

City of Worcester, Massachusetts

Edward M. Augustus, Jr.
City Manager

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



WORCESTER REDEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY

December 4, 2018

8:00 A.M.

City Hall, Levi Lincoln Chamber
Worcester, MA 01608

Present:

Worcester Redevelopment Authority Board

Vincent Pedone, Chair
David Minasian,
Michael Angelini

Staff

Michael Traynor, Chief Development Officer
Jennifer Beaton, Deputy City Solicitor
John Odell, Energy & Asset Management
Erin Cahill, WRA Financial Manager
Stephen Rolle, Office of Economic Development
Amanda Gregoire, Office of Economic Development
Jeanette Tozer, 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 Tuesday, December 4, 2018.

1. Call to Order

Chair Pedone called the meeting to order at 8:16 A.M.

2. Roll Call

Mr. Traynor called the roll. The Chair announced that Ms. Gaskin requested to participate in the meeting remotely. Since her physical presence at the meeting was not feasible, the Chair

agreed to her request. The Chair further stated that all votes at the meeting would be taken by roll call if Ms. Gaskins telephoned in. (N.B. – Ms. Gaskins did not join the meeting via telephone.)

New Business

1. Approval of Major Plan Amendment (Amendment No. 1) to the Downtown Urban Revitalization Plan

Mr. Traynor stated that the Amendment will allow the WRA to construct the ballpark for the Triple-A affiliate of the Boston Red Sox that is coming to Worcester. About a year ago the Board voted to authorize the amendment to the BSC Group consulting agreement that enabled the drafting of the Major Plan Amendment. Some preliminary work was completed in the winter of last year and finalized at the end of the summer because the Amendment was contingent upon the team's decision to relocate to Worcester, which is the sole purpose of this amendment. Mr. Traynor noted that the planning included looking at future development opportunities along the Lamartine Street corridor, so the boundary had been extended southerly to pick up some of the properties along that area that would benefit from investment. The original Amendment had designated a number of properties along that corridor for acquisition, but the focus right now is on assembling the parcels for the ballpark and getting that built.

Mr. Traynor explained that news came out last week that incorrectly reported eighteen properties would be taken to build the ballpark, and it immediately raised a lot of concern in the neighborhoods and business community. The eighteen properties were a mix of properties needed to construct the ballpark and parcels south of Lamartine Street that were designated for acquisition for redevelopment opportunities in the future. There was no plan to acquire any of the parcels at this time. As a result of the confusion caused by that news, what is being presented is a scaled back Amendment that does not include the properties along the Lamartine Street corridor; the WRA will be able to revisit that in the future. The original intent was to leverage development in the area to build affordable housing, not to displace people but to provide better, safer, and more affordable housing stock. The focus of the revised Amendment is the construction of the ballpark and the associated parcels. The properties that are designated for acquisition in the expanded area include 2 Plymouth Street, which will be a partial taking of an addition that is currently vacant; 50, 62, 69, 90, and 127 Washington Street; and 134 Madison Street. Three vacant lots on Gold Street are also being designated as potential future acquisitions in the event it becomes necessary as the ballpark is constructed. The WRA is not taking any of those parcels at this time.

Mr. Traynor turned the meeting over to Jef Fasser of BSC Group to present the proposed Amendment. Mr. Angelini inquired about the legislation that enabled the creation of the boundaries. Mr. Traynor informed the Board that the Urban Revitalization Plan defines an area in which the WRA can exercise urban renewal powers but does not compel takings, which can only be undertaken for properties that are designated for acquisition. Mr. Angelini stated his opinion that the designation process should be done by the Board after some discussion. Mr. Traynor explained that the formation of the original plan followed a different process and that the amendment is also the result of a planning process. Mr. Angelini further inquired about why the Board did not review and discuss the proposed plan before the boundary and parcels were identified. Mr. Traynor noted that he is in agreement with Mr. Angelini; however, the designation could not have been made until a deal was made with the Pawtucket Red Sox. These processes were running on tandem tracks, which was a little out of the ordinary.

