

**HIGHLAND REDEVELOPMENT COMMISSION
STUDY SESSION MINUTES
TUESDAY JULY 14, 2020**

Members of the Highland Redevelopment Commission (“RC”, “Commission”) met in an electronically convened meeting using the Zoom platform on Tuesday, July 14, 2020. The meeting was convened as an electronic meeting pursuant to Governor Eric Holcomb’s Executive Order 20-04 and 20-09, and 20-25 now extended by his Executive Order 20-30 through 3 August 2020 by his Order 20-34, allowing such meetings pursuant to IC 5-14-1.5-3.6 for the duration of the COVID-19 emergency. The Study Session was called to order at 7:01 p.m. by Commission President George Georgeff.

Minutes were prepared by Kathy DeGuilio-Fox, Redevelopment Director and Recording Secretary.

Roll Call: Commissioners present included George Georgeff, Bill Leep, Sean Conley and Robyn Radford. Commissioner Cyril (Cy) Huerter was absent with notice. A quorum was established.

Additional Officials Present: Pat Krull, School Town of Highland liaison and non-voting member; Roger Sheeman, Council Liaison to the Redevelopment Commission; John Reed, Abrahamson, Reed & Bilse and Redevelopment Attorney; Ed Dabrowski, IT Consultant; and Kathy DeGuilio-Fox, Redevelopment Director.

Also Present: There were no additional attendees identified.

General Substance of the Discussion

1. SW Corner of Highway & Kennedy – Development:

- a. **Project Update:** Ms. DeGuilio-Fox opened the conversation by reporting that Grimmer Construction was the lowest most responsive and responsible bidder at \$751,366.04. The Commissioners will have a resolution accepting this bid and awarding the contract to Grimmer Construction at their plenary business meeting on July 28th. She advised that she had been pleased with the firms that responded, not only that they were all well-known construction firms in Northwest Indiana but also that the bids all seemed to be reasonable. Ms. DeGuilio-Fox also reported that Grimmer Construction will work with the Parks Department to be sure the closing of the bike trail and temporary rerouting of the traffic on the trail will be done safely and appropriately.
- b. **Resolution 2020-23 to Accept Grimmer Bid:** The resolution for the Commissioners to accept the bid submitted by Grimmer will be prepared and submitted to them for consideration at their July 28th meeting.
- c. **Groundbreaking Planning:** Ms. DeGuilio-Fox advised that there will be a groundbreaking for the project however only as a photo opportunity. A full event will be planned for the ribbon-cutting and reopening of the project later in the fall. The “groundbreaking” will be scheduled for the first week of August after the contracts have been signed and the project is ready to begin. Brief discussion ensued regarding the ribbon cutting and whether an event could be held in lieu of the current pandemic situation.
- d. **Relocation of Gas Station:** Before turning the meeting over to Attorney Reed, Director DeGuilio-Fox reported that Speedway on 45th & Kennedy Avenue had contacted the Building Department in regards to renovations they hope to do to the property. They are interested in purchasing the property directly to the east of the current gas station (the B&F Pool property) to potentially use it to expand their footprint. That discussion is in early stages and will go

before the Plan Commission and BZA before a determination is made. She also advised everyone that she had reminded Ken Mika that that property is in the Commercial Corridors Allocation Area and the Redevelopment Commission will want to weigh in on the project. And, Ms. DeGuilio-Fox reported she had contacted Attorney Reed when she learned of this expressing interest in using this as a potential opportunity to leverage the Redevelopment Commissions use of the Kennedy Avenue (abandoned) property through the use of the 45th & Kennedy Avenue gas station. The meeting was then turned over to Attorney Reed to report his findings in regard to the Kennedy Avenue properties. He advised that thinking it could be an opportunity to leverage the use of the Kennedy Avenue property is a valid idea and one to be pursued. Attorney Reed reported he had gotten property information from the Lake County and had reviewed the covenants on the property. Attorney Reed explained that although initially it appeared as though covenants restricted the use of the property for another gas station further review actually indicates the covenants may not be as restrictive as first thought. The property may not be used for single-family residential or any use that would require consumption of groundwater. The property was an IDEM project for a reasonable amount of time. However, cleanup appears to have been completed and IDEM would only need to be notified of a new use. Attorney Reed suggested that because there would be multiple land purchase deals happening at one time it would be wise to have all parties in the same room at the same time so all transactions could be conducted. Brief discussion ensued regarding the potential exchange of properties. Attorney Reed advised that he sees no impediment in the Commissions way as far as land use and/or covenant restrictions on the property. Discussion ensued. Commissioners agreed that Ms. DeGuilio-Fox should contact the Khatra's and inquire as to their continued interest in moving their location.

