



MINUTES

Metropolitan Redevelopment Agency Board of Commissioners – June 15, 2021 Held in the Executive Conference Room at 800 Municipal Dr., Farmington NM

Members Present: John McNeill, D.D.S. – Chair (via Conference Call)
Jill Tanis – Vice Chair
Doug Dykeman – Commissioner

Members Absent: Elizabeth McNally - Commissioner

Staff Present: Julie Baird
Warren Unsicker
Beth Escobar
Elizabeth Sandoval

Others Present: Erin Havens

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 4:03 p.m. by Vice Chair Tanis. There being a quorum, the following proceedings were duly had and taken.

2. Approval of the May 18, 2021 Minutes

A motion was made by Chair McNeill and seconded by Commissioner Dykeman to approve the minutes of May 18, 2021 as amended. This motion passed 3-0.

3. Update on the Harvest Food Hub – Erin Havens

Erin Havens, Harvest University Center Project Manager, provided an update on the Food Hub Downtown location. Ms. Havens stated that the downtown location was moved into back in February, with a soft opening of the Food Hub on June 3, 2021. Ms. Havens presented the following flyer to all those present at the meeting:

Harvest Food Hub & Kitchen

Retail Ordering and Farm Box Subscriptions now available for the 2021 Season!

Harvest Market:

The Harvest Market is now open at 310 W. Animas St in Downtown Farmington! Support local farmers and producers by shopping at our retail storefront, featuring all local produce, food and artisan products.

Hours: Weds. – Friday, 3PM-6:30PM and Saturday, 11AM – 3PM



Online Retail Ordering:

We are open for online ordering every Tuesday from 10AM-6PM. Customer pick-up is every Thursday from 4-6PM at San Juan College (Parking Lot C) or at the Harvest Market, 310 W. Animas St. in Farmington. Place your Order at <https://harvestfoodhub.localfoodmarketplace.com/Products>

Summer Farm Box:

Subscribe now to the Summer Farm Box Program to receive a weekly box of produce all from LOCAL farms in Northwest New Mexico! The San Juan College Harvest Food Hub has various pick-up locations in San Juan County each Thursday from June 24-Oct 7. Subscribe at <https://harvestfoodhub.localfoodmarketplace.com/Subscriptions>



www.sanjuancollege.edu/harvestfoodhub

For more information, contact Erin Havens:
havense@sanjuancollege.edu 505-566-3119.
For information about the Harvest Kitchen,
lunna@sanjuancollege.edu 505-566-3964



Ms. Havens stated that the hours of operation for the Food Hub are Wednesday through Friday, 8:00 am – 6:00 pm, and Saturday from 11:00 am – 3:00 pm; online ordering is

available, orders must be placed by 6:00 pm Tuesday evening and can be picked up Thursdays at San Juan College or at the Food Hub downtown. The ribbon cutting and grand opening for the Food Hub is scheduled for July 16, 2021 at 5:30 pm and will tie in with the Downtown Art Walk. A weekly subscription box of mixed vegetables will be available for purchase starting next week, with boxes available for pickup starting next Thursday. Ms. Havens stated that Phase II of the Food Hub project is the Harvest Kitchen, funding has been secured from the Care Act to hire the kitchen manager for the Harvest Kitchen; renovation funds have not been secured, but other possible funding sources are being evaluated. Ms. Havens stated that the Food Hub is also providing training for individuals who are interested in starting a food business; training programs include life skills, food safety, website development and food entrepreneur training being offered in the fall. Ms. Havens stated that the Food Hub does have some funding that is set to expire soon.

Vice Chair Tanis asked what funding was available that going to expire that could not be applied to the kitchen?

Ms. Havens stated that the Cares Act funding is the funding that was set to expire.

Vice Chair Tanis asked Ms. Havens what was the budget that was needed for the kitchen renovations.

