

**REDEVELOPMENT COMMISSION MEETING
JANUARY 24, 2013**

President Niksch 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 Niksch, Jim Langen, Anthony Muscari, Craig Earley, and School Representative Timothy Cottingham. Phillip Kuiper was not in attendance. Also present were Building Administrator Tom Trulley, one press and two citizens.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Mr. Earley made a motion to approve the September 27, 2012 regular meeting minutes, seconded by Mr. Langen and carried by voice vote.

OLD BUSINESS

None.

NEW BUSINESS

Election of Officers – Mr. Langen made a motion for Doug Niksch to remain President, seconded by Mr. Earley and carried by voice vote. Mr. Muscari made a motion for Jim Langen to remain Vice President, seconded by Mr. Earley and carried by voice vote. Mr. Langen made a motion for Craig Earley to become Secretary, but Mr. Earley declined the nomination. Mr. Langen made a motion for Anthony Muscari to become Secretary, seconded by Mr. Earley and carried by voice vote.

Mr. Niksch stated the report for the bonds on the St. Anthony's project is in, and he had spoken to Matt Reardon and there is nothing unusual about the report so this is just for the Commission's review. He stated there is really nothing else scheduled for the meeting, but he would like for the members to go back through last year's minutes and pull out some of the items that may have been missed, and at the next meeting a priority list will be set for some tasks the Commission would like to tackle. He stated our job is to look at areas of blight and try to bring forth additional revenue to the Town and to encourage redevelopment within the Town. By next month we should have additional information on the health center plus we have a number of other items that are still out there that need to be prioritized. He also asked that Mr. Cottingham bring forth anything that he has going on at the school as well. Mr. Cottingham asked if the medical center was going to be a tax generating building, or a not-for-profit. Mr. Trulley stated it is a private company that will own the health center, so it will be tax generating. St. Anthony's does not own it.

Mr. Niksch asked if Mr. Trulley would be available every meeting. Mr. Trulley stated that he would be. Mr. Niksch asked if the Commission could rely on Mr. Trulley to do some research when questions come up to get answers. Mr. Trulley stated he would do

his best. Mr. Earley stated if there is anything that Mr. Trulley needs to add to the agenda, he can contact Mr. Niksch to make sure that it gets on there. There may be some things that he knows going on in the Town that the rest of us are unaware of. Mr. Niksch stated Mr. Trulley would bring a good cohesion between what is going on here and what is on going with the Town Council.

Mr. Langen stated as a long time resident of Lowell, he looks at the progress that the Redevelopment Commission has had a hand in in the growth of the Town. When you look at all of the new things that are coming, it is great. It is great that we have established the TIF district; we have the St. Anthony's Medical Center coming in, Family Dollar, George's new banquet hall, and the new nursing home coming in as well. He stated if it had not been for the Town Council saying we need to grow, we would be in the same place that we were three years ago with nothing. He stated he is very happy with the progress that his Town has made and the future is there to be had. Mr. Niksch agreed and stated we are fortunate to have two members of the Council on our Redevelopment Commission, and that helps to keep us going in the right direction. He stated it is obvious the activity that has gone on since the first year of this Commission in 2010. Mr. Langen stated before people would come to Town and there would be no place for them. We have seen some enhancements with the School Corporation as well. Working together with the Town and the school is critical. Our community is very unique in that it only has one school system. If you look at Cedar Lake or Crown Point, they have three or four, but we only have one. Some of the things that the School Corporation is proposing will really enhance what our Town has to offer as far as a good place to raise a family. Mr. Niksch stated when we first started this Commission in 2010, we were making a list of our assets that we have to offer businesses in Town, and on the top of our list was our work ethic and our school system. Those two go hand in hand because the school is the one who helps develop work ethic. Mr. Cottingham stated the two working together is the only way to go about it. Our goal is to give the best education that your kids can get and that when they graduate, they can compete with anyone for a college or trade. We also believe in bringing opportunities to our community whether that is through the young people or through the adults with the adult learning center that we have started. Mr. Langen stated his daughter is a teacher in Frankfort, IL and she cannot believe that every student in our school system has access to a computer. Mr. Cottingham stated everyone knows that is the wave of the future and technology is going to play a huge part. It should not be replacing, it should be enhancing.

