

City of Worcester, Massachusetts

Edward M. Augustus, Jr.
City Manager

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Chief Executive Officer
Worcester Redevelopment Authority



WORCESTER REDEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY

March 16, 2018

8:00 A.M.

Union Station - VHB Conference Room

2 Washington Square

Worcester, MA 01608

Present:

Worcester Redevelopment Authority Board

Vincent Pedone, Chair
David Minasian, Vice Chair
Sumner Tilton, Jr.
Jennifer Gaskin
Michael Angelini, Remotely

Staff

Michael E. Traynor, Esq., Chief Development Officer
Jennifer Beaton, Deputy City Solicitor
Heather Gould, Assistant Chief Development Officer
Paul Morano, Assistant Chief Development Officer
Erin Cahill, WRA Financial Manager
John Odell, Energy & Asset Management
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 Friday, March 16, 2018.

1. Call to Order

Chair Pedone called the meeting to order at 8:02 A.M.

2. Roll Call

Mr. Traynor called the roll.

Chair Pedone read the following statement:

Mr. Angelini has requested to participate in today's meeting remotely because he is out of town. Since his physical presence at today's meeting is not feasible, I have agreed to his request. Please let the meeting minutes reflect that Mr. Angelini's request has been approved and that he will be participating remotely by telephone today. All votes at today's meeting will be taken by roll call.

3. Approval of Minutes: February 9, 2018

Chair Pedone asked the Board to review the minutes of the February 9, 2018 meeting. The approval of the February 9, 2018 meeting minutes was moved by Mr. Tilton and seconded by Mr. Minasian; by a 5-0 roll call vote meeting minutes were unanimously accepted.

New Business

1. Major Plan Change for the Union Station Urban Revitalization Plan

Mr. Traynor reviewed a map with the Board that depicts the Washington Square parcel that was acquired through the Medical City Urban Renewal Plan. The Board had previously discussed combining said parcel with adjacent parcels that were formerly part of the rotary. The Medical City Urban Renewal Plan expired in June 2017 and said parcel is no longer encompassed in an urban renewal area, which means that it is no longer exempt from Chapter 30B, and the WRA is no longer able to package it with the other parcels and directly negotiate a sale. The proposal before the Board is to amend the Union Station Urban Renewal Plan (URP) in order to bring this parcel into the Union Station URP and assemble it with the other parcels to create one contiguous parcel. The WRA is in conversation with a potential developer for the combined parcel, and in the interest of advancing those discussions will start the process to amend the Union Station URP.

The addition of the parcel to the Union Station Urban Renewal Plan is considered a major plan amendment. The WRA previously undertook a similar process for a parcel on the other side of Washington Square when First Bristol Corporation purchased the property for the Homewood Suites, and at the time it was considered a minor plan amendment and required only an administrative process. The regulations have changed in the meantime, and the addition of a new parcel is now considered a major plan amendment. The WRA will have to undertake a process similar to when the Downtown Revitalization Plan was approved, though not quite as extensive. The WRA does not have to form a Citizen Advisory Committee but does have to hold the public hearings as required in the statute and regulations. The WRA Board will hold a public hearing first, followed by a Planning Board public hearing with a vote by the Planning Board. The amendment will then be referred to the City Council for a public hearing and a vote to approve the amendment.

Ms. Gould has been in touch with staff from the MA Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) and noted that the Union Station plan boundary amendment also requires a change in the use of the parcel. The Board was provided with a map depicting the current boundary of the Union Station URP as well as a map showing an aerial view of the disposition parcel that will be created.

Mr. Minasian asked if the discontinuance of the street within the disposition parcel has already taken place; Mr. Traynor explained that it is before the City Council Standing Committee on Public Works and noted that Foster Street is curbed and cars cannot pass through. Chair Pedone stated that the next steps would be for the WRA to announce the major plan amendment and the date for a public hearing. Mr. Traynor advised that the public hearing could be held in conjunction with a regularly scheduled board meeting. The Board scheduled the next meeting for Friday, April 6, 2018, and will hold the Public Hearing on that date. Abutters will be mailed a notice of the public hearing, and it will be advertised in the newspaper and on the City's website.

Mr. Minasian offered the following motion:

Voted that the Worcester Redevelopment Authority hereby authorizes its chief executive officer to initiate the process to undertake a major plan change to the Union Station Revitalization Plan to expand the urban renewal area to include an additional parcel.

Ms. Gaskin seconded the motion

Mr. Traynor called the roll, it was 5-0 on a voice vote.

