

MINUTES

COLUMBIA GATEWAY URBAN RENEWAL AGENCY BOARD MEETING

September 21, 2021

5:30 p.m.

VIA ZOOM

PRESIDING: Gary Grossman, Chair

BOARD PRESENT: Diana Bailey, Staci Coburn, Tracy Dugick, John Fredrick, Darcy Long, Tim McGlothlin, Dan Richardson, Kathy Schwartz

BOARD ABSENT:

STAFF PRESENT: Urban Renewal Manager Alice Cannon, City Attorney Jonathan Kara, Secretary Paula Webb

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order by Chair Grossman at 5:30 p.m.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Chair Grossman led the Pledge of Allegiance.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

It was moved by Dugick and seconded by Long to approve the agenda as submitted. The motion carried 9/0; Bailey, Coburn, Dugick, Fredrick, Grossman, Long, McGlothlin, Richardson and Schwartz in favor, none opposed.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

It was moved by Schwartz and seconded by Dugick to approve the minutes of August 17, 2021 as submitted. The motion carried 9/0; Bailey, Coburn, Dugick, Fredrick, Grossman, Long, McGlothlin, Richardson and Schwartz in favor, none opposed.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Tony Zilka, 205 Washington Street, The Dalles

Mr. Zilka stated ODOT had visited First Street in preparation for the First Street project.

Manager Cannon added she had met all the property owners along First Street prior to the ODOT visit. Mr. Zilka gave Manager Cannon a tour of the Blue Building.

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Mr. Zilka will forward the architectural drawings for the Blue Building to Manager Cannon. Mr. Zilka is looking forward to installation of doors and windows in the structure.

DISCUSSION ITEMS

Environmental Protection Agency/The Dalles Coalition Brownfield Grant: Site Reuse and Revitalization Program

Manager Cannon presented the staff report. She then introduced Jim Schwinof, Development Inspector, City of The Dalles, and Len Farr, Stantec consultant.

Mr. Farr provided the presentation on the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)/Brownfield Program, Exhibit 1. The program began October 1, 2021. Stantec and the City worked together to submit a Coalition Assessment Grant Application to the EPA. The EPA granted \$600,000.00 to address brownfields. The coalition consists of the City of The Dalles, Wasco County and Port of the Dalles. Thirty (30) percent of the grant must be used for environmental assessment. The program will end September 30, 2023.

Manager Cannon expressed her thanks to Len Farr and Jim Schwinof for their responsiveness.

Board Member Long stated when the program was presented to City Council, discussion noted that suspected contamination was also located outside the downtown, urban renewal area. Long thought the focus would be to gather as much information as possible about the suspected areas; she did not think buy-in from property owners was required at this moment. As a City, we need to know for future planning whether or not there is contamination. If we do not use this grant for that purpose, its possible landowners will be unable to perform those studies on their own later. It is in the best interest of the City and Urban Renewal to obtain this information for the future.

Manager Cannon clarified property owner consent is required for the initial analysis for contaminants. Significant outreach was provided and will continue.

Board Member Easling asked how much of the \$600,000.00 has been committed, and how much remains to be spent. Mr. Farr replied to date, only about 3% has been spent. Committed funding is roughly \$100,000.00 and the vast majority of the funding remains.

Manager Cannon encouraged the Board to share information about this opportunity.

URA Strategic Planning Effort

Manager Cannon suggested a two- or three-month approach, similar to the approach City Council is taking to update the Community Vision.

Part One:

- Return next month with a report card on finances
- Dust off the Urban Renewal Plan and project list
- Determine remaining projects
- Determine existing liabilities for repayment of loans
- Determine remaining obligations (interest payments on Interest Buy Down Loans)

Manager Cannon will bring this information next month. The Board will then have the opportunity to absorb the information, ask questions, set priorities for incomplete projects, and

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consider projects that may not fit within the boundaries of our projects.

Part Two:

- Visioning session – After the report card, review the list and set priorities against remaining funds.
- Request current cost estimates on existing projects to identify how projects may fit into the remaining available funds.

Part Three:

- Return in December or January for the Board's approval of the final draft.

Board Member Long said she liked the outline, but had a concern with the December meeting. The December meeting is scheduled during Christmas week; she suggested moving the meeting to the prior week to maintain the momentum. Board Member Richardson agreed, and said the semi-formal approach was appropriate.

