

MINUTES OF THE PROCEEDINGS OF THE CITY OF COOS BAY URBAN RENEWAL AGENCY

January 18, 2011

The minutes of the proceedings of the City of Coos Bay Urban Renewal Agency, held immediately following the City Council meeting held at 7 p.m. in the Council Chambers, 500 Central Avenue, Coos Bay, County, Oregon.

Those Attending

Those present were Chair Gene Melton and Board Members Jon Eck, Jennifer Groth, Joanie Johnson, Stephanie Kramer, John Muenchrath and Crystal Shoji. City staff present were City Manager Rodger Craddock, City Attorney Nate McClintock, Deputy Finance Director Susanne Baker, Intermediate Accountant Amy Kinnaman, Public Works and Development Director Jim Hossley, Economic Revitalization Administrator Joyce Jansen, Fire Chief Stan Gibson, and Police Captain Chris Chapanar.

Public Comments

No comments were given.

Consent Calendar

Chair Melton reviewed the consent calendar which consisted of 2a: approval of the minutes of the December 21, 2010 Urban Renewal Meeting; and 2b: acceptance of the annual financial audit for FYE 2010. Board Member Shoji requested the minutes of December 21, 2010 be amended to reflect the following comments for the acceptance of the Egyptian Theatre Structural/Geotechnical Assessment Report: Board Member Shoji stated there was a need for a unified vision for the Egyptian Theatre and to define the importance of the historic structure for the past and future. Board Member Shoji moved to approve consent calendar as amended approving the minutes of the December 21, 2010 Urban Renewal Meeting and accepting the annual financial audit for FYE 2010. Board Member Kramer seconded the motion which passed with Chair Melton and Board Members Eck, Groth, Johnson, Kramer, Muenchrath, and Shoji voting aye.

Discussion of the Short-term and Long-term Vision for the Old Fire Station and Lockhart Properties

Economic Revitalization Administrator Joyce Jansen reported with the demolition of the Lockhart building and old fire station the city would have two vacant lots in the downtown. As such, public comments were solicited for input on possible uses for the properties. Ms. Jansen received several suggestions from the public with uses ranging from a park/public space concept to a combined Coquille/Confederated Tribes cultural hall to retail storefronts. Additional feedback was also received from the Design Review Committee and the Planning Commission regarding the possibilities for development of the properties.

Gary Rifkin; Coos Bay: Suggested marketing the downtown area as the "Old Marshfield" shopping district; and suggested Central Avenue should be the center of the shopping district. Christine Coles; Coos Bay: Stated personally she was a proponent for Downtown Revitalization and as Chair of the Planning Commission the overall consensus was the sites should not be

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turned into public parking lots but was in favor of open public space. Hillary Baker; Coquille: Reported as Chair of the Historic Design Review Committee and stated the Committee's overall concern was for the visual impact of the sites and to minimizing any negative effects; and was not in favor of public parking lots. Mike Vaughn; Coos Bay: Presented a conceptual plan for the Lockhart and old fire station sites for use as a public space; recommended relocating the Firefighter Memorial to the old fire station site; and advocated opening up Central Avenue to revitalize the shopping district. Gino Landrum; Coos Bay: Suggested the City had a unique opportunity to shape the future of downtown either by making a nice public property or the ability to entice private enterprise. Gary Rifkin; Coos Bay: Also recommended Central Avenue be opened to thru traffic.

Board Member Kramer liked the idea of the public space but was concerned about the affordability of keeping both properties off the tax roll. Board Member Groth expressed concern over the quality and actual use of already existing public spaces, noting Pioneer Square in Portland was a vibrant public space but had a full-time organizer to ensure it remained busy. Board Member Shoji also expressed concern over the use and availability of existing public spaces; questioned what could be done to improve existing public spaces. Board Member Johnson noted concern for traffic flow in the downtown; suggested the fire department would be against moving the Firefighter Memorial. Board Member Muenchrath suggested when demolition of both buildings was complete, both lots would naturally revert to public spaces until a more permanent decision was made; advocated incorporating murals; recommended installing a sidewalk along 4th Street and the Old City Hall building; and suggested setting a time limit of March for making the final decision for the sites. Board Member Eck suggested the old fire station lot was one of the most visible lots in the downtown and recommended temporarily developing the lot as a parking lot; suggested both lots should eventually be developed for commercial use. Board Member Shoji recommended looking at the "Downtown Study" for guidance and recommended not making a decision until further consideration was given to the overall plan for downtown; suggested implementing the use of native plants as a temporary improvement for the sites. Chair Melton suggested the site of the Lockhart building would be best suited as a commercial space and the old fire station as a public space; was against opening up Central Avenue. It was the consensus of the Urban Renewal Agency to postpone consideration for the old downtown fire station and Lockhart building sites pending a review of the downtown plan at a future work session.