Ms. Havens stated that the initial estimated was \$700,000 to start new with everything. Ms. Havens stated that the budget could possibly be cut in half by find areas that could be cut. Ms. Havens also stated that signage has also been a topic of discussion and how to tie the Food Hub into the downtown with signage.

4. Community Gardens in the MRA – Doug Dykeman

Commissioner Dykeman stated that community gardens are gardens that are worked by a collective of people, often community gardens are a part of underserved communities or developed in cities where no one has access to land.

Commissioner Dykeman stated that there are three working community gardens in Farmington:

- New Beginning Community Gardens on Apache Street operated by the Navajo United Methodist Center and the New Beginning Program.
- PATH Community Garden by the PATH complex operated by People Assisting the Homeless program.
- Old Farm House on 20th Street operated by James Strickler and is a rent by the row garden space that is currently full.

Commissioner Dykeman stated that there is only one community garden within the MRA, the Sacred Heart Catholic Church Garden, designed for the Sacred Heart School. Commissioner Dykeman also stated that there is another garden within the MRA, the Bonnie Dallas Senior Center Garden, but has not been in operation for over two to three years. Commissioner Dykeman mentioned that community gardens are almost always incorporated into senior centers and senior living facilities.

Commissioner Dykeman stated that farms and gardens are almost always operated by landowning families where produce is grown and sold, with the exception of Navajo

Agricultural Products Industry (NAPI), a large scale corporate farming organization; NAPI does sell down at the Food Hub. Commissioner Dykeman stated that most of the farms and gardens are located in the county to be expected with the large open lands in the county area. Commissioner Dykeman named Bandy Ranch Beef, Bridgewater Family Farm, Coffman Family Farm, Kirby Orchards, Valdez Chili Farm, Happy Valley Farm, Humble Fungi and Offbeat Farm; most of these farms do setup at local markets and their produce is sold at the Food Hub. Commissioner Dykeman stated that in the MRA there are two farm and garden locations, the Bridgewater Family Farm and the Orchard Street Garden, which is Commissioner Dykeman's garden.

Commissioner Dykeman stated that within the MRA some ideas might be:

- Civic Center District – restart the Bonnie Dallas Community Garden and encourage landowners to repurpose some of the vacant lots in the area for gardening.
- Downtown Business District – Food Hub plot for intended garden, possible vertical gardens in the alley, encourage businesses to include raised beds behind their buildings.
- Animas District – this district is a blank slate, encourage community gardens with new infrastructure and develop a relationship with the San Juan Soil and Water Conservation District to get involved in the Farm Farmington project.

Vice Chair Tanis stated that a possible location for small garden boxes might be where the old Anasazi Inn was located and the new Three Rivers Senior Living facility.

Planning Manager Escobar stated that a community garden is included in the Phase II plan of the Three Rivers location.

Chair McNeill asked as people are making developments in the area, how can we approach them in including gardens in their projects.

Warren Unsicker, Director of Economic Development, stated that generally speaking recommendations can be made with new development begins in the area; having the MRA plan in place, developers that are investing are keen to see how they best fit into the downtown area.

Chair McNeill asked Planning Manager Escobar how the MRA could get their vision into the development plan and development phases of new development and asked if developers first begin their project at the Planning Division level.

Planning Manager Escobar stated that typically it's either the Planning Division or the Economic Development Division, depending on the developers focus. Planning Manager Escobar stated that she would go through the strategic actions identified in the Comp Plan and look at best practices for water and might look at doing something with trading off on landscape standards; there are no regulations to enforce the installations of gardens.

Chair McNeill stated that as the MRA we have some work to do to create concepts that we think the MRA would benefit from; the community garden concept and setback sidewalks, make it a more walkable and livable downtown, and just wondering where in the process these concepts should be introduced to the developer.

Planning Manager Escobar stated that as Mr. Unsicker mentioned, it can be mentioned to the developer and steer them in that direction. Planning Manager Escobar stated something to keep in mind is that not everyone can grow plants and having an education component would be important.

