

March 26, 2015

REDEVELOPMENT COMMISSION MEETING

MARCH 26, 2015

President Niksch called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited. Recording Secretary Gena Knapp took the roll. Members present were Doug Niksch, Jim Langen, LeAnn Angerman, and Craig Earley. Greg Shook and Timothy Cottingham were not in attendance. Also present were Building Administrator Tom Trulley, SEH Representatives Matt Reardon and Rich Oman, Planning Consultant Jim Mandon, and Town Council President Christopher Salatas.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

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February 26, 2015 Joint Work Session with the Town Council – Mr. Langen made a motion to approve the February 26, 2015 Joint Work Session minutes, seconded by Mrs. Angerman and carried with four ayes.

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NEW BUSINESS

Review the Expansion of TIF District (all areas) & Available Funds from 2014 – SEH Representative Matt Reardon stated there were a few recommendations that he would like to bring before the Commission. He stated he was not sure what the legislative session would bring with regard to Redevelopment Commissions and TIF Districts, but regardless of what they do, you should be grandfathered in because it will go back to March 1st of this year. If we create a new Economic Development Area for the property that was annexed, that will be okay. The other part is that there are two parcels that are adjacent to your existing TIF District that were not included because one was agricultural and the other had an existing business on it. We would have to basically have three Economic Development Areas in Town. You would create a sub-area adjacent to the two parcels, and then any new area you would have to create a separate parcel. He stated with the legislative session winding down, he would suggest waiting and seeing what would happen with regards to Redevelopment Commissions and TIF Districts. Mr. Earley asked if it mattered if we had the intent to start on that district, or if we do start now, would we fall in to the grandfather clause. Mr. Reardon stated right now, it would only go back to March 1st of this year, but that he would ask Attorney David Westland to see what his

feelings are on the matter. Mr. Earley asked when you mention creating a second district, is that because the property is not contingent with the rest? Mr. Reardon stated because these two properties were not originally included, we would have to go through the normal process to pick up those two properties. Discussion followed regarding the properties that Mr. Reardon was recommending to be included in the TIF District, that were not originally included. Mr. Reardon stated he would also suggest planning out the eighty acres before it is recommended to be in the TIF District. Mr. Earley asked why the Town would not move forward with those plans now instead of waiting for legislation to adjourn. Mr. Reardon stated you could do that, but taking a look at what will be coming out of Indianapolis will help guide what your processes or methods are. This will help with the planning of those areas, and budgeting for what needs to be done.

Mr. Earley stated looking ahead even further, the Town Council has proposed annexing acreage west of Austin, so that should be included in the planning of these other proposed parcels as well. Mr. Reardon agreed that they should plan for what they want, and TIF the area they want to be commercial. That is a question for the Plan Commission and the Town Council too as far as what they want to see out there. There is no reason not to plan for the future especially so you know what costs will be involved. Discussion followed. Mr. Nicksch stated we have a semi-plan for the land use heading out that direction. Planning Consultant Jim Mandon stated there is a map that was approved that shows anticipated land use going out that way, plus there is the Thoroughfare Plan that shows a preliminary plan for roads in that area as well. Mr. Reardon stated you have a good start for this. Mr. Earley stated we have talked about it, but there is no set plan in mind. Mr. Reardon stated you might want to consider just telling us to get it done. We will work with the staff to find out the cost of utilities, plan a land use, and then we can take a hard look at the area to see if it is worth it or not. Discussion followed.

Mr. Reardon stated currently there is about \$31,000 in the budget. He stated he brings that up because it does cost money to get these studies done. Mr. Reardon went in to detail regarding the money that is set aside for the medical building bonds, and what will be available for redevelopment after this year. He stated when we had our previous meeting we talked about different programs such as the façade program. This sounds like a good time to launch that program and formalize it. Discussion followed regarding examples of areas that will see growth that will help with the TIF money coming in. Mr. Langen asked if that \$31,000 could be used to help

offset the cost that the Town would incur for certain studies that need to be done. Mr. Trulley stated TIF money cannot be used for operating expenses. Discussion followed. Mr. Langen asked if the Commission needed to make a motion to get started. Mr. Earley stated he believed they first needed to figure out the priorities of the Commission.

