



CITY OF REDMOND
Community Development Department

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DOWNTOWN URBAN RENEWAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Meeting Minutes

Monday, May 11, 2009 5:00 PM

Redmond Fire Station Training Room, 341 Dogwood Ave

ADVISORY MEMBERS PRESENT: Chair Margie Sellers, Vice Chair Krista Beale, Craig Ladkin, Marty McNamee, Steven Boothroyd, Tory Allman (late in attendance)

CITY STAFF PRESENT: Community Development Director Heather Richards

OTHERS PRESENT: Trish Pinkerton (Redmond Spokesman), Gary Miller (City Slickers), Mickey Hiesler (Redmond Flea Market), Tania (Animal Land)

(Scribe MD's Note: These minutes were created from an audio recording.)

CALL TO ORDER/INTRODUCTIONS

A quorum not being present, Chair Sellers called a work session to order at approximately 5:00 PM. Mr. Allman then arrived at 5:16 PM, thus creating a quorum. Chair Sellers then called the meeting to order.

DISCUSSION/ACTION ITEMS

6th Street Improvement Project –

Community Development Director Heather Richards reported that the 6th Street improvement project is underway and ahead of schedule. The completion date is scheduled for June 30, 2009. A few components have been added to the project, which will go to City Council on May 12, 2009 for final approval.

While there was originally support for not installing sidewalks, a new decision was created. This was based on the contractor's recommendation that takes into consideration the disjoint between the old product and the new product, tree replacements, and sidewalk upheavals. Sidewalks will be installed from Deschutes to Forest on Sundays and Mondays, primarily, so as to have the least impact to businesses. The work will also take into account the schedules of some particular businesses. After assessing improvements and cost savings, it was decided to asphalt the streets from Forest to Glacier to tie in to the new asphalt surface on Glacier. There will not be a mid-block crossing between Forest and Glacier. All improvements made above the contract award will be paid for by capital improvement funds and transportation funds.

There has been a favorable response to Construction Bucks, with slightly less than \$100,000 in vouchers sold over the past three weeks. Funds from the last round of vouchers continue to arrive and bring the current estimated redemption rate to 95 percent.

The Urban Renewal District has funded "Please Pardon our Dust" signs and free public parking signs. Marketing materials have been distributed to businesses to keep them informed.

Ms. Richards reviewed a package of handouts for citizens who want to know about the construction project.

Chair Sellers questioned whether Oregon Grape is included in the landscaping as she feels it is wild and ugly.

DURAC CONSENT AGENDA

Approval of Minutes –

Mr. Allman made a motion to approve the March 30, 2009 meeting minutes as presented; Mr. Ladkin seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Boothroyd made a motion to approve the April 13, 2009 meeting minutes as corrected (Page 3 of 5, corrected to "Redmond Executive Association" under Citizen Comments); Ms. Nelson seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Awning Improvement Project

Ms. Richards attended a state-wide urban renewal meeting. Other communities doing awning improvement projects were in attendance. As far as funding goes, some have matching requirements; some do outright grants up to a particular cost level. Ms. Richards met with the architect and will do a quick sketch-up for each property from Deschutes to Forest. The total project area will eventually be Cascades to Glacier. Deschutes to Forest should be completed by July 3, 2009. Ms. Richards believes that they can work with different groups to bring in volunteer labor for a painting program. She noted that there was previous discussion of having \$500 contributions from each business owner, and requested DURAC to consider a lower figure. Ms. Richards recalled that DURAC has considered outright grants for \$2500 to pay for awnings in the past.

Chair Sellers asked for cost estimates on the awnings; Ms. Richards replied that they range from \$2000 to replace the canvas alone on a 25-foot storefront to roughly double that for businesses that have no awning frames in place. The possibility of no or low-interest loans to cover the match was discussed. Ms. Richards noted this would probably cost more than \$500 per unit to administer.

Ms. Richards discussed the program in Talent, which makes a \$5000 outright grant and then offers up to an additional \$10,000 in matching funds for exterior improvement. Their planning commission reserves the right to make this program available in only particular zones.

Ms. Richards reminded DURAC that the Property Assistance Program project is a part of the Urban Renewal District. There is \$730,000 available for this project, of which less than \$300,000 has already been used for loans and other façade improvement projects. Properties are currently being surveyed.