Chair McNeill asked if the MRA should have something more formal in writing, a list, to get to developers as they come into the area.

Mr. Unsicker stated that what we would need and require would be some points from the MRA plan, easy to digest items, the look and feel, the vision for specific areas, not handing over a large document.

Chair McNeill stated that he would like to have the vision fully stated so that new developers can be a part of this vision.

Mr. Unsicker stated that when he does have a developer looking to develop in the MRA, the MRA plan is sent to them.

Chair McNeill asked the commission to get their ideas in writing and get them to him. Chair McNeill stated that he will then get the document together.

Planning Manager Escobar asked the commission if they would pass this information along to Commissioner McNally.

Vice Chair Tanis stated that she would pass the information along to Commissioner McNally and Commissioner Mills.

Planning Manager Escobar stated that Commissioner Mills was no longer on the MRA Board.

5. Discussion Regarding Developing a Plan for Downtown Alleys – Beth Escobar

Planning Manager Escobar presented the following:

Planning Alleys

Slide Two:



1. South of Animas Street 1798 feet in length
 2. South of Broadway – 2876.5 feet in length
 3. North of Broadway, South of Main – 1757 feet in length
 4. North o Main – 1795 feet in length
- Total – 8226.50

Slide Three:

Determining the Best Use of Downtown Alleys

- Traffic circulation – no current traffic counts
- Pedestrian circulation – identify major parking areas
- Public space – outdoor dining
- Art display
- What is the consensus of the downtown stakeholders
- Different uses for different areas

Slide Four:

Criteria for Public Spaces

- Safe and walkable
- Support existing businesses
- Clean
- Shaded
- Ability to accommodate existing services
 - Waste Removal
 - Deliveries
- Questions:
 - Lighting
 - Cost?
 - Too comfortable?

Slide Five:

Ideas for Activating Alleys

- Events and activities
- Art
- Physical Improvements
 - Temporary (seating, signage)
 - Permanent (resurfacing, signage)

Slide Six:

Develop a Downtown Public Art and Amenities Plan

- Incorporate alley plan into this strategic priority?
- Create a separate plan?

Slide Seven:

Next Steps

- Direction from City Manager's office
- Presentation to Council
- Obtain Traffic Counts
- Stakeholder meetings
- Develop a plan (consultant/staff)
- Implementation

Slide Eight:

Questions and Discussion

Vice Chair Tanis thanked Planning Manager Escobar for presenting and working on these resources.

Commissioner Dykeman asked if the Art in the Alley program is still operational.

Mr. Unsicker stated that it is and there has been an inquiry about the mural that is located on the old Anasazi Inn property.

Chair McNeill asked Planning Manager Escobar what she anticipated the City Manager's office would want to know and what direction would the MRA be taking from the City Manager's office.

Planning Manager Escobar stated that as a staff member, she would need direction from City Council which dictates the work plan for the Planning Division. Planning Manager Escobar stated that if the MRA commission wants to move forward and expects staffs assistance with projects, staff must consult with City Management and City Council.

Chair McNeill asked is there some sort of information that the City Manager's office would need to make the decision and provide direction for staff and what should be included in the presentation for the City Manager's office; should the presentation include why we are considering the project, what we are looking at and what brought this up.

Planning Manager Escobar stated that those points should all be included and presented to the City Manager and Council.

Chair McNeill asked Planning Manager Escobar if he could meet with her and talk with her about a plan for a presentation for the next step.

Planning Manager Escobar stated that sounds good, but she would ask for consideration of timing. Planning Manager Escobar stated that a major focus coming forward is public participation for the Comp Plan, as well as the adoption of the Comp Plan by the end of this year. Planning Manager Escobar stated that the MRA project would need to wait until the end of September due to the obligations to the Comp Plan update.

