

Central Square Advisory Committee Meeting

October 26, 2015

5:30 – 7:00 PM

Frank J. Manning Apartments - 237 Franklin Street

Attendees:

Committee Members: Joel Altstein, Melissa Greene, Drew Kane, Robin Lapidus, Esther Hanig, Christopher Sol Gully Robert Winters

Absent: Michael Monestime

Cambridge Housing Authority Representative: Kyle Sullivan, Annemarie Grey, Margaret Morin, Terry Lurie

Staff: Liza Paden, Elaine Thorne

Kyle Sullivan representing the Cambridge Housing Authority gave an overview of the Frank J Manning Apartments Revitalization Project: Manning Apartments constructed in 1976, is a 199 unit building for elderly and disabled residents. This building has received limited improvements since construction and now requires a comprehensive revitalization; renovations to the façade, core systems, apartment interiors, common spaces and energy conservations improvements.

The improvements will include conversion of former office space located on the second floor into four new one-bedroom apartments, and two new two-bedroom apartments. Total replacements includes kitchens and bathrooms (lighting, cabinetry, appliances and flooring). Common Area Improvements include multi-use community rooms, renovations to community space and relocation of management offices from floor two to a more visible first-floor location. Expansion of the second floor patio, expansion of laundry facilities; and enclosure of the upper floor common balconies to provide additional community space.

Exterior improvements include a redesign of the plaza between the Manning Apartments and the Central Square Branch Library, which will create an area for cars to pull off of Franklin Street for pick-up and drop off of residents and users of the library, rather than live parking in Franklin Street as to not impede traffic. Enhanced pedestrian flow between Green Street and Franklin Street, a new glass canopy cover for the main walkways and improved signage. A green wall will be created on the City of Cambridge parking facility at the Green Street corner. Plantings will be lowered in plaza for better visibility, new landscaping installed in the library plaza, along with the preservation of existing trees. Additional several new trees will be planted.

Core building system improvements include: exterior insulating cladding, replacement and installation of high-performance window wall system, improvements to the ventilation system, upgrade of electrical wiring elements; installation of a combined heat and power system to allow for onsite generation of electricity.

The project architect for the revitalization is Bargmann-Hendrie+Archetype, Inc. Total cost of the project is \$58 million. Construction is anticipated to start in January 2016, with some preparation work beginning in November, 2015 which will include fencing on the Franklin Street side.

Construction is anticipated to last 30 months, the building will remain 70% occupied during construction. Construction will be done in phases (stacks) with tenants given the option to be relocated to other Housing Authority properties, with the option to return once construction complete, (not a guarantee back to same unit), be relocated within Manning Apartments while construction taking place on their units, returning to same unit, or receiving a voucher on the outside of CHA units. All tenant relocation cost handled by CHA. All tenants will move at least once during the construction process.

The requested relief that is being applied for is an increase in FAR from 2.794 to 2.876 under the Overlay District this request can be granted by the Planning Board up to a 3.0 FAR. The reason for the increase is to enclose the upper floor balconies creating habitable space.

Additional information on the project can be found on the Cambridge Housing Authority web site.

Committee Members/Public Questions and Concerns:

- What has been the reaction to the revitalization from the tenants-Overall good, the CHA has been meeting with the tenants since 2014, 40-50 tenants have been attending each meeting.
- How will the construction take place-it will be done in stacks , 17 units per stack, 3 stacks at a time anticipated construction on the stacks will be 40-50 days, a total of 9-months.
- Is there smoking on the property -the Housing Authority properties are smoke-free no smoking allowed with 25' of building. A new smoking area is being designed on the back of the building, which will allow for more security.
- A new entrance, for the new commercial kitchen that is being added to the building off of Franklin Street. The kitchen is being fitted out to prepare meals onsite, but no funds are in place to run it. Having this space in the future will allow the Cambridge Housing Authority to run a hot food program for tenants on site.
- How is the parking increase being handled to comply with the zoning requirement-staff no longer will be parking on site, during construction parking will not be allowed within a ¼ of mile of building, they are current exploring locations to store small tool sheds off-site.
- What has been the concern of residents-more storage areas, additional elevator, neither of the two concerns are being designed into the revitalization project, the additional of a new elevator could only be achieved by removing an entire stack of units, and the cost is too great. With the additional of new laundry facilities on the upper floors (current there is only one on the second floor),and the addition of new trash rooms and 2 chutes for recycling will also help to elevate the use of the elevators for tenants and maintenance staff.

- Plaza redesign very much needed, it will increase plaza utilization, and will make it safer during the evening hours.
- Will the garage design be updated, no, the CHA work does not include renovation to the garage. The exterior of the garage will include additional lighting and a “green screen” will be applied to the side facing the Green Street Plaza area.
- The inclusion of the turn in on the plaza, is a good idea it will help to reduce with noise to residents across the street from ambulances and other factors. (Neighbor observation)
- Will there be a wind tunnel created, no more than exists.
- Attention needs to be paid to the materials of the building, needs a more human scale and streetscape, they will become dated quickly.
- This building is very visible from many locations, so it is an opportunity to make an impact, attention should be paid to the color and materials used.

Overall the Committee was in favor of the revitalization of the building, seeing it as a positive improvement.

Meeting was adjourned at 7:15PM