

REDEVELOPMENT COMMISSION MEETING
APRIL 25, 2013

President Nicksch called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited. Recording Secretary Gena Knapp took Roll Call. Members answering the roll call were Doug Nicksch, Jim Langen, Craig Earley, and School Representative Timothy Cottingham. Anthony Muscari and Phillip Kuiper were not in attendance. Also present were Building Administrator Tom Trulley, Matt Reardon from SEH, and one citizen.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Mr. Earley made a motion to approve the February 28, 2013 regular meeting minutes and the April 2, 2013 work session minutes, seconded by Mr. Langen and carried by voice vote.

OLD BUSINESS

Update from Matt Reardon – HSA Bond Issues – Response on Buckley Homestead – Review Issues from Work Session (4/2/2013) - Matt Reardon, SEH, stated the HSA bond issues have been resolved. There is a couple of minor items left, but overall, everything has been resolved. Mr. Reardon stated there currently is a national retailer that has a lot of interest in being here in Town, but there is no property that the Town has to offer them. We had come up with the idea of talking to Buckley Homestead to see if we could work something out to get their land on the corner of Route 2 across from the Speedway by the High School, but the Lake County Parks Department says that the property is supposed to be used for park purposes. There is potential for that property to be developed and tie in to Buckley Homestead, but they are not ready to do that yet. Mr. Langen asked if there was some sort of trade we could do. Mr. Reardon stated that would be up to the Commission if that is something they would want to look in to. Mr. Cottingham stated that he had heard if the park could not do anything with that property, then it would revert back to the heirs. Mr. Reardon stated we will be having a meeting Monday to talk more in detail to see if there is anything that we can come up with to help that retailer get what they need. There was discussion about the property immediately to the east of the medical center, but there is a substantial amount of property that is the drainage easement. Mr. Reardon explained the challenge with the site due to the drainage easement and suggested it would be a good idea to do the drainage calculations for the whole site so when developers want to come in, you can show them where they can go. He stated there has been an agreed upon price that the retailer would pay, but he was not aware of the onsite and offsite costs associated with building what they want to build. A discussion followed about the drainage issues. Mr. Trulley stated the four acres on the doctor's property that we talked about would not have Mr. Lotton's drainage running through that property. The only thing that will get nipped is the top northeast corner, which is the seventy-five foot drainage easement for Spring Run. A discussion followed about the drainage easements and where they are located. Mr. Reardon stated eventually the company would have to submit a site plan, which will have to show how they will

deal with their stormwater, which will also have to go through the Lake County Drainage Board because we are dealing with a County drain. The issue would be with the other person's drainage issues and how that will get treated. This particular issue is challenging because it is not a platted subdivision, it could be, but currently it is not. He stated he would be getting with Mr. Trulley to discuss in detail some regulations on their building so we can get back to them and they can choose which way they want to go.

Mr. Cottingham asked how many acres they need. Mr. Reardon stated four acres. Mr. Cottingham asked about the Taylor Farm. Mr. Trulley stated that property is in the County. Mr. Reardon stated they want to be within the Town boundaries. Mr. Earley asked how much of the four acres is in the waterway. Mr. Trulley stated just the corner of it. The Plan Commission has already said whoever comes in to the Commission first, would have to put that drainage through. He stated he talked to Jeff Bann about selling off the four acres and the doctor's subdividing enough of that to show where the road would go so he can run his drainage easement along side that road, and the four acres could connect in to that drainage pipe. Mr. Earley stated that sounds like a lot to get done, and these guys want to break ground quickly. Mr. Reardon stated right now it is engineering time. They want to find out how much this will cost and where it will go. A discussion followed about the roadway that needs to be put in by the developers. Mr. Reardon asked if the medical center has received their road cut yet. Mr. Trulley stated currently INDOT is holding up the projects. Mr. Earley asked if they just now applied for that curb cut. Mr. Trulley stated they applied about four months ago and they still have a project that has been stopped by INDOT for two years. Mr. Langen asked if the Town could put any pressure on INDOT. Mr. Reardon stated we could inquire on behalf of the Town to try and get some information. You could also have your State Representative write a letter to them asking why the project is being held up.

NEW BUSINESS

Priority Listing from Town Council – Mr. Cottingham asked who currently owns the Costas building. Mr. Trulley stated the person who bought it on a tax sale lost it, so it will go back on the tax sale. Mr. Langen stated we have included the Costas building in our downtown revitalization area, but what can you do there. Mr. Cottingham stated the property might be worth more without the building. Mr. Trulley stated the building itself is structurally sound, but the addition does need to be torn down. Mr. Cottingham asked if the property across the street goes with it. Mr. Trulley stated no because they have still been paying taxes on it. Mr. Reardon stated if it is for economic development in a community, that community could draft a letter to the Commissioner's Office asking for it to be pulled off of the tax sale and conveyed to the Redevelopment Commission of that community. There is some cost, but it is not as complicated as you would think. Mr. Earley stated we would have to have an idea of what we would want to do with it. Mr. Trulley stated he has had some inquiries from certain supply companies that need the building for storage. Mr. Cottingham stated something like that would be good because there will not be that much traffic coming in and out of there. Mr. Earley stated he could see the façade being fixed up and using it as office space, too. Mr. Niksch asked if we take this building off of the tax sale, would we have to pay the taxes on it. Mr. Trulley

