



APPROVED: October 19, 2011

**CITY OF ALBANY**  
**Central Albany Revitalization Area Advisory Board**  
**City Hall Council Chambers, 333 Broadalbin Street SW**  
**Wednesday, September 21, 2011**

**MINUTES**

Advisory Board Members present: Rich Catlin, Jeff Christman, Bill Coburn, Floyd Collins, Kate Foster, Loyd Henion, Bessie Johnson, Gordon Kirbey, Sharon Konopa, Ray Kopczynski, Dick Olsen, Cordell Post, and Mark Spence

Advisory Board Members absent: Chuck Leland (excused)

Staff present: Urban Renewal Manager Kate Porsche, Community Development Director Greg Byrne, Parks & Recreation Director Ed Hodney, Transportation Systems Analyst Ron Irish, Civil Engineer III Chris Cerklewski, and Administrative Assistant Teresa Nix

Others present: Approximately 38 audience members

**CALL TO ORDER**

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

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

July 26, 2011

**MOTION:** Ray Kopczynski moved to approve the June 26 minutes as presented. Mark Spence seconded the motion, and it **passed** 13 to 0.

**SCHEDULED BUSINESS**

Business from the Public

None.

Retail Refinement Presentation

Urban Renewal Manager Kate Porsche said that consultant George Crandall has been working with the City, a stakeholder group, and a steering committee to develop a retail refinement plan. Crandall is here tonight to present the final version of that plan and to talk about public projects he feels CARA should be focusing on. The CARA Advisory Board will meet in October to discuss policy issues and clean up some smaller items and then in November to consider applications for the competitive round of public/private partnerships.

George Crandall reviewed the retail refinement plan process which included work with the stakeholder group and steering committee through several meetings. In the first meeting, he presented information regarding the traditional retail main street, the retail recipe for success, and a retail configuration with a major destination anchoring each end of the street and edge to edge retail on both sides of the street. Meeting participants were asked to list their top concerns from which the project goals were established. In the second meeting, Crandall presented a design proposal for consideration and participants provided input. In the third meeting, Crandall

presented an updated plan and an implementation strategy. The summary of all of this work is the Retail Revitalization Concept. The Concept includes high-priority projects in the amount of about \$2.1 million, as well as future projects totaling about \$7 million. He reviewed the high-priority projects as follows:

**East anchor site:** There is a major development opportunity site, suited for a high retail traffic generator, along the Ellsworth/Lyon corridor. The suggestion is that access be improved with an adjacent slip road. The slip road would require approval by the Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT). The recommendation is that CARA fund \$20,000 for preparation, review, and finalization of exit ramp concepts related to future development of the east anchor location.

**Retail parking site acquisition, parking lot resurfacing, and wayfinding signage:** Potential sites have been identified for a parking structure to accommodate new and existing retail and commercial uses. Option 1 is to purchase the site currently used by the Eagles and to use the JC Penney site for infill development. Option 2, if the Eagles' site could not be procured, would be to use the JC Penney site for parking. Crandall showed a scheme of how a parking structure with first-floor retail might look. Two existing parking lots, which will need to continue to provide parking until a parking structure can be developed, are in need of resurfacing. The recommendation is that CARA fund up to \$775,000 for potential purchase of the Eagles' site, up to \$50,000 for resurfacing of the two existing downtown parking lots, and \$75,000 to purchase and implement wayfinding signage throughout Central Albany to help visitors find and navigate to downtown destinations and parking.

**Broadalbin Promenade:** The first test block was completed in June 2010. The recommendation is that CARA fund up to \$1,020,000 for a debrief from the pilot block, preparation of a concept design plan and details, preparation of contract drawings, and construction of the final two blocks of the Broadalbin Promenade (First Avenue to Water Avenue and Second Avenue to Third Avenue).

**Monteith Riverpark Expansion, Albany Square:** The site of the Monteith Riverpark expansion was originally thought to be a good location for Albany Square. The current recommendation is that a town square would be better suited to a location with direct proximity to the retail core and that the site north of Water (currently a City-owned parking lot) would be better suited for an expansion of park area. The recommendation is that CARA fund up to \$24,000 for design concepts and refinement work for the Monteith Riverpark expansion.

