



APPROVED: March 4, 2014

CITY OF ALBANY
Central Albany Revitalization Area Advisory Board
City Hall Council Chambers, 333 Broadalbin Street SW
Wednesday, January 15, 2014

MINUTES

Advisory Board Members present: Russ Allen, Rich Catlin, Bill Coburn, Floyd Collins, Loyd Henion, Bessie Johnson, Rich Kellum, Sharon Konopa, Ray Kopczynski, Danon Kroessin, Dick Olsen, Maura Wilson

Advisory Board Members absent: Kevin Manske (excused), Mark Spence (excused)

CALL TO ORDER

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

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

November 20, 2013

MOTION: Rich Kellum moved to approve the minutes as presented. Floyd Collins seconded the motion, and it passed 12-0.

SCHEDULED BUSINESS

Business from the Public

There was no business from the public.

Parking Lot Resurfacing Between Lyons and Ellsworth Bridges (\$50,000)

Economic Development & Urban Renewal Director Kate Porsche said that she was asked by CARA Advisory Board members to provide details on potentially resurfacing the City-owned parking lot between the Lyon and Ellsworth Bridges. She reviewed the specifics of the project as detailed in the written staff report. The work would include repairing potholes, removing curb stops, applying a slurry seal, and restriping the 46,000 square foot lot. The estimated cost of the work is \$50,000. This would be a temporary fix that would last about five years. The long-range plan is to have a downtown anchor at this site.

Collins said that the estimate of about \$1 per square foot seems fair, recognizing that the work is primarily cosmetic in nature and would have a life of between five and seven years.

Catlin said that he would like to see the work done early in the summer, if possible. Brief discussion followed regarding the scope of the project, the desire to ultimately have an anchor at this location, the timing of the work, and potential constraints associated with weather and the construction season.

Loyd Henion asked how City-owned parking lots are typically resurfaced. City Manager Wes Hare said there is no money allocated for that purpose; the Street Fund is made up of gas tax revenue which cannot be used for parking lots.

MOTION: Ray Kopczynski moved to approve resurfacing of the parking lot, not to exceed \$50,000. Bill Coburn seconded the motion, and it passed 12-0.

Discussion/Planning for Meeting on Public Infrastructure Work

Porsche said that CARA's current year budget includes budget authority to borrow and spend up to \$3.1 million on public infrastructure projects. She has heard support for holding an open house or some other forum to engage the public and get feedback on which public infrastructure projects in the Urban Renewal Plan should be priority. She requested input on how a public forum might be structured.

Collins said that it is important to convey that potential projects are defined within the Urban Renewal Plan and to request input as to where we should be investing within those categories, if at all at this time.

Kopczynski said that he would value receiving input from the public on potential projects, noting that there is little public input received at regular CARA Advisory Board meetings.

Russ Allen said that if the Board is going to ask for public input, they should be ready to utilize the input in the decision process. Inviting input and then not heeding the input received could be damaging from a credibility standpoint. He suggested that staff take the Board's comments and bring back a more defined proposal.

Kellum said that he would like to consider how to best reach out so that input comes from a broad section of the community and not from just a few who are passionate about a particular thing.

Sharon Konopa said that the City sent out 17,000 notices for a recent public hearing on code changes; only 20 attended and only a few of those addressed the subject at hand. She said that it is important for the Advisory Board to base its decisions on what is best for the downtown area.

Maura Wilson agreed with Allen. She suggested that the Board could identify several projects that it wants to do and that are feasible. It should be made clear that we are seeking input and thoughts, but not a public vote.

Bessie Johnson agreed that the Board should decide which projects are desired and feasible and present those to the public for discussion.

Danon Kroessin said that when you give people a choice, you should be sure it's a choice you can live with. He suggested the Board identify four or five specific projects and request feedback on priorities.

Catlin said that he likes the approach of presenting options and the pros and cons of each to help people evaluate projects.

Coburn said he supports the idea of identifying a few projects and asking for the public's help in prioritizing them.

Allen said there is a very small subset of the public that will actually give feedback and it is the Board's job to speak for the silent majority. He suggested that input could also be accepted through e-mail or other modern methods.

Hare said that we have a representative form of government and the Advisory Board is charged with making decisions it thinks the public would make if they had access to the same information. It is important to make an effort on citizen engagement, but the reality is that a significant amount of input may not be forthcoming. In order to receive a good representation of citizen input, it would probably be necessary to hire consultants with that expertise, but that is an expensive and time-consuming process.

Dick Olsen said that he would like to streamline the process, get public input, and then get going on some projects.

Porsche will bring back a rough outline of how a public meeting might be structured and a potential timeframe for consideration at the next meeting. She will also provide a list of projects in the Urban Renewal Plan, along with staff's thoughts on priorities.

Staff Updates and Issues

Porsche said that review of applications for the Small Grants program will be on the agenda next month.

Porsche asked for direction regarding timing for the Focus Area Loan and Storefront Revitalization Grant programs. Following brief discussion, it was agreed that the Board will consider applications four times a year on a competitive basis.

Porsche said that the Edgewater Village project continues to move forward. The first five units are contractually due by October of this year, and the developers are working to secure a loan to get that work done.

The Woodland Square project is moving forward, with construction expected to begin in June.

BUSINESS FROM THE BOARD

Olsen asked how the Edgewater Village project will interact with the Dave Clark Path. Porsche said the developers are working with the Parks & Recreation Director on lighted bollards and clean up of invasive species. Olsen said that having fences along the path would feel unfriendly. Catlin, in his role as planning consultant for Edgewater Village, explained the agreement with the City to move lot lines three feet back from the path so that if a property owner wanted to put up a fence, it would be set back from the path. He said there was no desire by the parties to try to restrict property owners' ability to put up fencing.

Konopa said that the event center on the top floor of the Wheelhouse has been heavily booked and the building owners have now opened up the street level for events. This is a very nice and unique event center with a view. The street level can be converted for a restaurant in the future, but the owners are currently utilizing the space to meet the demand for event space.

Porsche advised that her husband, Rod Porsche, has been named Executive Director of the Albany Downtown Association. She underscored that she had no part in the hiring process, that she has no oversight with the money given to the ADA, and that this in no way creates a conflict of interest.

NEXT MEETING DATE

The next meeting of the CARA Advisory Board is scheduled for 5:15 p.m. on Wednesday, February 19, 2014, in the Council Chambers.

ADJOURNMENT

Hearing no further business, Chair Catlin adjourned the meeting at 6:25 p.m.

Submitted by,

Reviewed by,

Signature on File

Signature on File

Teresa Nix
Administrative Assistant
Director

Kate Porsche
Economic Development & Urban Renewal