

**REDEVELOPMENT COMMISSION MEETING  
AUGUST 27, 2015**

President Niksch called the meeting to order at 6:15 PM. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited. Recording Secretary Gena Knapp took the roll. Members present were Doug Niksch, LeAnn Angerman, Greg Shook, and Craig Earley. Jim Langen and Doug Ward were not in attendance. Also present were Building Administrator Tom Trulley, Town Attorney David Westland, Clerk-Treasurer Judith Walters, Councilman Edgar Corns, Councilman Donald Parker, Council President Christopher Salatras, and Town Planner Jim Mandon.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

July 23, 2015 – Mr. Earley made a motion to approve the July 23, 2015 regular meeting minutes, seconded by Mrs. Angerman and carried with four ayes.

**OLD BUSINESS**

Review Façade Rebate Program with Attorney – Finalize Façade Rebate Program – Attorney David Westland stated he had responded to Matt Reardon’s proposal with comments, but was not able to find the email. Mr. Niksch asked Building Administrator Tom Trulley if anyone had asked about the program. Mr. Trulley stated he has had a couple inquiries. Attorney Westland asked how much they had appropriated for the program. Mr. Niksch stated \$30,000. Attorney Westland stated if he had a project he would like to do, he would first submit the application. If it gets approved, the work would then be done, and once completed, invoices would be submitted that are eligible for 50%, up to a maximum of \$10,000, for reimbursement. He asked when the application is submitted, what criteria are you using to say yes or no to that application. If you have \$30,000 to work with and everyone gets the maximum, only three programs would take place. Mrs. Angerman stated if three were granted the maximum, yes, it would take up the whole \$30,000. Attorney Westland asked if an owner wanted to do \$30,000 worth of improvements, how do you judge how much would be awarded? The owner would clearly be over the 50%, but is capped at the maximum of \$10,000. Would the owner automatically get the entire \$10,000 if everyone likes the \$30,000 being spent, or is there some criteria to determine the number awarded, or would you award everyone the maximum until you run out of money for the calendar year? Mrs. Angerman stated she believed it was at the discretion of the Commission to decide how much, if any, the owner would be awarded for the project. Mr. Trulley asked if that amount would be decided before the project would start. Mr. Niksch stated yes. We also went out and had a number of banks in town that are interested in assisting with the program. Mr. Earley stated when we first drafted this the \$10,000 was per property, should that be changed? Attorney Westland stated he was not suggesting changing that, rather questioning how the Commission would arrive at the figure between \$0 and \$10,000. Mrs. Angerman stated she could see if she was a business owner that it would be beneficial to know what the criteria is that you will be judged on in order to make the project hit those points to get the maximum money allowed. Mr. Niksch stated when they submit their application, we will look at the project they are doing, decide the amount we would like to give, and then the owner is responsible for bringing in the paid invoices showing that they did what was laid out in the application before we reimburse them.

Attorney Westland stated in the original draft, it states that the applications will be accepted on the first of the month. If we have \$30,000 for the year, the guy who submits the application first has the best chance because, assuming everyone is awarded the maximum of \$10,000, once you do three, you are done for the year. Mrs. Angerman stated we had changed that to quarterly, but

even if you have three in the first quarter, you could be out of money. Mr. Earley stated we also talked about the limited funds we are starting this with, but in the future we will hopefully have more to do this program with. That may be just the way it is if we run out the first year early. Attorney Westland stated you could publicize that you have passed the program, and then set a date for applications to be submitted, this way you have the whole pool of applicants to look at and compare, rather than your pot of money for the year. Mrs. Angerman stated she believed that Jim Mandon had suggested an annual review process for applicants. Attorney Westland stated quarterly helps you, but if you run out of money in the first quarter, you are done. Mrs. Angerman stated if we could advertise accordingly encouraging people to apply in the first quarter since there are limited funds, we could then state if there are funds left we will be taking further applications. Mr. Niksch stated we could always transfer additional funds in to there if we run out. Town Planner Jim Mandon reiterated that a yearly deadline would be best in order to compare one against another, rather than it being first come first serve. Discussion followed regarding the application deadlines and funding.

