



CITY OF ALBANY
Central Albany Revitalization Area Advisory Board
City Hall Council Chambers, 333 Broadalbin Street SW
Wednesday, January 16, 2013

MINUTES

Advisory Board Members present: Russ Allen, Rich Catlin, Floyd Collins, Loyd Henion, Bessie Johnson, Rich Kellum, Gordon Kirbey, Sharon Konopa, Ray Kopczynski, Danon Kroessin, Dick Olsen, Mark Spence, and Maura Wilson

Advisory Board Members absent: Bill Coburn (excused)

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Rich Catlin called the meeting to order at 5:15 p.m.

Catlin welcomed new Advisory Board members. He said that although it is not on the agenda, the Advisory Board needs to elect a new Vice Chair; the previous Vice Chair was former Councilor Jeff Christman.

Sharon Konopa moved that Mark Spence be nominated for Vice Chair. Bessie Johnson seconded the nomination. There were no additional nominations. The motion passed 13-0.

Catlin said that he would like to share information that is not on the agenda but is important to our downtown. There are a series of meetings being held to take comments about a state initiative through ODOT Rail to look at passenger rail service in the Willamette Valley from Eugene to Portland. One of the meetings is being held tonight at the Albany Public Library and comments will be taken until 7:00 p.m. Public input may also be submitted on ODOT's website. He encouraged people to submit testimony on this issue. Konopa said that she is on the Leadership Council, the decision makers over what route will be used. Once the route is in place, it will open the door to any federal funding that may come available. She said that an online effort resulted in a lot of people pushing for the route through Corvallis at the last open house. She agreed that it is important to put in support for the Albany route.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

December 19, 2012

MOTION: Ray Kopczynski moved to approve the minutes as presented. Johnson seconded the motion, and it passed 13-0.

SCHEDULED BUSINESS

Business from the Public

None.

Discussion of Public Projects

Urban Renewal Manager Kate Porsche reviewed the written staff report. She provided background information on the Retail Refinement Plan that was commissioned by this body. Architect George Crandall and his firm worked with stakeholders in the community to develop a plan and implementation strategy which outlines a roadmap of how we would go about creating a more vibrant economy in Downtown Albany. The

plan addresses the idea of having large anchors in strategic locations with infill of retail and other uses. As part of the plan, Crandall recommended several high-priority catalyst projects as listed in the staff report. In the spring of 2012, these projects, with the exception of the architectural design of the west anchor – the Albany Carousel - were put on hold in order to work on a better policy framework.

Porsche said that CARA is anticipating income via tax-increment of about \$2 million this fiscal year. There are two loans on the books at different interest rates as detailed in the staff report. Available cash on-hand is about \$300,000. The general consensus has been to follow the traditional approach of borrowing money for public infrastructure projects. Because many of the public projects are not fleshed out to the point of being ready to borrow money, the idea has been raised that another possible direction would be to use the cash on-hand to fund some of the previously approved public projects from the Retail Refinement Plan, leaving open the option to borrow for additional projects over the next 18 months. In discussions with the Finance Director and financial consultant, the consensus was that rates should remain favorable through that timeframe. The Board will have additional cash on-hand next fiscal year which begins in July.

Maura Wilson asked when restrictions would go into effect if the ballot measures were to pass. Finance Director Stewart Taylor said that two measures will be on the ballot in March. One measure, if it were to pass, would require a vote of the people prior to any substantial amendments to the current urban renewal plan or consideration of a new urban renewal plan or area; the effective date would be triggered by the City Council canvassing of the vote and stating the outcome of the election. The second measure would not specifically affect the urban renewal agency unless it wanted to consider financing using the full faith and credit of the City. The City Council has directed the City Attorney to begin preparing information to receive judicial validation to determine whether a simple majority or a supermajority would be required to determine the outcome based on the language of the measure; therefore, the effective date of that measure is much harder to anticipate.

Catlin asked if there is an advantage to putting together a bond package now as opposed to six months from now. Taylor said that the financial advisor was concerned that a TIF-only supported bond would have limited interest in the market and would be more expensive than a bond based on the full faith and credit of the City. There will be more certainty in six months, after the election.

Floyd Collins said that he appreciates the information in the staff report and he would support the recommendation to use cash on-hand for the smaller projects in the plan – the slip lane design work, resurfacing of the lots, the wayfinding system, and design work on the riverpark expansion.

Rich Kellum said that there is another reason not to go back out to market just before the vote on the measures, and that is the image we send to the voters. We have some good projects that will keep the public eye on the prize without a slap in the face.

Spence asked if consideration was given to using cash on-hand to clear up the existing loans. Porsche said that she ran the financial analysis and found there was not quite enough cash to do that this fiscal year. There would be enough to do that next fiscal year and that will be part of the discussion that will take place during the upcoming budget process.

Russ Allen said that he is in support of moving ahead on these smaller items, but he hopes there will opportunities in the future to have further discussion about the bigger ticket items.

MOTION: Collins moved to utilize existing cash to fund the following projects: East Anchor – Slip Lane Design, Retail Parking – Resurfacing Lots, Retail Parking – Wayfinding System, and River Access – Monteith Riverpark Expansion, for a total of \$169,000. Loyd Henion seconded the motion.

Spence asked for a reminder on the details of the Monteith Riverpark expansion. Porsche said the early CALUTS plan envisioned a town square on the north side of Water Avenue. During the retail refinement process, it was determined that it would be better to bring the town square into the heart of downtown which left a need to work on what the expansion of Monteith Riverpark would look like. This funding would go toward that design work.

Catlin asked what is meant by the notation that project #2, Retail Parking – Site Acquisition, is waiting on negotiations. Porsche gave a brief summary of discussions with the owners of the Eagles building regarding a potential option which would put the City first in line if that organization chooses to sell and relocate.

Collins asked for an update on discussions about the slip lane. Porsche said that staff met with Smith Glass to hear their concerns. That business is not opposed to the idea of a slip lane, and staff can now move forward with a letter of interest to begin that conversation with the state.

Catlin asked how much interest there has been for public-private partnerships. Porsche said there have been some inquiries; she has been conveying that the Advisory Board will not be hearing requests until they are done with the policy work, hopefully within the next couple of months. Catlin said he is glad to know that there is still interest; he wants people to know that the downtown is open for business even though the Board has taken some time out to consider policy questions.

The motion passed 13-0.

Staff Updates and Issues

Porsche suggested that the Advisory Board complete its review of the policy brainstorming list at the next meeting.

BUSINESS FROM THE BOARD

In response to inquiries, Porsche provided brief updates on projects as follows:

Innovative Housing, Inc. (Woodland Square): Environmental work is continuing at the site.

Albany Steamworks Brewery: Funding for this project came from City economic development funds, not CARA funds. The firm has received their federal licensing and is scheduled to sign a contract with the City next week.

RCM Homes: This project is scheduled to come to a public hearing on February 11.

Wheelhouse: She understands that the first floor is occupied by Barrett Business Services and that improvements are still being done on the second floor. Brief discussion followed regarding occupancy issues associated with the economy.

NEXT MEETING DATE

The next meeting of the CARA Advisory Board is scheduled for Wednesday, February 20, 2013, 5:15 p.m., in the Council Chambers.

ADJOURNMENT

Hearing no further business, Chair Catlin adjourned the meeting at 6:10 p.m.

Submitted by,

Reviewed by,

Signature on File

Signature on File

Teresa Nix
Administrative Assistant

Kate Porsche
Urban Renewal Manager