



CITY OF WARREN
REDEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY
REGULAR MEETING
SEPTEMBER 22, 2021 *(as amended)*

The regular meeting of the Redevelopment Authority (RDA) was held on September 22, 2021, 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 were Chair Michael Boyd, Vice-Chair Wendy McCain, Mindy Saunders, and Holly LeMeur. Also present were Mike Holtz, DPW Director; Vince DeJoy, Director of Planning, Codes & Economic Development; Jessica Bee, Code Official; Andrea Stapleford, City Solicitor; City Council member Phil Gilbert; and Kelly Conti, Recording Secretary.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

~~The Board adjourned to Executive Session for discussion of Codes Department personnel matters. Following the session, the regular meeting was reconvened.~~

MINUTES

Ms. McCain requested an amendment to the May 26, 2021, regular meeting minutes to include the reasoning behind the outdoor table and chairs discussion. The motion to amend was made by Mindy Saunders with a second by Holly LeMeur. The motion carried unanimously.

Ms. McCain requested an amendment to the July 28, 2021, regular meeting minutes to add her questioning if the RDA members were liable for any actions for the façade grants. Mr. DeJoy stated that they are not liable. A motion to amend was made by Mindy Saunders with a second from Holly LeMeur. The motion carried unanimously.

VISITORS

- Brian Ferry, reporter for the Times Observer

CORRESPONDENCE

There was no correspondence to come before the Authority.

TREASURER'S REPORT

Due to Mr. McQuillan's absence, Chair Michael Boyd provided the following.

The checking account beginning balance on July 1 was \$63,461.17. Interest earned was \$2.70 leaving a balance on July 31, 2021, of \$63,463.87.

The checking account beginning balance of August 1 was \$63,463.87. Interest earned was \$2.69 leaving a balance of August 31, 2021, of \$63,466.56

The Enterprise Development Fund earned \$5.38 in interest in July, bringing the balance of the DCED portion to \$332,475.75 and the Revolving Loan portion to \$301,058.38 for a total balance of \$633,534.13

Two invoices for Stapleford & Byham Legal fees, #6908 for \$1,123.95 and #6941 for \$267.30, were approved and a reimbursement check to the City for a total of \$1,391.25 was signed.

OLD BUSINESS

- **602 Conewango Avenue**

Ms. Bee stated that this is a blighted property that went to the Blighted Property Review Committee (BPRC) in 2020. It is currently being rehabilitated. The exterior has been painted and interior work, including new plumbing, electric, and drywall are ongoing.

Ms. Bee asked Mr. Holtz if there has been any action regarding the sidewalk repair. Per Mr. Holtz there is no current activity; however, the owner plans to replace the sidewalk along the Glade Avenue side of the property. Ms. Bee asked if this property should be kept on the monthly agenda; Mr. DeJoy responded that it may be removed due to the amount of progress that has been, and continues to be, made.

- **1613 1/2 Madison Avenue.**

This property was recently demolished.

- **Downtown Façade Grant Program**

There are three open projects that have been approved.

1. *225 Pennsylvania Ave West* – Faith Inn, owned by the Warren-Forest Economic Opportunities Council. Mr. DeJoy informed the Authority that Bob Raible, EOC Director, is putting together bid documents and contacting contractors but has not moved any further with construction.

2. *428-438 Pennsylvania Ave East* – Storefronts owned by Kurt Smith. Mr. DeJoy stated that the storefronts have been painted and progress continues to be made. Mr. Smith has not requested any reimbursements at this time.

3. *20 Clark St* – Goat Fort Climbing owned by Dana Harrington. Mr. DeJoy stated that the outside landscaping has been completed. Mr. Harrington is now in possession of the new sign and is hoping to have it illuminated and hung on the building within a few weeks.

- Mr. Boyd requested an update on the status of the promotional cards for the Façade Improvement Grant Program. Mr. DeJoy presented a copy of the completed cards that are now ready for distribution to the community.

- **Comprehensive Plan**

Per Mr. DeJoy plans are being made for the kick-off for the public portion of working with Mackin Engineering. The summit meeting will take place soon and it is anticipated that an announcement will be made in October in regard to a meeting that will be open for the public to provide comment.

NEW BUSINESS

- Mr. DeJoy requested that the following be added to the October meeting agenda:
 - Define the role and mission of the RDA.
 - What is it that the Authority seeks to accomplish?
 - What other kinds of projects should the Authority be doing in addition to blighted properties?

