

City of Worcester, Massachusetts

Edward M. Augustus, Jr.
City Manager

Michael E. Traynor, Esq.
Chief Executive Officer
Worcester Redevelopment Authority



WORCESTER REDEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY

Friday, April 10, 2015
8:00 A.M.
City Hall, 455 Main Street
Levi Lincoln Chamber
Worcester, MA 01608

Present:

Worcester Redevelopment Authority Board

Vincent A. Pedone, Chair
Steven Rothschild, Vice Chair
David Minasian, Secretary
Jennifer Gaskins

Staff

Michael E. Traynor, Chief Executive Officer
Heather Gould, Chief of Staff, Office of Economic Development
Erin Cahill, WRA Financial Manager
John Odell, Director, City Energy and Asset Management Division
Jane Bresnahan, Office of Economic Development

Pursuant to a notice given (attached), a meeting of the Worcester Redevelopment Authority was held at 8:00 A.M. on April 10, 2015.

1. Call to Order

Chief Executive Officer Michael Traynor called the meeting to order at 8:07 A.M.

2. Roll Call

Mr. Traynor called the roll.

3. Minutes of the March 6, 2015, March 9, 2015, February 26, 2015

Mr. Pedone asked the Board to review the Executive Session minutes of March 6 and March 9. Ms. Gaskin offered approval of the minutes with Mr. Minasian seconding the approval. Mr. Pedone stated the disclosure of the minutes would no longer defeat the purpose of the executive session (discussion regarding the value of the Washington Square parcel conveyance to a hotel developer) and they are therefore now released to the public.

Mr. Pedone asked the Board to review the minutes of the open meetings of March 6th, and March 9th and the February 26, 2016 Urban Renewal Plan Public Hearing. Mr. Rothschild offered approval of the minutes with Mr. Minasian seconding the approval.

The minutes were approved by the Board on a 4-0 voice vote.

New Business

1. Additional Appointments to the Urban Renewal Citizens Advisory Committee – Alan Fletcher and Honee Hess

Mr. Pedone advised the Board that at the request of community leaders, discussions with the Administration and Chair of the CAC John Brissette, it was determined that a representative from the Canal District and the Crown Hill District be added to the Citizens Advisory Committee. Mr. Alan Fletcher from the Canal District and Honee Hess from the Crown Hill Historic District be added to the committee.

Mr. Rothschild offered the following motion:

Voted that the Worcester Redevelopment Authority hereby supports the addition of Alan Fletcher from the Canal District and Honee Hess from the Crown Hill Historic District as members of Citizen Advisory Committee.

On a roll call vote the Board unanimously (4-0) approved the motion.

Mr. Traynor advised the Board that City Manager Augustus will notify the new members.

2. Presentation for Proposed Museum of Worcester Fire History

Fire Chief Gerard A. Dio and Captain Greg Fleischer presented to the Board a progress report on the proposed Museum of Worcester Fire History. There is an eight member board comprised of Chief Dio, Captain Gary Fleischer, Michelle Esposito, John Franco, John Dwyer and Alfred Belanger of the Worcester Fire Department, William Wallace Director of the Worcester Historical Museum and Anne O'Brien. Chief Dio noted that they are in the process of creating a non-profit corporation, with by-laws, business plan, goals and objectives and are awaiting final approval and Articles of Incorporation from the Secretary of State.

Chief Dio reviewed with the Board the location of fire equipment and memorabilia and noted that the collection of equipment and items are stored in various locations throughout the City. Chief Dio advised the Board that in addition to the space in the front of the Station to house the museum that was previously discussed with the Board they are also interested in additional space in the rear of that space to house education programs in a theater like setting.

Chair Pedone asked Chief Dio if he has a cost estimate for the area proposed. Chief Dio stated there is no cost estimate but that he would have the committee prepare one to include both locations. Board members discussed how they would like to see space in the museum for events and receptions where a chance to visit the museum would be part of the event. Mr. Rothschild discussed the idea, previously discussed with the owner of Byblos, of adding a corridor through what is currently part of Byblos' area to provide direct access from the Museum area to the main hall. Mr. Traynor advised the Board that he will meet with Chief Financial Officer Thomas Zidelis to discuss costs, rent and viable options for space combinations for the Museum that would be beneficial for the Authority and will report back to the Board.

3. Notice of Next Citizens Advisory Committee meeting – April 16, 2015

Ms. Gould advised the Board that the next meeting will be a working meeting for the Advisory Committee. BSC Group will provide the committee with a new map of the proposed urban renewal area with an outline of the buildings and vacant land.

4. Status Reports – Miscellaneous/Improvement Projects

Mr. Odell stated the bids on the Harding Street Project came in too high and that the package will have to be separated and re-bid. He will reach out to Lamoureau - Pagano to arrange for a quick turn-around for the re-bid.

Mr. Traynor provided the Board with an email from Selim Lahoud regarding his inability to comply with his previously proposed payment schedule that was accepted by the Board to address his rent arrearage, currently in excess of Ten Thousand Dollars. Board members discussed various alternatives to address the issue including termination of his lease unless he agreed to renegotiate his lease to relinquish a portion of the leased premises for the construction of a corridor area that would provide direct access to the proposed Fire History Museum.

Mr. Rothschild offered the following motion:

Voted that the Worcester Redevelopment Authority hereby authorizes its Executive Director to work with the Law Department to terminate the lease or, alternatively, that Mr. Lahoud agrees to amend the lease to reduce the footprint of the leased premises for the Board to construct a corridor to provide direct, indoor access to the area behind Byblos.

Ms. Gaskin seconded the motion, and it was voted 4-0 on a voice vote.

Mr. Traynor advised the Board that he had received an email from CMRPC concerning the upkeep of their leased premises. Mr. Odell advised the Board that the concerns they raised are being addressed.

Mr. Odell advised the Board that the restroom project is at the ninety-five percent design stage and will bring a full update to the next meeting.

Other Business

Monthly Expenditure Report

Ms. Cahill, WRA Financial Manager reviewed with the Board the check detail and monthly comparison summary between February 28, 2015 and April 7, 2015. Expenses were \$254,394.98. Ms. Cahill stated that there was \$187,000.00 in operating expenses which included \$29,826.00 to BSC Group.

Updated Executed Contracts and Payments

Ms. Cahill stated that invoices totaling approximately \$250,000.00 have been submitted to FTA seeking reimbursement of about \$200,000.00 projects including the design of the Harding Street Improvements, Interior and Exterior Signage, and First Floor Public Restrooms, as well as work performed by Coghlin Electrical Contractors and Siemens Industry for video surveillance equipment.

Mr. Traynor reported to the Board that all necessary documents are before the Land Court for the deregistration of the Washington Square parcel. Mr. Minasian asked if the final plan of the proposed hotel can be incorporated into the Terms of Conveyance.

Mr. Traynor advised the Board that that the Cable Services Division has been asked to create public service announcements for boards and commissions and will be taping a short video, possibly at the next meeting.

There being no further business, the Board motioned to adjourn the meeting at 9:07 A.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Michael E. Traynor, Esq.
Chief Executive Officer