

**HIGHLAND REDEVELOPMENT COMMISSION**  
**STUDY SESSION MINUTES**  
**MONDAY, FEBRUARY 9<sup>TH</sup>, 2026**

Members of the Highland Redevelopment Commission (RC Commission) met in person at Town Hall on Monday, February 9<sup>th</sup>, 2026. The Study session was called to order at 8:40 pm by President Alex Robertson.

**Roll Call/Commissioners Present** at Town Hall George Georgeff, Tom Black, Alex Robertson, Doug Turich, Commissioner Phil Scheeringa and Pat Krull, Non-voting member & School Town Representative were present.

**Additional Officials Present:** Maria Becerra, Redevelopment Director; Attorney John Reed and 1 member of the audience .

**Lamar Sign -Redevelopment Property ( Indianapolis and 81st )**

Commissioner Robertson mentioned that we own the property that the Lamar sign is on and we would need council level approval if we were going to put a road in . I don't know if there are any easements to access but their contract is coming up .

Maria stated the reason they are on the agenda is because their contract is up on August 31<sup>st</sup>

Commissioner Scheeringa asked if that was both Lamar signs ?

Maria answered that she was just reviewing the one on 81<sup>st</sup> and she wasn't sure about the one by Meijer's because of the whole access that we have for the proposed developer

Commissioner Georgeff mentioned that they purchased the property .

Maria answered It's our property .

Commissioner Georgeff answered he knows but they gave to us and I bet if you go back and check that is some kind of first refusal .

Maria stated that she has the contract and the Attorney wants to review it but it says the contract does state that it terminates August 31<sup>st</sup> .

Commissioner Georgeff asked have you seen the contract ?

Maria answered Yes the contract is right there and John can review it quickly and I have highlighted when it terminates

Commissioner Georgeff stated There has to be some covenant or something because they wouldn't just give it to us. It has to be 2018/2019 There just not going to give us the property .That they have actually purchased it.They are not going to buy that property from the bait shop and just give us the property.

Commissioner Robertson stated that the parcel is under redevelopment

Commissioner Georgeff stated but not the part where the sign is

Attorney Reed intervened and said that the idea was we're not going to let you put the sign up unless we own the property because we don't like those big giant signs

Commissioner Turich asked what was the ask ?

Maria answered just to notify the commission and the council that this will be expiring August 31<sup>st</sup> and Attorney Reed if that's how it reads

Attorney Reed answered yes

Maria went on to say it was 15 years starting in 2011 about their lease agreement and we are looking at this Parcel because of the Patel development and we meet with Derek and how to configure things and we're still reviewing the agreement .

Attorney Reed stated we have to notify them within 90 days

Maria answered exactly

Commissioner Turich stated you mention a roadway does that open up additional opportunities for that building that they want to build at the old bus terminal because I Thought one of the reasons is that they were limited on options because they didn't have a light to get in and out . If I'm hearing this correctly we're trying to get a road from the bus property to the stop light .

Maria answered the latest presentation we have from the developer he will continue To develop that sight even if he can't get to the light .

Commissioner Turich stated the development is limited to inside storage because he doesn't have a good parking lot or good access to that space

Commissioner Georgeff answered no the developer stated he had retail in the front and a warehouse in the back.

Commissioner Turich stated but it's still storage

Commissioner Scheeringa stated it's not really storage .

Attorney Reed answered its flex space , there's still a storage component but it's flex space.

Commissioner Scheeringa it's flex space you can open it up

Attorney Reed interjected and stated call it a vanilla box you have 4 walls and here's your square footage tell me what you want to do with it and gave some examples.

Maria mentioned that will be doing another presentation and give more detail.

Commissioner Robertson mentioned the reason all this came up is because we are looking at that area and trying to figure a path to the road and get some costs . It owned by Redevelopment and then they brought up the sign licensing and when that lease is coming up.

Commissioner Georgeff asked how much it would cost to move the sign to give us more space.

Attorney Reed answered it's really the construction cost and those concrete pads that they sit on and they are several feet into the ground.

Maria asked Attorney Reed if nothing is done it auto updates , I think for the whole year . If we do something it would be 90 days prior otherwise it renews at the current \$25,000.00

### **Revise Commercial Improvement Grant**

Commissioner Robertson talked about revising this grant to include places along 45<sup>th</sup> . He mentioned that at least one business over on 45<sup>th</sup> has approached him about applying for the Grant. If we would like to revise anything that those areas are acceptable to use the Grant, do you want to add more funds and Commissioner Robertson also added that they have a lot of success over the years with the downtown area.

Commissioner Georgeff mentioned the problem with vacant lots and developing them is the stormwater retention requirements and so we can maybe offset that

Maria stated right now it's just the redevelopment district. So we did make an exception or it was made for the Brums on 45<sup>th</sup> and the allocation area, the commercial district goes all the way to Kennedy and Main all the way up the boulevard. So those funds are coming back to redevelopment as far as the businesses so if they improve the property more taxes and it just comes back to us

### **Landscaping – go out for bid? Accept proposal currently if price has not changed**

Proposal received for downtown landscaping and using existing contractor Deans Landscaping any issues that we had were remedied promptly and the contractor was responsive . Mark Knesek indicated a price hold for the next year and Maria received confirmation from Mark Herak . They start in April and it's February so we just needed to confirm.

