

MINUTES

COLUMBIA GATEWAY URBAN RENEWAL AGENCY
REGULAR MEETING
OF
FEBRUARY 23, 2015

CITY COUNCIL CHAMBER
313 COURT STREET
THE DALLES, OREGON

PRESIDING: Chair Steve Lawrence

AGENCY PRESENT: Dan Spatz, Tim McGlothlin, Linda Miller, Russ Brown, Taner Elliott

AGENCY ABSENT: None

STAFF PRESENT: City Manager Nolan Young, City Attorney Gene Parker, City Clerk Julie Krueger, Administrative Fellow Daniel Hunter, Business Development Director Gary Rains

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order by Chair Lawrence at 6:45 p.m.

ROLL CALL

Roll call was conducted by City Clerk Krueger; all members present.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

An Action Item to approve distribution of funds for the Lewis and Clark Fountain was added to the agenda.

It was moved by Elliott and seconded by McGlothlin to approve the agenda as amended. The motion carried unanimously.

AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION

None.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

It was moved by Miller and seconded by Brown to approve the minutes of the February 9, 2015 meeting. The motion carried unanimously.

ACTION ITEMS

Consider Recommendation from Urban Renewal Advisory Committee Regarding Purchase of Elks Club Building

Business Development Director Gary Rains reviewed the reasons for supporting the project, noting the Advisory Committee had unanimously recommended approval. He highlighted some of the answers to questions that had been asked by the Agency and the Advisory Committee. Rains introduced Dave Benko and Steve Burdick who were in attendance to help answer any further questions.

Administrative Fellow Daniel Hunter noted the assessed value of the property was listed at \$266,690, with current property taxes being approximately \$4,000 per year.

Rains talked about the future success of the proposed museum, saying it was realistic to expect between 10,000 and 15,000 visitors and provided figures for attendance at other local museums, including 34,000 per year at the Discovery Center, 40,000 at Western Antique Airplane and Auto Museum, and 40,000 at Maryhill over a seven month period. He said approximately 7 million cars pass by per year on Interstate 84.

Chair Lawrence said he had been asked once if you were driving on the freeway, what would make you stop in The Dalles. He said this made him think about needed signage so people knew what was worth stopping for.

Rains pointed out the fund raising for the project would be nation-wide, and in the Pacific Northwest and said the people involved were experts at fund raising. He said no one else had shown any interest in the building, nor had the ability to do a project like the one proposed. He said the greatest risk to the City was that no one purchased the building and it deteriorated to a point of requiring demolition. Rains said the potential from cruise ships alone would generate 14,000 visitors to the downtown.

In response to a question, Mr. Benko said the first year would be to raise the funds and the second year, to develop the museum. He said he believed this was a very reasonable time frame.

Spatz said he loved the concept of saving the building. He asked if an analysis for engineering and structural, electrical and seismic had been done. Mr. Rains said an engineer and architect had both looked at the building and had assisted in developing the cost for renovations. Spatz said he would be more comfortable with the proposal if there were firm figures.

Miller said no one else had shown an interest in developing the building and said it would cost a lot more if the City had to demolish it because it deteriorated too far.

Elliott said he supported the proposal, but wanted to know if other proposed Urban Renewal projects would be delayed or not pursued in order to fund this project.

Chair Lawrence said this was exactly the type of project that Urban Renewal funds should be used for.

Brown suggested the Washington Street Plaza project be scaled back to free up funds for the proposal.

City Manager Young said the purpose of Urban Renewal was to acquire debt to complete projects, which would create tax revenues to pay back the debt. He said it would take approximately seven and a half years to repay the cost of the project, through property taxes.

It was noted the building had been shown approximately 40 times in four years and only one person had looked at it more than one time.

McGlothlin said he supported the project, agreeing with Lawrence that this was an appropriate project for Urban Renewal to fund.

Elliott said he would like more time to consider and make sure this was the right choice.

Rains said there was the risk of losing the attention of the fund raisers if the project was delayed for too long.

Mr. Benko said once they filed for a non-profit status, they could begin to accept donations, as the application went through the process of being approved. He said they did need to have title to the building in order to move forward with the project.

Rodger Nichols, The Dalles, addressed the Agency, saying this was a small investment to restore a major asset in the downtown. He said there was no downside to the proposal and urged the Agency to approve the project.

MINUTES (Continued)
Urban Renewal Agency Meeting
February 23, 2015
Page 4

Chair Lawrence said he had met the people involved in the project and was very impressed with their enthusiasm.

It was moved by Spatz and seconded by McGlothlin to proceed with the purchase of the Elks building from Steven Johnston for a maximum of \$245,000 and transfer the title to David Benko for development of a sign museum. The motion carried unanimously.

Approval to Disburse Funds for Construction of the Lewis and Clark Fountain

Administrative Fellow Hunter reviewed the staff report. It was noted the Advisory Committee had recommended approval to disburse the funds for the project and the funds were included in the current budget.

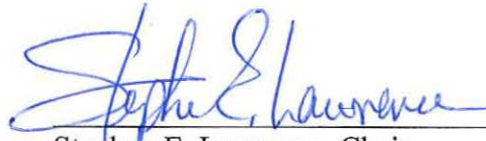
It was moved by McGlothlin and seconded by Spatz to approve distribution of \$100,000 for development of the Lewis and Clark Fountain. The motion carried unanimously.

ADJOURNMENT

Being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 7:48 p.m.

Submitted by/
Julie Krueger, MMC
City Clerk

SIGNED:



Stephen E. Lawrence, Chair

ATTEST:



Julie Krueger, MMC, City Clerk