LCEA – Coordination efforts, Process, Web-Links – Karen Lauerman, Lake County Economic Alliance, gave an update on what sites in Town are in their database for companies to look at. She also explained how widening the TIF District would help to market the area more, and gave a general update on the past six months. Mrs. Lauerman stated they would be partnering further with Mr. Reardon to work on process and knowing how the staff needs to address phone calls that come in. We will also be working on packaging the Town, getting a process together for those inquiries that come in, and engaging with the local businesses and connecting with their workforce to get them involved. Mr. Niksch asked how Mrs. Lauerman would suggest starting that process. Mrs. Lauerman stated they would like to be involved in devising the Commission's priorities and in turn putting together a plan to help accomplish those priorities. Mr. Niksch asked how the LCEA could help with the TIF District. Mrs. Lauerman stated when Mr. Reardon is complete with his process; we will get all of that information in to our database, and coordinate with Mr. Trulley to make sure there is an LCEA and local contact for companies. We have already had inquiries from companies as far as "would you be willing to..." and we have been able to respond to those inquiries quickly to show initiative and progress in the Town, and your wanting to grow. Mrs. Lauerman also mentioned that she will be getting with the intern that is designing the website to make sure that certain links are implemented and information is shared.

Downtown District – Mr. Niksch stated he would like to start talking about some of the Commission's priorities including the Downtown District. He stated he would like to proceed with what Mr. Reardon discussed tonight as one of the top priorities, and addressing the vacant businesses, which is also moving forward through the LCEA. Mr. Earley stated some of the priorities we are already moving on. Everyone seems to be eager to spend this money, but we need to prioritize how to use it. He gave the examples of moving forward with planning the eighty acres and looking in to the façade program to help out the historic downtown area. Mr. Earley stated he felt that starting with the façade program would be a great first step and to only fund it with a certain amount of money and once that is gone, it is gone, and it can then be refunded once there is more

money. The Council and this Commission have given certain opportunities to the downtown area and have had no interest, but if we can change gears and try something else, then maybe more people will show interest. Mr. Reardon stated he had a few examples of applications for that program, and the Commission can decide how much money they want to put in, or if they want to just put in a certain percentage. This program has worked well in other communities, and it would be a good start here. Discussion followed regarding setting rules for the applicants, which would differ between the historic and non-historic areas. Mr. Trulley mentioned that in Crown Point, the applicant would get a contractor to draw up the plans, they then took those to the Historic Board for approval, and then to the Redevelopment Commission. Each building was assessed separately and money was granted on a case-by-case basis, depending on what the project was. Mr. Reardon stated there does need to be some flexibility. Mr. Earley stated he liked Mr. Trulley's example and that it would give them flexibility if everything were reviewed on a case-by-case basis. Discussion followed regarding getting together examples of applications, outlining the rules for each area, and starting out with just one area rather than the whole Town. Mr. Niksch stated the main subject has always been our downtown area, and this program would be a positive way to start. Discussion followed regarding involving the organizations downtown to get their input and to make sure they know what the Commission is proposing. Mr. Reardon stated the best way to do this program would be a case-by-case basis to show the flexibility. Discussion followed.

Mr. Niksch stated the way he saw it, the three priorities are working with the LCEA to take care of the vacant buildings, working on the process of expanding the TIF District to the west, and the façade program in the downtown historic district. Mr. Earley stated he believed the façade program would be the easiest to get in to, and even that will take several meetings to get everything in place and ironed out. Mr. Reardon stated he would provide information for the next meeting that will help to get started with the façade program, and as far as the eighty acres out west, no TIF money can be spent there anyway because that is not in the District yet, but it does need to be planned out. After some discussion it was decided that the first priority would be to get the façade program in place. Mrs. Angerman stated she agreed, but believed that each of the three points needed to at least be looked at every meeting. There may not be movement on each of them for each meeting, but they still need to be reviewed. Mr. Reardon stated if he is directed he will work on the additions of the TIF District, but we can hang tight on that until the session is complete.

PUBLIC COMMENT

ADJOURNMENT

With no further questions or comments, Mr. Langen made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:08 PM, seconded by Mrs. Angerman and carried by voice vote.

Doug Nicksch, President

LeAnn Angerman, Secretary