

# City of Worcester, Massachusetts

Edward M. Augustus, Jr.  
City Manager

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Chief Executive Officer  
Worcester Redevelopment Authority



## WORCESTER REDEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY

Friday, April 15, 2016

8:00 A.M.

Levi Lincoln Chamber, City Hall, 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor  
Worcester, MA 01608

### Present:

#### *Worcester Redevelopment Authority Board*

Vincent Pedone, Chair  
Steven Rothschild, Vice Chair  
Jennifer Gaskin, Secretary  
David Minasian  
Sumner Tilton

#### *Staff*

Michael Traynor, Chief Development Officer  
Heather Gould, Assistant Chief Development Officer  
Jennifer H. Beaton, Deputy City Solicitor  
Erin Cahill, WRA Financial Manager  
John Odell, Energy and Asset Management  
Jeanette Roach, Office of Economic Development  
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 15, 2016.

### 1. Call to Order

Chief Executive Officer Michael Traynor called the meeting to order at 8:05 A.M.

### 2. Roll Call

Mr. Traynor called the roll.

### **3. Minutes of the February 12, 2016 Meeting**

Mr. Pedone asked the Board to review the minutes. Mr. Rothschild offered approval of the minutes and Ms. Gaskin seconded approval.

#### **New Business**

##### **1. Byblos Lounge – New Investor**

Chair Pedone asked that the item be postponed and held until the next meeting and asked that the Byblos Lounge agenda item be changed to reflect the new establishment.

##### **2. Financial Update Report Update FTA Reimbursement Monthly Expenditure Report Updated Executed Contracts and Payments**

Ms. Cahill reported that between February 9, 2016 and March 31, 2016 expenses were \$510,043.178. FTA submittals for the bathroom renovations have been submitted to FTA for reimbursement.

##### **3. RIBI – Security Company**

Mr. Odell informed the Board that the addition of one security guard between the hours of 1:30 a.m. and 4:00 a.m., Sunday through Thursday, at the current contract pricing of \$14.94 an hour would be an additional cost of approximately \$14,000.00 per year.

Mr. Rothschild offered the following motion:

**Voted, that the Worcester Redevelopment Authority hereby authorizes its chair or vice-chair to execute Amendment No. 1 to the contract with the Rhode Island Bureau of Investigation and Protection, Ltd. for security services at Union Station to add one additional security guard between the hours of 1:30 a.m. and 4:00 a.m. Sunday through Thursday at the current contract pricing of \$14.94 per hour.**

Mr. Tilton seconded the motion and it was voted 5-0 on a voice vote.

##### **4. Status Reports – Miscellaneous/Improvement Projects**

- a) Union Station Harding Street Improvements Project Wall**
- b) Union Station Restrooms Project**
- c) Union Station – Vendor & Maintenance Performance**
- d) Tenants Updates**
- e) Security System Update**
- f) Union Station Interior and Exterior Signage**

Mr. Odell informed the Board that the Harding Street lighting project has been completed and work continues on the retaining wall. The restroom renovations are scheduled to be substantially complete the week of April 18<sup>th</sup>. Mr. Odell stated that the deadline to submit the Phase II capital improvement projects and associated cost estimates to the Federal Transit Administration has been moved up from September 1, 2016 to June 1, 2016. The bike lockers

currently utilized by a tenant will have to be put back into circulation due to increased ridership at Union Station. Mr. Odell will be meeting with Mr. Giordano to define the scope of work for exterior lighting to be included in the Phase II capital improvement projects. All tenants are current with their payments.

## **5. Urban Revitalization Plan Update and Public Hearing Process**

Chair Pedone reviewed with Board Members the speaking portion of the public hearing process and established a limit of three (3) minutes per speaker. Written testimony may be submitted. The public hearing will be an official meeting of the WRA, and will therefore be public record.

Mr. Traynor reviewed with Board Members the Downtown Worcester Urban Revitalization Plan. Urban Revitalization is a strategic approach to addressing properties where private enterprise alone is not sufficient; where the private sector has failed to invest in a property and that property, as well as the surrounding properties, has suffered. The Urban Revitalization Plan is grounded in transformative development and identifies properties that have traditionally seen a lack of investment: brownfields that have been vacant for 20+ years; upper floors of buildings that have remained vacant for 20+ years; property owners that have not updated infrastructure and their buildings are in need of substantial upgrades due to a lack of investment over time; and obsolete buildings that the private sector is not willing to invest in to redevelop. The Urban Revitalization Plan also includes the strategic use of public funds for public infrastructure improvements as a catalyst for private investment. These actions include improving the public realm through wayfinding, streetscape, parking, pedestrian connections, green/open space, and bicycle paths.

Mr. Traynor cited the Med City Urban Renewal Plan as an example of the return on investment from Urban Revitalization. The 1993 assessed value for the plan area was \$9,204,500 with a total of \$277,331.59 in tax revenue. The 2016 assessed value (for real estate and personal property) is \$148,687,400, with total tax revenue of \$5,052,397.85. There are 26 active/recent Urban Renewal projects approved within the Commonwealth. Of these 26, 18 are in Gateway Cities. Worcester has 1 active Urban Renewal project – the Union Station Urban Revitalization Plan. Mr. Traynor stated that through the Citizens Advisory Committee meeting process, the boundary of the Downtown Worcester Urban Revitalization Plan was altered to include a triangular parcel at the southern end of the project area. The boundary also takes into account public infrastructure improvements that are being funded through a MassWorks Grant.

Heather Gould reviewed current major initiatives that the Downtown Worcester Urban Revitalization Plan builds on: CitySquare and the Theatre District Initiative. The CitySquare DIF District has involved public investment of approximately \$90 million for demolition of the former Worcester Common Fashion Outlets, site preparation, construction of the street network, and construction of an underground public parking garage. Private investment includes approximately \$300 million for the CitySquare and Mercantile Center projects. The Theatre District Initiative and the Master Plan involves a partnership between the City and the Worcester Business Development Corporation. The primary goal of the Theatre District Master Plan is to create a district and sense of place within Downtown Worcester, and to identify buildings and sites that provide the primary transformation opportunities for institutional, housing, entertainment/cultural uses, and the infrastructure improvements needed to support those uses. The Transformative Development Initiative spearheaded by MassDevelopment, in partnership with the City, WBDC, and the Hanover Theatre, aims to make the Theatre District known as a bustling hub of cultural activity and entertainment within the downtown that will leverage

additional anchors in institutional, residential, and commercial growth to create a mixed-use neighborhood for residents and visitors alike to live, work, and play.

Jef Fasser of BSC Group reviewed the redevelopment/improvement opportunities identified through the Urban Revitalization Plan process including acquisition, rehabilitation, facade improvements, and public realm improvements. Mr. Traynor reviewed the financial plan. The total project value is approximately \$104 million, with an estimated funding requirement of about \$82 million throughout the 20-year lifespan of Plan. The funding will be a combination of local, state and federal funding sources as well as income from the sale or lease of properties. Mr. Traynor reviewed with the Board the next steps to be taken before the May 5th Public Hearing and the timeline associated with City Council and Planning Board approval.

## **6. Adjournment**

There being no further business, the Board motioned to adjourn the meeting at 9:08 A.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Michael E. Traynor, Esq.  
Chief Executive Officer