- There are several redevelopment projects that are being proposed in the downtown area of the City. How far does the RDA want to get involved in those types of projects?
- Should we use some of the RDA funds as part of a grant redevelopment project?
- Mr. DeJoy reached out to other municipalities to see how they handle their landbanks. Ms. McCain suggested a collaboration with the County Land Bank.
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- Ms. McCain asked if there could be more member input regarding the agenda before it is posted. Ms. Conti informed the Authority that she could add the agenda to the email blast when polling to confirm that a quorum will be present. Ms. McCain asked that more details be provided regarding agenda items; particularly those relating to properties requiring a vote; Mr. Boyd concurred with this request.
- Ms. McCain expressed her concerns on approving invoices after the fact instead of the Authority having a chance to approve the items before they are paid. Mr. Boyd stated his belief that normal business items do not need to be approved prior to being invoiced. Discussion between Mr. Boyd and Mr. DeJoy resulted in the determination that the Authority will continue the current process unless there is an out of the ordinary expenditure, which would then be brought up during the discussion phase of approving any expenditures.
- Mr. Boyd requested an update on the cards for the Façade Grant Improvement Program to be distributed to local business. Mr. DeJoy indicated that the cards are ready for distribution.
- Mr. Boyd referenced a letter received from Jim Decker, Executive Director of the Warren County Chamber of Business and Industry, requesting grant money to help fund the construction drawings for a bicycle pump track. Mr. DeJoy stated that funding for this might be handled in a different manner.
- Solicitor Stapleford reviewed changes to the Sunshine Act that went into effect on August 29, 2021.
 - Meeting agendas are required to be posted to the public at least 24 hours prior to the meeting.
 - Any changes to the agenda within 24 hours prior to a meeting must be brought forth as a motion at the meeting and require a second to the motion with a unanimous vote by remaining members. Once complete, the discussion can commence. An updated agenda must be posted to the public within 24 hours after the meeting ends.
 - Mr. Boyd asked if there could be email correspondence within the 24-hour time frame between the posting of the addenda and the meeting regarding an issue needing addressed during the meeting. Ms. Stapleford advised the members that this would not be acceptable. She also informed the members that any personal discussion via email brought up during business correspondence is subject to public disclosure under the Right-to-Know Law.
 - Mr. DeJoy and Ms. McCain asked for clarification on in-person discussion outside of the meeting. Ms. Stapleford indicated that any two members can converse without issue, but three or more would only be allowed to be addressed as an agenda item at a meeting.
 - Mr. Boyd requested the presence of Ms. Stapleford for guidance at future meetings until everyone is comfortable with the new changes. He specifically would like her to attend any meetings where there will be a known “hot topic”

to be discussed with a visitor. Ms. Stapleford agreed to attend meetings as her schedule permits.

- Mr. DeJoy asked if it is allowable to bring up a topic to committee members to think about for discussion at a future meeting under new business, or would the agenda need to be amended. Ms. Stapleford stated that it is acceptable to bring up a topic to discuss fact finding needs and then put that topic on the next meeting's agenda.
- Mr. Boyd questioned whether members of the RDA are covered under the City if there is a Sunshine Act complaint against them. Ms. Stapleford stated that the RDA is covered unless it was proven to be an intentional violation of the Sunshine Act.
- Ms. LeMeur asked for a copy of the Sunshine Act. Ms. Conti noted that Nancy Freenock was working on providing all members with an updated packet that would include a copy of the Sunshine Act and the Right-to-Know Law. Ms. Stapleford stated that she will make copies available via e-mail.

Right-to-Know Law:

- Any request for documents must be specific.
 - The Agency Opens Records Officer (AORO) must provide a written response to the requestor within 5 business days. (Agency's business days)
 - If a 30-day extension is needed, a response stating such must still be provided to the requestor within 5 business days. (Agency's business days)
 - Any personal correspondence attached to business documents such as emails are considered public record. Keep personal correspondence separate.
- Teena Leary is the City's Open Records Officer. Any requests you receive must be forwarded to Ms. Leary immediately.

PUBLIC COMMENT

- Phil Gilbert addressed issues he had trying to obtain the agenda and a copy of the meeting minutes on the City's website and requested that steps be taken to provide easier access. He also requested that the listing of meeting minutes be updated on the website.

OTHER BUSINESS

There was no other business to be brought forth to the Authority.

ADJOURNMENT

With there being no further business to come before the Authority, the meeting was adjourned upon motion by Holly LeMeur and a second by Mindy Saunders. The motion carried unanimously

NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will be held on Wednesday, October 27, 2021, at 1:00 PM.

Minutes prepared by Kelly Conti.