There was discussion on the cost of signs in addition to the awnings. Ms. Richards suggested that signs may only cost a couple hundred dollars in addition to the basic awning. Mr. Ladkin commented that even though DURAC is currently offering to pay about 90% of the cost to improve the appearance of the businesses, DURAC cannot get "buy-in" from business owners.

The public archway on the 6th Street project should be installed the last week in June. The street will have to be shut down then, and that would be an opportune time for the awning installation and painting.

Of the \$430,000 still available, there must be reserves for the facades loans and facades grant programs. Ms. Richards reported that there has been no interest in the loan program thus far and is unsure of how much to hold in reserve. Plans call for an expenditure of a little over \$200,000 for next year and the same for the following year.

A question was raised about how much of the buildings will be visible once the trees are replaced. Ms. Richards referred to the engineering drawings which show the squares for the tree wells. There will be fewer trees than before and they will be more strategically positioned. The trees will go in at the

extensions at the curbs, one on each side, and then two at the mid-block crossing. There will be one tree at the middle of each block. Fewer trees will highlight the appearance of the buildings and make improvements all the more important. The trees are 4 inch diameter Maples at \$300 each.

There was general agreement that DURAC needs more precise cost estimates before considering changes to the matching fund requirement. Ms. Richards will provide this information via e-mail once it is available and requested a quick response. Chair Sellers informally polled those present about the need for matching funds. Most felt there should be some kind of contribution even if it is reduced from \$500.

Redevelopment Committee

Ms. Richards outlined the direction she has received from City leadership. There's a \$2.7 million set aside from redevelopment opportunity projects in the Urban Renewal plan. The City leadership would like to see a list of opportunity sites and an analysis of those sites to see what would be the value to the downtown community as a whole. This analysis will be brought to the Urban Renewal Agency in June or July.

The Redevelopment Committee has met and created a list of ten properties or property assemblies. A market analysis is being done on the value. The Urban Renewal Agency did an opportunity site analysis three years ago and picked four sites and did a conceptual analysis of each one. She outlined a couple of scenarios discussed for the Parr Lumber site over the years: The first was a hotel conference center/professional office plan; the second scenario was a retail plan. The Urban Renewal Agency is trying to estimate the taxes that will be brought in to offset the City's investment.

URBAN RENEWAL PLAN SPOTLIGHT – Sherwood Urban Renewal Agency

Ms. Richards discussed urban renewal in the City of Sherwood. She sees Redmond going in a similar direction as it matures. Sherwood's maximum indebtedness is \$35 million compared to \$27 million for Redmond. Sherwood has spent some significant funds on infrastructure improvements and leveraging the remaining funds in public-private partnerships for redevelopment to attract investment downtown. Sherwood has also found that infrastructure investment is necessary, but it is not sufficient to bring in needed private investment. She encouraged DURAC to read through their plan to get a perspective on city center urban renewal.

LIAISON COMMENTS (None)

CITIZEN COMMENTS

Tania from Animal Land offered comment. The owner of her building has talked with her about putting up a new awning, and \$500 is a substantial amount after several slow months. There is already an awning but the building could use improvement. She feels strongly that asking business to put up \$500 for awnings is too much in the current business climate. Ms. Richards pointed out that she has been in discussion with the owner of the building for two years and he sees the need and the value.

Chair Sellers asked about the parking situation. Tania noted that new customers are intimidated by the construction and are more confused about the parking. Signage is not always clear. She and other business owners are concerned about losing potential customers as the project drags on for two months. She suggested that banners be made to encourage people to park in their lot no matter which business they are frequenting. The construction people have the area barricaded. They are responsive to complaints but the signage is very poor. Mr. Miller commented that his business has dropped by 50% since the construction started, and this is after reductions due to the poor economy. He would like to see support for business during the construction. He has never seen numbers like this in 17 years of the business.

Ms. Richards recalled that there had been discussion of supporting the businesses but that this cannot be done with state funds. The question thus becomes how to help businesses in other ways. She reported that the original plan was not to shut down from Deschutes to Cascade. She noted that the contractor is supposed to provide more inviting signage. She encouraged the business owners to take their concerns to City Council.

