

City of Worcester, Massachusetts

Michael V. O'Brien
City Manager

Timothy J. McGourthy
Acting Chief Development Officer
Acting Chief Executive Officer
Worcester Redevelopment Authority



WORCESTER REDEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY
Tuesday, May 10, 2011
12:00 P.M.
CMRPC Conference Room
Union Station
2 Washington Square
Worcester, MA 01604

Present:

Worcester Redevelopment Authority Board

Richard N. Eid, Chair
Jack Donahue
Robert L. Thomas
Robert Diaz

City of Worcester

Timothy McGourthy, WRA Acting Chief Executive Officer
Michael Traynor, Deputy City Solicitor
Rick Trifero, WRA Facilities Manager
Jane Bresnahan, Economic Development Division

Pursuant to a notice given (attached), a meeting of the Worcester Redevelopment Authority was held at 12:00 P.M. on May 10, 2011.

1. Call to Order

Acting Chief Executive Officer Timothy McGourthy called the meeting to order at 12:00 P.M.

2. Roll Call

Mr. McGourthy called the roll.

3. Minutes of the April 12, 2011 Meeting

On a motion by Mr. Donahue and seconded by Mr. Diaz, the minutes were accepted on a 4-0 voice vote.

4. Discussion/Votes Votes

Discussion – Theater District Proposal

Mr. McGourthy informed the Board members that a council item will be submitted at tonight's meeting announcing a new partnership between the City and the Worcester Business Development Corporation (WBDC), including a Memorandum of Understanding, of an initiative focusing on generating new investment in an area surrounding the restored Hanover Theatre for the Performing Arts. A coordinated public-private approach, it will leverage investment within the Federal Square area by combining private investment and market strategies with public programming and infrastructure support to promote economic development of the area. This strong partnership approach will complement broader efforts to revitalize and reenergize the downtown and our neighborhood centers.

The focus area will include the Hanover Theater District, Mechanics Street, Francis McGrath Boulevard, Myrtle Street and High Street. A master plan and market study will be prepared investigating ways to better link important institutions such as The Hanover Theatre, Worcester Public Library, and YWCA, while creating connections between Federal Square, Worcester Common, and CitySquare. The process will be collaborative and inclusive. Key stakeholders in the area will be encouraged to provide input as the initiative progresses through its many stages of development. Mr. McGourthy also advised the Board that the City and WBDC will work the Worcester Redevelopment Authority (WRA) in the preparation of an Urban Revitalization Plan for sections in and around the study area that struggle against substandard conditions and do not lend themselves to market solutions. Through the urban renewal process, under the control of both the WRA and the City, Additional tools are gained to leverage private investment and activity. Approval of any urban renewal plan requires both WRA and City Council approval, prior to submission to the Commonwealth's Department of Housing and Community Development for final authorization. The City intends to work with both WRA and City Council to ensure that the resulting plan serves the needs of the community as a whole. Mr. McGourthy stated that the City and the WRA need to define a vision and a plan for the area, and then work with WBDC and developers to implement the plan.

A discussion ensued regarding the areas to be designated under the plan, the cost and scale of the plan including the mechanics of how the WRA acquires properties that are blighted. Mr. McGourthy explained that there has not been a plan in the past ten years and that the City must show that it has the financial capacity to acquire properties. Mr. McGourthy explained to the Board that it would take at least six months to strategize and at least six months to prepare the urban renewal plan with implementation over five to seven years. Board members requested that a discussion be held regarding the long-range plan. Mr. McGourthy stated that at the next meeting that a discussion will be held regarding the Board's role in the urban renewal process. Mr. McGourthy stated that a monthly update will be provided to the members as well as, at the appropriate point, to brief the Board on the master plan and urban renewal plan.

5. Other Business

a. Monthly Expenditure Report

Mr. McGourthy reviewed with the Board the check detail and monthly comparison summaries noting expenditure for Campbell Environmental for DEP submission of environmental testing of the temporary lot.

b. WRTA Monthly Update

Mr. McGourthy stated that a meeting is in the process of being scheduled with the FTA; the temporary parking lot is one-half owned by the WRA and one-half owned by the City. A lease document will be prepared for submission to City Council. Mr. Donahue requested that a FTA guideways report will be available for the next meeting.

c. Other

Mr. McGourthy advised the Board that there were illnesses at Luciano's Café as reported in the Telegram and Gazette, however no penalties imposed on the restaurant. Mr. Trifero notified the Board that the awning will be installed within the week.

Mr. McGourthy noted that the City was still working on an amendment to the lease agreement in the amount of \$34,000 to be presented to the board for approval.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 12:55 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Timothy J. McGourthy
Acting Chief Executive Officer