

MINUTES
Metropolitan Redevelopment Agency
Board of Commissioners - May 15, 2014

Commissioners Present	Chairman Carletta Thompson, M.D. Linda Barbeau John McNeill, D.D.S. Derald Polston, Vice-Chair Sara Kaynor
Staff Present	Cindy Lopez, Senior Planner Kathy Banks, Secretary Fran Fillerup
Others Present	John Armenta, FEUS Luwil Aligarbes, FEUS Jimmy Davis, Advantas Internet Solutions Tom Taylor Elizabeth Isenberg, Government Relations

1. CALL TO ORDER:

The meeting was called to order at 3:59 p.m. by Chairman Thompson and there being a quorum, the following proceedings were duly had and taken.

2. APPROVAL OF THE April 17, 2014 MEETING MINUTES:

A motion was made by Commissioner McNeill and seconded by Commissioner Polston to approve the minutes of the April 17, 2014 meeting. This motion passed unanimously by a 5-0 vote.

3. REPORT FROM FARMINGTON ELECTRIC UTILITY SYSTEMS:

John Armenta, the Electrical Engineering Manager with the Farmington Electric Utility System, handed out an estimate for repairing the infrastructure for the existing street lights. Mr. Armenta reiterated that his understanding was that the MRA wants to install pedestrian lighting and decorative lighting in the Main Street Corridor. Also the MRA wants to place Gateway Monuments at Court Ave and Main St. and at Auburn Ave and Main St. This covers the cost of repairing the infrastructure for the streetlights that now exist. There is a portion of the conduit that has collapsed, and we are not exactly sure where the actual collapse is located. As a result of the collapse the system was reconfigured to accommodate 120 volt instead of 240 volts. The existing 400 watt lamps that were there were replaced with 250 watt lamps. This estimate covers replacing the entire aged infrastructure and addresses supplying more electrical capacity to the area. At present the conduit runs underneath the sidewalk. The easiest way to repair the damage is to install a low voltage, 240 volt, flush mount pedestal and then install new conduit that would run out to the streets from pedestal to pedestal. From the pedestal we could break into the existing street light without having to replace them. Run additional power if we wanted to, adding more conduit, if necessary, at whatever location you want to install your pedestrian lights. We, the electric utility, will need to work with you, the MRA, to establish where the lights need to go. This is still in the idea stage, kind of wishful thinking. Also at that time we would be replacing the cobra head

light with a light that would meet the safety/lighting requirements. Mr. Armenta stated the Electric Utility has money in the fiscal budget for underground projects. This estimate still needs to be approved by electric utility management. Mr. Armenta then asked if anyone had any questions. Chairman Thompson asked if the lighting estimate is based on a specific level of Kelvin. Mr. Armenta replied he didn't know, but it is the brightest. It is equivalent to a 400 watt light. Commissioner Barbeau asked if the work would involve replacing the heads, and if it did, could the MRA be involved in the selection. Yes, the heads that Mr. Armenta saw didn't exactly look like a cobra head, but they were very close. Commissioner Polston asked, if this became a project and if the MRA was able to put in the pedestrian lighting, would the City of Farmington pick up the tab for the electrical? Mr. Armenta stated that particular issue was still up in the air. Commissioner McNeill asked if the collapse was on the south side of Main St., only having an effect on the south side of Main Street, and will the City make repairs to both sides of Main Street. Mr. Armenta answered that they want to do the repairs right. Commissioner McNeill then asked about the life span of the light poles that were placed in 1971. Mr. Armenta stated the aluminum poles usually last until they get knocked over. Jimmy Davis with Advantas asked "Can additional conduit go in the ground at the same time that the repairs are being made?" Mr. Armenta replied yes. Tom Taylor asked "What about cutting a 12" swatch out of the sidewalk?" Mr. Armenta replied that replacing sidewalk is more expensive than replacing asphalt.

Mr. Armenta has been talking with Boone Birdsell, a Senior Sales Executive at Yearout Energy Services Company (YESCO) and asked to have him included on the MRA Agenda for the next meeting to address the lighting requirements and options available.

The Board agreed that would be a great idea and they look forward to meeting with him.

