

**HIGHLAND REDEVELOPMENT COMMISSION
STUDY SESSION MINUTES
TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 27, 2022**

Members of the Highland Redevelopment Commission (RC Commission) met in person at Town Hall on Tuesday, September 27, 2022. The Study session was called to order at 6:30 by President, Sean Conley.

Present: Commissioners Sean Conley, George Georgeff, Cy Huerter, Bill Leep and Alex Robertson were present in person at Town Hall.

Additional Officials Present: Pat Krull, School Town of Highland Representative and non-voting member to the Redevelopment Commission. Commission Attorney John Reed.

Also Present: None

General Substance and Discussion

- 1. Required Resolution Wage & Salary** – Director Becerra explained that Atty Reed prepared the Resolution. Atty Reed explained that this is very similar to the one did on an annual basis. The last one that was done, was after Kathy DeGuilio decided to retire or resign. Basically, this is to inform the Council of what the pay for the employees will be. Typically, you will see the Attorney, the rate has not changed since the first year. The Recording Secretary, that will also be Maria at \$57.30 per month. Redevelopment Director, that is the salary that we all agreed on that is \$64,000.04. Then the assistant, I did put a footnote there, that is the current salary, assuming we have somebody. But that position is unoccupied as of the date of this resolution. So the Clerk-Treasurer will encumber funds for that. So anytime there is a change in terms or salary we did one of these. So everyone knows with the Redevelopment Assistant Position, if you look at the 2023 budget. Mark had put that salary at \$62,000 dollars, for an assistant. It was part of our discussion with Kathy, prior to her retiring. That we wanted to know what we could do to increase the assistant salary, if we found the right person. And that somehow got interpreted to that we were going to pay the assistant \$62,000. The budget has already been published. So the number is out there, we can't change it now. Maria and I sat down with Mark to go over the budget. We just asked him to leave it alone for the time being. We would like to start with this salary of \$41,000 some odd dollars. And we are thinking that with having that \$62,000 out there, we have the ability to negotiate with an individual if they wanted more money, in order fill that position for the right person. Atty Reed stated we would hire someone with higher qualifications. There has also been and brought up to me, by one of the Council people, potentially taking this Redevelopment Assistant, if we need to. Not only hiring to help us but also potentially help the council. Some of the Councilman feel they do not have much assistance, right

now. There is no one in the office right now to help them during the day. So this particular Redevelopment Assistant, if we find the right person, we could primarily pay them a little more. They would primarily be the Redevelopment Assistant and in some ways assist the Councilman with their day to day. Atty Reed, stated, not like a town manager but like a jack of all trades. Right now, there really is no Hub of communication. I think Michael was sort of that hub. And took on more duties than what Clerk-Treasurer does or doesn't do. Comm. Huerta, so yes you need a point of contact, so everyone knows what's going on. Can explain what Redevelopment is doing. Comm. Robertson, said well, what if there is a conflict of interest. Where the Council may not support something and get in their ear. Atty Reed said that is certainly possible. When it comes to this Conflict of interest. The pure definition of a Conflict of interest, Maria does not have one, she just doesn't.