Maria asked if we should go ahead and renew or put it out for quotes ?

Commissioner Turich asked Do they understand the expectation for 2026 then? Do you think we'll have the same hiccup?

Maria answered No, I don't know if he would be holding his price, but I wanted to ask what we, you know, what the Commission wanted to do. We can put it out for quote. there're a few landscaping companies here in Highland but I think last year Mark said nobody bid.

Commissioner Georgeff stated It does hurt because then he can withdraw his bid. If you go back to him and ask him if he'll hold his quote for next year if we're interested in keeping that.

Commissioner Turich stated part of it is about building relationships with vendors right? If they're doing a good job and they were responsive to our needs

Commissioner Georgeff stated if we were happy with what we ended up with and we went out for bid already with it and he's willing to hold the price . I don't think prices have went down on any of this.

Commissioner Turich asked if there was a watering system ?

Maria answered Mark Knesek watered them

Commissioner Georgeff mentioned one town that had a watering and they used to down and water the planters.

Maria sked if she should ask if Deans wanted to hold the price down

Commissioner Robertson answered yes

Maria stated she would like to see it expand to the Highland sign on the boulevard

Commissioner Scheeringa stated he thinks it's between the parks and public works they try and coordinate and work together .

**If 7950 Kennedy Ave is to be used for contractor laydown area, do we draft a short - term lease agreement .**

Commissioner Robertson stated A contractor has expressed interest in using 7950 Kennedy for a contract laydown area and renting or leasing the building and lot for at least 2 years to avoid trailer cost. Should we do a short-term lease ?

Commissioner Scheeringa answered Yep. I think that's advised by our insurance carrier as well.

Commissioner Georgeff mentioned the previous rent was \$2000.00 a month that is what Krazy Kaplan paid

Commissioner Robertson aske dis \$2000 a month a fair price to ask for if we could get it .

**Ideas for future use at 8436 Kennedy Ave (Gas Station) demo to be complete in spring of this year .**

Demo is scheduled for spring and it was discussed being used as a green space including a picnic table , a bike repair station and even an E-bike rental and after a lengthy discussion it was decided that we would place it in the Gazebo and receive input from the residents

Commissioner Black mentioned What had come to mind for me was sort of green space, sort of what we see on the bike trail there at 45th, where you've got a picnic table, maybe a place to, you know, fix your tire on your bike, whatever, if you're going down the bike trail there. A little bit of a canopy where they sit in the shade for a second.

Commissioner Georgeff mentioned I kind of thought about maybe putting something out in the gazebo, asking for the residents to give suggestions on what we could do there.

Commissioner Scheeringa mentioned I thought we were never going to try and sell the property

Commissioner Georgeff stated we weren't going to sell it right away.

Commissioner Scheeringa stated Well, I mean, I don't want us to put it in a gazebo if someone's going to want to buy it in six months

Commissioner Georgeff mentioned one of the things I see at all the time, don't pay attention anymore, but on Ridge Road in Munster and when you come to Columbia on Ridge Road, the town of Munster has that display at Rotary Park . I didn't think we were going to try and sell it right now. I thought that was something that whole corridor gets developed, that people have an option for that property.

Maria stated The Neighborhoods of Sustainability Group said they would be willing to work with us if we were going to make it green. They have one of their members that would help us kind of design, right? How do you use that?

Commissioner Robertson mentioned So, either way, it's going to be green this spring. If we want to try to sell or put out an RP or go out and see what the residents think.

Commissioner Georgeff stated I wouldn't be opposed to getting input from the residents on what they think, or what suggestions, or see what they suggest. It doesn't mean we have to accept the suggestions and at least there might be something to come forward.

**Update – Kendig Keast to have first draft of gateway redevelopment plan in 1 week . The consultant has budget left if we want to expand plans.**

Commissioner Robertson spoke with Greg from Kendig Keast and he said in about a week he will have a rough draft that he's been putting together for the APA in the loop.

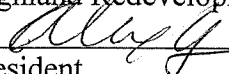
He is spending money on putting together a more detailed plan, something he wants to show us, and then he wants to start diving into the PUD process, or at least finding out what he needs to do on a challenge.

COMMISSIONER COMMENTS : Commissioner Krull mentioned about the little islands in the municipal parking lot and what could be done with them because they just look terrible and mentioned Crown Point and how nice their islands look

ADJOURNMENT: Meeting Adjourned at: 9:15 pm

Duly Passed and Resolved by the Highland Redevelopment Commission,  
Highland, Lake County, Indiana, this 23<sup>rd</sup> day of March 2026, having passed by a  
vote 4 in favor and 0 opposed.

Highland Redevelopment Commission

  
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President

ATTEST:

  
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Secretary