Mr. Trulley gave a few examples of the projects that have been brought to him that are waiting for finalization of this program. Mr. Earley stated if we kick it off this year, we could still consider these projects. The only argument is whether it is monthly, quarterly, or a deadline. To use the funds we will have next year to the best of our ability, would it be best to have a quarterly or yearly deadline? Mrs. Angerman stated she still stands with quarterly, but to advertise it in a way to encourage projects to be submitted early. Discussion followed.

Mrs. Angerman asked, regarding the criteria, are you asking if there are certain points that would make us more inclined to approve a project? Attorney Westland stated he was thinking that it would be judged project versus project, but if you are doing it quarterly, speed is your biggest criteria. The biggest question is, if you are not inclined to give the full \$10,000 and someone is over the top of the \$20,000 with eligible activities, how will you determine the \$0 - \$10,000 given? Mr. Earley stated he believed it was written as it cannot exceed 50% or \$10,000, so if someone has a \$50,000 project, the maximum we can give is \$10,000. Mrs. Angerman stated as it is written now, if we have five projects that come in and we like them all, we can divide the \$30,000 up between them at our discretion. Mr. Earley agreed. Discussion followed.

Mr. Earley asked what was wrong with using the \$30,000 this year as the Commission sees fit, and then starting the quarterly or annual deadlines next year? Mr. Trulley stated these owners still have to go in front of the Historic Board before we can even give them a permit. Since the Historic Board has been here, there have only been a handful of people that have come in for projects. You may not get as many applications as you think. Mr. Earley stated we are at least trying to get the guidelines set so that it does not have to be changed every year. Mr. Trulley asked how many times the Commission would give a rebate to the same owner. Mr. Earley stated we should have that discretion. Mr. Niksch stated we cannot forget that the banks are interested in helping with the program if someone is doing a large project. Mr. Earley stated we are still stuck on the monthly, quarterly, or annual deadline.

Mrs. Angerman asked if an owner could do something such as paint their building and not be licensed. Mr. Trulley stated the owner could do that, but anything structural or mechanical has to be a licensed contractor. Mrs. Angerman stated it would be following our current ordinance, then. Mr. Earley asked what the "maximum per building" is that is stated under the general guidelines. Attorney Westland stated it is \$10,000 per property. If you have one building with three stores, it is still one building. Mr. Shook asked if there was something that says we have to pick quarterly or annually, or can the Redevelopment Commission periodically set a date. Attorney Westland stated you could set your program however you want. Mr. Shook stated he would suggest setting a date periodically. If we do our first awards and there is no money left,

then we will not be sitting here with a program that states we will look over more projects the next quarter. As far as transferring money, that is going to be up to the Town Council. They have to agree to move that money from the infrastructure to the façade program. Mr. Earley stated he agreed that this option would be more flexible. Mr. Niksch stated he still did not see a reason why it needed to be changed from quarterly. Discussion followed.

Mr. Niksch suggested keeping the deadline quarterly for now and then grant next year's Redevelopment Commission to review the date just to get the program going this year. Mrs. Angerman stated they would always have the ability to review the deadline. Mr. Earley asked since we are going in to the next quarter now, could we take these two applicants and decide on them before the end of the quarter? Mr. Niksch stated if they come in. Mr. Earley stated we would have to have the applications in and approve them by October 1<sup>st</sup>, then. Mr. Trulley stated they still have to go in front of the Historic Board, which meets once a month, then they have to come to the building department to get their permit, and then it will go to the Redevelopment Commission meeting. Mr. Earley stated we have four months left in the year. How can we get around this in order to have these applicants be eligible this year? Attorney Westland stated you would have to leave the language as monthly. Mr. Earley made a motion to approve the Lowell Redevelopment Commission Façade Program for the Downtown Development Area as it is written with the monthly deadline, seconded by Mr. Shook and carried with four ayes.

### **NEW BUSINESS**

### **PUBLIC COMMENT**

### **ADJOURNMENT**

With no further questions or comments, Mrs. Angerman made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:08 PM, seconded by Mr. Shook and carried with four ayes.

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Doug Niksch, President

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LeAnn Angerman, Secretary