Board Member Schwartz stated she was unfamiliar with the City Council's visioning plan, and requested additional information. Manager Cannon clarified the City Council updates the Community Vision approximately every ten years. This is a citywide project, which includes a variety of partners as well as a community survey. This process will help determine where the community wants to be as well as develop goals, strategies, and identify partners to help the City achieve the vision.

Manager Cannon, acting as in-house project manager, will regularly update the Board on the Council's visioning progress.

Manager Cannon stated the goal of urban renewal is to produce jobs, produce prosperity, and produce tax revenue so that all taxing entities will realize the profit from work done in the urban renewal district.

Board Member Fredrick stated a cost benefit analysis should be done on any project. He stated our community is made of groups with individual interests. Based on his experience with strategic planning, we need a well-organized effort with all of the community's input. How does this fit in with City Council and the school district? What are the community priorities? Fredrick stated he does not see an overall priority, we work on separate projects, get some stuff done, but at the end, it is all isolated.

STAFF COMMENTS / PROJECT UPDATES

Recreation Building – Manager Cannon visited the site and said the project is on schedule. The façade was cleaned up. Windows will be installed on the two eastern most structures in the coming weeks. KOIN TV filmed a segment for a feature on The Dalles about Exploring the Gorge which will air in the first week of October on Channel 6. A new shuttle service is available now to transport people to local music venues.

First Street Project – This project is on track to be under construction in summer of 2023. A contract was awarded to investigate the structural integrity of basalt walls along First Street adjacent to below grade parking areas. Manager Cannon visited the basements of the Blue

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Building, Eric Gleason's property (Chew-Kee Building), the Baldwin Saloon, and the former Urness Motors site at the corner of Union and First Street. The investigation will determine the need for modifications, if any, to the wall and whether changes to the wall will slow down the project. The basalt walls are a contributing resource on the historic inventory.

Manager Cannon shared the color palette of the 95% Plan provided by the consultants, Exhibit 2. Cannon welcomed feedback from the Board. The Dalles Disposal has collected the garbage downtown free of charge for the past 30 years. They have requested a modernized waste receptacle to increase safety for their employees.

Tony's Building – Results of the grant application will be available next month.

BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS / QUESTIONS

Board Member Fredrick reiterated his concerns regarding planning and individual groups with specific interests. Chair Grossman asked for Fredrick's suggestion for a solution.

Board Member Fredrick stated there should be a community-wide discussion to bring all the players to the table at the same time. All the different organizations sitting in the same room, with a facilitator, to hash out goals to move the City forward. We need to fix our schools, we need an identity, and we need to work together to move forward.

Board Member McGlothlin stated his appreciation for the direction we are going, and his appreciation for Manager Cannon's efforts.

Board Member Richardson asked about the next steps for First Street. Manager Cannon replied completion of the structural evaluation on the basalt wall. Cannon will provide comments on the 95% Plan Set. From there, we will move into right-of-way acquisition. Concurrently, we will work on a 100% Plan Set in order to go out for bid.

Manager Cannon said she would like to see an opportunity to incorporate concrete stamps on each block of First Street. This would incorporate our cultural history.

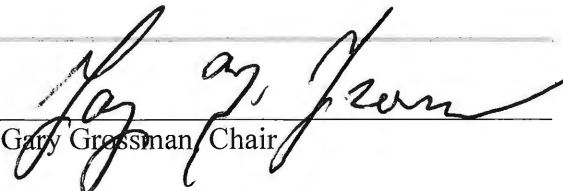
Board Member McGlothlin stated the property at the corner of E. Second Street and Madison Street is an eyesore that needs Board attention. McGlothlin later noted this property is identified in the brownfield inventory. Manager Cannon noted Staff has been in contact with the property owner.

Board Member Schwartz asked for the boundaries of the First Street Project. Manager Cannon replied they extend along First Street between Union and Laughlin Streets.

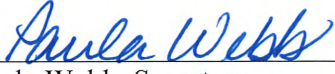
ADJOURNMENT

It was moved by McGlothlin and seconded by Richardson to adjourn the meeting. Being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 6:55 p.m.

Submitted by/
Paula Webb, Secretary
Community Development Department

SIGNED: 

Gary Grossman, Chair

ATTEST: 

Paula Webb, Secretary
Community Development Department