



Community Redevelopment Authority (CRA)

**Wednesday, April 11, 2012
Regular Meeting**

Item B1

Meeting Minutes

Staff Contact: Chad Nabity

OFFICIAL PROCEEDINGS

MINUTES OF COMMUNITY REDEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY MEETING OF March 14, 2012

Pursuant to due call and notice thereof, a Regular Meeting of the Community Redevelopment Authority of the City of Grand Island, Nebraska was conducted on March 14, 2012 at City Hall 100 E First Street. Notice of the meeting was given in the March 9, 2012 Grand Island Independent.

1. CALL TO ORDER. Barry Sandstrom called the meeting to order at 4:00 p.m. The following members were present: Glen Murray, Sue Pirnie and Tom Gdowski. Also present were; Director, Chad Nabity; Secretary, Rose Woods, Marlan Ferguson; City Administrator, Mary Lou Brown; Finance Director, Jaye Monter; Tom Ziller, Marv Webb, Jay Palu, Council Liaison Randy Gard and Community Development Administrator Marco Floriani.

Sandstrom stated this was a public meeting subject to the open meeting laws of the State of Nebraska. He noted that the requirements for an open meeting were posted on the wall easily accessible to anyone who would like to read through them.

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES. A motion for approval of the Minutes for the February 28, 2012 meeting was made by Pirnie and seconded by Gdowski. Upon roll call vote all present voted aye. Motion carried unanimously.
3. APPROVAL OF FINANCIAL REPORTS. Monter reviewed the financial reports for the period of February 1, 2012 through February 29, 2012. Motion was made by Murray and seconded by Pirnie to approve the financial reports. Upon roll call vote, all present voted aye. Motion carried unanimously.
4. APPROVAL OF BILLS. The bills were reviewed by Sandstrom. Motion made by Pirnie and seconded by Murray to approve the bills in the amount of \$9,710.12. Upon roll call vote all present voted aye. Motion carried unanimously to approve the payment of bills totaling \$9,710.12.
5. PRESENTATION OF DOWNTOWN HOUSING DEVELOPMENT STUDY. Jay Palu from Alley Poyner-Macchietto Architecture, Marv Webb from Webb & Company Architects and Tom Ziller from BID 8 presented the study to the board.

Low cost, ample-sized buildings; a need for housing; and a stable local economy are setting Grand Island up in a perfect storm for downtown

redevelopment. “They are ripe for rebuild,” Omaha architect Palu said of Grand Island’s downtown buildings. Palu, who works for Alley-Poyner Macchietto Architecture, was part of a team that prepared a 100-page downtown housing and development study.

The study was requested by the downtown business improvement board and paid for by the Grand Island Community Redevelopment Authority. The CRA discussed the study with Palu during a Wednesday afternoon meeting at Grand Island City Hall.

The study looked at eight downtown buildings and found that 85 apartments could be created on the upper floors of those buildings to add to downtown revitalization. The buildings studied were the Elks Building, 205 W. First St.; Wolbach Building, 103 W. Third St.; Kallos Building, 106 E. Third; Roeser Building, 115 and 117 W. Third St.; Labor Temple Building, 210 N. Walnut St.; Hedde Building, 201 and 203 W. Third; Empire Building, 116 W. Third St.; and the Pathfinder Building, 223 W. Second St.

Palu said the buildings are structurally sound and nearly all lend themselves well to a mixed use of commercial space on the first floor and housing up above. The study outlined floor plans for the buildings and looked at possible rents. Palu noted housing can be vital in covering the expenses of downtown buildings, especially at a time when renting out first-floor commercial space is highly competitive. With Grand Island’s high demand for rental housing, putting in downtown apartments not only generates a cash flow for the building, but it also provides a population and clientele for downtown shops and restaurants.

Palu said there are numerous funding sources to use in restoring old buildings, historic project tax credits, federal incentives and local incentives that could be offered to aid developers.

Ziller suggested the CRA may want to look at revamping the incentives it offers. The CRA has been providing facade grants to assist with updates to downtown building fronts. That’s nice, Ziller said, but after a while it leads to a “decorated coffin” where the building exterior is pretty, but the upper floors are still vacant and not generating an income. Providing help

to fix up the upper floors can be the catalyst for restoring an entire building and in turn, the whole downtown, he said.

On the parking issue, Palu said there's quite a bit of downtown parking already. By having a good mix of businesses and housing, the parking can be utilized around the clock. The primary business use is during the day and the primary residential use is after 5 p.m. when people get off work and return home.

What the city and downtown shouldn't do is tear down any downtown buildings to provide parking for remaining buildings. It reduces the density of a downtown, which people expect, and takes away from the character of the neighborhood. Virtually nothing built new will ever compare to the detail, architecture and mass of an original downtown building, he said.

"Pay careful attention to protecting those existing buildings," Palu told the CRA. But do understand that the buildings are ready for something new such as an old bank building in Omaha being converted into 180 housing units or upper-levels in downtown Hastings being turned into condos.

"These buildings are in transition from a previous use," Palu said of Grand Island's downtown.

6. DIRECTORS REPORT.

Nabity talked briefly about the Council and the creating of micro-blighted and substandard areas

7. ADJOURNMENT.

Sandstrom adjourned the meeting at 5:45 p.m.

The next meeting is scheduled for April 4, 2012 at 4:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted
Chad Nabity
Director