2. Strategy Plan for Union Station Rental Spaces

Item 2 comes out of the discussions over the past few months regarding the leasable space in Union Station and the garage. Coincidentally, a paper released by the Chamber of Commerce offered a view of what might be done with the space. In response to the WRA Board's request to have some type of plan and vision for the Union Station rental spaces and how to market them, Mr. Morano approached Don Mancini from Kelleher and Sadowski, and Mr. Mancini has provided a proposal for a study and visioning plan, a copy of which is enclosed in the Board packet. Mr. Mancini is very confident that with the right strategy, the WRA can lease out the space rather easily. Mr. Traynor is signing the contract for \$3,000.00, as it is under the \$25,000 threshold. The study will have a quick turnaround and will likely be brought before the Board at their May meeting.

Mr. Traynor noted that the garage space is owned by the City and is leased from the DPW&P. In Union Station itself, the former Byblos Lounge and the former CMRPC space on the second floor are both vacant, and the WRA has been informed by VHB that they will not be renewing their lease that expires at the end of June. VHB indicated that they wanted to remain in Union Station but a corporate restructuring dictates their layout needs, which are not compatible with the space in Union Station. VHB will be staying in the city. This presents a real opportunity to reprogram Union Station, and the study will be the first step in taking that action, including engaging in a conversation with Mr. Giordano about his lease and the operation of the Grand Hall. Mr. Traynor stated that the WRA has had conversations with Mr. Giordano about his lease in relation to the Grand Hall and has offered the former Byblos space; Mr. Giordano has not expressed interest in revising his lease. Chair Pedone requested that the Board wait to hear what the consultant says and to discuss the recommendations when they are received.

3. Vote to Execute Amendment No. 9 in the amount of \$1,800.00 to the Design Services Agreement between the Authority and Nault Architects, Inc. for the additional design services related to the Generator Replacement Project that was included in Amendment No. 8

Mr. Odell explained to the Board that the existing generator will be replaced and the related design work requires additional structural engineering.

Mr. Minasian offered the following motion:

Voted that the Worcester Redevelopment Authority hereby authorizes its chair or vice-chair to execute Amendment No. 9, in the not to exceed amount of \$1,800.00, to the Design Services Agreement between the Authority and Nault Architects, Inc. for additional design services related to the generator replacement project at Union Station.

Ms. Gaskin seconded the motion.

Mr. Traynor called the roll, it was a 5-0 voice vote.

4. Financial Update Report

Monthly Expenditure Report Updated Executed Contracts and Payments

Ms. Cahill stated that for the period February 6, 2018, through March 12, 2018, there were expenses incurred totaling \$238,888.94. Approximately \$233,000.00 was for operating expenses, approximately \$5,200.00 was for urban renewal expenses, and approximately \$700.00 was for capital expenses

5. Status Reports – Miscellaneous/Improvement Projects

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

Mr. Traynor advised the Board that the Police Substation is now open and that a press conference would be held at 9:00 A.M. Mr. Odell informed the Board that there will be a two to three month period where there will be both private security and WPD details. The security company provides services that are outside the scope of services provided by the Worcester Police Department. Responsibility for these duties will be covered by an employee that will be hired to maintain the building in a manner that reflects the quality and character of the building and meets the expectations of the WRA. The contract with the private security company will end once the new person is hired.

The costs associated with the Worcester Police Department's services at Union Station will be covered by the funding currently allocated to private security. The Federal Transit Administration (FTA) will reimburse 80% of the costs. Chair Pedone stated that the WRTA has private security as well and has been approached about having WPD officers provide security services at the WRTA Hub. The WRTA is not participating, and the WRA is concerned about this because Union Station and the Hub are an intermodal transportation center. Chair Pedone stated that the City of Worcester is a forty percent member of the WRTA board and asked that the administration allow a representative of the WRA to go to a meeting to ask the WRTA if their administration is unwilling to see the value of participating in the police operations. Mr.

Traynor will obtain the information the Board is requesting and explained that the City's vote on the WRTA Board is forty percent and that the other sixty percent is made up of the other communities served by the WRTA. Chair Pedone suggested that the WRA should bring in Holden and Shrewsbury to take a vote on the management of the WRTA Board, and recommended that the WRA inform the City Manager that they have significant concerns about the WRTA's resistance to having the WPD cover their building.

Mr. Minasian inquired about the exterior stucco project. Mr. Odell informed the Board that the project is underway and that they are dealing with logistics. The weather has been problematic and the temperature has not been high enough for work to begin. Mr. Odell also informed the Board that Nault has recommended a much less expensive option for the flag poles. The recommendation does not include replacing the existing poles but rather improving them at a fraction of the cost of the replacement. The WRA is currently awaiting funding approval from the FTA, and they will subsequently present the flag pole project to the Board for approval.

6. Adjournment

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 8:30 A.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Michael E. Traynor, Esq.
Chief Executive Officer