

M I N U T E S
Metropolitan Redevelopment Agency
Board of Commissioners – April 18, 2013

Commissioners Present

Chairman Carletta Thompson, M.D.
Linda Barbeau
Sara Kaynor
Derald Polston (arrived at 4:54pm)

Commissioners Absent

Staff Present

Julie Baird
Kathy Banks
Mary Holton
Dee Dee Moore

Others Present

Anthony Emerson
Dr. Lehmer

1. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 4:06 p.m. by Chairman Thompson and there being a quorum, the following proceedings were duly had and taken.

2. APPROVAL OF THE MARCH 21, 2013 MEETING MINUTES

A motion was made to approve the minutes of the March 21, 2013 meeting by Commissioner Barbeau and seconded by Commissioner Kaynor. The motion passed unanimously by a 3-0 vote.

3. DISCUSSION OF A POSSIBLE DOWNTOWN PROPERTY DONATION

General Services Director Julie Baird identified the property located at 301 W. Main, which is referred to as the Culpepper Property, was in the process of using that space as a museum. The Culpeppers' felt that if the City was willing to operate a museum, that they would be willing to donate that property to the City. Specifics regarding the who; the what; and the where, are still pending. The building is approximately 6,000 square feet which includes two separate basement areas. Chairman Thompson asked if each basement had a separate entry access and if the vault was accessible by both basement spaces. Director Baird stated that the access is separate but the vault is only accessible from one basement space. Director Baird added that there is also a vault on the first floor.

Director Baird stated that city staff had looked over the property and overall it is in good condition and it appears that the roof is fairly new. An appraisal identified that there is an 8-12 feet encroachment onto the property to the west, owned by Kathy Foutz. These lots were previously all owned by the Foutz Family. Chairman Thompson and Commissioner Kaynor were interested if that encroachment was going to create any issues. Director Baird stated that the 8-12 feet could be quit claimed to the Culpeppers' prior to any donation to the City.

Museum Director Bart Wilsey toured the facility and stated that the main floor in is very good condition for museum exhibits, including the lighting and cabinets that would also be a part of the donation. He stated that there is a grid in place for lighting and that the second room is/was used as a rug display area.

Director Baird added that there are also two storefront offices facing Behrend and each has its own entrance. Commissioner Kaynor asked if the whole property would need to be used as a museum. Director Baird stated that uses could be part of the donation discussions.

Director Baird showed pictures of the property and stated that the upstairs area is in fair condition and that her crews provided a cost estimate of 120,000 dollars to gut the entire area, which is currently sectioned off into small side rooms. Chairman Thompson asked if the second floor area had its own entrance. Director Baird stated the second floor is accessed between the two storefronts on Behrend. She added that there is no elevator at this time, but feels that there is space to build one. Director Baird stated that there was also an attached area just one story high, which may have been used during the 1950's when this property was a restaurant. Commissioner Barbeau asked about that area and asked if it would provide access to the building. Director Baird stated that the area was used primarily for deliveries. Chairman Thompson felt that it should just be removed for safety. She added that there is also a parking lot that is 121 feet by 48 feet and is adjacent to the west of the Deli Factory that is included in this proposal.

Commissioner Kaynor asked if this space is really needed with the expansion currently being built at the museum. Director Baird stated that all of the expansion space will be used for energy displays. Staff feels that the Culpepper property is being looked at as a tourism draw to the downtown, which may also include the Culpepper's rug collection. This can be viewed as an opportunity to enhance and build the rug collection. Commissioner Barbeau asked if the museum would showcase just Navajo artwork, or could it include any tribe. Director Baird stated that is part of the specific negotiation, that the request is for it to be Native Art. It may also be a place to showcase current artists' rug making, basket weaving and silversmithing, not just past art. Commissioner Kaynor asked what type of timeframe staff is looking at. Director Baird stated that the family is anxious to settle this matter as soon as possible. Commissioner Kaynor asked if the museum would like to obtain this space. Director Baird stated yes, they would. Chairman Thompson stated that she felt the Commission was ready to make a recommendation.

Commissioner Kaynor made a recommendation that the MRA Commission support this project and move it forward to City Council. Commissioner Barbeau seconded that recommendation. Chairman Thompson added that this type of project is in line with the MRA Plan and the downtown area and will assist with supporting tourism. The recommendation was passed by a 3-0 vote (Commissioner Polston had not arrived at the time of this vote.).

4. DISCUSSION OF POSSIBLE RESTAURANT AT 119 W. MAIN STREET IN THE MRA

Dr. Lehmer addressed the commission and explained his concept for a restaurant/sports bar to be located with the building at 119 W. Main Street. He explained that he had attended a meeting in Gallup at Sammy's Sports Bar and felt the same concept would be a good fit for the downtown. Dr. Lehmer stated that he had spoken with Anthony Emerson, who owns the Emerson Gallery store next to this building. He discussed with "Sammy" the possibility of working to build this type of restaurant. "Sammy" advised Dr. Lehmer that he would need at least 6,000 square feet, and by combining Mr. Emerson's building and the 119 W. Main properties, it could be attained.

