



# **A G E N D A**

**Tuesday, January 17, 2023 - 4:00 P.M.**

**The regular meeting of the Metropolitan Redevelopment Area Commission will be held in the Executive Conference Room, 800 Municipal Dr., Farmington, NM**

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1. Meeting Called To Order
2. Approval of the December 13, 2022 Meeting Minutes
3. Discussion of the initial site visit and stakeholder meeting conducted by Sites Southwest
4. Main Street Advisory Board Business
  - a. Staff Update – Karen Lupton
    - i. Upcoming Events and Trainings
5. City Staff Updates – (Warren Unsicker)
  - a. T-Mobile Hometown Grant
6. Business From:
  - a. Floor
  - b. Chair
  - c. Members
  - d. Staff
7. Next Meeting – February 21, 2023
8. Adjournment

**ATTENTION PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES:**

If you plan to attend the virtual meeting and will need an auxiliary aid or service, please contact the City Clerk's Office at 599-1101 prior to the meeting so that arrangements can be made.



# MINUTES

## Metropolitan Redevelopment Agency Board of Commissioners – December 13, 2022 Held in the Executive Conference Room at 800 Municipal Dr., Farmington NM

**Members Present:**

Jill Tanis – Chair  
Doug Dykeman – Vice Chair  
Elizabeth McNally – Commissioner  
John McNeill, D.D.S. – Commissioner

**Members Absent:**

None

**Staff Present:**

Warren Unsicker  
Julie Baird  
Shaña Reeves  
Mike Safrany  
Karen Lupton  
Tami Spencer

**Staff Absent:**

None

**Others Present:**

Michael Huston	Bill Freimuth	Gary Hanson
John McNeill	Gloria Lehmer	Bob Lehmer
George Radnovich	Danielle Wilson	Jay Narayana

**1. Call to Order**

Chair Tanis called the meeting to order at 4:10 p.m., Chair Tanis, Vice Chair Dykeman, Commissioners McNally and McNeill were in attendance. There being a quorum the following proceedings were duly had and taken.

**2. Approval of the November 15, 2022 Minutes**

A motion was made by Commissioner McNeill and seconded by Commissioner McNally to approve the minutes of November 15, 2022, and upon voice vote, the motion carried unanimously 4-0.

**3. Q&A with Consultants for Initial State of Animas and Healthcare Hub Study**

Sites Southwest summarized the intention of their visit as laying the foundation for their understanding of the project area. Their purpose was to verify the vision that has been laid out in previous planning efforts, to begin to build on and revise that and to understand where they are going and where the opportunities are. Most importantly, they wanted to hear directly from stakeholders. That will help determine the direction for the next steps, which will include a design workshop to be held in early March 2023. People see the opportunity and the amenities and the connections that are there it is just a matter of understanding what the challenges are that has prevented the area from developing a space that compliments the downtown, hospital and riverfront areas. Part of the tasks for Sites Southwest is to understand the challenges so they can prescribe actions in a scenario that will help to overcome those or take steps to remedy those challenges in order for the development to occur. Sites Southwest will also be talking to the schools in the area and to the tribal agencies and conducting outreach in a manner that is appropriate for those groups to make sure that they are hearing from them and respecting their interests in the area as well.

Sites Southwest wanted to compliment the MRA update already completed in 2019, it laid a great foundation for understanding the area. They want to know if there were ideas or solutions in that plan that, they need to be studying more or revisit.

Commissioner McNally brought up some of the traffic ideas she had for possibly making some of the streets one way. She understands this would have to go through the Streets and Traffic Departments for their approval.

Commissioner McNeill brought up that he would like to see some of the covered ditches opened up to become walking trails that could connect with the trail expansion project that the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) is working on. He would also like to see some of the open spaces turn into trails that would lead to some of the parks. Commissioner McNeill also feels that the MRA update may be too vague; he has a list of things that he would like to see the steps from inception to completion that can be presented to City Council when it comes to that point.

Vice Chair Dykeman wanted to bring up the easements for the ditches would need to be checked out. Some of the housing in that area is historic, even the fact there was housing there at one time it could be used as historical reference. He added that the railroad used to go through the MRA District and he thought possibly the railroad could be used as part of the theme. Vice Chair Dykeman also wanted to see about having a market added to the area design.

Bob and Gloria Lehmer from the River Reach Foundation attended this meeting. Mr. Lehmer read from a prepared speech. (See speech below)

The riverine corridor is Farmington's premier natural asset.

One of the yet-to-be-met goals of our Foundation is to connect downtown to the Animas River.

In 1986 the City of Farmington, with the financial help of the County, provided funding for an American Institute of Architects (AIA) Riverine Plan called the RUDAT Study (Regional Urban Design Assistance Team Study).

This study created the founding of the non-profit River Reach Foundation. The RUDAT Team, with their study, opened our eyes to the potential of the river corridor for our Community.

Over the past 36 years, the RRF has facilitated the acquisition of several hundred acres of riverine properties. It helped to secure land connections to develop trails.

A second riverine study was complete in 1990 with funding from the gross receipts tax passed in 1987. This was the Urban Edges consultant group out of Denver's plan of future development. Urban Edges highly recommended connecting our Downtown to the River.

We are now at a new juncture—the development of the Animas District MRA plan—also a result of the planning.

In 1992 the city of Pueblo, Colorado began a similar study much related to ours, to develop a connection from their downtown by a diversion of the Arkansas River. The grand opening of the HARP (Historic Arkansas River Project) was celebrated in September of 2000. Five entities worked together to make the project a reality for their City.

Our MRA Animas District project mirrors the Pueblo HARP Project. We need to be inclusive of the many local groups who can positively influence a potential game changer for our City.