stated no. The same thing was done with the old school next door. Mr. Cottingham stated you would still need an idea of what to do with it. Mr. Reardon stated before you took it, you would want to do a phase one environmental so you know what is going on, and you would want to know what you want to do with it. Mr. Earley asked if Mr. Trulley knew the intentions of the person who originally bought the building. Mr. Trulley stated he was going to flip it, but once he found out the taxes owed, he let it go. For us to get this property from the Commissioners, we have to have a use for it. Mr. Reardon stated it has to be part of a public purpose. If you want to buy it and flip it, they will not let you do that. Mr. Trulley stated the biggest problem with that property is where the taxes are and who actually owns it. Mr. Reardon stated if you have a deal, you could use that to try and waive the back taxes, which would be more appealing to a potential buyer. Everyone agreed that it is something that should be looked in to. Discussion followed. Mr. Niksch stated if we were able to do something with it, and since it is in our Revitalization Area, it may catch on and other people may follow suite. A discussion followed on how the Commission could acquire that property and possibly get the back taxes waived. Mr. Reardon stated number fourteen on the list is to “consider having Town act as property broker buying and selling parcels”. This is something that scored dead last on the list. Mr. Niksch stated number two on the list is “add more commercial property for development or redevelopment”. Half of this stuff that we have discussed is part of the Redevelopment Commission. This is what we are supposed to be doing. Mr. Reardon stated that is correct. All of these things are in the statute and allowable and are in the Redevelopment Plan.

Mr. Cottingham stated there has to be some sort of incentive, but we need someone interested in this place first. Mr. Trulley stated he will be going up to the County and will find out how much is owed in back taxes and if it is going to go on the tax sale or not. He stated he is trying to look at getting it sold. Mr. Earley asked how many people are interested in that property. Mr. Trulley stated four total. Mr. Reardon stated if we can get the people lined up, we could start to make deals. Mr. Niksch stated they could then qualify for the incentives in the Revitalization Area. Mr. Reardon stated that was correct. The Town can give a ten-year tax abatement on improvements, and they can also abate the gross assessed value for up to three years. A discussion followed on ideas for the Costas property.

Mr. Langen asked if Mr. Reardon knew anything about the commuter railroad coming. Mr. Reardon stated there would be a summer study session to find out more information about where the people are who ride. A brief discussion was held about the commuter railroad.

Downtown Progress – Mr. Niksch stated last year we had a conversation with the Downtown Historic District and came up with some ideas of helping that area like starting an association. Mr. Reardon stated the challenge is having the resources necessary to do that stuff. It was not that expensive to do, but you do not have any TIF money, you do not have a Business Improvement District that will pay in to this, and you do not have business owners willing to pay a little more to do the improvements. You have the planning in place, but you just need the resources. With the levy being frozen

for the Town, you are stuck. You need to pull something off of the list that you want to do and replace it with this. Mr. Earley stated there were some good ideas, but something like expanding the parking lot size does not need to be done. We can create a wish list and prioritize it, but we do not have the funds to get it done right now. Mr. Cottingham stated as far as the parking, there is ample parking, but people are not going to walk around to the front to get in to the store. About 90% of the stores down there do not have back entrances. A discussion followed about the parking issues downtown. Mr. Earley stated every building downtown has a back entrance. If they wanted to utilize that, they could reconfigure their store to allow that to be an entrance as well from the parking lot. Mr. Cottingham stated he agreed, but that has to be encouraged. Mr. Earley stated they have the incentive out there, but the owners need to utilize it. Mr. Langen spoke about the nice condos that were put above businesses on the square in Crown Point and how these apartments should maybe be geared towards families instead of rentals by the head. Mr. Niksch stated he would e-mail the list of ideas for the downtown area out to the members for them to review and possibly add to. Mr. Earley stated that he believed this is all good stuff, but it needs to be prioritized. We also need to help this community find property so when these commercial businesses come to us we have somewhere to put them. Discussion followed.

Promotion – Tri-Creek – Mr. Niksch stated this came up a couple of meetings ago about working with the schools on helping the Town with their website. He asked if there is anyway we could pair with the school to have the kids help with the design and contents of the website. Mr. Cottingham stated that was a great idea and that they have the technology onsite to help with it. He stated he would bring it up to the school board to see if this is something they would like to get involved with. Mr. Earley stated we are probably looking at a redevelopment of our website and the maintenance of it. Mr. Niksch stated we could also pass that on to the Council to get their opinion as well.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Scott Kiechle, 19910 Colfax, stated he had a creative idea for some of the issues the Commission was talking about. He stated to take the oil company that is next to Mid-Town Garden Center and move that to the Costas building. Then you could use the Garden Center and that oil business to create some sort of attraction for people to want to come to the downtown area, like a park of some sort. That will also encourage the owners to improve their back entrances since there will be more foot traffic back there.

ADJOURNMENT

With no further questions or comments, Mr. Langen made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:06 PM, seconded by Mr. Earley and carried by voice vote.

Doug Nicksch, President

Anthony Muscari, Secretary