

SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES

COLUMBIA GATEWAY URBAN RENEWAL AGENCY BOARD MEETING

January 30, 2024

5:30 p.m.

City Hall Council Chambers
313 Court Street, The Dalles, Oregon 97058
Via Zoom / Livestream via City Website

PRESIDING: Darcy Long, Chair

BOARD PRESENT: Walter Denstedt, Scott Hege, Tim McGlothlin, Dan Richardson, Marcus Swift and Ben Wring

BOARD ABSENT: Staci Coburn and Shanon Saldivar

STAFF PRESENT: Director and Urban Renewal Manager Joshua Chandler, Economic Development Officer Dan Spatz, City Attorney Jonathan Kara, Secretary Paula Webb

CALL TO ORDER

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

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Chair Long led the Pledge of Allegiance.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Item 8. A. was relocated to Public Comment, Item 6.

Action Items were rearranged in the following order:

- A. Agency Goals and Objectives Draft Revision and Review
- B. Urban Renewal Funding Consideration – Gitchell Building Light Projection Project
- C. Tony's Building Property – Redevelopment Options

It was moved by Hege and seconded by Richardson to approve the agenda as revised. The motion carried 7/0; Baker, Denstedt, Hege, Long, McGlothlin, Richardson and Wring voting in favor, none opposed, Coburn and Saldivar absent.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

It was moved by Denstedt and seconded by McGlothlin to approve the minutes of December 19, 2023 as submitted. The motion carried 7/0; Baker, Denstedt, Hege, Long, McGlothlin, Richardson and Wring voting in favor, none opposed, Coburn and Saldivar absent.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Scott Baker, Executive Director, Northern Wasco County Parks and Recreation District (NWPRD), 602 W. Second Street, The Dalles

Mr. Baker stated the Mill Creek Greenway is a bike and pedestrian friendly walkway along Mill Creek. The segment mentioned tonight connects Second Street to Sixth Street via the riparian zone along Mill Creek. This segment necessitates an elevated boardwalk, cantilevered over the creek to protect fish, habitat, and to remain in the shaded riparian area.

The preliminary design estimate is approximately \$3 million. An Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT) grant was awarded with a match requirement of 10.25%. Matching funds were largely provided by Urban Renewal and in part by the NWPRD.

The Architecture and Engineering (A&E) section is coming up. This design will expand on the original preliminary design to create construction document for use in securing bids.

ODOT's administrative work was completed, followed by a bid package for design work. The design RFP is now under Department of Justice review. Once reviewed, it will be posted to OregonBuys. Interested bidding parties are referred to ODOT. The RFP is expected to go through August, 2025, due to the difficulties of the project. The project will then go out for construction bids.

Mr. Baker encouraged new Board Members to visit the NWPRD website. Go to nwprd.org, choose Parks & Trails, then Mill Creek Greenway to view a video of the project details. The video may also be found at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7gQW2gWHG48>.

Mr. Baker added construction may have to work around fish windows for in-water work.

Claire Graper, resident of The Dalles

Ms. Graper did not realize Tony's [401-407 E. Second Street] would be demolished until it was gone. She said City Council is making many changes now, especially to portions of our legacy as a community. Ms. Graper would like to see more outreach to the community.

Chair Long said the Agency is increasing public outreach. Everyone was disappointed that Tony's had to be demolished; due to asbestos and leakage it would cost more to repair than to replace.

Ms. Graper asked if community involvement would be a core part of plans for the property. Chair Long replied meeting agendas are published and invite community feedback. Community input is always welcomed.

Ms. Graper stated the City is failing to involve the community. She asked how the City would reach out to every member of the community. Board Member Richardson replied many community members and public representatives are involved. It is difficult to have a community conversation given that our media environment has been splintered; there is not one specific source. Board Member Richardson said in his personal opinion, people that want to know the business of the City can keep track of the basic or major developments by reading about them or attending meetings.

Chair Long offered to contact Ms. Graper for a longer conversation.

