

City of Worcester, Massachusetts

Edward M. Augustus, Jr.
City Manager

Michael E. Traynor, Esq.
Chief Executive Officer
Worcester Redevelopment Authority



Joint Meeting
WORCESTER REDEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY
and
WRA Citizens Advisory Committee
Friday, February 13, 2015
8:00 A.M.
City Hall, 455 Main Street
Levi Lincoln Chamber
Worcester, MA 01608

Present:

Worcester Redevelopment Authority Board

Vincent A. Pedone, Chair
Steven Rothschild
David Minasian

Staff

Michael E. Traynor, Chief Executive Officer
Erin Cahill, WRA Financial Manager
Jackson Restrepo, Executive Office of Economic Development
Jane Bresnahan, Executive Office of Economic Development

Pursuant to a notice given (attached), a meeting of the Worcester Redevelopment Authority and the WRA Citizens Advisory Committee was held at 8:00 A.M. on February 13, 2015.

1. Call to Order

Chief Executive Officer Michael Traynor called the meeting to order at 8:15 A.M.

2. Roll Call

Mr. Traynor called the roll.

New Business

1. Joint Meeting with Citizens Advisory Committee - Update on the Downtown/Theatre District Urban Renewal Plan Process and Public Hearing Announcement - February 26, 2015

Chair Pedone opened the WRA Board meeting and invited Chair Brissette to open the WRA Citizens Advisory Committee meeting.

Jef Fasser, BSC Group, delivered a PowerPoint presentation that outlined draft proposed boundaries of the urban renewal area, and the process of preparing and obtaining approval of an urban renewal plan. He also discussed the respective roles of the WRA and the CAC. Mr. Fasser outlined the area of the plan and stated that he will work with the Committee in every step of the urban renewal process.

Mr. Traynor explained to the Committee and the WRA that this plan is not comparable to the Medical City Urban Renewal Plan, the dominant purpose of which was to obtain title to numerous properties by eminent domain to assemble a development parcel for an identified redeveloper. The actions under this proposed plan will be strategic, not every property located within the plan boundaries will be targeted for urban renewal activities. The goal of this plan is to change the fabric of the area downtown and the boundaries outlined in the Plan by incentivizing private investment and replacing non-performing or underperforming property owners. Mr. Traynor explained that the financing aspect of the plan will come into play as the plan evolves. At the present time there is no funding available from the State.

Mr. Pedone introduced City Councilor Frederick C. Rushton, Chair of the City Council Economic Development Subcommittee. Councilor Rushton said that he looked forward to having his Committee involved in the process along with the rest of the City Council members.

Advisory Committee Members proposed additions to the process to include a mailing to property and business owners prior to the first public hearing to discuss the development of a proposed urban renewal plan for the Theatre District and surrounding areas being held February 26, 2015 at 5:30 PM in City Hall

Mr. Traynor advised the members that he will work with John Hill, Communications Specialist from the City Manager's office to make sure the hearing is well publicized.

The Citizens Advisory Committee conducted their meeting until 8:55 AM. The WRA recessed its meeting and resumed at 9:12 AM.

2. Proposed Amendment No. 1 to VHB Lease Agreement – Recommend Approval

Mr. Traynor advised the Board that VHB has accepted the WRA's counterproposal, to VHB's request for a lease amendment, as outlined in the executive session held on January 9, 2015. In summary, the amendment deletes the current schedule of rent increases for the first three year renewal and freezes the current annual rent for the next three years.

Mr. Rothschild offered the following motion as written:

Voted that the Worcester Redevelopment Authority hereby authorizes its chair or vice-chair to execute Amendment No. 1 to the Commercial Lease Agreement dated January 31, 2008 with Vanasse Hangen Brustlin, Inc., to revise the rent payable over the term of the first three year extension through July 8, 2018.

Mr. Minasian seconded the motion, and it was voted 3-0 on a voice vote.

3. Release of Executive Session Minutes – January 9, 2015 relative to the VHB Lease Amendment

Mr. Traynor provided the Board Members with Executive Session Minutes for review relative to the VHB Lease Amendment. The portion of the Sale of Parcel at Washington Square has been redacted because the basis for Executive Session has not expired as of February 13, 2015. Chair Pedone reviewed and released the portion of the Executive Session Minutes regarding the VHB Lease Amendment and stated the minutes are now public and are disclosed and released to the public.

4. Status Reports – Miscellaneous Maintenance/Improvement Projects

Ms. Cahill advised the Board that Fusion Entertainment has not paid its January rent and underpaid the previous three months. The Board requested Mr. Traynor to send a default letter.

Mr. Traynor advised the Board that the Board's petition for city council designation of a taxi stand area on Harding Street, as part of the Harding Street Improvements Project was presented the City Council's Standing Committee on Traffic and Parking. The request for the taxi stand area as well as the plan the overall project were well received and the Committee voted to recommend approval of the petition to the City Council.

Other Business

Monthly Expenditure Report

Ms. Cahill, WRA Financial Manager reviewed with the Board the check detail and monthly comparison summary between January 7, 2015 and February 9, 2015. Expenses were \$75,313.43. Ms. Cahill stated that there were \$22,000.00 less in expenses for this time period.

Updated Executed Contracts and Payments

Ms. Cahill stated that a check in the amount of \$210,000.00 was received from the FTA which is the eighty percent reimbursement for the Fixed Guideways Funded Capital Projects for design scope of the Harding Street Improvements, Interior and Exterior Signage and First Floor Public Restrooms as well as work in connection with Coghlin Electrical Contractors and Siemens Industry for video surveillance equipment.

Chair Pedone requested that the Board change the meeting in March. After discussion the Board moved the meeting to Friday, March 6, 2015 at 8:00 AM.

Respectfully submitted,

Michael E. Traynor,
Chief Executive Officer