2. **Triangle Equities LLC Façade and Interior Commercial Property Improvement Grants:** Director DeGuilio-Fox opened the discussion by advising the Commissioners that there have been no changes to the grant information as they've discussed in the past. However, with recent changes in development plans it is time to move forward with decisions regarding the two Commercial Property Improvement Grant applications as submitted by Triangle Equities LLC. Discussion ensued. As previously determined, the Commissioners do not feel it appropriate to award an interior grant that is not for a commercial use. In this case, the interior grant is for residential space and would not have an effect on the commercial entities of the downtown. The Commissioners agreed that at their plenary business meeting on July 28th they will deny the Interior grant application for the property located at 8719-8721 Kennedy Avenue. Discussion next ensued regarding the façade grant application for the property located at 8719-8721 Kennedy Avenue. As previously determined, the Commissioner felt that they are inclined to approve the grant request if the owner of the property will change the façade design that was present. The Commissioners approve of the materials used however the design is not what they would like to see in the Highland downtown district. Director DeGuilio-Fox was instructed to notify the petitioner, Triangle Equities LLC, to inform them of these decisions and ask that they provide a new façade design as soon as possible such that the Commissioners may review it prior to their plenary business meeting on Tuesday, July 28, 2020.
3. **2020 Goals Review:** Ms. DeGuilio-Fox directed the Commissioners attention to the 2020 Goals that had been included in their packet. Commissioners had requested that their 2020 Goals be reviewed and updated if necessary. Discussion ensued. After much discussion the Commissioners asked Director DeGuilio-Fox to update their 2020 Goals as follows:
 - i. Include "Consider Development of Container Market" under Goal #1: Development of Kennedy/Condit corridor of Downtown Highland. Discussion ensued regarding the development of a container market in the Highland downtown. Ms. DeGuilio-Fox shared with the commissioners that she had, in fact, been working with a company out

of Chicago last year to do this. However, the Commission at that time did not move forward on the idea.

- ii. Move Goal #6: "Downtown Lighting" up to Goal #2. Ms. DeGuilio-Fox reported she has been in contact with an individual at Hyre Electric. This is the person John Bach had been working with before he retired. Matt Summers is in the process of preparing a proposal for retrofitting the downtown street lights. Ms. DeGuilio-Fox will report back when she has a potential cost and more information.
- iii. Update Goal #11; "Public Offerings" to include "Prepare Public Offering for (former) Bult Oil site". Ms. DeGuilio-Fox reminded everyone that due to the number of years that have passed a new public offering is required for them to sell the former Bult Oil property and that she is waiting for the appraisals to be completed first.

The Commissioners agreed that these changes would be sufficient at this time however they will continue to review their goals throughout the year.

4. **Bult Oil Property – Update and Next Steps:** Ms. DeGuilio-Fox advised that she had not yet received completed appraisals although both had been advised that on June 23, 2020 the Redevelopment Commission had approved them to complete appraisals of the former Bult Oil property. Ms. DeGuilio-Fox also advise that she had not yet heard from IFA in regard to the Site Status Letter. She will continue to check into that and begin work on the public offering for the property.
5. **Redevelopment Commissioner Comments:** Commissioners inquired as to why the property listings on the Highland website were not providing more information. Director DeGuilio-Fox advised that the listings were as they are due to the way the Idea Factory thought that page should be done. She advised that she and Lance had notified the Idea Factory on numerous occasions that numerous of the links were broken and/or redirecting an individual to a site different than where the intended listing should have been. She advised that she had very recently, in fact, had the same conversation and was told that the issues would be looked into. Roger indicated that he would have a conversation with the Idea Factory as he has been in regard to the Highland website. Councilman Sheeman indicated that the Council is looking into getting a different website developer and they have interviewed at least one firm already. Commissioners also inquired as to the status of the senior housing development. Discussion ensued. The Commissioners have asked that a fact sheet be developed so that they may better understand the project.

There being no further business, Commissioner Sean Conley moved to adjourn the meeting. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Bill Leep. The motion passed by a voice vote of 4 affirmatives and 0 negatives. The July 14, 2020 study session of the Highland Redevelopment Commission was adjourned at 8:15 PM.

Respectfully submitted by Kathy DeGuilio-Fox, Recording Secretary.