

APPROVED: January 20, 2010

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

MINUTES

Advisory Board Members present: David Anderer, Rich Catlin, Jeff-Christman, Floyd Collins, Loyd Henion, Bessie Johnson, Gordon Kirbey, Sharon Konopa, Dick Olsen, Cordell Post, Ralph Reid, Jr., and Kim Sass

Advisory Board Members absent: Bill Coburn, Ray Kopczynski (excused)

Staff present: City Manager Wes Hare, Community Development Director Greg Byrne, Finance Director Stewart Taylor, Urban Renewal Manager Kate Porsche, and Administrative Assistant Teresa Nix

Others present: Gregoor Passchier

CALL TO ORDER

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

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

CARA Advisory Board: October 21, 2009

**MOTION:** Gordon Kirbey moved to approve the October 21 CARA Advisory Board minutes. Ralph Reid, Jr., seconded the motion, and it **passed** unanimously with Post abstaining.

CARA Small Grants Subcommittee: July 29, 2008

**MOTION:** Floyd Collins moved to approve the July 29, 2008, CARA Small Grants Subcommittee minutes. Reid seconded the motion, and it **passed** unanimously.

SCHEDULED BUSINESS

Business from the Public

There was no business from the public.

Urban Renewal in Oregon Rural Communities: a Tool for Historic Preservation

Gregoor Passchier said that he recently finished his Master's degree in planning and historic preservation at the University of Oregon. He gave a PowerPoint presentation on his thesis, *Urban Renewal in Oregon Rural Communities: a Tool for Historic Preservation*. The project purpose was to analyze the role of historic preservation in the urban renewal efforts of small Oregon communities, focused on case studies in Albany, Astoria, and Pendleton. His project involved document research, site visits, and participant interviews. He showed photographs and reviewed each of the case studies as follows:

Albany: The Central Albany Revitalization Area (CARA) was formed to implement the 1995 Central Albany Land Use and Transportation Study (CALUTS). Efforts focused on how to use urban renewal to enhance quality of life in the community. A \$1 million CARA grant allowed for the First Avenue Streetscape to be completed in 2004; this had a cascading effect on surrounding neighborhoods, including improvements to Jordan Jewelers, the Flinn block, the Ames building, and the Olivetti building. The results are an aesthetic improvement to one block in downtown Albany; accurate restoration of downtown buildings; a new business mix with higher-end boutique stores, restaurants, usable office space, and conference space; and improved community perception of the downtown.

Astoria: The Astor-East Urban Renewal Area was established in 1980 to restore the Clatsop County fairgrounds. In 2000, a “cherry stem” extension of the renewal area was done in order to allow for the purchase and restoration of the Astoria Liberty Theater in conjunction with a local nonprofit organization. The Liberty Theater opened in 2005 and has hosted events, including national events that have at times filled all of the hotel rooms in downtown Astoria. The restoration was a catalyst for redevelopment, resulting in restoration of Hotel Elliott, Bank of Astoria Day Spa, restaurants, and a number of other historic buildings.

Pendleton: This urban renewal area includes downtown Pendleton and the area along the river. The Façade Restoration Program provides grants of 40 percent of total project cost for buildings of historical significance within the urban renewal area. Completed projects include the Rainbow Café, the Brown Building, St. George Hotel, and Cimmiyotti’s Building. Results include downtown housing, improved business activity, and improved community perception of the downtown.

In conclusion, he said that a variety of different activities have been undertaken to preserve historic buildings. In Albany, the focus has been on commercial rehabilitation and storefront redevelopment through loans and grants. In Astoria, the focus has been on restoration of key landmarks. In Pendleton, the focus has been on façade restoration. He reviewed the following questions and answers from his thesis:

- Is urban renewal effective at preserving historic preservation? Urban Renewal provides an essential funding tool for preservation. A strong regulatory framework for preservation is necessary.
- What has changed in these communities as a result of investing in historic preservation? New higher-end businesses, more downtown residents/office workers, improved community perception, and development of place and identity. He found that historic preservation is not necessarily a job creator.
- How do communities measure success? One measurement is the increase in tax increment. It was difficult to find other measures for success. Suggested measures that came out of his interviews were vacancy rates, business mix, and community surveys.

Recommendations that came out of the study are to develop a strong regulatory framework for preservation, to provide clear guidelines for applicants, to provide matching grants and loans rather than full grants, to combine urban renewal incentives with other incentives, to seek strategies to market communities, to provide an open public forum for decision making, and to develop clear criteria for approving projects.

Several Board members expressed appreciation for a job well done.

#### Discussion: Findings from Last Month’s Open House

Urban Renewal Manager Kate Porsche gave a PowerPoint presentation on the results of the CARA Open House. She noted that CARA projects as stated in the plan were posted around the room and participants were given stickers and asked to rank the projects in order of importance. There were 42 participants.

Porsche distributed and reviewed an outline of the votes by weighted totals and comments received by participants. The top five projects were Commercial Building Rehabilitation, Overhead Utilities, Santiam Canal Esplanade, Water Avenue Improvements, and the Broadalbin Promenade.

Porsche said she will provide a proposal for consideration at the next meeting about how the Board may want to categorize and allocate funds moving forward. She said that a list of specific projects would also be helpful for the lender. Brief discussion followed.

Staff Updates and Issues

Porsche provided an update on the Wheelhouse project; work is moving forward and the building is looking very nice.

Porsche reported that the Christmas Parlor Tour will be on Sunday, December 13.

BUSINESS FROM THE BOARD

Gordon Kirbey requested an update on the status of a new awning for the Pix Theater, previously approved by the Small Grant Subcommittee. Porsche said that the holdup has been in getting the owner of the building to share in the cost. Mr. Mexico has been working with the building owner on this issue without success.

NEXT MEETING DATE

The next regular meeting of the CARA Advisory Board will be held on Wednesday, December 16, 2009, at 5:15 p.m. in the Council Chambers.

ADJOURNMENT

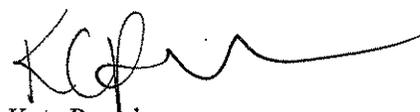
Hearing no further business, Chair Post adjourned the meeting at 6:12 p.m.

Submitted by,



Teresa Nix  
Administrative Assistant

Reviewed by,



Kate Porsche  
Urban Renewal Manager