Rick Wolfe, The Dalles, Oregon

Mr. Wolfe commented on the members of the Historic Landmarks Commission. He stated they are all organizations, not the public at large. The community's trust is being eroded. Chair Long

replied this is a City Council issue. The Urban Renewal Agency Board is a separate entity from the City. Chair Long offered to speak with Mr. Wolfe at another time.

ACTION ITEMS

Agency Goals and Objectives Draft Revision and Review

Economic Development Officer (EDO) Spatz presented the staff report. He noted the Agency's remaining debt capacity, estimated at \$6.2 million, will be presented as \$5,756,258 in the Fiscal Analysis in February. This figure does not include pending projects: Basalt Commons, Federal Street Plaza, and E. Third Street parking lot. Director Chandler added funds are set aside for First Street. However, cost escalations will require additional funds. Final estimates for the First Street project will be available in March.

In response to Board questions, Staff replied:

- Approximately \$3.5 million is set aside for the First Street Streetscape.
- Developers of Basalt Commons are closing in on financing.
- Affordable childcare was removed from Exhibit D [Attachment D] in error.
- EDO Spatz would like to include affordable housing in the goals and objectives.

Board Member Richardson appreciated the alternatives present. Attachment D includes metrics. Attachment D, point D. 2. states, "Provide an adequate amount of properly located and designed off-street accessible parking..." We have plenty of parking at the current time, in my opinion. Richardson suggested revision to, "parking maintained" or "parking ratio."

EDO Spatz replied he used a grant writing approach, which includes measurable outcomes.

Board Member Swift referred to a prior discussion about increased communication and opportunities. He is excited this is now included in the goals and objectives. EDO Spatz replied Staff is envisioning a return to public meetings, and additional information on the website.

Chair Long requested clarification on, "Support the respective missions of the Urban Renewal public taxing districts." EDO Spatz referred to a past discussion, which asked if there is a more tangible way Urban Renewal can benefit, e.g., the fire department. EDO Spatz wanted to capture all of the taxing districts, rather than just one, with that suggestion. If the Agency continues, and if the Agency decides to have a new district, would there be other intentional ways to benefit the taxing districts – infrastructure, buildings, Mill Creek Greenway.

Chair Long emphasized the need for clear intent in goals and objectives.

Item C. 4. states, "Expand the availability of family-wage housing..." Chair Long noted there are actual definitions of housing, low-income, family wage or work force in State statute. Second level projects can be so expensive they cannot pencil out without significant assistance, and may be unable to be low-income housing.

Director Chandler suggested the use of "housing" in general. The Board could then decide on a project-by-project basis.

EDO Spatz asked if the Board had a preference among the Attachments.

Board Member Richardson preferred Attachment C, with the deletion of Item D. 5. "Support the respective missions of Urban Renewal public taxing districts, or." The Agency has a mission, as do individual taxing districts – the missions do not need to be tangled up.

Board Member Denstedt added the Fire District wants to determine how their funds are used, rather than Urban Renewal. His impression is the Agency will run out of money prior to 2029.

EDO Spatz replied the debt payment schedule for the current Maximum Indebtedness (MI), for the original \$29 million authorized debt, is scheduled to terminate in 2029. The Agency can continue without a district. Elaine Howard, consultant, added some agencies have program income, perhaps from property sales, that allow the agency to continue with smaller projects to keep the business community lively and vital.

Chair Long said there may a way to highlight that we want to be mindful of the way Agency decisions impact other agencies.

EDO Spatz asked if the Board preferred Attachment C.

Board Member Swift preferred Attachments C or D.

Director Chandler noted Attachments A and B retain the original order of goals and objectives. Attachment C responds to earlier discussions regarding improved flow, and removed redundancies.

EDO Spatz stated Attachment C puts emphasis on public outreach and awareness.

Board Member Wring referred again to housing. He suggested changing, Attachment C, Item D. 6. "Expand the availability of family-wage housing and affordable child care." to "Expanding housing for residential property" to allow decisions based on the pros and cons of individual projects. Ms. Howard agreed with this recommendation and noted secondary points could include upper floor residential, family wage housing, etc. A more general goal could increase housing in the area.

