



APPROVED: April 15, 2009

CITY OF ALBANY
Central Albany Revitalization Area Advisory Board
City Hall Council Chambers, 333 Broadalbin Street SW
Wednesday, March 18, 2009

MINUTES

Advisory Board Members present: David Anderer, Jeff Christman, Bill Coburn, Floyd Collins, Loyd Henion, Oscar Hult (arrived at 6:07 p.m.), Bessie Johnson (arrived at 5:30 p.m.), Gordon Kirbey, Sharon Konopa, Ray Kopczynski, Dick Olsen, Cordell Post, and Kim Sass

Advisory Board Members absent: Ralph Reid, Jr.

Staff present: City Manager Wes Hare, Community Development Director Greg Byrne, Urban Renewal Manager Kate Porsche, Public Information Officer Marilyn Smith, Building Official Melanie Adams, and Administrative Assistant Teresa Nix

Others present: Approximately 8 others in the audience

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Cordell Post called the meeting to order at 5:15 p.m.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

February 18, 2009

MOTION: Ray Kopczynski moved to approve the February 18 meeting minutes as presented. Loyd Henion seconded the motion, and it **passed** unanimously.

July 9, 2007 CARA Finance Subcommittee

MOTION: Henion moved to approve the July 9, 2007, CARA Finance Subcommittee minutes as presented. Bill Coburn seconded the motion, and it **passed** unanimously.

SCHEDULED BUSINESS

Communication: Accepting Rick Rogers' resignation from the CARA Small Grant Subcommittee

Sharon Konopa passed along a suggestion from David Anderer that staff be asked to prepare a certificate of appreciation to Rick Rogers from the CARA Advisory Board. There was general agreement. Urban Renewal Manager Kate Porsche agreed to follow up.

MOTION: Kim Sass moved to accept Rick Rogers' resignation from the CARA Small Grant Subcommittee. The motion was seconded, and it **passed** unanimously.

Business from the Public

None.

Budget and Cash-Flow Update

Porsche distributed and reviewed an updated *CARA Funds Available* spreadsheet. She noted that the current fund balance amount is \$438,969.52.

Report from Code Compliance – Blight Removal in CARA District

Porsche recalled that CARA previously approved funding for a pilot project with the City's Code Compliance team to help address blight in the CARA district. Building Official Melanie Adams introduced Code Compliance staff members in the audience. She said that staff identified a target region with an established neighborhood group and attended a meeting of the Salem/Harrison Neighborhood Watch on February 17, during which attendees provided responses to questions as follows:

What are your neighborhood assets? Periwinkle Creek, mature landscaping, the Dave Clark river path, King Kone (land mark), two churches, schools, pride of ownership, 25 mph speed limit, family-owned retail such as Legacy Ballet and the antique shop.

What are your neighborhood liabilities? Woodland Square trailer park was by far the largest topic of conversation related to liabilities. Other liabilities include the Water Avenue railroad tracks, damaged sidewalks and curbs, needed road repairs, curb drainage, water main problems, vacant lots and houses, trash from the 7/11 store, riverfront squatters, Pine/Santiam railroad property, the truck-driving school, and speeding by commuters.

What are your people assets? Citizen groups, church groups, Scouts, longtime residents, care of historic homes, neighborhood watch, blend of families and ages, SOLV, artists, and neighborhood get-togethers.

What are your people liabilities? Irresponsible pet owners, litter by commuters and customers of 7/11, loss of family businesses, transient activity and riverfront squatters, and communal use of dumpsters at Woodland Square causing overflowing.

What does your neighborhood want to change? Reduced speeding, more landscaping, enhanced patrols in warmer months, managed landscape that conceals, and gateway enhancement.

What does your neighborhood want to create? A minipark with flowers, a community recreation center, a safe place for children to play, less emphasis on affordable housing, more mixed use and small business, maybe a coffee shop or bistro near the creek.

What does your neighborhood want to preserve? Historic homes, the family mix, big trees, the quiet neighborhood, churches, and access to the river.

What is your vision for your neighborhood? One year: Woodland Square vacated, redevelopment process underway, the railroad property cleaned up, trash service for the rental properties, weatherization, and community painting effort. Three to five years: road/sidewalk/curb repairs, removal of the Water Avenue railroad tracks, and a community center. Five to seven years: water infrastructure repaired/improved and a high level of neighborhood maintenance.

Adams stated that the neighborhood group is very enthusiastic about this process. Code Compliance staff will attend another neighborhood meeting on March 24, 7:00 p.m., at the First Evangelical Church on First Avenue. CARA Advisory Board members are welcome to attend. The project team's next steps are to identify owner-occupied vs. landlord-tenant properties, evaluate the region's assets/liabilities, narrow the pilot project to a smaller target area, and develop a needs assessment for the smaller target area.