4. JIMMY DAVIS WITH ADVANTAS INTERNET SOLUTIONS:

Jimmy Davis introduced himself as an Internet provider for San Juan County since 2000. What he is proposing has already been done in Aztec. He met with Commissioner McNeill who asked Jimmy to put a proposal together for providing internet service to the downtown area. His company believes that while the community has provided him with an income for the last 14 years, it is time to give back to the community. His company has not done a project of this scale yet. They have done Wi-Fi for hotels and recently provided the Wi-Fi service for the Oil and Gas Expo that was at McGee Park.

The technology is better today and less expensive than when he looked at doing this project 3-4 years ago. Basically he wants to connect Main Street from Artifacts to Sun Glass. The system he is talking about would also run on Broadway Ave from Citizens Bank to the Credit Union. The base station would be located on top of the Dusty Attic (owned by his family). That's where the fiber optics would come in from Albuquerque into the building. The connectivity to the system is already downtown. The transmitter units would be attached to the existing poles with clamps. Elizabeth Isenberg has put together a portal based on examples from other communities that people would be able to log on to first and once they accepted the terms can access the internet. Mr. Davis can't start the work until July 1st. He has his own bucket truck and stated that the power

levels would need to be on 24 hours a day 7 days a week. Eventually it could turn into a profit situation, running specials for local merchants, promoting retail businesses, and restaurants. To keep Comcast and Century Link happy, it would need to be limited to an hour or two so people living downtown couldn't get free internet. Commissioner Polston asked, so you are willing to provide this service for free? Mr. Davis replied yes, it would be a win-win situation for both the city and Advantas. Chairman Thompson made it an action item. Chairman Thompson suggested sending the proposal with a cover letter from the MRA Commission. Commissioner McNeill made the motion to accept the proposal from Advantas Internet Solutions and encourage its implementation as soon as possible and to forward it to the Mayor's Office with a cover letter from the MRA. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Kaynor. A vote was taken and it passed unanimously. Commissioner McNeill asked to be kept aware of the progress of this motion as he would like to be present when it goes before City Council for their approval in case they have any questions.

5. DOWNTOWN ASSOCIATION UPDATE:

Elizabeth Isenberg invited the Commissioners to attend TGIF music and lunch in Orchard Park. It starts next Friday, May 23rd and will run for 10 weeks. The Summer Art walk will take place Friday June 13th. And Saturday morning, June 14th, on North Orchard we will be hosting our Annual Strong Man competition.

Since the last MRA meeting, the NM Main Street Program met with the Farmington Main Street and had their annual assessment, it went really well. At the end of the meeting, Ms. Isenberg asked NM Main Street to stay to discuss an Arts and Cultural

District with the Farmington Community. There were about 20 people in attendance. She is looking to form a steering committee of about 10 people that will be key players in the creation of an Arts and Cultural District, which we would like to be a non-profit, staffed by Ms. Isenberg. Ms. Isenberg will be attending the NM Main Street Arts and Cultural District Meeting in August to see what other communities are doing and to bring ideas back to the steering committee, so the discussion can be continued. The NM Main Street is not opening up applications for this year, but they should be opening up for next year. That will give us a year to study the old application process so we can put our best foot forward. Ms. Isenberg then asked for any questions.

Commissioner McNeill had some follow up questions:

1) At the last meeting, the question was brought up about the creation of an analysis of the current rents downtown, whether they are high or low. Ms. Isenberg replied she has started the project, but it has not been completed yet. She does have a list of all the available properties downtown and she has some of the rental information. She plans to finalize that on an excel spreadsheet and she will send it to the MRA Commissioners.

Commissioner Mc Neil then asked:

2) At our last meeting we discussed identifying appropriate spaces for the Arts incubator and a retail incubator downtown. Ms. Castleberry said she would be in touch with Ms. Lopez to discuss options. Ms. Lopez replied she had not heard from Ms. Castleberry. Ms. Isenberg stated she had met with Ms. Castleberry this week and they discussed what would be the ideal location for their Arts incubator. Ms. Isenberg invited her to sit on the steering committee representing the theater and Ms. Castleberry is very excited.