Chair Long noted the Board consensus for Attachment C with recommended changes.

EDO Spatz turned the meeting over to Elaine Howard.

Ms. Howard replied to questions submitted by the Board (questions are in boldface).

**What is the best practice to share with the community the successes of Urban Renewal?
How are other communities doing this – frequency, method, information share, etc.?**

The best practice depends on what works in your own community. Some examples:

- In La Grande, a sign at the property states, "Urban renewal has helped finance this project. For information go to..." followed by links. Once the project is completed, a sign is posted stating, "This project was funded through..." not only urban renewal, but any lender involved in the project. There is a temporary construction sign followed by a permanent sign. This works well for building rehabilitation, a storefront loan, new housing, etc. Other urban renewal areas also follow this process.
- If the project has a grand opening covered by a newspaper, the Agency should provide facts about the project, including the fact that financing from Urban Renewal caused the project to happen. This will ensure Urban Renewal does not get lost as an important aspect of the project.
- Post monthly or bi-monthly about current or historical projects saying this is a project completed through urban renewal. Include the important components: leverage amount of urban renewal funding vs. private funding, the number of jobs created, or the historic resource improved.

- Primarily, documenting and sharing successes.
- Add to the website fact sheets that provide information about individual projects.

How are urban renewal agencies working to set goals for the completion of agency?

Goals for an agency are separate from goals for a plan. Lincoln City has agency goals, but in the urban renewal plans they incorporate a portion of those goals with a subset of objectives. Understanding if your goals are agency goals or plan goals is important.

Setting goals for completion of the Agency is the process you are in now. The Board has just discussed goals. At the next meeting, the Board will discuss how much money is left to spend through the remaining MI, which is not a lot of money.

The Board will then compare remaining funds to the projects you want to complete. A limited group of projects are left because the amount of MI is limited. Setting goals for completion of those projects will then be identifying which of the projects underneath the goals can be implemented first.

Urban Renewal is an implementation tool. Many times those goals come from other things – comprehensive plans, housing action plans, or downtown plans. Usually Urban Renewal is what implements those other plans and makes them happen.

What are other agencies using to measure success, completion of an agency, and how do we know if we are successful?

There is no overall answer for this question. The Hood River waterfront was an urban renewal area. Measurement for that success was job creation, development, and park improvements. Implementing infrastructure projects allowed the development to occur.

Measuring success depends on the type of district you have, and what the agency is trying to accomplish. It is different in every example.

When is blight eliminated in our current Agency?

The actual goal of urban renewal is not to eliminate blight. Blight is necessary to establish an urban renewal agency and plan, but the goal generally is to create better economic conditions and improve the community. This is accomplished through addressing blight.

- Are downtown storefronts full?
- Is our community receiving the desired services downtown?
- Do we have an active downtown?
- Have we had successes through the improvement of our district in terms of business, jobs, sense of place, and sense of safety?

Are agencies being set up now with a way to measure completion?

Not necessarily. Lake Oswego measured success with the completion of Boones Ferry Road, which provided a safer community with easier access to business, and a better business environment for new businesses. It is not always necessary to establish metrics.

Board Member Denstedt stated the Fire District did not want to fund projects that would not increase the tax rolls. Ms. Howard replied a vibrant, interesting, lively, safe community is more likely to attract new businesses, indirectly raising the tax rolls.

Board Member Richardson mentioned the Fire District had benefitted from the community with the addition of a fire station on the east side of town and the training tower.

Board Member Denstedt added the need for funding has always existed. Primary concerns are a shortage of paramedics and the inability to attract staff and volunteers.

Board Member Richardson felt this would be a useful offline conversation. He felt there are several areas of medical and medical adjacent personnel that we might as a community invest in.

Ms. Howard asked the Board if they felt the goals and objectives covered everything they want to accomplish over the next few years. Are there things the Board could address through Urban Renewal funds, not presently on the list or covered, that should receive consideration to ensure funds will be spent on the top priorities of our community needs?

