



APPROVED: September 22, 2016

CITY OF ALBANY
Central Albany Revitalization Area Advisory Board
City Hall Council Chambers, 333 Broadalbin Street SW
Wednesday, July 20, 2016

MINUTES

Advisory Board Members present: Rich Catlin, David Abarr, Bill Coburn, Floyd Collins, Loyd Henion, Bessie Johnson, Rich Kellum, Sharon Konopa, Ray Kopczynski, Mitch Langjahr, Dick Olsen, Maura Wilson

Advisory Board Members absent: Russ Allen (excused), Mark Spence (excused)

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Rich Catlin called the meeting to order at 5:20 p.m.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

May 18, 2016

MOTION: Ray Kopczynski moved to approve the minutes as presented. Maura Wilson seconded the motion, and it passed 12-0.

SCHEDULED BUSINESS

Business from the Public

None.

Update on Downtown Parklets

Peggy Burris, Executive Director of the Albany Downtown Association (ADA), reported that the Broadalbin Parklet and the Wells Fargo Parklet were installed on May 30 for a total cost of \$8,650, paid from the Main Street Program. She showed photos of the two areas before and after installation of the Parklets, photos of people using the completed areas, and public art and signage projects in progress. She said the Parklets have been extremely well received by the public and the merchants, and there was an article and a nice editorial in the newspaper. Each morning, the checkerboard tables are cleaned, the space is picked up, and the plants and veggies are maintained. There has been no theft, not even of the checkerboard pieces. There was one incident of attempted arson by a known arsonist who is no longer in the community. The Parklets are seasonal and will be stored over winter. Next year, the plan is to add more Parklets, a lending library, chessboard pieces, backgammon tables, instructions on how to play the games, and a sunshade at the Wells Fargo Parklet. There was brief discussion.

CARA Project Activities Reports

Economic Development & Urban Renewal Director Kate Porsche referred to the written staff report and attachments – *CARA Project Activities Overview* and *CARA Project Activities with Project Details*. The first report outlines each project category in the urban renewal plan along with hard costs, revolving costs (loan funds), amount spent to date, and the balance for each category. The second report includes a breakout of all the individual projects for each category. The reports are intended to help orient Board members to costs outlined in the urban renewal plan compared to amounts spent to date in each category. The estimates

provided are in 2002-03 dollars, and there has been discussion on how to handle inflation. Staff suggests that the Board review the report each January prior to construction of the budget. She will take feedback tonight and bring back a revised version for further discussion.

Kopczynski asked whether CARA funding for the police and fire facilities is included in the reports. Porsche said she would look into that and report back.

Floyd Collins asked whether the goal with the reports is to capture what has been done historically or that plus identify issues and areas where funds could be shifted. Porsche said she spoke with an urban renewal attorney who recommended this annual review and also recommended that the Board may want to consider eliminating projects that aren't likely to be completed. Collins said he would like to retain all of the projects from the original scope of work on these reports for tracking purposes and to allow for better comparison of tax generating vs. non-tax generating projects.

Wilson referred to Projects 41-43; she would like to remove the word "esplanade" which she feels does not fully describe the projects. Porsche said that may have been part of previous direction; she will look into it.

Wilson discussed high bids she received for exterior painting, lead abatement, and window preservation for her historic home; she requested additional information regarding Project 5 - Paint Program. Porsche said the category was used in the past for a matching grant program for downtown commercial buildings; however, the line item states it is intended to incite sprucing up of residences as well. If the Board wants to go forward with matching paint program for residences, that would be allowed under the plan. Sharon Konopa said she thinks the idea was to preserve our historic stock and assist with lead paint removal; she wondered if State Historic Preservation Funds could also be used in this manner. David Abarr said the Landmarks Advisory Commission isn't currently taking applications for that fund; however, anyone interested could contact staff for more information.

Porsche said she has been contacted by downtown property owners with questions about potential funding for sidewalks and street trees; she suggested that those recent requests might be part of policy discussions related to Project 23 – Sidewalk Program. Collins suggested that any program around street trees should include a requirement for root containment that forces roots to go down to avoid lifting the sidewalk or curb.

Konopa referred to Project 36 – Queen Avenue Rail Crossing. She recalled that this was added to the original scope because the previous Mayor supported a signal on Pacific Boulevard to notify drivers when the railroad crossing bars were down on Queen Avenue. She doesn't know that this is really a CARA item.