Mr. Minasian stated that he would also have liked to have a discussion at the Board level beforehand in order to have a more transparent process. Mr. Minasian expressed support for the plan, especially around the affordable housing piece, and noted that he is looking forward to revisiting that in the future. He further stated that he thinks it is going to be beneficial for Green

Island and that there is a lot of hope for the ballpark project and what it is going to do for the neighborhood, although there are concerns about its effect on the existing housing stock.

Jef Fasser and Mary Ellen Radovanic, both of BSC Group, prepared Amendment No. 1 to the Downtown Urban Revitalization Plan (Downtown URP). Mr. Fasser explained that it is an amendment to the plan that was approved two years ago by the Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD), the State agency with oversight of Urban Renewal activities. DHCD allows plans to be amended for various reasons; it is commonplace and has happened in many communities across the Commonwealth. Amendments are classified in one of two categories: a major plan amendment or a minor plan amendment. Changes currently being proposed to the Downtown Worcester URP are considered a major plan amendment primarily due to the change in boundary and the addition of parcels identified for acquisition. The overall goal and purpose of the urban renewal plan has not changed; the goal is to benefit the downtown area, to bring more jobs, housing, and more commerce to the downtown area, which will result in more jobs and a better place to live. This is especially the case when dealing with the more blighted properties, such as the Wyman Gordon properties that have been vacant for years.

Chair Pedone asked Mr. Fasser to explain the difference between a major and minor plan change and what the process entails for the major plan amendment. Mr. Fasser explained that the State has regulations for Urban Renewal Plans, and in those regulations are certain actions that trigger a major plan amendment and certain actions that can be considered a minor plan change. A major plan change would be a boundary change, changes in acquisition parcels, things that significantly impact the intent of the original plan as opposed to things that are minor changes, e.g., a new roadway that has to be cut in a slightly different direction, changes in public infrastructure, changes where open space may be going in, and changes in particular land uses. Minor changes do not change the boundary or the parcels identified for acquisition, and generally have less of an impact. Chair Pedone stated that the process of developing the Amendment to the Downtown Urban Revitalization Plan started back in December of 2017 with the authorizing of BSC's work on developing Amendment No. 1.

Mr. Fasser explained that another difference between a minor and major plan is that the latter requires a public process including a public hearing in front of City Council, which will be held at a future date. A minor plan amendment involves a discussion at the WRA Board level and a letter that is submitted to DHCD, so it has less of a public process. A major amendment has a robust public process including a public hearing where people will be invited to testify and comment on the proposed amendment. Mr. Minasian asked if there would be another public hearing outside of City Council. Mr. Fasser stated that the regulations require one public hearing in front of the governing body, which is the City Council. Mr. Fasser further stated that all of the public meetings held to date, including the meetings about the design of Kelley Square, have been documented and included in the amendment.

Mr. Fasser reviewed with the Board the boundary of the original plan and the proposed boundary change. The boundary near the Wyman Gordon parcels was expanded to include properties that abut Lamartine Street up to the Kelley Square area, which includes Kelley Square and Table Talk Pies. There are no changes downtown; the only changes are south of the Providence & Worcester Railroad. The original concept plan included Lamartine Street and proposed a recreational complex south of Madison Street and a mixed use area north of Madison Street. The new concept plan contains similar uses, but they have been flip flopped with the recreational area north of Madison Street and the mixed use development to the south.

Mr. Angelini inquired if a Board vote supporting the Amendment means that the Board has endorsed the recommended recreational areas. Mr. Fasser responded affirmatively. Mr. Angelini sought further clarification about whether or not the new boundary is a designation or enables actions already taken. Mr. Traynor responded that the answer is both; the designation creates the boundaries in which actions can be taken, but when you designate particular properties for a particular reuse it is an endorsement of the proposal. This is why taking a parcel

previously designated for one use and changing it to another reuse qualifies as a major plan amendment. In this case, the Amendment will enable the building of a ballpark on the north side of Madison Street, and recommends mixed-use development on the south side, which will be private. Mr. Angelini asked about any other implications of the proposed Amendment beyond designating where the ballpark is going and where the private development is going. Mr. Traynor responded that it is changing the boundaries of the Downtown URP.

