



CITY OF WARREN
REDEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY
REGULAR MEETING
MARCH 23, 2022

The regular meeting of the Redevelopment Authority (RDA) was held on March 23, 2022, at 1:00 PM in Council Chambers of the Municipal Building, 318 W. Third Avenue.

ROLL CALL

Chair Michael Boyd called the meeting to order. Members present; Chair Michael Boyd, Vice Chair Gary Sawtelle, Secretary/Treasurer Holly LeMeur, and Doug Hearn. Also present; Randy Rossey – Director of Codes & Planning, Mike Holtz – DPW Director, Scott Taylor – Zoning Ordinance Enforcement Official, Kelly Conti - Recording Secretary and Andrea Stapleford – City Solicitor. Absent: Melinda Saunders

MINUTES

Mr. Sawtelle made a motion to approve the February 23, 2022, regular meeting minutes, followed by a second from Ms. LeMeur. The motion carried unanimously.

VISITORS

- Josh Cotton - reporter for the Times Observer via Zoom.
- Phil Gilbert – City Council member.
- Jim Decker – representing the Build Back Better grant initiative.

CORRESPONDENCE

Mr. Rossey presented the Authority members with an invitation to the upcoming Comprehensive Plan work sessions being held in March.

TREASURER'S REPORT

Ms. LeMeur reviewed the following:

Bank Statements:

February 2022

Key Bank:

Beginning balance: \$633,566.07. Interest earned: \$4.86. Total balance on February 28, 2022: \$633,570.93

Northwest Savings Bank:

Beginning balance: \$69,889.43. Issued check #1210: \$4,160.10. Deposit: \$595.00. Interest earned: \$2.61. Total ending balance on February 28, 2022: \$66,326.94

Invoice for approval:

Invoice #11607 from Bureau Veritas for \$4.50 to reimburse the City of Warren for the UCC fee paid on their behalf for the demolition of 423 Ranking St. was reviewed and approved by a motion from Mr. Hearn, followed by a second from Ms. LeMeur. The motion carrier unanimously.

Mr. Boyd inquired about the origin of the \$595.00 deposit. Per Ms. LeMeur, it was a return from an insurance premium.

Mr. Sawtelle made a motion to approve the treasurers report, Ms. LeMeur seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

NEW BUSINESS

- ***New members signatures on the bank account:***

Per Mr. Rossey asked Mr. Boyd if he could use his banking knowledge to assist with updating the signatures on the bank account to reflect the newly elected members. Mr. Boyd agreed.

- ***Changes to the DCED & Revolving Loan:***

Per Mr. Rossey, Jessica Byler - City of Warren's Financial Officer, checked to see if these two accounts still needed to remain separate and found that they do not. They will now be recorded as one combined account. Mr. Boyd asked Mr. Rossey if this changed the funds available to lend. Mr. Rossey responded yes; the one fund no longer has the stipulations it once carried now that they are both combined.

OLD BUSINESS

- ***Mission Statement***

Mr. Hearn and Mr. Boyd worked on a mission statement which was presented to the authority. Ms. LeMeur made a motion to accept the mission statement which was followed by a second from Mr. Sawtelle. The motion carried unanimously. The new mission statement is as follows:

The mission of The City of Warren Redevelopment Authority is elimination of blighted areas by acquisition, promoting sound re-planning, and redevelopment of such areas for the promotion of reinvestment, health, safety, convenience, and welfare of the citizens of the City of Warren, PA. In addition, we will establish sound re-planning and redevelopment of non-blighted properties, in order to foster and promote business expansion, job creation, to facilitate new business and housing development as well as redevelopment of such areas for the promotion of health, safety, convenience, and welfare of the citizens of the City of Warren, PA.

- ***423 Rankin Street***

Per Mr. Rossey, the demolition of this property has been completed and there are two parties interested in purchasing this property. He requested the RDA Authority entertain the idea of advertising a sealed bid sale with a \$4,000 minimum bid to cover the demolition and other costs the city has incurred on this property.

Mr. Boyd asked the authority what they thought of the sealed bid as apposed to an auction. Mr. Rossey noted that with a sealed bid you are guaranteed to get the minimum requirement. Mr. Sawtelle made a motion to advertise this property for a sealed bid sale with a minimum bid of \$4,000. Mr. Hearn seconded the motion. The motion carrier unanimously. The City staff will be in charge of advertising the sealed bid, providing and collecting the bid packages.