2. **Assistant Position Update** Does anyone have any ideas on how we can potentially attract. We had discussed before about changing the title of the position from Asst to the Director. Maria stated the position was posted internally. She reached out to the Times, we have an open account with them, so she could invoice us. She originally sent 3 quotes for an Ad, but asked if there was something more affordable. She sent a quote for 2 quarters of a page for \$750. She is trying to work off the job description that exist and try to summarize. Comm. Conley asked if we are we posting on any online, indeed? Maria stated that Idea Factory has the summary already. Comm. Conley asked the commissioners if they remember if Kathy posted to indeed. Comm. Leep, said yes she posted to indeed, we did get some response, but you get a lot of unqualified responses. Comm. Conley asked does the job have minimum qualifications? Maria responded, no, this is all I had access to, it does not say what the qualifications, which probably is a good idea, once candidate apply, so you can screen them out. Comm. Conley said, we want them to self-screen themselves. Comm. Leep stated that it sounds like we are talking about a significantly different position, then Lance had. They will be doing work for the rest of the Council, so a different Title makes a lot of sense. Comm. Georgeff said Administrative Asst to the Redevelopment Commission and the Town Council. Comm. Leep said that is awfully long, but that would be just fine. Comm. Huerta asked if that title would be a problem since we are paying them. Comm. Conley and Atty Reed both said, we would need to ask the Town Council, before we put that in the ad for sure. Comm. Conley said we just hire this individual as the Asst to the Redevelopment Director and then they can interview that individual and decide whether or not they want them. Because from what we just went through with Maria, was some hurt feelings from the Council, on how we did not include them in the interview process for Maria. And part of the that Conflict of Interest, I think was for them to have a say on whether or not they were ok with Maria. Comm. Huerta said I think let's hire the Asst like you said, and let them make a decision on whether they want to do it. Comm. Conley, I think with this particular hire, that we collect the resumes and we at least share with the Council, these are the candidates that we will be interviewing for this

position. We are not asking them to do the interviewing and the hiring, but we want to make them aware of who we are considering. And once they are hired we would give the job description and their title. Comm. Georgeff, said or should we are interested in hiring, send them to the Council to be interviewed, to see if they are interested in using that person, before we hire them. Comm. Huerta stated, we could say we are thinking of the potential hire, so we can spark that interest. Comm. Georgeff asked the Atty, since we are in Executive Session, can we ask the Council if they are interested in attending that? Atty Reed responded, absolutely, you can invite anybody you want to an Executive Session. And can they participate, yes, they can, it's going to have an impact on the job description and what their pay is going to be. If this person is going to wear multiple hats. It might be we are chipping in 30 and the Town chips in 30, something along those lines. Comm Georgeff stated that he knows they need help with some of the work they do, I have no problem sharing with them, as long as we can work together. Comm. Huerta said, then again, if we are paying the majority of what the person is being paid, I have no problem doing that, if have the budget to do that. With the understanding they would be assisting the council. If they are helping other departments, we are helping improve the Town of Highland. Comm. Leep stated to him it would be better to have 2 people. One filling in Lance's position and possibly one who has experience with social media, but it certainly sounds like the town council needs and assistant. Comm. Georgeff stated, well it's a start because they may find they like it so well, that they need more, they would hire their own. Comm. Leep said how would it end up if we split 50/50? We need someone, so Alex is not running the Main Street. I know Lance took care of listing all their properties on their website and making sure that's all updated. As long as we that stuff done and its not impacting the ability for the things in Redevelopment. Comm Huerta stated, Bill you know from your business experience if you've got the right employee, they figure out how to get things done, even though it may not be necessarily in their job description. Comm. Georgeff stated maybe the next step would be somebody. Sean can you reach out to Bernie and see if they can put that on their agenda for discussion. See if they would be interested in that. Comm. Leep said, I think that's a good place to start, we can see if interested. Atty Reed, said, well it could be like the IT guy, he works for everybody all the depts. Servers, emails. He floats around all day and does whatever is necessary. Comm. Conley, I agree we should reach out to the Council to see if they are interested in this. Comm. Conley said he would reach out to Kathy and ask if we have an Indeed account and she be willing to share that also with AIM. I think we start back there before we spend money on advertising. Comm. Leep stated it's been a long time since I pulled an ad in the paper, and I don't think people, online is where they are finding it. Comm. Conley said to span what other sites we can use online. Comm. Leep said you could check the job on Indeed, but you are better off posting a new job and use the old description as a template, then it pops up a new job and it gets their attention, because if you start the old job it does not get the attention that a new job does. Comm. Huerta asked, what was the lady's

name that we were looking at for the Director, what was her name again? Comm. Georgeff, said Bailey. Comm Huerter asked is she still available. Comm. Conley said he can reach out and ask if she has accepted any other position. But she pretty much told me no. Atty Reed, asked is it title based or was it salary. Comm. Conley said I don't know, I think it was more title based. I don't think she wanted to be the Redevelopment Assistant. Comm. Huerter said maybe explain to her where the discussion is going and see if she has interest. Comm. Conley said he will. She would be the perfect person because of how much she already does. I will email her in the morning to see if there is any interest. Comm. Georgeff stated, that's another issue, our emails were brought up about our discussions on our emails. Shouldn't we have our own email address with the Town to discuss the Redevelopment business instead of our personal emails. I know a lot of the other towns have their own emails. Atty Reed said it's a good idea, because if you use your personal emails they can be discoverable, which isn't awesome. Ed can whip up emails.

