

**HIGHLAND REDEVELOPMENT COMMISSION
STUDY SESSION MINUTES
TUESDAY, JULY 12, 2022**

Members of the Highland Redevelopment Commission (“RC”, “Commission”) met in person at the Highland Municipal Building on Tuesday, July 12, 2022. The study session was called to order at 6:31 p.m. by Commission President Sean Conley.

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

Roll Call: Commissioners present in person included Sean Conley, George Georgeff, Bill Leep and Alex Robertson. Commissioner Cy Huerter was absent. A quorum was established.

Additional Officials Present: Pat Krull, School Town of Highland Representative and non-voting member to the Redevelopment Commission; Tom Black, Highland Town Council Liaison to the Redevelopment Commission; John Reed, Abrahamson, Reed and Bilse; Kathy DeGuilio-Fox, Highland Redevelopment Director were present in person

Also Present in Person:

General Substance of the Discussion

1. **Wayfinding Sign Project:** Director DeGuilio-Fox briefly commented that she’d reached out to VIA Marketing regarding The Commissioners decision to move forward with the project and hopes to begin with the parking lot sign first. Additional updates will be provided.
2. **Town Theatre Items:** Ms. DeGuilio-Fox advised that Summer (from A1Estate Sales) had taken additional pictures in order to more adequately represent the items online. At this time both statues are already listed on EBay. Research must be done in regard to the projector. There is no visible serial number on the projector that she can use in the listing and so has been unable to match the projector with others online. Ms. DeGuilio-Fox asked those present to be sure to mention the items to those they know who might be interested in them. She also mentioned that Summer felt she would be unable to sell the seats due to their disrepair. Commissioner Georgeff suggested the items be listed in the Gazebo Express along with a short story. Ms. DeGuilio-Fox will follow up with the Idea Factory in this regard. Discussion ensued.
3. **Highland Rookery:** Ms. DeGuilio-Fox advised that Ms. Darlene Barron had called and asked what the Redevelopment Commission is doing to bring back wildlife to the Highland Rookery. She advised that she was involved several years ago with the Highland Main Street and Redevelopment Commission when they installed park benches and large binoculars on the levee bank. Ms. DeGuilio-Fox reported she had advised Ms. Barron that the Commission’s attention was focused on other projects and that it would be the Little Calumet River Basin that would develop such a project. She was invited to the Commission’s study session to express her ideas and views on the subject but had decided she was not able to attend. John Reed reported he received a text from Dan Repay, Executive Director of the Little Calumet River Basin, who advised they are working on a project with the Audubon Society to restore the rookery. Discussion ensued.
4. **2022 Goals Review:** Ms. DeGuilio-Fox reminded the Commissioners of which of their 2022 goals has either been completed (Goals in Progress # 3 and # 4, #5 and #7 remain in progress). She advised that in regard to Goals in Progress #6 there has been several inquiries so far this year with the NWI Parkinson’s Association actively completing an application. (Ms. DeGuilio-Fox

advised that she's spoken with Ms. Morrison since returning to the office on July 11th.) Ms. DeGuilio-Fox asked if there were any new goals that the Commissioners wished to add to the list. She referred the Commissioners to the second section of the 2022 Goals: Additional Goals for Consideration in 2022. Commissioner Robertson suggested he would like to add the development of a branding/marketing video. Commissioner Robertson volunteered to take charge of the project to development a short video with the same team (Sawdust) who created one for his business. A short discuss ensued regarding budget for such a project. Ms. DeGuilio-Fox asked if Commissioner Robertson would get a proposal from Sawdust Video for a short video as well as a longer one addressing marketing from a different approach and then she would check the budget to determine if and where there funds may be available. Discussion ensued. Ms. DeGuilio-Fox will provide Commissioner Robertson with property improvement grant information so that certain of those locations may be used in the video. Commissioner Georgeff suggested the Commission focus on Additional Goals for Consideration in 2022: Item #1.

5. **Welcome to Downtown Highland Sign:** Ms. DeGuilio-Fox advised that she discovered on Saturday evening that the Welcome to Downtown Highland sign is not working even after recently being refurbished and re-installed. She advised that she contacted Legacy Sign first thing yesterday (July 11th) as well as Mark Knesek at Public Works. Mark is going to meet onsite with Shawn O'Brien from Legacy Sign to determine what the problems are. Shawn had asked what electrician we'd work with and perhaps they've cut the power to the sign. I advised that there had been no electrician's involved (according to Lance Ryskamp) and so the power was on when the sign was removed. Further information was received from Mr. Knesek who will also report back once he meets with Legacy onsite. Alex reported that he saw individuals working on the sign earlier today (prior to the Redevelopment Commission meeting) and that it appeared to be working.
6. **Redevelopment Commission Comments:**
 - a. Commissioner Georgeff suggested he would contact Tony Belmonte about availability of the Siemer building on Highway Avenue. It was agreed that if interested, it would be a wonderful location for a restaurant.
 - b. Larry Kondrat advised that the Lake County Public Library Highland Branch has a plan in place for the renovation of their parking lot (purchase along with the former Midwest Bank building) that will include a digital sign but that they feel unsure as to how to proceed to get approval for the sign. Mr. Kondrat advised that the library is planning a digital sign and will be willing to allow the town to post information on it. Commissioner Georgeff advised that he believes the library should file application with the Building Department to get on the BZA and/or Plan Commission agenda. Ms. DeGuilio-Fox was asked to speak with Ken Mika about the status of the project as well as to call John Brock at the library. The Commissioners believe this project will be an asset to the downtown and wish to see it move forward. Discussion ensued.
 - c. Commissioner Robertson mentioned that Apex may be interested in selling their building and downsizing to a building that could be used to store their materials rather than having a showroom for display. Brief discussion ensued.
 - d. Commissioner Georgeff commented that the Bult Oil site is looking better. Commissioner Bill Leep commented that he believes the Eriks have installed two new doors on the garage, has taken the fence down, cleared the trees and brush and are using the property.
 - e. Commissioner Bill Leep asked what the others plan to do to move forward to hire a new director. Commissioner Georgeff suggested offering the assistant position to one of the candidates that was interviewed for the director position. The group agreed and Commissioner Conley and John Reed will reach out to the individual.

Commissioner Leep suggested the director job position be listed again on Indeed. Commissioner Georgeff asked Ms. DeGuilio-Fox to send him the job posting as well as the job description and he will send it to his contact at the IEDC to ask if they will post the position. Discussion ensued. John Reed advised he will reach out to Dave Westland as to whether there is anyone with the Hammond Development Corp who is ready to take on more responsibility and willing to take on the Highland position.

There being no further discussion the Redevelopment Commission study session was adjourned at 7:24 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by Kathy DeGuilio-Fox, Recording Secretary.