



CITY OF WARREN
REDEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY
REGULAR MEETING
APRIL 27, 2022

The regular meeting of the Redevelopment Authority (RDA) was held on April 27, 2022, at 1:00 PM in Council Chambers of the Municipal Building, 318 W. Third Avenue.

ROLL CALL

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

MINUTES

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

VISITORS

- Josh Cotton - Warren Times Observer
- Tom Christeson – via Zoom – representing 219 Liberty St.

CORRESPONDENCE

There was no correspondence to bring before the Authority.

TREASURER'S REPORT

Ms. LeMeur reviewed the following:

Bank Statements:

March 2022

Key Bank:

Beginning balance: \$633,570.93 Interest earned: \$5.38. Total balance on March 31, 2022: \$633,576.31.

Northwest Savings Bank:

Beginning balance: \$66,329.76. Interest earned: \$2.82. Total ending balance on March 31, 2022: \$66,329.76.

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

Invoices for approval:

Invoice #11622 for \$2,330.88 - reimbursement to the City of Warren for fees they paid on behalf of the RDA which consisted of Stapleford & Byham Legal Fees – inv#1931 for \$80.25, Casella – inv. #697173 for \$377.76 and inv. #697330 for \$2,330.88 to cover demolition and tipping fees for 423 Rankin Street, was reviewed and approved by a motion from Ms. LeMeur, followed by a second from Mr. Hearn. The motion carried unanimously.

NEW BUSINESS

- ***Hudson Group update:*** Per City Manager Nancy Freenock, the Hudson Group is proposing to construct a 40-unit senior, income-based housing facility. This will not be low-income housing. She passed on a conceptual based drawing for the Authority to review.
- ***Letter of Support for Hudson Group:*** City Manager Nancy Freenock asked the Authority if they would consider submitting a letter of support for the Hudson Group Senior Living project located at the corner of Liberty Street and Pennsylvania Avenue for them to submit with their grant application. Providing the City and the RDA Authority are still support this project, the Hudson Group is preparing to submit an application at the end of June for tax credit financing. This lot has been vacant for about 40 years and for the past ten years she has tried diligently to get someone to develop this lot. She has reached out to hotel developers, mini casino developers, etc. but hasn't been able to get any kind of interest outside of the Hudson Group. The Hudson Group builds projects that complement the community. For this current proposal, Eagles Crest Senior Housing, they plan to incorporate a small artist space to compliment the Cray Art Gallery. There would be a Community Center available for public use, along with a cross walk out the back exit to the parking garage with 40 parking spaces allotted for residents, five of which would be handicap accessible on the ground level. There would be onsite laundry and trash facilities, a computer room with staff onboard to assist with computer training, a storage area where they would house canoes and kayaks for the residents to use on the river and a few other amenities. The Director of DPW and city engineer have walked through the two empty buildings currently on the lot and have deemed them not salvageable due to excessive mold, vaults underground that need filled in, etc.

Hudson Group did a survey and found there to be approximately 1,000 people in the Warren County area that would be potential candidates to live in this project. Ms. LeMeur questioned if this would just create a transfer of current residents from one housing authority to another. Ms. Freenock stated this would not be in competition with other local housing authorities. Per Ms. Damcott, potential renters would have to be at least 62 years old and fall within a certain income level, tentatively between \$21,000 and \$36,000 yearly.

The RDA members were concerned about the materials to be used for this project and the overall aesthetic look of the building. They would prefer something that fits better with the historical nature of other Warren buildings. Ms. Freenock put Kelley Coey from the Hudson Group on speaker phone to address some concerns, including the façade of the structure. Per Ms. Coey, the drawing they were presented was just a rough drawing and that they would be willing to work with the RDA Authority and the City to provide a more historical looking structure.

Mr. Sawtelle asked if there has been any other interest in developing this property. Per Ms. Freenock, Tom Christie has expressed interest in turning the lot into a distillery, but per Mr. Rossey, he had expressed interest several years and never acted on the project.

Ms. LeMeur asked if it was allowable to demolish a historic building. Ms. Freenock stated this was allowed, but not when using government funding, which is the issue the Hudson Group faced with their previous grant application. The group is now looking at different financing options that would not hinder the demolition of the building.

The Authority was not prepared to offer a letter of support at this time with two RDA members and the Director of Codes & Planning absent. They chose to readdress this topic at the May 25th meeting, unless a special meeting was held prior for the 219 Liberty St. Loan project, they would add it to the special meeting agenda. Ms. Freenock will forward videos of previous Hudson Group projects to the RDA Authority for them to review and see the quality of their work.

OLD BUSINESS

- ***RDA Loan for 219 Liberty Street*** – Tom Christeson was present via Zoom to discuss the terms of the RDA Loan for the Brick House project. Mr. Christeson sent an email to Michael Boyd, Mr. Sawtelle, Randy Rossey and Andrea Stapleford's office early today regarding the terms of the loan. Mr. Sawtelle read the email to those present who weren't copied in on the email. Mr. Christeson is requesting an interest cap at no higher than 4.5%. He stated if the interest rate was to start out at 3.0% with five or ten year increases not to exceed 4.5% interest, that would work. He also stated it may be easier to do a 3.5% fixed rate for a 20-year term. Regarding the request from the RDA to have Mr. Christeson personally back the funding, this is not a standard practice for Mr. Christeson, but if it was a requirement, he would be willing to personally back the loan. He would also like to push the first payment due out six months from the day of funding approval. Ms. Freenock asked if the RDA would be in the first position on the loan, Mr. Christeson confirmed they would. The present members chose to table this decision until the May 25th meeting with the option of a special meeting being held prior to that, if need be, so that Mr. Boyd and Mr. Rossey could review and provide input on the loan terms.
- ***423 Rankin Street*** – Per Mr. Taylor, the house on this property has been demolished by the DPW. The DPW is in the process of replacing a fence they had to remove to do the demolition. This property is currently in a bid process, we will have an update at the May 25th meeting.
- ***708 West Fifth Avenue*** – Per Mr. Taylor, on behalf of the RDA, a bid was submitted to the county tax office for \$1.

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. Hearn followed by a second from Ms. LeMeur. The motion carried unanimously.

NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will be held on Wednesday, May 25, 2022, at 1:00 PM.

Minutes prepared by Kelly Conti.