Comm Conley, so we are going to reach out to the Town Council with the sharing of the Assistant and I will reach out to Bailey, se whether or not she considers a discussion about it.

- 3. Resolution for Consulting Contract** using outside consulting services. So, this is a Resolutions, so we have the ability to reach out to Kathy. Atty Reed, stated that it basically states we can ask her and she can do it or not. Comm. Huerta asked if we do reach out to Kathy and she is not interested, could we use the same format for someone else? Atty Reed said this one is specifically for Kathy, and we got the pay be dividing her salary into an hourly. So, it could be used for someone else just change the name and the number. So, this is if she is willing and its going to be on a case by case basis. Only if we need to call her and consult on something that we are not aware of. Comm. Huerta commented, that basically Maria a determination here, whatever transition material or have her come it. Atty Reed, said you may or may not need her, but she may be more willing to answer phone call or sit down, look over a Resolution or give some analysis on an older project. She can bill by the hour whatever it might be. We would put it on our claims list and submit it for payment. Comm. Robertson, is there a specific procedure for her to bill us? Atty Reed, said the bill is submitted Maria would approve and put on the claims list.

Conference Comm. Georgeff, said Maria sent an email earlier today about a conference, Redevelopment conference. I was wondering if it would be beneficial for you and her to attend. Comm. Conley said he must have missed that email, was it as the end of the day. Comm. Georgeff said they are going to go over TIF, one of the items of topic is how you are able to capture 1% of the assessed valuation of residential properties. Comm. Huerta stated, Maria usually there is Items for the commissioners on the agenda. Comm. Georgeff stated we would have to approve so they can submit their

vouchers. We need to participate. Comm. Huerta any of these things, whether its the Forum, the County things and all that, I think Maria that's going to be very important. To get out there and see what other people are doing and bring back. Grab their ideas, no sense in reinventing the wheel, if someone else has gone through the Development process. Maria commented, Best Practices.

Commercial Property Applications Comm. Bill Leep asked, do we want to discuss this commercial property applications. Comm. Georgeff, said we should its actually some expenses for the interior, we've never, well we did downtown. Comm. Conley stated at least since I have been on the commission we have been very wary of interior work. We are very aware of crossing that line, because if you do it for one, it opens up that box. Someone is going to say why did you do it over there. Comm. Leep said, I believe the Town Council did it when they were running the Redevelopment, for one person. Since then we have pulled back. What about signage. I don't have the rules in front of me. Does signage fit into the façade grant? Maria Becerra said yes. Comm. Robertson asked do we know how much is left in the grant program. Maria said that we have quiet a bit of money left. Comm. Conley said we haven't really had any. Now the 45th St project that we ok'd but its not within district, the strip where Brumms Barn are done. I guess they have submitted their receipts. So, we will have to take that into consideration as far as what the total is that we have left. Maria, were you saying Ken was going to go back out there and do the final inspection. Maria, said yes to do the final inspection. Comm. Leep, said that was from 2021, so that comes out of the 2021 budget. Comm. Conley said we would have all \$100,000 dollars, we have not done anything this year. Comm. Leep said, even though this is a good organization, I want to shy away from replacing the furnace. The whole idea is the signage that goes along with the façade. The idea is to make the outside of the businesses look good. I don't support anything mechanical. I support doing 30% of the signage. Maria stated in reading the regulations, it talks about exterior, no neglected maintenance. Anything that is really maintenance is not eligible. Comm. Georgeff, agreed, signage would be fine. Comm. Conley asked, do we know if these folks own the building? Comm Huerta, said it says, business owner and not building owner. Atty Reed asked what is the address? Comm. Huerta stated 2927 Jewett, is the property. Comm. Georgeff stated, I helped them find their key number.

