambridge Historical Commission's oral history program; perhaps have historic photographs on hand as props while interviewing. (Mr. Murphy will contact Charles Sullivan to discuss)

Motion: To thank Mr. Tercyak for his efforts and let him know his information has been taken up by the board with great interest, and that CRA looks forward to participating in oral history documentation, possibly engaging assistance from City oral history experts.

Vote: Approved. All in favor

- Freedom of Information Act request received on July 8, 2013 from Marc Levy.

Mr. Evans noted that he has sent this to Board members, and to comply must look into email transactions. He has drafted response to Mr. Levy addressing the level of work involved and expected costs to assemble information.

Motion: to place on file

Vote: Approved. All in favor

Report of the Executive Redevelopment Officer

Mr. Evans reported that the audit firm completed its fieldwork phase and that the board can expect a management letter that it would respond to point by point as part of the published audit report. The audit has been a learning experience and step toward establishing appropriate operational policies.

He is also involved in a process to establish a CRA web site for which CRA can create its own content. He has spoken with a specialist with municipal website experience and expects that work can be done through a contract under \$5,000 so that they can have a site up and running, hopefully, by November. The expectation is that the CRA site would continue to link to the City site but that CRA would not have to rely on City staff to post and edit content.

Mr. Evans updated board on conversations regarding the possibility of sharing office space with the Kendall Square Association (their current lease is ending and they need interim space). Space sharing could be accommodated as an interim solution, in a way that thoughtfully addresses potential issues related to such a business agreement. Board discussed possible structures for agreement and potential areas of concern to be addressed, with general consensus that they would like to be supportive of KSA and its work on behalf of Kendall Square.

Attorney Mullan addressed various alternatives and issues related to maximizing efficiency of CRA space and space sharing option.

Board authorized Mr. Evans to continue to pursue the matter, subject to board review and oversight.

Mr. Evans noted that the CRA Board strategic planning meeting will be at the Police Station on August 7. It will be a public meeting (though likely no formal public comment period); the goal of which is to establish atmosphere of idea sharing and open interchange.

Mr. Evans reported on the parcel at Third and Binney and the arrangement with Flett Construction. More extensive discussion of use of this parcel could take place as an agenda item in September. Mr. Evans has been working on policies and procedures, with the personnel policy being furthest along; will bring to full board in September. Other items are waiting for audit input to create/revise including record management, investment policy ,etc.. This year's budget revisions will inform 2014 budgeting. There have been many meetings for strategic planning, design review, and zoning discussions.

Greenscape has cleared tot lot area and has left partially finished; need to address irrigation/dust as well as access and other issues related to use transition.

Attorney Mullan noted the accompanying opportunity to look at the status of nearby billboard. Board discussed options.

Mr. Evans updated board regarding Longfellow bridge project and recent conversations relating to traffic flow plan.

Attorney Mullan noted that DOT is committed to monitoring and will take another look if plan not working.

Discussion of options to lesson volume of cars crossing the Charles and past experience with Craigie bridge shutdown, which had fewer negative impacts than expected. Summer provides opportunity to ease into changing behavior and encourage use and accommodation of alternative modes.

Other updates: Clover received permit but does not yet have lease.

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 noted that CRA is now below budget projections for spending; they hired fewer consultants, have been steady on projected legal fees, and have achieved other savings. Some modifications made to accommodate Kathryn Madden's planning work. Healthcare benefits slightly higher than projected.

Motion: To place these reports on file.

Vote: Approved. All in favor.

Report on Design Review Committee review of proposed revisions to Microsoft signage on One Cambridge Center

Ms. Born referred to Mr. Bluestone's meeting notes, and reported that the meeting covered two pieces of signage. The first was the rooftop, or higher illuminated sign that is in the same category as other "high-up" signs for businesses such as Marriott, Biogen, Akamai, and the Broad Institute. Concerns are consistent with signs of this type, regarding levels of illumination. Ms. Born presented details relating to the proposed sign design and operation, recognizing this review process as an opportunity to approve replacement sign that would end any outstanding issues related to review of the original Microsoft sign.

Board members discussed the need for more information to ensure appropriate illumination level and understand potential negative impacts.

Motion: To approve fabrication and installation of the proposed Microsoft "rooftop" sign at the specified location with the provision that illumination levels and hours of operation may have to be adjusted to mitigate impacts; and to authorize the Executive Redevelopment Officer to conduct due diligence (including outreach to MIT Housing Office) regarding impact of existing sign and new sign after its installation. Board approval is subject to reconsideration should operator not respond satisfactorily to lighting issues; the Board will confirm final acceptance of signage conditions by [specify date].

Vote: Approved. All in favor.

Ms. Born noted that the second sign for consideration, the blade sign, is a more complicated issue in that much change is underway around the location of the sign. Board members discussed proposed new signage within the context of those changes and agreed that the matter could not be resolved in this meeting.