Dr. Lehmer feels that this could be a catalyst to draw sports minded people to the downtown, but reminded the Commission that this is just in the conceptual phase right now. He stated that he felt you had to have a liquor license to be successful. Commissioner Barbeau stated that the cost is high to obtain a liquor license. He added that he was meeting with a contractor to get an idea of the shape and improvements that might be needed. Commissioner Barbeau suggested that Dr. Lehmer speak with Chief Building Inspector Leo Hardie regarding requirements to update an existing building.

Anthony Emerson showed photos of his building and the 119 W. Main building. He spoke about opening up the walls between two buildings and providing an open patio at the front of the combined stores. Director Holton responded to the roof repair issues for 119 W. Main Street and stated that the City is currently working on repairs. Chairman Thompson asked if there was an area to create the required kitchen and bathroom. Mr. Emerson stated that he does have existing facilities in his portion of the building.

Commissioner Kaynor requested how to proceed procedurally since the Commission had already made a recommendation based on a previous proposal for the building. Director Holton reminded the Commission that the sports bar was not yet a proposal and that multiple proposals for the building can be forwarded to the City Council.

Mr. Emerson explained that in the kitchen area of his building are the required 3-tub sink, gas and exhaust link, 220 outlet and dedicated hot water for the dishwasher. He added that the second floor of his building is at the same level as the 119 W. Main building.

Director Holton reminded Dr. Lehmer and Mr. Emerson that a written proposal would be required before a recommendation could be made by the Commission. Mr. Emerson asked if any of Façade Improvement Grant funds were still available. Director Holton stated that the remaining funds have been reallocated at the instruction of the City Council into a capital project. Mr. Emerson asked if there were any funds available to assist with the building of the outdoor patio area. Commissioner Barbeau asked if his building was a historic contribution, and he stated it had a non-contributing status. She stated that her initial reaction was that it would be a great idea to have downtown and a good location, but with the Culpepper property as a museum, that perhaps the retail incubator could locate into that same building. She added that a restaurant is a huge undertaking and she would hate to see it fail.

Chairman Thompson informed the participants that there has been discussion about a possible pool hall/sports bar business at another location in the downtown area. Mr. Emerson stated that his location is already zoned as a small restaurant and could easily be upgraded into a dining area. Commissioner Barbeau reminded them to research everything thoroughly. Chairman Thompson stated this could help the nightlife in downtown. Mr. Emerson felt that it might cause the other businesses to stay open past 8:00 pm.

Director Holton stated that for a proposal to be presented to the MRA Commission that Community Development would need to receive the information by May 9, 2013. She added that she would send a sample proposal that can be used as a model.

5. DISCUSSION AND CONSIDERATION OF MEETING LOCATION CHANGE TO COUNCIL CHAMBERS

Director Holton stated that during the meeting held in the Council Chambers in January that it appeared the meeting had a more formal feeling. Commissioner Barbeau felt that the Council Chambers placed the Commissioners too far above the public. Chairman Thompson shared that the Council Chambers felt too far away, too separate from the participants. Commissioner Kaynor added that the feeling of formality could have been because the Mayor was in attendance. Chairman Thompson stated that the consensus of this Commission was to make no changes to the meeting location.

6a. BUSINESS FROM THE FLOOR There was no business from the floor.

6b. BUSINESS FROM THE CHAIR There was no business from the Chairman.

6c. BUSINESS FROM THE MEMBERS There was no business from the members.

6d. BUSINESS FROM STAFF Director Holton reminded the Commission of the workshop to discuss the TIDD/TIF proposal, which will be held on June 6, 2013 starting at 5:00pm in the Executive Conference Room. She added that a light supper will be provided.

Director Holton also informed the Commission that Cory Styron, PRCA Director was unavailable for the May 16, 2013 MRA Meeting but will be in attendance at the June 20, 2013 MRA meeting.

Director Holton stated that she had received a call from Mr. Phil McKinney of Dirt Bandit and that he has found a location to relocate his business. He stated that it would take a while to move, but it would be in the vicinity of Twin Peaks and Troy King Rd.

Staff has been approached regarding locating an upscale sports bar/pool hall in the MRA. Chairman Thompson stated that there is an existing pool hall. Commissioner Barbeau shared that perhaps this person is purchasing the existing business, and added that the pool hall is the oldest business downtown and has been there since the 1800's.

Director Holton stated that the approval has been given to proceed with the Gateway Signage Project and the Complete Street Traffic Study Projects. Commissioner Barbeau advised she would like to provide some specific language to Director Holton for the RFP's.

Staff will be asking for direction from City Council to look into two areas for annexation; one along the US 64 corridor; and the other to the southwest along Bisti Hwy, where Craig Price wants to build the industrial park.

Director Holton advised the Commission that the San Juan College would be in attendance to introduce their proposal at the May 7, 2013 City Council Work Session.

7. ADJOURNMENT

The Metropolitan Redevelopment Agency Board of Commissioners meeting was adjourned at 5:12 pm.

Carletta Thompson, M.D., Chairman

Dee Dee Moore, Office Manager