



MINUTES

Metropolitan Redevelopment Agency Board of Commissioners – February 16, 2021 Held virtually using Zoom

<https://zoom.us/j/96918731121?pwd=Q2twRGx6WjhZRU5K1dzcmdXeDhVUT09>

Members Present: John McNeill, D.D.S. - Chair
Jill Tanis – Vice Chair
Elizabeth McNally - Commissioner
Greg Mills – Commissioner
Doug Dykeman – Commissioner

Members Absent: None

Staff Present: Beth Escobar
Shana Reeves
Elizabeth Sandoval
Warren Unsicker

Others Present: Tom Taylor
Gloria Lehmer
Janis Jakino

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 4:00 p.m. by Chair John McNeill, and there being a quorum, the following proceedings were duly had and taken.

Roll call was taken. Chair McNeill, Vice Chair Tanis, Commissioner Mills and Commissioner Dykeman were in attendance.

2. Approval of the December 15, 2020 and January 19, 2021 Minutes

Chair McNeill asked Elizabeth Sandoval, Administrative Assistant, if the minutes from the previous meeting could be sent out before the next month's agenda items were requested.

Planning Manager Escobar stated that this request had been discussed with Warren Unsicker and Julie Baird and would not be possible due to the work load of Elizabeth Sandoval.

Mr. Unsicker stated that the previous agenda will be provided when agenda items are being requested.

A motion was made by Vice Chair Tanis and seconded by Commissioner Mills to approve the minutes of December 15, 2020 and January 19, 2021. A roll call vote was taken and passed 4-0.

3. Second Floor Residential Living of Main Street Properties – Jill Tanis

Vice Chair Tanis stated that she had prepared several interview questions and that interviews were conducted with related parties. Calls were made to property owners and property managers, two conversations were had and two messages were left. Real estate brokers and agents were also contacted, three conversations were had and three messages were left. Vice Chair Tanis stated that as she is having these conversations, referrals of who to contact are being provided.

Vice Chair Tanis stated that the first interview question is “Share with me the view of housing availability and desirability in the Downtown area.” Comments received were “The need for single and multifamily housing to support Downtown businesses is important.” “It’s great to have affordable housing, such as apartments and condos, small single family residences for young people and singles, both young and mature.” Vice Chair Tanis stated that the interviewees stated that they would like to see a trendy vibe Downtown, with trendy lifestyle and living options.

Vice Chair Tanis stated that the second question asked was “What do you see as pros for people who want to live Downtown?” Vice Chair Tanis said that answers to this question were broken down by owners and property managers and real estate agents and brokers. Vice Chair Tanis stated that some of the owners and property managers live or have lived Downtown and love it or loved it. Some things that the owners and property managers mentioned that they loved were being able to walk to work and the proximity to restaurants and events. The real estate owners and agents stated that they love the idea of second level living and felt that Downtown had wonderful potential and people will be drawn downtown as it develops. Parking was noted to possibly be an issue for those living on the second level properties.

Vice Chair Tanis stated that the third question asked was “What do you see as downsides?” One real estate agent mentioned the transient traffic was a downside. Other things also mentioned were the need for more restaurants and

properties available with restaurant amenities, vacancies of retail spaces, zoning situations, conversation and repurposing of properties, and allowance of spot zoning north of Downtown Main Street, a recommendation for a “five and dime” type store with a “five and dime” feel.

Vice Chair Tanis also asked if the interviewees if they were aware of the MRA update that was completed in 2019. Most of the interviewees were not aware. Vice Chair Tanis stated that she is sending the link to the interviewees and invited interviewees to attend the MRA’s monthly meeting.

Vice Chair Tanis asked if there were any questions.

Chair McNeill asked if any of the interviewees asked about the need to remodel and the cost required from the Building Department or Fire Department, such as sprinkler systems.

Vice Chair Tanis stated that there were more talks about historic preservation and ADA guidelines compliance.

Chair McNeill asked if that comment came from the realtors.

Vice Chair Tanis stated yes.

Chair McNeill asked what the concerns were from the owners that had spaces available upstairs.

Vice Chair Tanis stated that she only connected with two owners and one owner had already done a floor remodel and there were no concerns at the time. Vice Chair Tanis stated that she is having a difficult time at the moment getting contact information and asked Warren Unsicker, Economic Development Director, if the City had any of the contract information for the property owners.

Mr. Unsicker stated that the County Assessors website will generally just give the address for properties and asked Vice Chair Tanis if she is refereeing to contact information for property owners.

Vice Chair Tanis stated yes, especially with those who have vacant lots.

Mr. Unsicker stated that at this time a letter would probably need to be sent, due to property owners not being readily available and possibly living in other states.

Chair McNeill asked Mr. Unsicker, in trying to increase residential use for the upstairs properties, if he had seen anything work well in other communities.

Mr. Unsicker stated the biggest problems are usually fire suppression requirements and ADA access to the upstairs properties. Mr. Unsicker also

stated that it really also depends on the building itself and whether it is intended for residential use and access and egress.

Chair McNeill asked what kinds of things can be done to encourage professional space upstairs, while still keeping retail space on the first floor.

Planning Manager Escobar stated that professional use is already allowed on either floor in the central business district and she is not sure what else could be done, but maybe to spread the word that it is a permitted use. Planning Manager Escobar also stated that in the upcoming Comp Plan update, addressing the relaxing of building requirements at the state level has been identified as a strategic action. Mr. Unsicker asked Chair McNeill if he is implying the desire to encourage the use of office professional in the upstairs area to free up some of the prime retail space.

Chair McNeill stated yes, both professional and residential.