Mr. Minasian inquired about whether or not other reuse designations in the original Downtown URP would be changing, and Mr. Traynor noted that no other changes related to land uses are being made to the underlying 2016 plan. Mr. Fasser followed up, noting that his presentation is focused on the changes that are included in the Amendment and that the downtown is not changing. Mr. Fasser explained that a couple of other changes are being proposed to the original plan in order to support current development options. One involves a different configuration of the Wyman Gordon parcels north of Madison Street; the original plan had a street cutting through this area because they originally thought it would be mixed use development. Those street improvements must now be shifted to the east to open up the larger area for the ballpark, and a new roadway planned for south of Madison Street is being shifted to accommodate the mixed use development. Mr. Traynor also clarified that the WRA will be getting a parcel from the private developer for a parking garage on the Wyman Gordon site, but the main parcel is private.

Mr. Minasian inquired about the red area above the ballpark, and Mr. Traynor noted that a building is planned behind left field that would be privately developed. Mr. Fasser stated that properties identified for acquisition also require identification of any of those properties that would be disposed of or sold, and that a lease is considered a disposal. As a result, the original plan has changed and the proposed acquisitions include a city-owned parking lot that will be transferred to the WRA in order to help facilitate the ballpark development. Mr. Minasian asked if any of the parcels identified for acquisition are residential. Mr. Fasser responded that while none are residential, some buildings house active businesses. He further explained that there is a relocation plan to help and support those businesses. While a relocation plan was acknowledged in the original Downtown URP, they are now getting into more detail about the relocation plan. The ultimate goal for any business is to cover any and all costs associated with relocating, including fit out.

Mr. Fasser reviewed with the Board the proposed zoning change for a new Mixed-Use Zoning District for the Wyman Gordon North and South areas, including Kelley Square. This zoning change is needed to support the development that is being proposed for the area. The Amendment also requires an updated financial plan, and the proposed program will be supported through a number of different means, including using District Improvement Financing (DIF), bonding, and grants. Mr. Fasser outlined next steps for the Amendment process, noting that once the amendment is approved by the WRA there is a review by the Planning Board, followed by a public hearing before the City Council and their final approval, and finally submittal to and approval by DHCD at the State level. Mr. Traynor informed the Board that the City Council public hearing has been scheduled for December 18, 2018, and the Planning Board meeting would occur December 5, 2018.

Chair Pedone inquired if the proposed zoning change would pose a problem, and Mr. Traynor stated that he does not anticipate any issues. Mr. Rolle, Assistant Chief Development Officer for the Division of Planning and Regulatory Services, noted that the proposed changes to the zoning ordinance are similar to the commercial corridor overlay district, which currently exists and covers most of the area in the Mixed-Use Zoning District.

Mr. Minasian asked if the properties identified as proposed residential townhouses south of Lamartine Street and the proposed retail/commercial properties were where they had been planning for affordable housing to be built; Mr. Traynor followed up that they were recommending townhouses because it is a type of housing stock that is not readily available. Mr.

Traynor also clarified that there will be right-of-way acquisitions for street widening that require City Council action but are not considered an urban renewal plan action. Mr. Angelini inquired if any takings would be required for any changes that are made in Kelley Square. Mr. Traynor responded that the process for Kelley Square is being driven by MassDOT and he believes that there will be some partial takings for street widening but no full parcel takings. Mr. Minasian inquired about the public process and if the public hearing with the City Council on December 18, 2018 would be a City Council Economic Development committee hearing. Mr. Traynor stated that it will be with the full City Council.