**West anchor - the Albany Carousel Museum:** The Carousel is a wonderful attractor which has already had the benefit of a great amount of community time and effort. The recommendation is that CARA fund up to \$110,000 for schematic design fees to move this anchor site to the next level in their fund-raising efforts.

Crandall said that an investment of about \$2.1 million in public projects at this time would leverage about \$22.8 million in private investment. This is a wonderful ratio of 11/1 given that a ratio of 6/1 is considered successful.

#### Review of Crandall's Recommended Public Projects

Porsche distributed and reviewed "*High-Priority Catalyst Projects – Public Project Funding Request Details*," which provides additional information about the seven projects recommended by Crandall. If the CARA Advisory Board decides to fund all seven projects at a total of about \$2.1 million, it would leave about \$1.6 million for the competitive round of public/private projects that will come forward in November. This would deplete the current line-of-credit, and staff estimates that the urban renewal district would be able to pay down the existing debt and take on another line-of-credit in about 1.5 to 2 years.

The Board reviewed, discussed, and took any public comment for each project as follows:

**East anchor, Lyon Street exit ramp, concept design work (\$20,000):** Porsche reviewed the background and the request as detailed in the handout. Mark Spence asked if the area should be designed in a way to attract a certain type of anchor. Crandall said that it is hard to say what the east anchor would be – it could be a grocery store, a cluster of home furnishing stores, etc. Gordon Kirbey noted that department stores often served as

anchors in the past, but that has changed. Crandall agreed; he said that large department stores now tend to develop outside of downtowns. Kate Foster asked if any historic structures are proposed to be removed. Crandall said that historic buildings should be preserved if possible; however, developing an area that would attract an anchor should be a high priority. Rich Catlin asked if funding should be increased to allow for marketing work in order to be able to market the site as feasible for development. Crandall suggested that the first step to marketing the downtown is to adopt a refinement plan like the one he is presenting. Many analysts now agree that a good alternative to doing a marketing study is to create market demand, i.e., create a place where investors want to invest. In response to an inquiry from Catlin, Crandall said that a site-specific marketing plan could be beneficial.

There was no public comment on this item.

**Retail parking site acquisition (\$775,000):** Porsche reviewed the background and the request as detailed in the handout. She advised that staff has made progress in working with the Eagles on possible acquisition of that site but more time is needed to work out the details. Bessie Johnson noted that the market value is usually higher than assessed value; Porsche agreed to double-check the figures in the handout to be sure they were not transposed. In response to inquiries, Porsche said that the Eagles building was constructed in the 1960s and that it is currently tax-exempt. Bill Coburn said that he is not opposed to having some discussion; however, he understood from Crandall's presentation that parking is not a primary need at this time. Crandall responded that it is important to position for future success, that parking is very important in trying to appeal to potential developers and tenants, and that this is a decision that needs to be made now in order to achieve long-term success. Brief discussion followed.

Public comment: Scott Lepman asked if below grade parking has been considered. Crandall noted that subsurface parking is about double the cost of above grade parking; however, consideration could be given to that when it is time to build.

**Parking lot resurfacing (\$50,000):** Porsche reviewed the background and the request as detailed in the handout. In response to inquiries from the Board, Civil Engineer III Chris Cerklewski said that the assumptions that went into the estimate were that the improvements would be temporary to bridge the gap until a more permanent surface parking lot is constructed; it would be much better than what is there now and he thinks it would be good for at least five years. Floyd Collins asked if the improvement would have to meet current development standards. Transportation Systems Analyst Ron Irish said that the overlay would not trigger all current standards; however, ADA standards would have to be met.

There was no public comment on this item.

**Wayfinding signage (\$75,000):** Porsche reviewed the background and the request as detailed in the handout. Johnson said that she often gets calls from people trying to find the courthouse and other buildings; she thinks this is a great idea. Kirby agreed that signage is needed in downtown. In response to inquiries, Porsche said that the signs are designed so the directional pieces can easily be changed. She would be happy to bring back information showing the locations mapped for signage.

Public comment: Oscar Hult commented that wayfinding signage was highly recommended by the Lakota Group when it conducted an analysis for Downtown Albany three years ago.

