

**HIGHLAND REDEVELOPMENT COMMISSION
SPECIAL STUDY SESSION MINUTES
WEDNESDAY, March 23, 2016**

Members of the Highland Redevelopment Commission ("RC", "Commission") met on Wednesday, March 23, 2016, at 6:05 PM in the Upper Conference Room within the Municipal Building at 3333 Ridge Road, Highland, Indiana. President Greg Kuzmar called the meeting to order. Minutes were prepared by Cecile Petro, Redevelopment Director.

ROLL CALL: Commissioners present included Greg Kuzmar, Bill Leep, Ed Dabrowski, Dominic Noce, and Kathy DeGuilio-Fox. Also present included Attorney Carol Green-Fraley, School Town of Highland Commissioner Pat Krull, Jon Ruble and Dan Botich from SEH, and Redevelopment Director Cecile Petro. Councilman Zemen resigned from the Commission and appointed Dominic Noce to take his seat.

General Substance of the Discussion

1. Review Contract for Financial Services

President Kuzmar introduced Dan Botich, Senior Economic Development Professional from SEH of Indiana. He was asked what services he could provide now that he was a part of a new firm. Mr. Botich replied that he would continue with the same financial services previously provided; in addition, he would be able to supply the RC with additional landscape architecture, engineering, and other services. He will not be a Municipal Advisor who supplies amortization schedules for bonds; but, he will be able to give potential estimates for bonds. Mr. Botich was asked if he would be the lead for all projects. He responded by stating that only those projects with an economic development focus. Attorney Green-Fraley will review the contract before approval at the next meeting.

2. Plan for the Proposed Art & Cultural District

The Director highlighted some areas within the draft plan that should be expanded and RC members provided their input. Some of the additions would include:

--Additional renditions of the Plaza Street including views from Kennedy Avenue facing west, aerial views, and a gateway or entrance treatment to the new district.

--Additional renditions of Kennedy Avenue from LaPorte Street to the Ridge overpass providing an aerial view of the street, illustrating landscaped medians, closed off entrances to Kennedy, calming features, and a crosswalk from the Town Theatre parking lot to the District.

--Other questions asked concerned acquiring future funding from INDOT for street improvements, underground storage tank identification and possible elimination, and improvements to the Ridge Road overpass.

--Attorney Green-Fraley suggested that the document provide a section that would outline the next steps that should be phased in over time.

3. Kennedy & Main Engineering Study

Redevelopment Commission members discussed the Engineering Study of Main & Kennedy Avenue with SEH. Commissioners DeGuilio-Fox and Dabrowski and the Director will meet with SEH before the project begins for a "kick-off" meeting tentatively scheduled for April 4, 2016 at 4:00 PM in the town hall. SEH will walk through the site and take soil samples beforehand. The SEH representatives exited the meeting.

4. Legal Services Contract

Members of the Commission reviewed the legal agreement with Attorney Green-Fraley. President Kuzmar asked Attorney Green-Fraley who would be the litigator for various services. She responded that her partner, Glenn Kuchel would be able to provide that service for the same rate as she provides for municipal services.

5. **Art & Cultural District**

President Kuzmar provided the RC with a fact sheet of information on the draft schematic design. He also stated that Berglund Construction will provide a cost projection pro bono. In the meantime, he and the Director will confer with Morris Architects Planners to resolve questions they have and for clarification purposes. Once a final draft is completed with corresponding construction figures, it will be released to the RC and then to the public.

The RC reviewed two estimates for an ALTA survey for the theatre. Commissioners and the Attorney discussed whether all items were included. The Director will re-contact both companies to be sure all ALTA checklist items were included within the estimates.

Director Petro provided the RC with a two page summary of the *Explorer Program* that the Town Theatre Board approved at their last meeting on March 22, 2016. The Board will become a Post for the program that will be open to girls and boys from 14 to 20 years of age. The program offers young adults the opportunity to learn about the careers involved with the theatre from meeting with architects and engineers through construction and, ultimately, with professionals who will operate the theatre. The Theatre Board will benefit from having the next generation of movie/theatre goers involved and invested in the theatre.

6. **8630 Kennedy Avenue**

The Director reported that she had received an email from the realtor for 8630 Kennedy regarding the RC's ability to conduct an environmental test of the building. She has contacted a firm that will perform the test within a couple of weeks.

7. **Intern for Housing Study**

Director Petro reported that Matt Wells from Purdue University Calumet will be distributing the job description for an intern to perform a housing study in the downtown. When he receives replies from students, he will contact the Director.

8. **Public Art**

A local business person was contacted regarding the cost of cement slabs that would hold an art sculpture. The cost for slabs that measure 6" x 24" x 24" would be about \$125 and up. Members indicated their willingness to proceed with the project.

9. **Poet Laureate**

The first Poet Laureate will be selected soon from three candidates by a well-qualified and experienced committee. The announcement will be made on or soon after April 1, 2016.

10. **North Kennedy Avenue Bridge Replacement**

The Director reported that she has talked to several people involved with the replacement of the North Kennedy Avenue bridge. The Lake Calumet River Basin Commission is funding the project. In order for Highland to acquire the type of bridge that would be more than a functional bridge, other parties may be contacted to contribute to its "betterment". She will continue to update the Commission as progress is made.

11. **Grant Opportunity with the Office and Rural Affairs**

The Director attended an OCRA (Indiana Office of Community and Rural Affairs) workshop in which various new grant opportunities were highlighted. She will review which grants may provide the RC with an opportunity for funding.

12. Redevelopment Assistant

Resolution #2016-10 was presented to the Commission. This resolution would allow a transfer between funds in order to increase the funding and hours for the Commission's Assistant. Discussion ensued.

13. Other Possible Projects and Developments

The President stated that the owner of the building located at 8020 Kennedy Avenue, which was previously approved for a Façade Improvement Grant, wanted to change the materials on the lower area of the building. It was related to the owner that any changes must go back to the Redevelopment Commission for approval.

The Director stated that she is expecting another possible Tax Abatement request. Commissioner DeGuilio-Fox replied that she would like to have a closer look at any new Tax Abatement requests.

Discussion ended at 8:08 PM