Mr. Angelini moved the following motion as written:

Whereas, the Worcester Redevelopment Authority determined that an urban renewal project should be undertaken in the city pursuant to M.G.L. c.121B and approved the Urban Renewal Plan entitled “Downtown Urban Revitalization Plan, Worcester, Massachusetts,” dated April 2016, prepared by prepared by BSC Group, consisting of 118.4 acres, on May 5, 2016 (the “Plan”);

Whereas, the Worcester Redevelopment Authority desires to amend the Plan by expanding the Downtown Urban Revitalization Area boundary to include thirty-three (33) additional parcels within an area of approximately twenty-one (21) acres (“Amendment 1”) as depicted on the attached Figure A-1 (the “Amended Plan”);

Now Therefore, Be it Voted, that Worcester Redevelopment Authority does hereby accept and approve Amendment 1, as presented at its meeting on December 4, 2018; And Be it Voted Further, that the Worcester Redevelopment Authority, based upon the evidence set forth in the Amendment 1 and its own knowledge of the area, finds that the Downtown Urban Revitalization Area, as shown on the Amended Plan, to be a decadent area and a blighted open area as those terms are defined in M.G.L. c.121B, §1.

And Be it Voted Further, that the Worcester Redevelopment Authority hereby authorizes its chief executive officer to request the Worcester City Manager to file a certified copy of the Amended Plan along with the minutes of this meeting to the Worcester City Council for a public hearing and to the Planning Board for a finding that the Amended Plan is based upon a local survey and conforms to a comprehensive plan of the locality as a whole, all in accordance with M.G.L. c.121B, §48.

Mr. Minasian seconded the motion.

The motion was approved 3-0.

2. Authorize Amendment No. 5 to the Professional Services Agreement with BSC Group for Additional Services Relative to Urban Revitalization Activities

The proposed amendment to the agreement with the BSC Group includes some of the work that they were already doing as the ballpark project was advancing, as well as the services of Mr. Molica to develop a plan for relocation services.

Mr. Angelini moved the following motion as written:

Voted, that the Worcester Redevelopment Authority hereby authorizes its chair or vice-chair to execute Amendment No. 5, in the amount of Two Hundred Fifty Four Thousand, Seven Hundred Fifty Dollars (\$254,750.00), to the Consultant Services Agreement dated August 15, 2014, with BSC Group, Inc., for the purposes of assisting with the implementation of urban renewal activities associated with the Canal District Ballpark Project.

Mr. Minasian seconded the motion.

The motion was approved 3-0.

3. Authorize Amendment No. 1 to the Design Services Agreement with D'Agostino Izzo & Quirk Architects, Inc. for Additional Services

Mr. Traynor stated that this item is a correction to the agreement previously authorized; the fee in the original agreement was inaccurately reported as it was supposed to include \$40,000.00 for reimbursable expenses, but only \$40.00 was included.

Mr. Angelini moved the following motion as written:

Voted that the Authority hereby authorizes its chair or vice-chair to execute Amendment No. 1 to the Design Services Agreement with D'Agostino Izzo Quirk Architects, Inc. in the not to exceed amount of Thirty Nine Thousand Nine Hundred Sixty Dollars and No Cents (\$39,960.00) for reimbursable expenses.

Mr. Minasian seconded the motion.

The motion was approved 3-0.

Mr. Minasian asked if a committee was set up that is separate from the building committee to provide the awarding of contracts like the construction manager. Mr. Traynor responded that the design team is recommended to the WRA by the City's Designer Selection Board, which was voted at the last meeting. The Department of Public Works & Parks reviews building projects and is taking the lead for the Construction Manager At-Risk documents, and that process will start in the next week or so with the issuance of a Request for Qualifications, to be followed by a Request for Proposals in January that will be issued to those pre-qualified through the RFQ process. The recommendations from that process will be brought back to this Board for the awarding of a contract.

