



**CITY OF ALBANY**  
**Central Albany Revitalization Area Advisory Board**  
**City Hall Council Chambers, 333 Broadalbin Street SW**  
**Wednesday, July 25, 2012**

**MINUTES**

Advisory Board Members present: Jeff Christman, Bill Coburn, Floyd Collins, Kate Foster, Loyd Henion, Gordon Kirbey, Chuck Leland, Sharon Konopa, Ray Kopczynski, Dick Olsen, Mark Spence

Advisory Board Members absent: Russ Allen, Rich Catlin, Bessie Johnson (all excused)

Staff present: City Manager Wes Hare, City Attorney Jim Delapoer, Urban Renewal Manager Kate Porsche, Public Information Officer Marilyn Smith, Administrative Assistant Teresa Nix

**CALL TO ORDER**

Vice Chair Jeff Christman called the meeting to order at 5:15 p.m.

**ELECTION OF CHAIR**

Christman called for nominations for CARA Advisory Board Chair.

Gordon Kirbey nominated Mark Spence. Spence respectfully declined.

Floyd Collins nominated Rich Catlin. Loyd Henion seconded the nomination.

In response to an inquiry from the Board, Collins said that he has spoken with Catlin, who indicated he would consider serving as Chair.

Rich Catlin was elected Chair by a vote of 11-0.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

November 16, 2011 (with revisions), and January 18, 2012

**MOTION:** Ray Kopczynski moved to approve the November 16, 2011, and January 18, 2012, minutes as written. Kate Foster seconded the motion, and it **passed** 14-0.

**SCHEDULED BUSINESS**

Business from the Public

Stella Reimers read a letter, previously submitted to Urban Renewal Manager Kate Porsche (see agenda file). She said that she is a downtown property owner and she reviewed how conditions in Downtown Albany have improved since the formation of the CARA urban renewal district. She urged the Council to continue funding for the CARA program and finish the work that is yet to be completed. Christman requested that Porsche distribute Reimer's letter to the Advisory Board members.

Tom Cordier referred to a graphic that was displayed for the Edgewater Village Update agenda item. He asked what kind of demographic study has been done that leads the City Council and CARA Advisory Board to believe that the general public will want to reside in an area that is next to railroad tracks and a growing tavern. His recollection is that most urbanites try to stay away from those kinds of features.

Mike Quinn referred to the RCM Homes and Edgewater Village housing projects. He said that it seems these projects are taking a long time to get off the ground. He feels the market is not there for these projects; he would build apartments before he would consider building condos and single-family homes. He asked if there are market studies, whether the Council has talked with investors in depth, and when these projects are going to get off the ground.

Jim Claussen said that he wonders if the housing projects will remain empty like the Wheel House, the Flinn Building, and the JC Penney Building. He thinks this project will end up the same way. There has been a lot of money and a lot of effort with nothing to show for it and no solid estimates of what the financial outcomes will be.

### Edgewater Village Update

Porsche distributed graphics provided by the applicant of the site plan and landscape plan for the Edgewater Village residential project (see agenda file). She said that the City is the first lien holder on the property and that the contract outlines specific benchmarks that the development is required to meet. There is a requirement that the development receive land use approval by October 31, 2012; they have been working through the process and are on track to meet that benchmark. The next phases outline the construction of units with the first five units to be completed by October 2013. She has reviewed the site layout against CARA's design guidelines and had the design reviewed by CARA architect George Crandall whose comments are incorporated into the information before the Board.

David Reece spoke on behalf of the applicant. He said this project was started several years ago but stalled due to the downturn in the economy. As time has gone by and the economy slowly tries to recover, thoughts have been given to ways to achieve the two goals of developing a product that will be absorbed and meeting the criteria set forth by the CARA Advisory Board. The developer worked with architect Bill Ryals to develop a master plan which was vetted through planning staff, two neighborhood meetings, and review by CARA staff and architect. A realtor was brought onto the team to give a feel for the type of housing that would sell. Feedback from the neighborhood meetings and subsequent studies, as well as the project size, scope, and timeline, drove the conclusion that this project needed to be a Planned Development (PD). A PD will provide flexibility to revisit and potentially modify the plan in future phases. He said the plan preserves view and access corridors and makes the most of the Dave Clark Riverfront Path, the Willamette River, and other features. It incorporates four house styles on 58 lots in a range of sizes and prices. Property in the center of the site is owned by the railroad and could be incorporated into the plan if it comes available. He thanked the CARA Board for their support.

Spence asked for a staff update on negotiations with the railroad. City Attorney Jim Delapoer said that negotiations are ongoing and there is reason to be optimistic. It is possible that the property may be in City ownership within the next 90 to 120 days. Once that happens, decisions will have to be made about how to integrate that property into this project.

Porsche will provide additional updates as the project moves forward.

### CARA Project Updates

Porsche said that the United Steelworkers were not able to secure financing for the property and this project will not be moving forward. Staff will prepare a resolution for the Agency to rescind the previous resolution that approved funding for that project. Porsche noted that all CARA funding is paid on a reimbursement basis after work has been completed. In the case of United Steelworkers, no money has been distributed and the \$240,000 set aside for the project will go back into the budget and be available for this body's consideration in the future.

Porsche said the Woodland Square Project was not chosen for this year's round of affordable housing tax credits. The developers heard from the state that the project was very competitive and may be successful in the next round. The developers are exploring a way to purchase the property this year to be ready for the next round of tax credits. Staff will bring forward a full report and recommendation next month.