Presentation on the Urban Renewal Tax Assessment

City Manager Rodger Craddock provided a brief overview of how urban renewal taxes were assessed throughout the City. Mr. Craddock explained that urban renewal was unique in that it was funded by tax increment revenues and clarified tax increment revenues were the amount of property taxes generated by the increase in total assessed values in the urban renewal area from the time the urban renewal area was first established. The assessed value of an urban renewal area at the time the plan is adopted is called the "frozen base". Growth above the base is called the "increment". Tax increment revenues were the taxes resulting from the total property tax rate. Mr. Craddock stated historically taxes raised for the Urban Renewal Agency (URA) were paid by property owners located within the URA boundaries; however the passage of Measure 5 in 1990 required the dividing and categorizing (governmental and education) of the taxes paid by property owners. Property tax statements throughout the city now show a total dollar amount allocated to the urban renewal as a part of general government taxes. The

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total taxes in both general government and educational categories are shown before and after the Measure 5 compression. Although the manner in which the URA tax was being collected / assessed changed after Measure 5, the total amount of property tax (percentage of the assessed value) had not increased. Mr. Craddock further stated if the City closed both its urban renewal districts the tax burden on its citizens would not go down as taxes currently diverted to the URA would be redistributed to the overlapping taxing districts.

Denise Harris, Acting Coos County Assessor clarified if the urban renewal districts did not exist tax payers would still pay the same amount of tax; rather the tax would be redistributed to the other taxing districts.

South Coast Development Council's Quarterly Report by Director Sandra Messerle

Sandra Messerle, Director of the South Coast Development Council (SCDC) stated the City of Coos Bay and SCDC have developed a great partnership. Ms. Messerle stated the Sustainable Design Assessment Team (SDAT) final report highlighted strengths and weaknesses of the community with regard to sustainability, along with opportunities and obstacles to change. The SDAT committee's final remarks spoke very highly of the efforts being made by the City of Coos Bay, of the Council, and staffs leadership and recognition of the intricate value of the Coos Bay and Empire districts to the success of the entire community. Ms. Messerle provided Board Members with a CD of SDAT's final report and stated the SCDC staff was currently working on grants for the implementation of the next steps for the project. Ms. Messerle reported SCDC was also working on a study based the relatively new economic concept of economic gardening which could potentially help to provide information, infrastructure and connections to help businesses grow as well as attracting new companies to the region. Ms. Messerle continues developing community partnerships and was actively involved in the recruitment of new business opportunities in both the Empire and Downtown area.

Board Member Muenchrath requested a report on how the money paid to SCDC was spent within the Urban Renewal District whereby Ms. Messerle stated the information was provided on a monthly invoice sent to the city

Economic Revitalization Quarterly Report by Economic Revitalization Administrator Joyce Jansen

Economic Revitalization Administrator Joyce Jansen provided the agency with copies of both the Empire and Downtown Urban Renewal Assessment reports for future review and discussion. Ms. Jansen noted several planned and currently ongoing improvements in the downtown which included the Old City Hall and the old National Bank buildings. Ms. Jansen reported working with the Oregon Travel Information Council and the Daughters of the American Revolution in effort to develop historic signage for the Hollering Wayside. Due to the required repairs of the Boat Building Center's (BBC) original location the BBC was temporarily relocated to the Business Development Center. Year end visitor numbers for the Visitor Information Center in 2010 were 15,205 which was an increase of 3,372 from 2009. Ms. Jansen noted economic development was a team sport with its success involving the Agency, community partners, and dedicated staff to implement the goals. Ms. Jansen reported on progress in business retention, projects, new businesses, relocations, and interest in the façade program.

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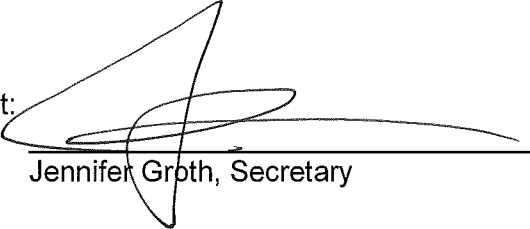
Public Comments

Mike Vaughn; Coos Bay: Reported the Design Review Committee was also reviewing the downtown plan and recommended a joint work session to include the Urban Renewal Agency and the Design Review Committee. Board Member Kramer congratulated Chris Chapanar on his promotion to Police Captain.

Adjourn

There being no further business to come before the Agency, Chair Melton adjourned the meeting.

Attest:



Jennifer Groth, Secretary



Gene Melton, Chair