4. Authorize Agreement with John Burke, PE for Canal District Phase I Parking Action Plan

This item stems from a promise that the City Manager made as the project went through the public hearings process. The agreement brings a parking consultant on board to come up with a plan for how to deal with traffic and parking in the Canal District and Green Island areas during the two years of construction. Mr. Burke has worked for the city previously, and it is anticipated that he will come back to complete a phase two study. This study will provide for comprehensive permanent parking and will look at ways to protect the neighborhoods and the people that live there from being overwhelmed during ballgames.

Mr. Angelini moved the following motion as written:

Voted that the Worcester Redevelopment Authority hereby authorizes its chair or vice-chair to execute a contract with John Burke, PE, CAPP in the not-to-exceed amount of Nineteen Thousand Five Hundred Sixty Dollars and No Cents (\$19,560.00) for professional services related to the development of the Canal District Phase I Parking Action Plan for the Canal District Ballpark Project.

Mr. Minasian seconded the motion.

The motion was approved 3-0.

- 5. Authorize issuance of an Invitation to Bid for the Union Station Miscellaneous Renovations Project (consisting of Tenant Space Corridor Construction, Harding Street Corridor Improvements, Basement and Second Floor Restroom Renovations, Plaza Drain Improvements, Exterior Lighting Upgrades, Automated Lighting Controls, and Construction of Worcester Police Substation) and Authorize Chair or Vice-Chair to execute a contract with the lowest responsible and eligible bidder.**

Mr. Odell stated that the vote is needed to move seven projects currently in the design phase to the bidding phase. Mr. Angelini noted that there are two votes included in the item, and stated that he felt it more appropriate to have the bid results brought back to the Board for award. Mr. Traynor noted that the two votes are consistent with past practice but can be changed. Construction projects are procured pursuant to Chapter 149 or 30, 39M, which by State law requires that the award go to the lowest responsible and eligible bidder. The City's Purchasing Department reviews the bids and designates the lowest responsible bidder, and the WRA awards the contract. Given this, the WRA has been using one vote to be expedient, but it can be split into two going forward. Mr. Angelini stated that he prefers that the bidding and awarding of contracts be separated.

Chair Pedone requested that the second vote be stricken from the public document.

Mr. Angelini moved the following motion as written:

Be It Voted the Authority hereby authorizes and requests its chief executive officer to solicit bids pursuant to M.G.L. c. 149, §44A, through the city of Worcester Engineering & Architectural Services Division, relative to miscellaneous renovation projects at Union Station, including tenant space corridor construction, Harding Street corridor improvements, basement and second floor restroom renovations, plaza drain improvements, exterior lighting upgrades, automated lighting controls and construction of the Worcester Police substation.

Mr. Minasian seconded the motion.

The motion was approved 3-0.

Mr. Minasian asked if the Responsible Employer Ordinance (REO) would apply to these projects. Mr. Odell noted that the cost estimate for the overall contract is over \$1.1 million and the REO does apply. Mr. Minasian further inquired if the City of Worcester wage theft ordinance

would apply, and Mr. Traynor noted that currently the wage theft ordinance applies only to the city side. The Board will discuss changes to the WRA policy at the December 14th meeting.

**6. Financial Update Report
Report on Prior Month's Executed Contracts and Payments**

Ms. Cahill reported that for the period of November 6, 2018, through November 27, 2018, the WRA incurred \$657,776.41 in expenses. Of this amount, approximately \$554,000.00 was for capital expenses and the balance of approximately \$103,000.00 was for general operating expenses.

7. Status Reports:

- a) **Union Station Exterior Stucco Project**
- b) **Union Station – Vendor & Maintenance Performance**
- d) **Union Station – Leak Remediation Project**
- e) **Tenant Updates – Former Tenant**
- f) **Security Update**
- g) **Urban Revitalization Plan**

The status reports will be held until the next meeting, and the minutes of the November 9, 2018 meeting and December 4, 2018 meeting will be approved at the December 14, 2018 meeting.

8. Adjournment

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 8:59 A.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Michael E. Traynor, Esq.
Chief Executive Officer