



APPROVED: April 17, 2013

CITY OF ALBANY
Central Albany Revitalization Area Advisory Board
City Hall Council Chambers, 333 Broadalbin Street SW
Wednesday, March 20, 2013

MINUTES

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

Advisory Board Members absent: Maura Wilson (excused)

CALL TO ORDER

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

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

January 16, 2013

MOTION: Ray Kopczynski moved to approve the January 16 minutes as presented. Bessie Johnson seconded the motion, and it passed 13-0.

SCHEDULED BUSINESS

Business from the Public

There was no business from the public.

Discussion of Public Projects

Urban Renewal Manager Kate Porsche distributed an updated *CARA Policy Brainstorming List*, showing the status of items that have been discussed to date. The Board discussed remaining items on the list as follows:

Reporting: Porsche said that she maintains a database which tracks information on CARA projects and provides the ability to create a variety of reports. She has heard that the Board would like regular reports; she asked for further direction. Kopczynski said he would like to see reports on a quarterly basis and he would like them to be presented in writing in advance of the meeting. Rich Kellum said he would like to track the total amount of assistance a person or organization has received from the City, including CARA funds, economic development funds, etc. Mark Spence suggested that the application also ask if the applicant has partnered with the City or CARA on other projects. Porsche asked that Advisory Board members contact her with other items they would like to see in the reporting.

Annual Review: Porsche suggested that an annual review be done as part of the annual budgeting process. She reviewed items listed on the handout that might be important to include in the annual review; she invited input.

Kopczynski suggested that the reporting include information on forgivable loans – what actions forgiveness is predicated upon and where the applicant is on those action items. Floyd Collins said he would like to see a macro view of all the projects that have been done to date and where we are on the seven categories identified in the urban renewal plan.

Annual Report: Porsche suggested the publishing of an annual report – something that is easy to read with great visuals that could be provided on the City’s website. She has prepared a basic draft which she will e-mail out to Board members for review and comment.

Metrics: Porsche reviewed some of the metrics that the AORA will be tracking at the state level. She invited input on specific metrics that the Board would like to see tracked. Kopczynski said the items noted on the handout that will be tracked at the state level would be beneficial to track locally for informational purposes. Catlin said he would like to be able to track the spinoff effects of public investments in the urban renewal district; one way to get at that would be through building permit data. Porsche said she also has access to Main Street data, which would help to show if we are getting to the end goal of the space downtown being occupied.

Porsche noted that the Board previously reached consensus around the idea of primarily using borrowed funds for public projects and money on-hand for competitive public/private projects. She requested input from the Board regarding the types of public/private partnerships that it would like to sponsor.

Collins said that the policy review process has resulted in a lot of progress toward improving the application process and accountability on the part of recipients and toward ensuring we are making the right investments.

Porsche noted the Board’s previous direction related to the creation of a task force to review how return on investment (ROI) has been calculated and the challenges with this type of assessment. The task force will be meeting in the next month or so to begin that work.

Collins said it is important to convey that 65 percent of projects in the urban renewal plan are public projects for which we cannot calculate an ROI; the concept of an ROI needs to be framed in the context of the entire plan.

Spence asked about ways of identifying the amount of private investment that would not have occurred without public projects that were done with CARA assistance. Porsche said that it is challenging to track the direct effect of those public investments; this gets to Catlin’s suggestion about using building permit data.

Kopczynski noted that the project on Broadalbin included \$400,000 for necessary infrastructure improvements. Kellum said that it is important to call out those costs as what they are – in the case of the Broadalbin work, it would have been better accepted if it had been identified as a pipe repair project. Porsche said she will be breaking out the Broadalbin project to show the amount assigned to water and street infrastructure in order to provide a better understanding of that project.

Russ Allen said that he is concerned about any perception that CARA funds are used to do infrastructure projects simply to save money in the City’s sewer and water funds. To the extent that the project is necessary for development purposes to further CARA’s goals, that is another matter. Porsche agreed, noting that at the state level that one of the things affected taxing districts dislike is when it is perceived that a jurisdiction is using urban renewal funds for pet projects. She noted that urban renewal is meant to be a tool to drive private investments; there are 51 projects listed in the urban renewal plan, and it is important to focus on those specific projects. Brief discussion followed.

Porsche will update the policy brainstorming list and complete some of the staff work prior to the next meeting.

Staff Updates and Issues

Porsche advised of a change in the meeting schedule. The CARA Advisory Board will have its next regular meeting on April 17. The public hearing with the ARA Budget Committee will be held on May 14, 2013.

City Attorney Jim Delapoer provided an update on the two ballot measures that were recently approved by the voters. The first requires voter approval for a new urban renewal district or significant amendment to existing urban renewal districts; it should not affect the existing urban renewal district unless the plan is significantly amended. The second measure limits the City's ability to incur debt without a vote; he has had discussions with bond counsel and has heard nothing that led him to believe this will constrain the ability of the existing urban renewal agency to borrow money. Brief discussion followed.

Porsche provided an update on state legislation related to urban renewal. There are some urban renewal districts, including CARA, that were put into place when the law allowed for them to affect both permanent tax rates and also local option levies. Urban renewal districts no longer affect local option levies, and there is a House bill that would change the rules so that CARA would not affect new or renewed local option levies going forward.

Porsche advised that, as part of the ICMA International Fellows program, two Fellows from New Zealand will be coming to Albany for two weeks to work on civic engagement. City Manager Hare has suggested that they work on civic engagement specific to urban renewal, noting that this would be a good opportunity for neutral parties to engage with members of the community on this issue.

BUSINESS FROM THE BOARD

There was no further business from the Board.

NEXT MEETING DATE

The next meeting of the CARA Advisory Board is scheduled for Wednesday, April 17, 2013, 5:15 p.m., in the Council Chambers.

ADJOURNMENT

Hearing no further business, Chair Catlin adjourned the meeting at 6:18 p.m.

Submitted by,

Reviewed by,

Signature on File

Signature on File

Teresa Nix
Administrative Assistant

Kate Porsche
Urban Renewal Manager