**Broadalbin Promenade, design and construct the two remaining blocks (\$1,020,000):** Porsche reviewed the background and the request as detailed in the handout. Sharon Konopa said that she often hears positive comments about the promenade block, as well as questions about why only one block was done. Loyd Henion and Bessie Johnson shared positive comments that they have received about the promenade. Jeff Christman expressed concern about what would happen to the improvements when development eventually occurs along the north block. Porsche said she understands the concern; she noted that Crandall has said improvements could be done in a way that considers future development. Spence said that this work would make sense if there was plaza and park expansion; without those, he doesn't think it makes sense. Konopa said that the promenade would provide a connection between the river and downtown and would also benefit development

at the other end of Water Avenue. Crandall said that improvement has to start somewhere; this would start to give definition to the downtown, build pedestrian amenities that show this is a special zone, provide a north-south connection to the waterfront, and make it more likely that a park expansion will move forward. Kopczynski noted that the first block of the promenade was the catalyst to at least one business moving forward on improvements.

Public comment: Oscar Hult said that if the promenade results in someone deciding to develop a hotel, for example, it will be well worth the effort. He thinks that completing the promenade is visionary, follows through with the 1995 plan, and shows that Albany is serious about growing. Brief discussion followed.

**Monteith Riverpark Expansion, concept design and refinement (\$24,000):** Porsche reviewed the background and the request as detailed in the handout. She read from a letter from Parks & Recreation Director Ed Hodney in support of the project. In response to inquiries as to whether this work would put the City in a better place for future grants, Irish stated that public support and having a project near completion both cause projects to rank well in grant applications.

Public comment: Scott Lepman said that he cannot see the river from his office during the summer. He suggested that the park design consider river views. Porsche said that there are some nonnative species along the river and that staff has had conversations about ways to carefully craft view corridors.

**West Anchor, Carousel Building, conceptual design (\$110,000):** Porsche reviewed the background and the request as detailed in the handout. Konopa said that it is important for the City to assist with the design in order to ensure that the public and stakeholders have input and that the conceptual design will help the Carousel organization with fund-raising. She said that many in the community are excited about the Carousel and that the City has an obligation to follow through and protect this investment. In response to inquiries, Porsche affirmed that CARA gave the Carousel a \$300,000 forgivable loan in 2007 and stated that THA Architecture, the architect chosen by the Carousel Architectural Selection Committee, has done several significant projects, most recently in Ashland and Portland. Foster asked if CARA would have any input into the design; she wants to be sure it fits in with the downtown. Porsche said that CARA has design guidelines associated with its money and that THA Architecture is planning to gather input, work on design alternatives, and present the design to several groups including CARA. Konopa said it was stressed to the architect that it would be important to bring the public and stakeholders into process. Johnson asked if the design will address concerns about noise impacts on adjacent businesses. Porsche said that one of the discussion items at the initial meeting was how to create an open, airy atmosphere while addressing noise concerns.

Public comment: David Johnson said he is representing the Albany Carousel Museum. He said the organization has a mechanism, animals, and a museum site; it needs to design and construct a building. Several months ago, an architectural selection committee went through a process and selected an architect out of Portland. The architect plans a very collaborative public process involving the general public, downtown merchants, the City, and stakeholders. The conceptual design is needed in order to solicit donations. He said that the conceptual design will cost about \$110,000 and the construction drawings will cost about \$245,000. The organization has received donations of over \$900,000; after paying for animals, overhead, utilities, etc., it has about \$467,000 in the bank. The vast majority of that money is restricted donations that cannot be used for soft costs such as design and permits. The Carousel Museum has attracted 50,000 visitors in three years and those numbers are growing. In terms of community support, the Carousel has had more than 118,000 volunteer hours in the last five years. At his request, many people in the audience raised their hands in support of the Carousel.

In response to inquiries from the Board, David Johnson said that although a total of \$355,000 is needed for the conceptual design and construction drawings, he understands there are other requests to be considered and that the CARA Advisory Board will have to make the decision as to whether to fund any or part of those costs. The request is for \$110,000 for the conceptual design at this time. Porsche said that the CARA Advisory Board could choose to approve the full \$355,000, funding only the \$110,000 at this time and funding the construction drawings with a new line-of-credit in 2013. David Johnson advised that the goal is to complete construction documents in 2012 and to start construction in 2013.