Mr. Miller noted that the water will be shut off in a few days and he needs to be present to shut down his refrigeration. He stated there should have been more notice. Ms. Richards will do what she can to follow up but recommends taking such concerns to the City Council. Feedback is especially crucial now as the project is beginning and adjustments can still be made.

The citizens then left. Ms. Richards noted that all three citizen speakers are from an area that was not originally supposed to be disrupted by the project. It might have made a difference if they had been prepared.

STAFF COMMENTS

Ms. Richards announced that the Frank and Josephine Redmond Park plan was approved by the Urban Renewal Agency based upon the DURAC recommendation.

The DURAC recommendation for \$15,000 for "Playing in Traffic" was taken by the City Manager to the Council for consideration but there is no word on the outcome.

Ms. Richards referred to a document regarding a pending initiative. This was put together for the Redmond Internal Leadership Academy. It shows how the identity of Redmond has changed over the past ten years. This is based on census data from 2000 and 2007 and also some more recent data from 2008. The population doubled in size; half of the population has arrived within the past 10 years. Going from 12,000 to 25,000 is a qualitative shift from a rural to small town character. Looking at the demographic data, the newcomers look similar to the older citizens: young families with children. In terms of education, the number of people with an associate degree has gone up. The percentage of people with advanced degrees is considerably lower than Bend. In terms of employment, the retail sector grew considerably, while the manufacturing and professional sectors decreased. The median wage for full-time males employed decreased. Much of the employment data is before the big box retail stores opened for business in 2007 and 2008 and so Ms. Richards predicts the decline in income may turn out to be even more dramatic.

Newer data from 2008 was analyzed by UC Santa Barbara because they felt that Central Oregon is a good example of the more extreme impact from the bursting of the real estate bubble. Two growing industries are education/health services and retail. Durable manufacturing/mining and construction are the two sectors contracting the most. The retail sector employs the most people, followed by leisure and hospitality services. These are not the highest-paying jobs. Education and health services is the third-largest employer. Education is the highest job sector in Bend, which helps explain some of the disparity in educational level between Bend and Redmond. Professional employment is relatively high in Bend as well.

Unemployment rates in the study are only through December 2008 and would therefore be much higher now. UC Santa Barbara forecast that Redmond's unemployment will be 15% for 2009 and 2010—which is the limit of their forecast period. Going forward, manufacturing and other trades will continue to decline. There will also be a decline in young starter families (25 to 44 year-olds with kids less than 15 years of age) because the jobs are no longer available to support them. COBA lacks documentation, but predicts Redmond will be the hardest hit in Central Oregon due to the amount of commercial real estate which is vacant and the fact that workforce development is not turning the tide. Bend's real estate market has dropped to a level where housing is attractive there again and home buyers are choosing Bend over Redmond.

Redmond is a great family town but it needs more living wage jobs. This is what motivated the mayor to offer his State of the City initiative. He called on Redmond to provide 10,000 new century jobs by 2030. The overall job base should grow by 13,000 to 14,000 during that time. The goal is to have a large portion of that growth be in higher wage jobs. Downtown can be an attractor, as well as the educational system. The Mayor has set up an Economic Development Commission which has been meeting weekly for two months. The goal is to see what Redmond is doing well and what can be improved. Urban renewal has come up several times as a huge funding resource. They are wondering how to use this funding tool to promote higher wage job growth.

The Commission sees that there are a lot of entities doing urban renewal work, each with its own focus. They would like to bring all of the resources together. This would not mean eliminating resources so much as coordinating them more effectively. The overriding concern is to develop a coherent community development strategy. City Council functions in this way politically, but a Commission can offer another perspective that is valuable.

Ms. Richards reported that the discussion is on having a committee versus a commission. A commission would be city-appointed and would operate much like DURAC with a code. Candidates would have to apply to be on the commission. The intention is to have representatives from each major group working towards economic development. All the minutes for the commission meeting should be available online this week.

ADJOURN

Chair Sellers adjourned the meeting at approximately 6:50 PM.

APPROVED BY THE DOWNTOWN URBAN RENEWAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE AND SIGNED BY ME THIS 14th DAY OF September 2009.

ATTEST:

/s/ Margie Sellers
Margie Sellers, Chair

/s/ Heather Richards
Heather Richards,
Community Development Director