Rick Wolfe, The Dalles, Oregon

At the intersection of 3rd, 4th and 6th Streets a young woman was involved in a fatal accident. Mr. Wolfe said the wall should be repaired. A section of the retaining wall is missing and is an eyesore. Chair Long replied this item is outside of the Urban Renewal boundary. The City Manager's office can direct you to the correct department within the City.

As a member of the Parks and Rec Board, Board Member Swift invited Mr. Wolfe to reach out.

Ms. Howard said Nick Popenuk, Tiberius Solutions, will be at the next meeting to report on the Agency's financial status.

EDO Spatz stated the February agenda will include the Agency audit and annual fiscal report. The Board will then go into a comprehensive analysis of Agency accomplishments, return on tax value, and things of that nature. These topics will likely carry over into the March meeting.

Urban Renewal Funding Consideration – Gitchell Building Light Projection Project

Special Projects Coordinator (SPC) Ann Moorhead provided the staff report and presentation, Attachment 1.

In response to Board questions, SPC Moorhead replied:

- The Winslow Group will administer the project and content.
- The ongoing costs will be electrical and possibly maintenance; the City will be responsible for the costs. The equipment will become City property.
- The projectors do not have a dual purpose; designed only to project restored images of the signs.
- The point of this project is to recall the historic aspect of the structure. Other purposes would double the original cost and maintenance.
- There are six different projectors, with two projectors per sign. The photos will fade in and out.
- The project intent is to capture interest and attract visitors.
- The estimated life span is ten years.
- The Waldron Drug/Gitchell Building has a new roof. It is not suitable for occupancy, but 10 years from the structure will remain. The long-term future of the building is unknown.

- The 1st Street retaining wall does not affect the building.

Eric Gleason, 704 Case Street, The Dalles, representing The Friends of the Waldron Brothers Drugstore

Mr. Gleason stated the group is still active in the community and working to collaborate with the City for the long-term future of the building. We recognize there are challenges, but do not see those challenges as insurmountable. The Light Projection Project is good initial first step to increase the building's visibility in the community. We hope to partner with the City on further restoration work.

Board Member Wring asked if there are any similar alternatives from a cost perspective. SPC Moorhead replied she could find no alternative source for both the projection ability at this scale along with the restoration.

It was moved by Hege and seconded by McGlothlin to authorize the Agency Manager to execute and implement the Gitchell Building Light Projector Project with Winslow Studio in an amount not to exceed \$24,400.00 as presented. The motion carried 6/0; Hege, Long, McGlothlin, Richardson, Swift and Wring voting in favor, Denstedt opposed, Coburn and Saldivar absent.

Tony's Building Property – Redevelopment Options

EDO Spatz presented the staff report.

Board Member McGlothlin asked how much it would cost for marketing. EDO Spatz said Staff would return with an estimate. Staff would seek competitive bids for publications, design and advertising costs.

Board Member McGlothlin stated future use should be compatible with the community. Chair Long suggested contacting The Dalles Main Street and the Beautification Committee.

Board Member McGlothlin is in favor of researching marketing and reviewing outside proposals. He would like to pursue something attractive from the highway, that would produce revenue, and support community activities. Board Member McGlothlin would like many opportunities to choose from.

Board Member Richardson leaned toward a Request for Expressions of Interest (RFEI) with some parameters, expressions of interest that are serious, useful and appropriate for the site. Some criteria might be: complements a future Federal Street Plaza, increases downtown foot traffic, complements existing or planned major developments, and tax benefits.

Board Member Denstedt preferred waiting for final decisions on Basalt Commons and the Federal Street Plaza. If the property is later for sale, it may have increased in value.

Board Member Swift supports the RFEI and the Federal Street Plaza as a part of that development. He does not want to limit the focus. If someone were to come forward with a great idea for housing, he would be in favor of that.