6. New Business and Real Estate Update - Warren Unsicker

Mr. Unsicker stated that he is please to highlight some of the new business that have come downtown:

- Three Rivers Senior Living
- Iron Wood Gym and Locke Street Eats
- Love and Life Nutrition
- Inspired Moments Event Center
- Kiavo Santos Y Mas
- Pop Up Shop
- Lash Attyc
- Beauty Salon
- Sandstone Bicycle
- Bisti Bikes
- Basin Printing
- Wilcox Realty
- Co-working Space
- Whisky and Lace Hair Salon
- Nizhoni Soaps

- Train To Win Gym
- Olive Tree Restaurant
- Icon Salon

Mr. Unsicker stated that there are about 10-12 vacant spaces available, with a majority on the 200 block of West Main Street.

Vice Chair Tanis stated that she has had one salon owner bring up that there are too many salons downtown and now there are two bike shops downtown, not sure how the spacing of the same type business is handled or handled at all.

Mr. Unsicker stated that competition will occur with same type businesses; the salons downtown do have different clientele and does not see the number of salons as an issue.

7. Upcoming Events

Mr. Unsicker stated that events are starting to happen again, a few to make note of are:

- Makers Market – every Thursday until October
- Possible Live Concerts – over the speaker system downtown
- Fourth of July Parade – July 4, 2021
- First Art Walk – July 16, 2021
- SJC Fair Parade – August 6, 2021
- 4X4 Downtown Takeover – September
- Art Walk – October 1, 2021
- Outdoor Economic Conference – October 1, 2021

Commissioner Dykeman asked if TGIF in Orchard Park would be happening this year.

Mr. Unsicker stated that Parks is working on this event.

Commissioner Dykeman asked if Boopalooza would happen this year.

Mr. Unsicker stated he does not have any information on that event, but that he would look into that.

8. Fiscal Year End Summary (MRA Fund, Grants, etc.)

Mr. Unsicker stated that the Tax Increment Financing (TIF) fund is still pretty small, not as much property tax are received, since the inception of the TIF in the MRA there was a balance of \$6,249.75 before FY 2021, to date the balance is \$10,318.03. Mr. Unsicker stated that these funds could be utilized for possible small grants or incentives downtown. Mr. Unsicker stated that a grant from the State was received for \$5,000 for businesses that would like to add outdoor space; the grant will be a 50% match, up to \$1,000 and an application would be available for business soon.

Chair McNeill asked if the new liquor law that was signed into effect by the Governor would affect downtown businesses.

Mr. Unsicker stated that the State has passed a law for business that have been in business for at least one year, receive at least 60% revenue from food and have an existing beer and wine license, to apply for a full liquor license for \$1,200 per year as

opposed to the \$500,000 it would cost. Mr. Unsicker stated that this law is specific to small restaurants only and not package liquor stores.

Chair McNeill asked if there are business downtown that could take advantage of this offer.

Mr. Unsicker stated that was correct, with business like the Chili Pod, Boons and Mikasa; businesses like the Olive Tree would not qualify as they have not been in business for a year.

Chair McNeill asked if downtown businesses are aware of this new law and if any outreach has been done.

Mr. Unsicker stated that things are still being finalized with this law at this point; as soon as it is finalized we can share this information with downtown businesses.

9. MRA Staff Updates – Warren Unsicker

Mr. Unsicker stated that there is some warranty work regarding waterlines going on downtown.

Vice Chair Tanis asked if there was an update on the plantings downtown.

Mr. Unsicker stated that the water system does need to be fully functional before planting can take place.

10. Business From:

Floor – There was no business from the Floor.

Chair – There was no business from the Chair.

Members – There was no business from Members.

Staff – There was no business from Staff.

11. Adjournment

A motion was made by Vice Chair Tanis and seconded by Commissioner Dykeman to adjourn. The motion passed 3-0. The Metropolitan Redevelopment Agency meeting was adjourned at 5:19 p.m.



Jill Tanis, Vice Chair



Elizabeth Sandoval, Administrative Assistant

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