### Initial Review of Policy Items

Christman drew attention to the staff report and CARA Policy Brainstorming List in meeting packets. He said that it is important for the Board to take its time in this process and building solid guidelines which will guide funding decisions on future projects. Following brief discussion, there was general agreement to proceed through the brainstorming list in the order provided. It was noted that it may take several meetings to complete the review. Porsche distributed the Project Evaluation Grid that is currently used (see agenda file). She said that she would be happy to provide additional staff analysis on any of the items on the list.

Collins said that, having reviewed the existing project evaluation grid and hearing from the community, he would like to consider issues including consistency with the existing plan, potential modification of the application process, modifying some review criteria, strengthening the contractual language, looking at cost accounting, and keeping track of where we are in the scope of the CARA plan. He said that the City Council receives financial data on a quarterly basis; it would be helpful to see CARA financial data and tracking on a quarterly basis as well.

Spence said that an underlying principle he will be considering throughout this discussion is that he would like for this body to be more proactive rather than simply react to proposals that are brought forward.

Delapoer said that he can do a better job of providing documentation that fits the Board's expectations if he is included in the process earlier and given the flexibility to negotiate terms. It is important to know the Board's values (i.e., is getting repaid or having money spent in the desired way most important), and the amount of risk that the Board is comfortable with; this may be different for different requests.

The Board began a review of the items in the CARA Policy Brainstorming List as follows:

*Board Composition:* Christman said it has been suggested that consideration be given to adding representatives of the taxing districts to the Advisory Board. He asked if this is something the Board would like to consider.

Kopczynski asked if those members would have the authority to represent their respective taxing district and whether the Board would be enlarged or existing members would be supplanted. Coburn said his most recent appointee, Greater Albany Public School District (GAPS) Business Director Russ Allen, made clear that he would not be representing GAPS. Coburn expects that Allen would bring expertise and perspective associated with his position that would be beneficial but that he would do so as an individual.

Foster said that she thinks this is a diverse Board and she likes its current makeup.

Porsche said that some communities are changing the makeup of their urban renewal boards to include elected officials who officially represent the taxing districts with the idea that you have all of the parties at the table.

Delapoer suggested that the Board might consider a routine distribution to all taxing districts to give those agencies an opportunity to take an official position on projects if they wish.

Collins said he would like to get comments from the taxing districts as projects are being considered. He noted that there is nothing in the statutes that regulate advisory boards and the Agency is free to structure the body as it wants.

Spence likened having members of the taxing districts on the CARA Board to having a member of the Council sitting on all bodies that make decisions that affect the City; he said it would be fragmenting.

Kirbey asked, "If the Board is going to do a proactive outreach to the taxing districts seeking input on every decision, what is the Advisory Board for?" He expressed concern about the length of time it might take to make decisions.

Konopa said that she feels a 14-member Board is large enough. She likes Delapoe's suggestion that proposals be sent to the taxing districts which can then choose to comment or not.

Foster agreed. She said that sending notice would allow the taxing districts to submit comment and allow the Board to get input to make the best decision.

Porsche asked if the Board would want to consider some threshold that would trigger the notification process, i.e., would the taxing districts be notified of the small grant requests? She noted that one idea staff had was to periodically visit the taxing districts to provide an update on projects and answer questions.

Henion said more knowledge is better; he would support a process which invites input from all groups that might be affected by a proposal, perhaps even beyond the taxing districts.

Christman summarized that it appears that the Board would like to have some input from the taxing districts; he suggested that staff bring back ideas for how that might work. He said he is not hearing that anyone wants to increase the size of the Board, but representatives of the taxing districts are welcome to apply and may be appointed as vacancies occur.

*Project Types/Decision:* Foster said that she is concerned that defining a geographic focus area would become too limiting; she wouldn't mind setting priority areas. Collins agreed; he referred to the successful Viper NW project and said he would not want to set a geographic focus to the exclusion of considering projects that may come forward outside of the focus area.

Coburn reviewed examples in Salem and Portland where targeted focus has had good results. He suggested that focus could be given to parts of the CARA district with flexibility to consider worthwhile projects outside of the target area. Brief discussion followed.

Konopa noted that there are people in the audience who wish to speak. She said that there was an opportunity for public input prior to the brainstorming session and that there will be additional opportunities for public input throughout this review process.

Christman said that there was some good brainstorming this evening. He suggested that Board members be thinking about more specific guidelines and recommendations for discussion at the next meeting. Collins suggested that Board members also review the CARA plan, including the categories of projects.

#### Staff Updates and Issues

None.

#### BUSINESS FROM THE BOARD

None.

#### RECESS TO EXECUTIVE SESSION TO DISCUSS REAL PROPERTY TRANSACTION IN ACCORDANCE WITH ORS 192.660(2)(e)

The meeting was recessed into an Executive Session at 6:34 p.m.

#### RECONVENE

The meeting was reconvened at 6:54 p.m.

#### NEXT MEETING DATE

The next meeting of the CARA Advisory Board is scheduled for Wednesday, August 15, 2012, at 5:15 p.m. in the Council Chambers.

ADJOURNMENT

Hearing no further business, Vice Chair Christman adjourned the meeting at 6:55 p.m.

Submitted by,

Reviewed by,

*Signature on File*

*Signature on File*

Teresa Nix  
Administrative Assistant

Kate Porsche  
Urban Renewal Manager