In response to inquiries, Adams said that the Woodland Square trailer park is owned by a person who lives in Silverton. There have been efforts to purchase the property, but the price has been very high. The new owner would have to consider the purchase price, as well as the cost of relocating the people who live there. Konopa

reviewed efforts toward purchase of the property over the past years. The owner has indicated a selling price of \$900,000; he is receiving \$90,000 per year in rents. City enforcement measures have resulted in the removal of some trailers and run-down buildings on the site. Brief discussion followed.

Public Information Officer Marilyn Smith came forward to discuss the Crabtree Automotive property on Hill Street. She said that there is an ongoing enforcement complaint regarding the nuisance property on this site. She requested that any CARA financing for this site be conditioned to require the cleanup of that area. Porsche said that the contract has not yet been drawn up and that this could be added as a condition of CARA funding. Jeff Christman suggested that staff discuss this with the owners of Crabtree Automotive to see if such condition would have an impact on their project plan. There was general agreement. Porsche will have that conversation and report back.

Grant Funding Request – Annunzio, Schultz Building

Porsche briefly reviewed the request for a CARA matching grant in the amount of \$45,000 to rehabilitate the second floor of the building at 212 First Avenue East into a residence. She said architect Rob Dortignacq has visited the site and provided input.

Jay Annunzio, 212 First Avenue SE, said that the Schultz Building was built in 1910. It is a historic site and is the largest surviving brick building on the east side of Downtown Albany. He purchased the building in 2004 and spent the funds needed to clean it up and return the lower floor to retail space. The site was previously an adult store, and he has had a lot of community support for changing the use. The furniture store on the lower level will be leaving at the end of the month. He has had discussions regarding various potential retail uses.

Coburn reviewed several apparent discrepancies between the estimates received and the application amounts. Annunzio said that there were wide variances in the bids received, and he used averages in filling out the CARA application.

Kopczynski asked if the project is contingent upon CARA funding and whether Annunzio would accept a loan rather than a grant. Annunzio responded that he has done a lot of work on his own over the past five years and that he would prefer to make repairs and upgrades over time rather than accept a loan.

In response to an inquiry from Dick Olsen, Annunzio said that he has made efforts to find photographs of the building which show the original windows, but he has been unable to do so. He plans to open up all of the bricked up windows on the west side of the building.

Porsche noted that some previous requests have also had widely varying bids. If this request is approved, CARA would only pay out 50 percent of the actual amount spent, up to a maximum of \$45,000.

Floyd Collins stated that he would prefer to see the funding provided as a loan, forgivable upon certificate of occupancy. Annunzio said that he would accept a forgivable loan.

MOTION: Collins moved to approve a forgivable loan for up to 50 percent of the final project cost (loan amount not to exceed \$45,000). The loan will convert to a grant upon issuance of a certificate of occupancy. The motion was seconded, and it **passed** unanimously.

Staff Updates and Issues

Porsche advised that installation of the Second Avenue streetscape accoutrements will begin next week and is expected to be complete by the end of April.

Porsche advised that there would be a joint work session with the ARA Budget Commission on April 15 prior the regular meetings of the CARA Advisory Board and ARA. In response to her inquiry, the Board requested that the small grant and single-family residential programs be included in the proposal for discussion by the full body.

Porsche advised that she will be initiating the spring 2009 small grant allocation process. She asked whether the Board would support eliminating the Small Grant Subcommittee filter and allow her to bring the small grant requests to the full Board two times per year. This would save time on the part of staff and the applicants. Following brief discussion, it was agreed to do so on a trial basis.

BUSINESS FROM THE BOARD

Sass asked for an update on the old Sears building. Adams said that the building was damaged when a contractor mistakenly cut into the rebar. The property owner did not respond to the notice and order and has not taken any action to fix the building. The City is taking steps to ensure that the building is safe. City Manager Wes Hare added that the City has opinions from structural engineers that the building could collapse and could impact the structural integrity of the two adjacent buildings. It was felt that the threat to the public is such that the City had to take emergency action.

NEXT MEETING DATE

The next meeting of the CARA Advisory Board will be held on Wednesday, April 15, 2009, following the joint work session with the ARA Budget Committee in the Council Chambers.

ADJOURNMENT

Hearing no further business, Chair Post adjourned the meeting at 6:27 p.m.

Submitted by,

Reviewed by,

Signature on File

Signature on File

Teresa Nix
Administrative Assistant

Kate Porsche
Urban Renewal Manager