Comm. Conley commented, Maria and I attended the Council meeting. We were requested to attend to introduce Maria. We did not know it was the 2023 budget was going to be discussed. I didn' t prepare the budget, Maria did not prepared the budget, George did not prepare the budget. We got the budget on Tuesday and the previous years budget on Friday, to compare what was actually being submitted. So I rquested sometime with Mark to sit down and really go over the budget, so Maria and I would have an idea of what did the budget all entail. One of things that we learned about, and I learned about it. You guys might know about it, but I did not know, that we get

monthly money, into this fund, or this account called the CEDIT acct. And that CEDIT acct comes from the County charges. Its is a significant amount of money. That's the money Kathy always talked about, "I think I can find some money". In fact, it ends up being about \$50,000 a month. And I am just bringing this up, because this is something Mark is going to come to us with. There is a shortfall, within the street dept. Maria, stated CDBG dept. overrun. Atty Reed, stated matching funds. Comm. Conley said, matching funds, and they are short about \$250,000 dollars budget this year. And Mark is thinking that he may be able to cover that with some of the money from this particular account, that we have. Now this is money that we give \$100,000 to the Town every year? Excuse me the School? Mr. Krull, from the School, stated, yes but technically, no. You don't cut us a check. Comm. Conley said, no we don't cut you a check but, the money goes to the Town, from this fund. Mr. Krull said it offsets. We also give \$250,000 to the local streets. But Mark is going to ask us for more money. Just wanted to share where it is all going to come from. Comm. Huerter asked, do we know what the balance in the acct is? Maria stated \$194,000. Comm. Conley stated, so its not going to be the full \$250,000, he is going to take some money from the rainy day fund and ask us to give money from this account. With there only being a quarter left, I am assuming we should be able to swing it, to try and help the Town, to balance their budget. Comm. Huerter stated, let's be clear on what we can and cannot spend that money on, so that if we have our own projects that we. Comm Conley, right, that's why I think Kathy was very careful about, this money is for Redevelopment. Comm. Conley asked Pat, what were you saying? It's really to offset debt on a bond? Pat responded, yes, the payment goes directly into the debt acct that we have, technically saves the taxpayers \$100,000 dollars annually paying towards the debt. I know that we have 2 or 3 years left. Comm. Conley, for that particular bond. Comm Huerter, said here is another example of what we do to save the taxpayers. Comm. Conley, that's why I am bringing it up, because I don't want anyone to be surprised when this is brought up. Because its going to happen here pretty quick. October 10th is the final budget approval. Comm. Huerta stated he would support that project, but here again what I don't want is, questioning, what does the commission do. Because, I know how hard we work here these past 2 1/2 years and the accomplishments that we got. Just again, I was telling Mark, I walked by the bank of highland, the old Bult Oil property over there, they are running the lawn sprinkler. That place looks like its inhabited, compared to what it had been a year ago at this time. So that's another project over there, that had been on the agenda for 20 some years and we got it done. Comm. Conley – I spent last week at the special meeting study session and I went last night with Maria, to actual Town Council meeting. What I am really gathering from the people who represent us on the Town Council is most dissatisfied with, is the level of communication, that they get from our Commission. Whether that is from our liaison or from us directly. Going to them and being part of what we are trying to do over here. So as long as we step that up, the communication up. So we talking to them Cy or Bill or whomever, huh, I think once we