Mr. Earley stated we had tried to do this last year, but it is a new year, and we need to go back and look at some of the things that we did not achieve or touch on last year and prioritize them for this year. He stated he believed that is what Mr. Niksch was talking about earlier and that it may have been something that should have been on the agenda for tonight. Mr. Earley stated that he had been talking with a gentleman this week that is interested in some office space in Town and he has asked if there was anything the Town could do for a new business. We have created this redevelopment district, but are there a list of things that says what that district actually does for businesses. Mr. Langen stated he thought we would have the authority to abate taxes for a period of time. Mr. Earley

stated as the Town Council, we already have that ability. We need to define what advantages there is to that district so we can tell these people that call in the benefits in that area. We created an Ordinance, but it is apparently very vague. Mr. Niksch asked if he was talking about the redevelopment district, or the downtown district. Mr. Trulley stated both. Mr. Earley stated not the TIF district, but the redevelopment and downtown. Mr. Langen stated it is the revitalization district. Mr. Niksch stated he does have a list. Mr. Trulley stated he would like that list because he has some people that are interested in Ashland. Mr. Niksch stated the downtown district is only for the owners. A discussion followed on the map of the area that was passed and the title of the district. Mr. Niksch stated the last question we asked was about sections of the buildings. If the top floor is rented out for a residence and the bottom floor is vacant, can that be separated or not, because there was a contingency on vacancy. Mr. Earley stated if we have to define that, then we have to. Mr. Langen stated it might be as easy as you said if we define it as office space or residential space. Mr. Earley stated the way he understands it is that we make up the rules other than the financial part of it that Matt Reardon was involved with. He asked Mr. Niksch if he remembered what the advantages are. Mr. Niksch stated he did not remember all of them off the top of his head, but there were some advantages where you did not have to pay some taxes on it. Mr. Earley stated, we need to clarify that because if the Ordinance is not clear enough that it spells it out, we need to fix that. Mr. Trulley stated he has someone that is interested in buying the Ashland plant and asked if there was anything we could give them. Mr. Niksch stated that is not in the district. Mr. Langen stated it is not in the revitalization district, but it is in the TIF district. Mr. Cottingham stated there should be plenty of information on the TIF district. Mr. Niksch stated anyone that is coming in and is interested in that building knows about the TIF district.

Mr. Niksch stated that is another thing that we had talked about was helping the Ashland products building, and we have not really done anything. Mr. Earley asked what we were supposed to help them with. Mr. Niksch stated we were going to help them with getting someone to buy their building. Mr. Earley asked how we were supposed to do that. Mr. Niksch stated through advertising. Mr. Trulley stated currently there is already a realtor involved. Mr. Niksch stated we need to know what is going on with vacant buildings so that we can assist these people that call in and ask us about available properties. Mr. Earley stated he has spoken with Matt Reardon about certain venues that will allow you to freely advertise places like Ashland or Rieter. Mr. Reardon gave me three different venues, NIPSCO being one of them, and there were two others. Mr. Langen stated it would be nice if you could go to the Lowell website and have those properties pop up. Mr. Earley stated that would be a possibility, but our website is not really geared for that. We do not have an I.T. budget for something like that and these venues that Mr. Reardon talked about were much larger than our website. We could have a page or advertisement saying if you are interested in properties in Lowell, "click here", and it will take you to one of those three venues. Mr. Niksch stated our intent is for Mr. Reardon to be here at the next meeting. Also, if anyone else on the Commission would like to add things to the agenda, please do so.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Scott Kiechle, 19910 Colfax, asked if 6:00 PM on the fourth Thursday of the month was the anticipated meeting time for this Commission. Mr. Nicksch stated that was correct. Mr. Langen stated it was shifted around with the Town Court for a while. Mr. Nicksch stated also, the Annexation Committee meeting is on the fourth Thursday at 7:00 PM.

ADJOURNMENT

With no further questions or comments, Mr. Langen made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 6:25 PM, seconded by Mr. Muscari and carried by voice vote.

Doug Nicksch, President

Anthony Muscari, Secretary

Note: The above-proposed minutes are submitted for review and approval as the official minutes by the Redevelopment Commission.

Gena Knapp - Recording Secretary