Board Member Wring seconds housing, or potentially mixed-use of residential with a public space. He said competition is a good thing. We have a lack of residential housing, and would like increased availability. The RFEI is interesting, but he is very interested in the value of the parcel, not just revenues from a sale, but also in the potential tax revenues over time. The cost of initial buy-in along with demolition costs are well over a \$1 million investment.

Director Chandler replied Business Oregon contributed \$60,000. We budgeted \$750,000 for demolition and abatement; the project's actual cost was approximately \$500,000.

Board Member Swift noted the example of Talent's RFEI is from 2017. He would like to discover the results of the RFEI. EDO Spatz replied Staff will research the results.

Board Member Hege was not in favor of leaving the property in its current, unattractive state. He said the Agency should be straightforward and proceed with an RFP. It is the easiest way to determine private sector interest in the parcel in its current condition.

Chair Long was in favor of the RFEI. It is less expensive for applicants to forward their proposals. It gives the Agency a great opportunity to involve the community and gather feedback. It could also be an opportunity to advance outreach. A QR code could lead to a website with current information on activity. This would also attract interest in proposals. Chair Long added any action will take time. This is an opportunity to reach out to the Chamber of Commerce for Cherry Festival, and pursue other short-term ideas like a farmer's market.

EDO Spatz credited Mr. Wolfe for his efforts collecting the community's ideas.

Rick Wolfe, The Dalles, Oregon

Mr. Wolfe stated the community wants to know what is going on. There is interest in a pickle ball court. Wolfe suggested an overlay for a common space. Most were not in favor of a parking lot. Mr. Wolfe offered his assistance in reaching out.

Chair Long asked if there was consensus. EDO Spatz felt there was consensus for an RFP or RFEI, or blur the lines between both.

Director Chandler thought it should be one or the other. An RFP asks for much more information. The Board would need to decide what to include in the RFP to attract the best applicants. An RFEI opens an opportunity for interested parties to come up with ideas, and then we create an RFP to develop the idea. A large sign with a QR code on the fence could invite community ideas, "What would you like to see here?" Scan the QR, a simple action takes you to fill out your suggestion. We can then take those suggestions and determine if they should go in an RFP. The RFEI puts it out to developers for their ideas. Director Chandler's suggestion is to choose either the RFP or RFEI.

Board Member Wring agreed with Board Member Hege; we should be very decisive. He would like to better understand the value of the lot and to consider selling, but to also consider an RFP to develop the property.

Chair Long said it was important to act, but when interest rates go crazy, people will not put forward proposals or will offer very limited options. She is more concerned with securing a worthwhile project, rather than rushing in and receiving limited proposals. It takes longer for an RFEI, but gives people more time to digest and think of good ideas. It is important to take our time and get it right the first time.

EDO Spatz said this would be a two-step process to gather and filter community visions. It becomes an outreach function.

Chair Long replied after receiving proposals, the Board could then judge whether or not the applicant could complete the project. She thought, but was not sure, that you could proceed to the Development and Disposition Agreement (DDA) step.

Board Member Hege asked if RFEIs work. We could collect multiple suggestions, and the developer may decline.

EDO Spatz said he would like to find the results of the Talent RFEI and then return with bulleted elements for either the RFP or RFEI.

Board Member Hege said ultimately we have a piece of property in which we want someone to make an investment, to add tax value and create opportunities.

Board Member Richardson used the term "criteria," and thought it might not quite be the right word. Whether and RFP or RFEI, we should be clear. Broadly, how will we evaluate something? We may receive many suggestions that are not applicable.

Chair Long replied the RFEI has minimum criteria, but requires well planned ideas. Board Member Hege noted general requirements can be included in an RFP.

EDO Spatz added there is certainly interest now in the property.

Chair Long does not want the property to be tied up, and then have no development for a long period.

EDO Spatz said he will return with something. Director Chandler stated this will not be put on the back burner. The next two meetings will be very busy, but Staff should have something by the April meeting. He added Talent was devastated by fire; it is unsure if the project moved forward. Talent will not be used as an example for our project. It is time this moved forward.

BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS / QUESTIONS

None.