Loyd Henion asked for additional information about Project 48 – Plan Administration. Porsche said that line item currently includes only a pass-through to the City Building Department for a Code Compliance Partnership, and other administration costs need to be added. The plan states that administration is not to exceed ten percent of the total indebtedness, and the actual amount will be far less than that. She will bring back revised numbers.

Mitch Langjahr referred to Project 37 - First Avenue Undercrossing. He said this is a dangerous situation, and he is concerned about the potential for serious injury or death occurring at the location. Discussion followed regarding the history of trucks hitting the crossing, existing warning signage, and potential alternative solutions.

In response to a question from Catlin, Porsche said the reports show loan funds dispersed but not repayment amounts; that area needs to be finalized.

Catlin said he would like to consider how the reports could be used to generate discussion and planning for a three- to five-year cycle, similar to a Capital Improvement Plan (CIP).

Following additional discussion, Porsche agreed to revise the reports based on the feedback and bring back a comparison of the original financial analysis and estimates by the consultants, suggestions for a CIP-type of planning document, and a breakdown of tax generating vs. non-tax generating project funding to date.

Historic Homebuyer Loan Program Update

Urban Renewal Officer Nathan Reid said that last year, the CARA Advisory Board approved the Historic Home Buyer Loan Program. While there has been interest from new homeowners and realtors, no applications have been submitted, and staff has heard feedback regarding suggested changes to the program. Potential changes could include decreasing the minimum private match from 80 percent to 50 percent to help new homeowners improve their homes immediately; increasing the time period that homes could be eligible from within twelve months to within two or three years; or changing the loan program to a grant program with the same match percentage and project costs. Discussion followed and staff provided clarifying information.

Langjahr suggested that it would be beneficial to request the opinion of real estate professionals on what CARA could do to assist with getting these houses sold and rehabilitated. Staff noted that the pool of potential applicants for the program is small due to the focus area and program requirements. Brief discussion followed regarding the existing condition that requires interest-only payments as long as the property is owner-occupied.

Konopa agreed that it might be helpful to get input from real estate professionals. She recalled previous discussion about a potential program to encourage someone to buy these blighted homes and flip them. She said something needs to be done to bring investment to the area, and she suggested that staff come back with suggestions on what CARA can do to help bring that investment.

Kopczynski said he would support the first two suggested changes; he would not support changing the loan program to a grant program.

Olsen said he would support time extensions; he wants to make it feasible for people to purchase and fix up these houses to live there as opposed to creating rentals.

Catlin said he would like to see MLS listings and sales in the area for the last 12 months, as well as a GIS analysis of owner-occupied homes vs. rentals.

It was agreed that staff will bring back additional information as requested.

Staff Updates and Issues

Porsche said the CARA Advisory Board previously approved a sidewalk project on Second Avenue and Calapooia Street around the post office. Upon review, Public Works staff determined that it won't be necessary to replace all of that sidewalk; so there will be some cost savings. The sidewalk on the south side of Second Avenue in front of Loafers was found to be in bad shape and will be added to the project.

Porsche reviewed discussions with George Diamond, developer of the Edgewater Village project, regarding the potential of the City purchasing a small part of one parcel in order to square up a City-owned parcel. Staff feels that value could be added if it were a contiguous parcel surrounded by streets. She asked whether there was interest in acquiring the property. Brief discussion followed regarding the Edgewater Village project, schedule and timeline. Bill Coburn said he thinks the sale of property is a City Council decision. Porsche agreed to check with the City Attorney.

Porsche provided an update on the Signs of Victory building. The City Council had directed staff to participate in the foreclosure sale on July 7; however, that sale was canceled at last minute, and staff doesn't know the status of the property. The Police Chief has continued concerns about activity at the building, and there is a desire to see Signs of Victory move to their other location. A staff meeting is scheduled for Monday, July 25, to discuss the issue. Brief discussion followed.

BUSINESS FROM THE BOARD

None.

NEXT MEETING DATE

Wednesday, August 17, 2016.

ADJOURNMENT

Hearing no further business, Chair Catlin adjourned the meeting at 6:48 p.m.

Submitted by,

Reviewed by,

Signature on File

Signature on File

Teresa Nix
Recorder

Kate Porsche
Economic Development & Urban Renewal Director