Christman said he would prefer that this request come back in a more traditional type of proposal and that he would like to see the entire request in one package. Porsche said that it was her idea to include this in the high-priority catalyst projects as part of the overall retail strategy; it can certainly be brought back as a public/private partnership request if the Board so directs. Coburn said that he would prefer to delay the Broadalbin Promenade until 2013 in order to allow the Carousel project to move forward. Dick Olsen said that he would like to give at least \$110,000 to the Carousel at this time so that potential donors can see the conceptual design; he is especially concerned about the ability to secure the Denzel collection. Brief discussion followed regarding design processes and timelines. Konopa said that the Carousel is a community project and that the community needs to be part of the design process; by funding the conceptual design, the community and stakeholders are brought into the process. Foster said that she would like to fund the entire amount needed for the design and construction drawings. In response to an inquiry from Olsen, Porsche reviewed the available funds; funding in the amount of \$355,000 to the Carousel would reduce the amount available for the competitive round of public/private partnerships to about \$1.4 million.

Spence said he had no idea that the Board would be voting on this level of spending tonight, effectively putting itself out of business for a couple of years. He has not had the time to consider what he thinks are the priority projects. He agrees that funding public projects is an important component of what CARA does; however, another important thing urban renewal does is to address blight. One of the projects that will be considered in November is a project on Salem Avenue that will greatly reduce blight in that area. Porsche advised that detailed information was not shared prior to the meeting because staff was in the process of negotiating on the Eagles' site.

Collins asked if the urban renewal plan needs to be amended in order to adopt the retail refinement plan. Porsche said all of the projects outlined in the retail refinement plan are components of the urban renewal plan; there is no need to adopt it as a separate plan.

Collins said that there is a lot of information being presented and consideration needs to be given to the total financing package and potential competition from requests that will come forward in November. He does not feel he has the necessary information to make decisions tonight. Olsen said that he tends to agree; he would like to allocate \$110,000 to the Carousel tonight and wait on the rest. Porsche said that she struggled with the best way to bring this forward, and she thinks it could work to consider all of the public and private projects together; she cautioned that this would result in a very long meeting in November.

**WEST ANCHOR - THE ALBANY CAROUSEL MUSEUM: MOTION:** Catlin moved to approve funding of up to \$110,000 in the form of a forgivable loan for the Albany Carousel Museum to pay for architectural costs associated with the design concept. Forgiveness of the loan will be conditioned upon construction completion of the project within an acceptable amount of time. Staff is authorized to negotiate an acceptable timeline with the Albany Carousel Museum. Olsen seconded the motion, and it **passed** 13 to 0.

Christman requested that staff bring back more detail on the timeframe when this comes before the Albany Revitalization Agency in the form of a resolution.

**WAYFINDING SIGNAGE: MOTION:** Spence moved to approve funding not to exceed \$75,000 to purchase and implement the wayfinding system for downtown. Staff is authorized to work with the Main Street Design Committee on a RFP for these services. Johnson seconded the motion, and it **passed** 13 to 0.

**RETAIL PARKING SITE ACQUISITION: MOTION:** Spence moved to authorize staff to purchase the Eagles' site for a price not to exceed \$775,000 if the site can be secured by December 31, 2011; otherwise to proceed with further investigation of the use of the City's JC Penney lot for this use. Konopa seconded the motion.

Brief discussion followed during which several Board members said they would like to see the purchase details prior to a deal being finalized.

Spence offered a **friendly amendment** to his motion, and Konopa agreed, as follows:

The motion is subject to an offer being tendered and the amount and conditions returned to CARA for final discussion and approval.

Collins said he will vote against the motion. He wants more information on the terms and conditions, as well as how it competes with the applications that will be considered in November. Coburn said that Crandall's information showed that there is no immediate need for parking; he is not sure this is at the top of the priorities. Catlin said he is concerned that there has not yet been a discussion about priorities; he will vote against the motion at this time.