Motion: To accept the report of the Design Review Committee with the understanding that blade sign replacement would be taken up at future meeting after the Board has the opportunity to consider revised proposals.

Vote: Approved. All in favor.

Report on Design Review Committee update of the status of Google Connector Project for Three, Four, and Five Cambridge Center

Referring, again, to the Bluestone notes, Ms. Born reported on the committee's tour of the Google space, which included discussion of interior plans and viewing the arcade. The board discussed committee member observations of the space and questions about aspects of the project that have yet to be resolved, such as the public view from the open space and spatial relationships to the future residential project on Ames Street.

David Stewart (Boston Properties) confirmed that the exterior connection to Ames Street housing was not yet designed.

The Board discussed how this work would move forward from a planning, zoning and project review perspective, and the distinction between public open space and private open space incorporated in project lot, noting that the City PUD encourages shared use of open space with the goal of creating as much public open space as possible. With sharing issues confirmed by Attorney Mullan as unresolved, the board agreed on the importance of balancing interests of building users with public goals. Ms. Born noted that there would be follow-up Design Review Committee work and further information on this project.

Arcade Discussion: Issues still to be resolved include approach to various categories of signage including Google corporate, location identity, identity for retail uses, building wayfinding, and wayfinding for public garden.

Mr. Sheehan asked for CRA feedback regarding place naming, and what would be most meaningful moving into the future. The board discussed the need to reflect public interest and values in the place name, looking forward to a continuing discussion.

Motion: To place this report on file.

Vote: Approved. All in favor.

Report on Ames Street Housing status

Mr. Evans reported on his inventory of development square footage in the MXD district, which is now close to but still under the cap. Mr. Sheehan suggested some areas that might not be reflected in the existing data. The possibility of a variance process for the Urban Renewal Plan was discussed; matter to be resolved and follow-up work on building documentation (as well as clarification of methodology) is necessary. Accurate information will help as CRA work moves forward with its work and with modification of MXD/amendment of Urban Renewal Plan.

Ames Street Housing: City expects appraisal information soon and discussion is under way to craft language for minor zoning amendment. Components for necessary variance expected to be submitted to City as a petition in late summer; this will involve City Council Ordinance Committee and Planning Board.

Mr. Murphy noted that December 16 is the last Council meeting for the current session.

Mr. Evans walked the board through zoning changes necessary to make the project feasible, using the provided text with potential revisions highlighted. Discussion included the fast food cap, minimum open space requirements, parking minimums, loading requirements, shared uses, and the goal of changing language to reflect contemporary conditions and priorities.

The board discussed the process for making changes to the MXD District zoning and the corresponding amendments to the Kendall Square Urban Renewal Plan. Mr. Evans identified next steps, with the expectation that the Board will have actual text to review in early fall. Changes related to Ames Street Housing and K2C2 process will be separate.

Motion: To place on file the inventory of square footage and modifications suggested.

Vote: Approved. All in favor.

Report on Point Park/Main Street Improvement designs and proposed land transfers

Mr. Evans walked the board through projects plans that are part of the meeting package; work is scoped to go out to bid in fall with construction in early spring. To accomplish this project, land transactions are necessary. They will likely come before the board in the fall; fees are to be worked out with City staff.

Attorney Mullan noted that the board should be aware that Boston Properties is supportive of project concept but is evaluating how it affects zoning compliance status. The City is making certain that if it takes title to sidewalk, it understands associated rights and responsibilities. This is something for CRA to monitor.

Discussion of other issues related to land transactions and proposed City work.

Motion: To place report on file.

Vote: Approved. All in favor.

Discussion of Strategic Planning Process

Ms. Madden reported having had productive conversations with board members as well as with CDD division heads; she wants to meet with non-profit partners. The goal is to enter the new calendar year with the process behind them; the timeline for process documentation will be developed accordingly.

Questions asked during the interviewing process covered business strategy and financial themes (revenue growth & mix, cost reduction, productivity, asset utilization), and suggestions for operating principles.

Attorney Mullan pointed out that this may be a good time to check in with the Commonwealth to update on what CRA activity and reach out as a partner. Also outreach to those who regularly attend CRA meetings.

Ms. Madden noted that she had done some of this kind of outreach, and their goal is to broaden the constituency engaging with CRA, including outreach to nearby neighborhoods.

Discussion of CRA outreach, including potential press coverage, to more fully realize opportunities and leverage the transformative story and history of CRA as it moves into the future. Public release of the draft plan to public will be a key milestone; stakeholder input essential to its success.

Attorney Mullan encouraged creative thinking about mission and opportunities, and to think about potential activities with citywide impact. The goal is to better serve citizens, with a bias for action.

Ms. Madden will work with Mr. Evans to establish the schedule for the next steps.

Motion: To adjourn.(8:40 p.m.)

Vote: Approved. All in favor.