The energy is wonderful and the ideas are flowing. The Wallace Building has been vacant for a long time now and Ms. Isenberg is putting Ms. Castleberry in touch with the owner of that building to discuss possibilities for that property. Ms. Isenberg has approached vacant building owners in the past about Art Open Houses so the artists can display their art, the possibility of Pop-up stores, that are really hot right now in Albuquerque, and has found that it all really depends on who owns the property or who is managing it. They also had a discussion about the Retail incubator. The environment she was in a year ago is very different than the environment she is in now. The College has no money for the Retail incubator and they are not really interested in 119 W. Main, because of the ADA accessibility issues. Ms. Castleberry is still open to using 119, but the motion is moving up hill now rather than downhill.

6. BUSINESS FROM THE FLOOR:

Chairman Thompson asked if there were any other comments from the floor. Tom Taylor was recognized and stated he is planning to do some fun things with Artifacts and that he wanted to get back in the loop as far as downtown goes. He will get with Ms. Isenberg to discuss what groups have which relationships with downtown that may or may not be moving in the same direction. He noticed there was some discussion about Tibbetts School. Commissioner Kaynor mentioned they were going to use it to house Hermosa for a year, but hadn't heard anything beyond that. Mr. Taylor was thinking about the building possibly being converted to apartments for rentals. Another thought he had was utilizing a Downtown Development Corporation to invest in downtown, by establishing some more restaurants, more rentals, and drawing more people downtown.

9. BUSINESS FROM THE CHAIR:

Chairman Thompson stated that she thought it would be of great benefit if the MRA spent time to re-prioritize projects at the July meeting. What do we want to accomplish as a Board? Regarding the pedestrian lights, if we want to move forward with that, are we willing to pay for them? The same thing with the Complete Street Project; are we willing to take money from the budget to pay for that? Ms. Lopez stated she thought a list ought to be made and prioritized. Also, her understanding regarding the Complete Streets is that we were waiting for the guidelines so they can be used for the RFP for the traffic study.

Commissioner McNeill suggested creating another Ad-Hoc committee to address planning and zoning code compliance for the MRA District. We need a plan to put in place. Ms. Lopez stated that many of the property owners, especially those with industrial uses in the industrial district do not want mixed use right now. They are very concerned about residential moving too close to them, and about the noise issues and how that is going to affect their businesses. Fran Fillerup spoke up; he was the staff planner on the petition to zone several properties in the MRA. He stated that Ms. Lopez was correct in her assessment and that was definitely a problem they faced. The petition to re-zone portions of the MRA was not moved forward.

10. BUSINESS FROM THE MEMBERS:

Commissioner McNeill attended the Complete Streets Presentation this week and the Live WALC Institutes presentations at the Civic Center. Commissioner Barbeau was also in attendance. The WALC Institute came two years ago and presented some ideas to the MRA. They are back now looking at Complete Streets, having many of the same ideas, but not the same amount of changes in the streets themselves. So

Commissioner McNeill feels the time is right for this type of change to occur on the street itself. He and his wife attended the City Council meeting the other night, and the City Council was in unanimous agreement that this needed to take place. All five members were engaged, and took ownership for previous things that had occurred downtown. Commissioner McNeill made a suggestion to establish an Ad Hoc Committee to revisit these issues, gather information under one hat, uncovering what exists, determine some sort of a scope and scale for this, where we'd like to start, what is available, where we are, see what talent is in the City to actually make the design or see if we need to go out and contract with Live WALC or some other group to present a design for our MRA and get the public's input for all this. It would be a long project and would not happen overnight but he thinks it needs to move forward. He would be happy to be on that committee and would like another member of the MRA to sit on the committee with him. Commissioner McNeill then made a motion to establish such a committee. It was seconded by Commissioner Barbeau. Chairman Thompson asked if there was any discussion needed. Commissioner McNeill said he would be glad to head up the committee and have something ready for the July MRA meeting.