Crandall stated that there is a simple rule in urban renewal – take care of the heart if you want healthy extremities. The best place for CARA to invest is in the downtown. He feels that CARA owning the Eagles' site would provide a number of options and is critical for long-term success. Konopa thanked Crandall for his comments. She said that this type of advice is why Crandall was hired; he is an expert and she trusts his knowledge and experience. She noted that some public projects will immediately bring money into the community in the way of construction dollars, that many private projects have been funded with CARA funds, and that public projects are a vital piece to bringing in money and investment. She said that Crandall's recommendations are a result of his work with the stakeholders and business owners, as well as his experience.

Foster asked why a second option for parking was presented if the Eagles' site is thought to be vital. Crandall said that it was felt that a fallback option may be needed in the event that the Eagles' site could not be secured; he feels it is a poor second choice.

Collins said that he would agree to a purchase option or some way of tying up the Eagles' building without acquiring it at this time. Porsche said that preliminary discussions did include the potential of a right-of-first refusal; however, the City Attorney's strong recommendation was to go the route of an earnest money agreement.

Post noted that the friendly amendment to the motion will require a second review by this Board prior to purchase.

The motion **passed** 9 to 4:

Yes: Coburn, Foster, Johnson, Kirbey, Konopa, Henion, Olsen, Post, Spence

No: Catlin, Christman, Collins, Kopczynski

Collins said he would like to be able to compare the merits of the private projects with the remaining public projects in November. Foster disagreed; she noted that Crandall said it is important to take care of the heart first and she thinks the public projects are more important. Porsche noted that Crandall did not do his work in a vacuum; he is aware of many of the private projects that will be coming forward and these recommendations truly represent his highest priority. Christman said that he thinks several of the smaller projects could be addressed tonight; however, he feels that the Broadalbin Promenade needs to be held up against the public/private partnerships, including the large one that would take care of a severely blighted area.

**PARKING LOT RESURFACING: MOTION:** Christman moved to approve funding not to exceed \$50,000 for the resurfacing of the two existing downtown lots – First Avenue between Cappie's and Venetian and the lot behind the JC Penney building. Olsen seconded the motion.

Coburn said that he doesn't think this work is feasible until next spring and he doesn't see an urgency to approve this now. In response to inquiries from the Board, Irish said that, if this is approved, staff would do some evaluation, survey, and design work but would not do the resurfacing until next construction season.

The motion **passed** 9 to 3 with Post abstaining:

Yes: Catlin, Christman, Foster, Johnson, Konopa, Henion, Olsen, Kopczynski, Spence

No: Collins, Coburn, Kirbey

**EAST ANCHOR SITE: MOTION:** Olsen moved to approve funding of up to \$20,000 to pay for costs related to hiring and working with a consultant on the preparation, review, and finalization of exit ramp concepts related to the future development of the east anchor location. Johnson seconded the motion.

Catlin said that he understands the slip lane is a priority but some other pieces need to come into play to demonstrate whether this will be a viable anchor site.

**MOTION TO AMEND:** Catlin moved to amend the motion to approve funding of up to \$50,000 to include additional predevelopment of the site to demonstrate that it is marketable as an anchor site. Johnson seconded the motion.

Collins said he would rather have the necessary discussions with ODOT before committing this money. Brief discussion followed.

The motion to amend **failed** 4 to 9:

Yes: Catlin, Johnson, Konopa, Spence

No: Christman, Collins, Coburn, Foster, Kirbey, Henion, Olsen, Kopczynski, Post

In response to an inquiry from Collins, Irish said that he has not yet talked with ODOT about the concept of a slip lane at this location; he wanted to see if this body supported the concept before moving forward.

The motion **passed** 12 to 1, with Christman voting no.

**MONTEITH RIVERPARK EXPANSION: MOTION:** Olsen moved to approve funding of up to \$24,000 for design concepts and refinement of the Monteith Riverpark Expansion. Johnson seconded the motion, and it **passed** 12 to 1 with Kirbey voting no.

#### Staff Updates and Issues

None.

#### BUSINESS FROM THE BOARD

None.

#### NEXT MEETING DATE

The next meeting of the CARA Advisory Board is scheduled for Wednesday, October 19, 2011, at 5:15 p.m. in the Council Chambers.

#### ADJOURNMENT

Hearing no further business, Chair Post adjourned the meeting at 9:05 p.m.

Submitted by,



Teresa Nix  
Administrative Assistant

Reviewed by,



Kate Porsche  
Urban Renewal Manager