can do that, we will get a lot more cooperation from them. Would you agree with that John? Oh, yeah. My assessment is that, they think we are running around making decisions, just because we want to make decisions. But they want to at least be informed on what we are trying to do over here. I don't think there was much communication, in the past year, because of the nature of the relationship between Redevelopment and the Council. Atty. John, said Kathy did attend the meetings and then towards the end, when Councilman goes around the room, Kathy was there, she would answer any questions. There was never a lot of questions. I think being there is important, and maybe just issuing a memo. Here is what happened the last month. Send a memo for one meeting and be present at another. Comm. Huerta, so a copy to the Council Pres and the whole Council. Comm. Leep stated that every year Kathy would have an annual report for the State and its basically, every meeting we did this. Like a record of the whole year. If these memos are done, you would have it done by the end of the year. Use those memos as your year end report. Pat Krull, said in your defense, you guys haven't done anything different than the previous Commissions, your communications. Comm. Conley, said thank you, Pat, I would like to try and work a little bit more with them. Comm. Leep asked so what are those funds supposed to be used for. Comm. Conley, they are supposed to be for Redevelopment. Maria stated they were earmarked for Downtown. A Commissioner asked, can they be used for wages? Comm. Conley said, no they cannot be used for wages. So when we were talking about moving wages, it was from the 300 and 400 series of accounts, correct? Like consulting fees, training. Comm. Georgeff, remember when we had that consultant here going over our funds, our budget? He mentioned, I remember him saying that the funds that we use, we can use them outside of our districts, as long as we can show that it is a benefit to the entire Town. Atty. Reed stated that's how money goes to relieve some of the debt to the school. Comm. Georgeff – that community development block grant is for the entire Town, I am thinking that is a question we are going to have to ask Mark. Because if he is asking for us to do it. Is it an authorized expense we can make? That CEDIT fund is directly from the County for Redevelopment. So is it Mark that we ask that question to? Atty Reed, yes. Comm. Conley said can you make sure we are not, I don't want to say Illegally. Comm. Georgeff said, the State Board of Accounts, would make an exception. They would identify an exception, that would be us, we don't want to be one of their exceptions. Atty Reed, said he will get an answer. Comm. Conley – What is this Shared Code of Ethics? Atty Reed, went and looked a deeper dive into that. Highland is a signatory, only things I could find is Public Officials. Its not signing individually to the Ethics, it is done as a Town. The only thing that I have seen individuals sign, is the anti-nepotism policy. So, they are not as really thorough as I thought. Maria said, it is just for everyone information. Comm. Conley said did everyone see this nice picture of Maria? It will be in the next Gazette Issue. Comm. Huerta asked about the sign? Was it fixed. Atty Reed said it was a bad light cell. Atty Reed sent them a letter and it got done.

Comm. Georgeff, Maria said she would be willing to sign that ethics. Atty Reed said, it's a Town wide ethics not an individual signatory. So there is nothing for her to sign.

Comm. Conley – but last night Maria agreed to sign a Conflict of Interest form. Comm. Conley asked Maria if she had signed it. Maria said she had asked Mark, he said he would be around. We came to the conclusion, that it would be the thing for her to sign the form that they want. We all know that Maria does not have a Conflict of interest.

Comm. Georgeff – the only question I have is does the Council vote on it? Comm. Conley stated they did vote on it last night. Comm Georgeff – its my understanding is that they are filed with the Town, but the Council or governing body does not vote. Comm. Conley- that was my question last night, was are you voting on this form that is actually going to be used or are you voting on accepting her conflict of interest? And they said both. Atty Reed said, it is a State form, it is kind of messy and there never is one size fits all. But the fill in the blanks are all correct, and the Council signs it and they are going to ask her to sign. All she is saying is that I work for McColly Realty and file it with the State. Councilman Schocke brought up a very good point, that I did not even think about, was, as he referenced. I am an attorney and if I find a case, I can always refer it to another attorney and get paid a referral fee. So, with Maria, if there was a real estate transaction here in Town. If the person said, would you refer a realtor to me, would Maria be looking for a referral fee for referring that person to another realtor. Comm. Georgeff said, I filed a Conflict of Interest form, is it still good. Atty Reed said, as long as you are still sitting up here. Comm. Georgeff – I filed it when I was on the water board, I represented the Town in the purchase of a property. Atty Reed, said it's been disclosed. Comm. Georgeff said, so I can, but I would never do that. Comm. Conley, said Maria said, she would never do that. She would ask the person to find their own real estate. Atty Reed- its all about avoiding even the appearance of inpropriety.

Study session ends at 7:35 P.M.