Mr. Unsicker stated that professional uses are allowed on both levels and residential on the upper story. Mr. Unsicker stated that within the MRA plan, it can advertise it as encouraging the use of upstairs spaces for office professional spaces. Office professional use could be easier to permit without the need for fire suppression and occupancy restrictions.

Planning Manager Escobar stated that was correct, but ADA access is still needed.

Chair McNeill stated that the encouragement of upper level properties being used as office professional space could be included in the upcoming brochure update.

Chair McNeill asked if the Commission had any questions at this time.

Planning Manager Escobar asked Vice Chair Tanis if the request regarding grandmother/grandfather flats, which are permitted in residential zones with a special use permit, is to expand to commercial zones.

Vice Chair Tanis stated that it was residential and the comment came from a real estate agent.

Chair McNeill asked Vice Chair Tanis how she would like to follow up with this topic in the future.

Vice Chair Tanis stated that she would like to continue to work on this project and get more of a full range of input and develop relationships with the community and the MRA.

Chair McNeill suggested to Vice Chair Tanis to create a way to update on her progress.

Mr. Unsicker suggested that at some point being able to do virtual open house of vacant spaces to encourage what we have been talking about here, showcasing what is available Downtown.

NOTE – Commissioner McNally joined the meeting via Zoom.

4. Total Theater Project Updates – Warren Unsicker & Julie Baird

Mr. Unsicker stated that the project is underway and the County is in full operation mode. The grant of \$135,000 has been received to put in the film equipment, which will happen when construction by the County is completed. The Total Theater will be managed by the Civic Center staff. More updates will be made as the project continues.

Chair McNeill asked if there were any questions for Mr. Unsicker.

There were no questions.

5. MRA Staff Updates – Warren Unsicker

Mr. Unsicker stated a request to partially fund the demolition of the Anasazi Inn was presented to Council and was approved for the \$150,000 funding requested, due to the public safety nature of the project location.

Mr. Unsicker stated that the Brownfield Grant application was submitted. At this time there are no updates from the federal level. There has not been a request for additional information.

Mr. Unsicker stated that the Downtown Coordinator position has been posted and is open on the City of Farmington website. There are several applications that have been received and will be reviewed. Downtown HQ has been vacated.

Mr. Unsicker stated that the improvements of the Buy Fresh Buy Local building are just about done and a walk through will be completed this week. The kitchen portion is the second phase of the project and has not begun.

Chair McNeill asked if the refrigeration units in the building were installed.

Mr. Unsicker stated that he is not sure and it may be a part of phase two.

Commissioner Dykeman stated that he attended a Zoom meeting and it was announced that the refrigeration units will be moved in sometime in the next couple months and there are also plans to get freezer space and retail refrigerators.

Commissioner McNally asked if the Anasazi Inn project has a proposed timeline of when the demolition will take place.

Mr. Unsicker stated that it would happen soon and was a part of the negotiation with the incentive.

Commissioner McNally asked if the Downtown Coordinator position was full time or part time and if the City has a goal of when that position will be filled.

Mr. Unsicker stated that it is a part time position and it is opened until filled.

Commissioner McNally asked if there would be a chance for the public to tour the new Buy Local Buy Fresh building.

Mr. Unsicker stated that once the project is completed he is pretty sure that a tour will be available.

Chair McNeill asked about the status of the retirement center facility at the American Plaza area.

Mr. Unsicker asked Planning Manager Escobar if she had any insight on the status of the retirement center facility.

Planning Manager Escobar stated that she believes the permit has been issued to the developer, with construction to start soon. Planning Manager Escobar stated that she would get with the City Building Official and get a status update on the permit.

Vice Chair Tanis asked when phase two of the Buy Fresh Buy Local project is scheduled to start.

Mr. Unsicker stated that the funding source for phase two is still underway and a timeline has not yet been established.

6. Business from

Floor – There was no business from the floor.

Chair – There was no business from the Chair.

Members – Vice Chair Tanis stated that she has seen speakers downtown on the light posts and asked if the Wi-Fi has been installed.

Mr. Unsicker stated that the speaker installation, as well as the Wi-Fi installation, is in process and coming soon.

Vice Chair Tanis stated that she noticed that the lot behind the old tea company was cleaned up. Vice Chair Tanis asked if anyone knew what was happening with this lot space.

Planning Manager Escobar stated that there has been no talk about the development of that lot and she believes that it was a code enforcement action on the property.

Chair McNeill asked if anyone knew if the present owner of the lot had any thoughts on what might happen with the lot space.

Planning Manager Escobar stated that she has not talk to anyone about that property.

Chair McNeill asked Mr. Unsicker if it would be wise to go about talking with the owner of the property.

Mr. Unsicker stated that it would not hurt to inquire.

Vice Chair Tanis volunteered to call the property owner.

Planning Manger Escobar stated that the City will work with the property owner if they have any ideas for the property and they are welcome to attend the weekly development review committee meeting.

Chair McNeill asked if one wanted to get on the agenda, if they should call Ms. Escobar.

Planning Manager Escobar stated that was correct.

Commissioner McNally asked if anyone was aware of when Three Rivers restaurant would be reopening.

Chair McNeill stated that the owners are working out some details of their business and it may be sometime before the restaurant reopens.

Staff – Planning Manager Escobar stated that Boons Family Thai BBQ restaurant has been issued an outdoor dining permit and plans to put 10 outdoor dining seats in front of their building.

7. Adjournment

A motion was made by Commissioner Mills and seconded by Vice Chair Tanis to adjourn. Roll call was taken and the motion was approved unanimously 5-0. The

Metropolitan Redevelopment Agency Board of Board Members meeting was adjourned at 4:48 p.m.



John McNeill, Chair



Elizabeth Sandoval, Administrative Assistant