- ***RDA Loan for 219 Liberty Street***

Mr. Boyd asked Ms. Stapleford for an update on the preparation of the loan terms. Ms. Stapleford stated we needed to know the terms that Mr. Christeson is willing to accept. Mr. Boyd asked if the loan should be set up as a revolving loan or a fixed term. Mr. Sawtelle asked for clarification between the two loan options. Mr. Boyd explained that a revolving loan or line of credit could be set up where Mr. Christeson would be required to provide the authority with invoice receipts throughout the process with the option of having

someone from the authority do periodic inspections to monitor the process prior to receiving more funding or we could do a fixed loan where he would receive a lump sum and start incurring interest fees immediately on the loan. Per Mr. Rossey, during a discussion with Mr. Christeson prior to the meeting, that he regretfully was not able to attend, Mr. Christeson stated he would prefer a fixed loan as apposed to a revolving line of credit or a construction loan. Mr. Rossey suggested the RDA should appoint a negotiating team to conduct negotiations with Mr. Christeson and then bring those terms back to the RDA Authority to entertain a vote. Mr. Hearn requested progress reports be a stipulation of the loan terms. Mr. Boyd asked Ms. Stapleford what the best course of action would be regarding a sit-down meeting or email correspondence to negotiate with Mr. Christeson. Per Ms. Stapleford, either would be fine, but emails would create a paper trail for documentation purposes. Ms. Stapleford and Mr. Holtz suggested stipulating Mr. Christeson put up some type of collateral to secure the loan and protect the RDA. Ms. LeMeur made a motion to appoint Mr. Boyd and Mr. Sawtelle as the loan negotiating committee, Mr. Hearn seconded the motion. The motion carrier unanimously.

- ***306 Prospect Street:***

Per Mr. Taylor, this property declared blighted by the Blighted Property Committee and Planning Commission and is now before the RDA. He mailed correspondence to the LLC company that owns this property but hasn't received any response back. He did receive signature release cards confirming the company has received the last two items mailed. This property is currently in litigation with the Commonwealth. Mr. Taylor provided Ms. Stapleford with documents per her inquiry as to what the litigation was about, from which she was able to determine the litigation was regarding predatory lending. Mr. Taylor and Mr. Holtz agree this property is a good candidate for demolition. Ms. LeMeur asked if there was any interest from the neighbors in purchasing this property. Mr. Taylor has not reached out to the neighbors yet but has had other interested parties contact him. Mr. Rossey stated the city staff would keep an eye on the litigation progress and will provide updates. If the property comes up for tax sale, the RDA can address how they would like to proceed with the property at that time. Mr. Boyd asked if the DPW would be able to handle the potential demolition, per Mr. Holtz, they could. Mr. Gilbert, speaking on behalf of the Tax Assessment Office, informed the authority the LLC Company was a victim in the predatory lending litigation, and he had been asked to pull this property from tax sale until the litigation was finalized. He was under the assumption the lending company was considering giving the property to the owners.

- ***Build Back Better Riverfront Development Grant:***

Mr. Decker provided the authority with the narrative that was presented with the Build Back Better Pa Wild's grant application. The Federal Economic Development Agency put out a regional challenge nationally to develop regional economic development and economic impact project and the Pennsylvania Wilds Outdoor Recreation Industry Cluster Development project was one of 62 regional projects selected out of the 653 applicants. This covers the entire footprint of the PA Wilds which extends from Warren County all the way over to Tioga County. Pennsylvania Wilds is doing some capacity building as part of this \$55,000,000.00 regional grant. The ask for the total riverfront redevelopment totals \$9,250,000.00, the City of Warren has committed \$2,000,000.00, so the part of the funding we would receive if rewarded is \$7,250,000.00. The scope of this project includes:

- Multi-use river access ramp – provide access for canoes, kayaks, and powered boats.
 - Boat tie-up docking system – to be used for powered boats and handicap access to watercraft.
 - Stepped, river-bank viewing/access area – provide access for canoes and kayaks when water is high and riverbank access for non-boaters when the water is low.
 - Realignment of the Liberty and Clark Streets and Langdon Drive – provide safe traffic flow, upgraded parking with safety lighting, Wi-Fi “hotspots” and EV charging stations.
 - Extend the riverwalk and ramp east – extend from Breeze point landing to the confluence of the Conewango Creek which will include a river wall.
 - Construction of a bicycle Pump Track and Skills Park – provide a place for all skill levels to hone their skills and attract more riders to the area.
- Economic impact studies show this project could potentially input an annual addition of \$11,318,000.00 in economic impact for the community. The time frame for the grant to be awarded is September, we will continue to lobby our federal legislators to help put as much influence on us being one of the 32 project recipients of this grant as we possibly can. One of the other benefits of being awarded funding through the PA Wilds is they are going to be co-branding, inter-connecting and inter-marketing all these projects. Mr. Decker asked the authority if they could promote this project to any legislators they may have contact with, to help push for the approval of the grant funding. On behalf of the authority, Mr. Boyd stated the authority would help in any way they could with letters of recommendation or any other support they could provide.

PUBLIC COMMENT

There was no public comment.

ADJOURNMENT

With there being no further business to come before the Authority, the meeting was adjourned upon motion by Mr. Sawtelle followed by a second from Ms. LeMeur. The motion carried unanimously.

NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will be held on Wednesday, April 27, 2022, at 1:00 PM.

Minutes prepared by Kelly Conti.