STAFF COMMENTS / PROJECT UPDATES

EDO Spatz said a new Incentive Program application will be ready in February for a downtown building. Interior work is ongoing at Sunshine Mill. The Foley is making progress on repairs. The Dalles Inn is under new ownership, considering a very significant renovation and possible addition. There may also be some renovation at the old Post Office.

Staff will research signage and related costs.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 7:56 p.m.

Meeting conducted in a room in compliance with ADA standards.

Submitted by/
Paula Webb, Secretary
Community Development Department

SIGNED: 
Nancy A. Long, Chair

ATTEST: 
Paula Webb, Secretary
Community Development Department

GITCHELL BUILDING LIGHT PROJECTION PROJECT

URBAN RENEWAL FUNDING CONSIDERATION



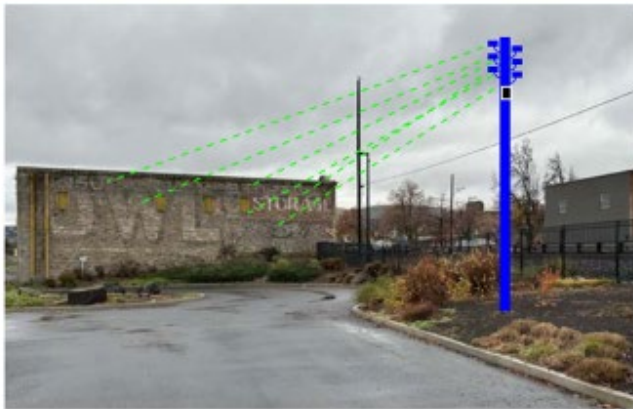
THE OLDEST COMMERCIAL BUILDING





CURRENT WEST FACE

INSTALLATION



Initial pole location mockup. 4 meters tall, pole mount attachments for 6x ROSCO ImageSpots.

- 4 M tall pole with six projectors
- Would cycle through the three layers of ghost signs:
 - The OWL Cigar sign
 - The red STORAGE sign
 - The black INSURANCE and STORAGE sign
- Would connect to the existing electrical line running through the landscaping for the street-side park lights

PERMANENT LIGHT FIXTURE

- Uses a custom re-designed ghost sign printed onto custom templates which are backlit to project the image onto the wall.

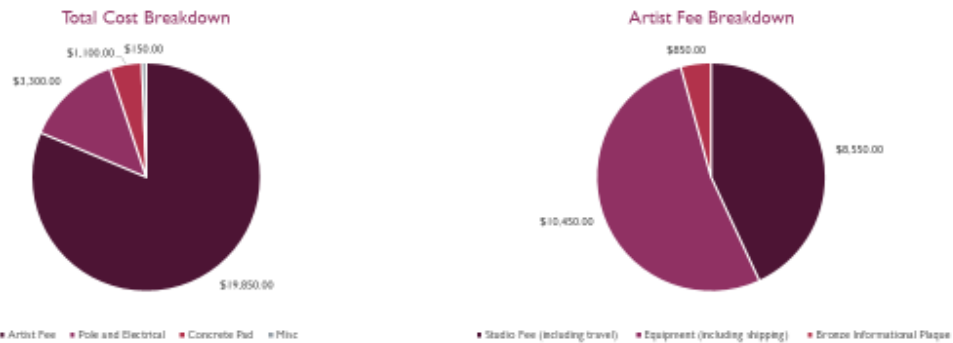


PERMANENT LIGHT FIXTURE

- Installation would bring the signs back to life in the dark, transforming it from what it is (below) to a brilliant display of what it had been (right)



FUNDING BREAKDOWN



TOTAL COST: \$24,400

BOARD ALTERNATIVES

- **Staff recommendation:** Move to authorize the Agency Manager to execute and implement the Gitchell Building Light Projector Project with Winslow Studio in an amount not to exceed \$24,400.00, as presented.
- Make modifications and then authorize the Agency Manager to execute and implement the Gitchell Building Light Projector Project with Winslow Studio, as amended.
- Decline authorization and provide other direction to staff.



QUESTIONS?