The second item Commissioner McNeill wanted to bring back is the request from the MRA to the City of Farmington's Street Department to start working on a request to the MPO for a street safety study downtown. Ms. Lopez said she had notified David Sypher and she thought he forwarded it to Steve Krest and hadn't heard back from them yet. She said she would check on it. Commissioner McNeill said he sat with Mr. Krest at the Complete Streets program and Mr. Krest knew nothing about it. Commissioner McNeill asked Ms. Lopez to contact Mr. Sypher and Mr. Krest and ask one of them to attend out next MRA meeting for a presentation. Ms. Lopez replied she will invite Mr. Sypher.

Fran Fillerup, representing the MPO, was in attendance and stated that if the MPO is the end of that chain, he would follow up too. The MRA understands that the request needed to come from the City, but that the application had to go through the MPO. Ms. Lopez said she would speak with those in Public Works and find out if the studies only apply to State highways. Safety Audit funds need to be applied through an application process and Ms. Lopez was not sure of the parameters.

Commissioner Mc Neil stated one other item just for clarification about Mr. McKinney's presentation at the last MRA meeting, there was a question whether he had to request approval from the New Mexico State Historic Preservation District Organization as the building is in an Historic District. Ms. Isenberg let him know that is not necessary unless Mr. McKinney is accepting municipal or State/County funds. Ms. Lopez did check and 108 and 110 Main Street are both contributing buildings in the Main Street Corridor. If Mr. McKinney is not using Federal/State or Municipal funds he is not obligated to go through NM SHPO. Commissioner McNeill stated in that same discussion we had talked about the liability of the balcony extending over the sidewalk and putting a restaurant facility up on the second story over the sidewalk has anyone checked with other municipalities yet to determine how they dealt with it. Ms. Lopez replied she had not checked into that as of yet, but she will.

Commissioner Polston wanted to remind everyone that the MRA had put in a request over a year ago, to Public Works and Mr. Krest, that whenever they do spend the money to re-stripe Main Street that they use the Complete Streets configuration. That would mean removing the center stripe and putting in bike lanes, slowing down traffic paying

special attention to the side streets. Ms. Lopez was not aware of this request and suggested since Mr. Krest is retiring that she would contact David Sypher with Public Works and bring him in to the conversation.

Commissioner Polston had one other item; he attended the Budget meeting and found out that the MRA is due for another \$500,000.

11. BUSINESS FROM STAFF:

Ms. Isenberg wondered if there had been an update on the Gateways timeline. Ms. Lopez replied that DHM is working on the construction drawings, she just spoke with them. And they are 35% complete. She gave DHM Mr. Armenta's contact information for their Engineers so they can speak with one another. Chairman Thompson inquired of Mr. Armenta, is there anything the MRA Board can do to make the project a reality. Mr. Armenta wasn't sure of the process, but he will find out and bring it back to the Board. He does know that a work order is required for most work being done. Ms. Lopez suggested that the MRA Board write a letter to City Council and to also speak with City Councilors about the MRA's desire to piggy back in the trench while it is open. Council needs to make a directive. Ms. Isenberg is leaving for Detroit to attend the National Main Street Conference and she offered to gather up as much lighting information as possible to bring back with her to the next MRA meeting.

Fran Fillerup was at today's meeting to state that MPO really appreciates the support from MRA staff on Complete Streets Activity Workshop that they had, as well as the advisory group's presence at their presentations. He is also anxious to provide

information and support to the newly created Ad-Hoc Committee and invite the MRA to continue to participate in the MPO processes.

Ms. Lopez wanted to update the Board that Dirt Bandit just requested another Special Use Permit for its asphalt recycling plant. They are looking at another location, 4100 Twin Peaks Blvd which is southwest of where Tibbetts School just relocated. Dirt Bandit's current properties in the MRA are up for sale.

Ms. Lopez wanted to remind the group about the final decision for the southwest annexation that will be going before the City Council at their May 27th meeting. This area is where more industrial uses are planned and the MRA presence would be appreciated

Commissioner McNeill asked about business cards for the MRA Commissioners, it would be helpful if we had them. Ms. Lopez stated she would have samples for the next meeting.

12. ADJOURNMENT:

A motion was made by Commissioner Polston and seconded by Commissioner Barbeau to adjourn. The Metropolitan Redevelopment Agency Board of Commissioners meeting was adjourned at 5:13 pm.

Carletta Thompson, M.D., Chairman

Kathleen Banks, Secretary