



CITY OF ALBANY
Albany Revitalization Agency
Council Chambers, 333 Broadalbin Street SW
Wednesday, June 27, 2012
Immediately following Regular City Council Session

MINUTES

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Floyd Collins called the meeting to order at 8:23 p.m.

ROLL CALL

Agency Members present: Floyd Collins, Bessie Johnson, Bill Coburn, Jeff Christman, Sharon Konopa, Dick Olsen, and Ray Kopczynski

Agency Members absent: None.

Staff present: Urban Renewal Manager Kate Porsche, Public Works Director Mark Shepard, City Attorney Jim Delapoer, and City Manager Wes Hare

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

April 18, 2012
April 25, 2012

MOTION: Member Ray Kopczynski moved to approve the April 18, 2012, and April 25, 2012, Albany Revitalization Agency minutes. Member Bessie Johnson seconded the motion, and it passed 6-0.

SCHEDULED BUSINESS

Business from the Public

There was no business from the public.

Public Hearing

Adopting the budget for Fiscal Year 2012-2013

Open: Collins opened the public hearing at 8:24 p.m.

Staff Report

Urban Renewal Manager Kate Porsche said that there have been two opportunities for deliberation on this Budget.

Public Comment

No one wished to speak.

Closed: The public hearing was closed at 8:25 p.m.

MOTION: Member Bill Coburn moved to adopt the approved budget as presented, and Kopczynski seconded it.

Member Jeff Christman said the budget shows loan proceeds of \$3 million, but it does not mean that \$3 million is owed. Just because it is listed here does not mean it will be spent. City Manger Wes Hare said that is correct; it gives

the Agency the legal authority to draw down the line of credit and spend money on projects, but it does not compel the Agency to do so.

VOTE: The motion to adopt the approved budget as presented passed 6-0 and was designated ARA Resolution No. ARA 2012-04.

Accepting Cordell Post's resignation from the Board

MOTION: Johnson moved to accept Cordell Post's resignation and to send a thank-you letter, and Member Bill Coburn seconded it. The motion passed 6-0.

Appointing Russ Allen to the CARA Advisory Board

MOTION: Kopczynski moved to approve Member Coburn's nomination of Russ Allen to the Board, and Member Dick Olsen seconded it.

Johnson asked if there is a conflict of interest since Allen works for the Greater Albany Public Schools (GAPS). Hare said there is no legal conflict of interest. Porsche said that through her work with the Association of Oregon Redevelopment Agencies (AORA) they are seeing more members of the taxing district become members of urban renewal boards.

VOTE: A vote was taken on the motion to appoint Russ Allen to the Board; it passed 6-0.

BUSINESS FROM THE AGENCY

Olsen said he would like to see CARA become active again.

Coburn is curious about what others think of the "wayfinding sign." The two representatives from Historic Albany Revitalization Project (HARP) discussed it during a presentation. Coburn sees value in the signs. The issue at the time was the cost, which is estimated to be \$75,000. He understands that these are custom signs and will be more expensive, but he would still be interested in seeing the City and HARP move forward on the project with a more definitive plan. Porsche said the \$75,000 cost was an educated guess based on some phone calls, so it could be less. The Main Street Design Committee has been working on the design along with Albany Visitors Association. Graphics & Web Specialist Matt Harrington has also been involved.

Coburn would like to see some activity with the local sign makers.

Collins suggested that they first work through criteria for projects, as Christman has suggested in the past, and then they could look at all the projects, including the wayfinding sign. Then they could consider if they should move forward given the context of those policies.

Coburn said that since HARP is disbanding in August, then this is a timing issue. There are already several agencies working together on it. He feels it is akin to advertising the city, and it also helps out local business and the downtown. There is a sense of urgency if they want to capitalize on HARP still being in existence.

Olsen said he is aware of a microbrewery distillery project, and other CARA projects in general, felt a certain sense of betrayal that CARA has become inactive given that they invested their own money, too. He, too, is disappointed. He thinks CARA projects will come back, but he doesn't know when or how. He hopes that progress can be made.

Collins said his intent was not to disband CARA, but rather put the projects on hold. He thinks they need to tighten up the application process and contracts, and then they can move forward on the applications. Olsen said, but in the meantime, everything is on hold.

Christman said it was never his intent to have CARA go away. They spent several years spending money in ways he thinks was not appropriate. Some were great, and some he voted no on. He has been consistent on the projects he disagreed on. It was not his intent to make CARA go away but rather to spend money on projects that will increase the tax base. The intent as it is written by law is to increase the tax base, and some projects do not do that. He also thinks they have not done due diligence on some of the projects. They should offer gap financing, not be the lender of first choice. He said, if they are going to spend it, then it needs to be spent on worthwhile projects where CARA is the lender or grantor of last resort, not first resort.

Member Sharon Konopa said it should not take too long to set criteria. She thinks the decision to suspend CARA project applications has taken the life out of downtown. They no longer have the momentum or motivation to put projects together because they don't know when CARA will come back. Yet when they see projects going, that provides motivation for the next property owner. That is how CARA has managed to make such a difference in the last ten years. She said, imagine what downtown would look like if we didn't have CARA. She said, we need to bring back the motivation for property owners and for downtown.

Kopczynski recalled that if a project of sufficient scope came forward, the City Attorney said that they could vote on it. City Attorney Jim Delapoer said that is correct; they can still vote on projects. Also, the urban renewal district is not just in the downtown area.

MOTION: Coburn moved to have staff work with HARP to bring back budgeting information on the wayfinding sign project, and Johnson seconded the motion. The motion passed 5-2 with Christman and Kopczynski voting no.

Porsche has been working on criteria grid so that CARA can begin the work of creating a better policy framework to provide a clearer way to approve or disapprove projects.

Olsen said it takes a certain amount of faith to invest in a declining downtown. He doesn't think it is declining anymore and actually folks that have come back are amazed at how good First Avenue looks, for example. He thinks the downtown has improved a great deal and it is actually more expensive than used to be. His point is that it took a lot of faith for folks to put sweat and money in downtown.

NEXT MEETING DATE

The next meeting of the ARA is July 25, 2012, following the CARA Advisory Board meeting that begins at 5:15 p.m.

ADJOURNMENT

Hearing no further business, Chair Collins adjourned the meeting at 8:48 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by,

Signature on File

Mary Dibble, MMC
Deputy City Clerk

Reviewed by,

Signature on File

Kate Porsche
Urban Renewal Manager