We cannot accept failure of a plan that was agreed upon many years ago, and has been completed in part by collaboration, volunteerism, and the hard work of many. The appropriate development will be an economic plus from a business, tourism, and local civic pride standpoint.

1. CITY OF FARMINGTON
2. SAN JUAN COUNTY
3. FOUR CORNERS ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
4. CHAMBER OF COMMERCE
5. MRA
6. RRF
7. ARTIST COMMUNITY
8. COLLEGE

Sites Southwest mentioned the river trails and parks are beautiful open spaces, and that they have not been activated to the urban fabric. They would normally like to see housing along the edges that would help keep eyes on the trails as a way to help monitor those areas.

Mr. Lehmer stated they would like to protect the wildlife in the areas around the river. He also stated there are plans for the river trails to go through to Pinon Hills Extension, as the land can be acquired.

Julie Baird, Assistant City Manager, explained the ditches have right of ways, and where the river trail crosses that right of way, the city will get the easement to cross the right of way.

Warren Unsicker, Economic Development, City of Farmington, added some of the projects finished to meet some goals for Downtown and the Animas Healthcare Hub. There is the food hub and test kitchen, the outdoor recreation incubator that was constructed as well as some of the public/private partnerships, including the Anasazi Inn demolition. As well as the private project, Three Rivers Estates. There are developers like Tristan Hawkins that have shown interest in being part of that growth. There are key projects like connecting the river way with a pedestrian promenade, to get people from Downtown to the river corridor. Mr. Unsicker added that after the City invested in the Downtown project it catalyzed things, we got 16+ new businesses within a two-year period and we continue to see new businesses. There has also been growth in the private sector, with business investing and expanding their properties. I hope that projects like that will help bring new development to that area which falls in line with where some of the growth areas are. The City has taken

some proactive steps and has acquired land on the south side, near Miller Ave. and Pinon St.

Shaña Reeves, PRCA Director, City of Farmington, gave a brief rundown on the Downtown improvement project, including the Downtown Main Street revitalization, the Civic Center remodel and the Among the Waters River Trail that was just completed. She also stated the Animas District would be the next focus.

Sites Southwest asked about the proposed Totah Park that was laid out in the MRA Plan, does it need to be revised or revisited. Assistant City Manager Baird replied that yes, it does need to be revised and revisited to see how it would fit into this plan. Ms. Baird also stated that we need to understand the new FEMA flood plain maps, and which areas are in the flood way.

Sites Southwest asked what outcome the City would like to see with this project in the next few years.

Mr. Unsicker replied to enable and embolden developers and public/private partnerships to bring in the types of businesses and redevelopment we would like to see in that district.

Bill Freimuth, 316 Behrend Ave., Farmington, Something dynamic that invites economic activity and a thriving mixed use community. Residences to support the Downtown area.

Ms. Reeves added there is an awareness of the industrial type setting down there and she is looking for the same positive shift that happened with the Civic Center and Downtown District improvements. She believes the Totah Park is very important for the Animas District as a whole. Ms. Reeves thinks it is very important to have improvements that will complement the retirement aspect. In addition, does it fit in with the community owned hospital? Will it fit in with the outdoor recreation?

Chair Tanis would like to see more multi-family housing and some small local businesses, like insurance or legal providers to support the residential population we are hoping to bring to that area. She would also like to see a small grocery store.

Sites Southwest noted that Farmington has the citizen, business and landowner support for this project, and that is very important. They also inquired about outdoor recreation and how large that market is expected to be. Mr. Unsicker replied that it is multifaceted; we realized that with diversifying our industry here, because of the nature of the energy, that seasonal jobs were not going to foot the bill. We have focused our energy on the manufacturing side of outdoor recreation. We are also pushing for businesses like the Desert River Guide and bike shops that will create the culture those manufactures like to see when they move into a community, and of course all the work that Parks & Rec is doing with the river trails and the amenities those businesses like to see.

Sites Southwest suggested that we might want to look at micro mobility, e-bikes and one-wheels. The Animas area is a nice scale for that. Mr. Unsicker added the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) is working on a bicycle pedestrian plan to interconnect and connect with the river trails.

Commissioner McNeill would like to know when the MRA has to have its re-designation so that will not become a time-line issue. He also wants to see a list of the steps needed to achieve each phase of the action. He also believes that you will need buy in from each City Councilor and the Mayor. He also added that Commissioner McNally is the expert needed to get the information on the brownfield areas.

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4. **Main Street Advisory Board Business – Karen Lupton**

Ms. Lupton informed the Commission the Artwalk will be on April 7, 2023, and the SASSY Run will be on April 8, 2023. The Winter Conference for NM Main Street will be in February in Santa Fe.

5. **City Staff Updates – Warren Unsicker**

Mr. Unsicker let the Commission know we have some ongoing projects, like the Well Fargo Bank building. We have continuing interest in Downtown. He is working with the developer on the vacant land where the Anasazi Inn was. The sound system for Downtown has been moved and is wholly contained at Orchard Park, so now bands will be able to plug in directly at the park, into the Downtown sound system. The permanent projector was installed at the Totah Theater.

6. **Business From**

**Floor** – There was no business from the floor.

**Chair** – Chair Tanis thanked Commissioner McNeill for his dedicated service to the MRA Commission.

**Members** – With this being his last MRA meeting, Commissioner McNeill thanked the governing body, the Staff for its professionalism, their community focus getting things accomplished. He also wanted to thank the Commission Members for their focus, involvement, dedication and their friendship.

**Staff** – There was no business from Staff.

7. **Adjournment**

A motion was made by Commissioner McNally and seconded by Vice Chair Dykeman to adjourn. The motion passed unanimously 4-0. The Metropolitan Redevelopment Agency meeting was adjourned at 5.28 p.m.

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Jill Tanis  
Chair

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Tami Spencer  
Administrative Assistant