

**MINUTES**

**COLUMBIA GATEWAY URBAN RENEWAL AGENCY BOARD MEETING**

December 19, 2023

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:** Staci Coburn, Walter Denstedt, Scott Hege, Tim McGlothlin, Dan Richardson, Shanon Saldivar, Marcus Swift and Ben Wring
- BOARD ABSENT:** None
- 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**

It was moved by Coburn and seconded by Wring to approve the agenda as prepared. The motion carried 9/0; Baker, Coburn, Denstedt, Hege, Long, McGlothlin, Richardson, Saldivar and Wring voting in favor, none opposed.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

It was moved by McGlothlin and seconded by Richardson to approve the minutes of October 17, 2023 as submitted. The motion carried 8/0; Baker, Coburn, Denstedt, Long, McGlothlin, Richardson, Saldivar and Wring voting in favor, none opposed, Hege abstained.

Chair Long noted Scott Hege, Dan Richardson and Shanon Saldivar were absent at the November 21, 2023 meeting. All three Board Members were included in both the present and absent roll.

Board Member Saldivar noted she was absent, and did not vote in favor of the November 21, 2023 Agenda.

It was moved by Coburn and seconded by Denstedt to approve the minutes of November 21, 2023 as amended. The motion carried 7/0; Baker, Coburn, Denstedt, Long, McGlothlin, Saldivar and Wring voting in favor, none opposed, Hege and Richardson abstained.

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

Chair Long noted due to recent City Council “Zoom bombings,” participation/engagement rules have changed for online participation. Parties wishing to comment via Zoom should contact the CDD Secretary, Paula Webb, by noon of the meeting day.

*Richard Wolfe, 4752 Simonelli Road, The Dalles*

Mr. Wolfe spoke regarding the Federal Street Plaza project. Mr. Wolfe is in possession of bricks and glulams from the Tony’s Building. He has spoken with many community members, and compiled a survey (Attachment 1) of potential considerations for Federal Street between E. 1<sup>st</sup> and E. 2<sup>nd</sup> Streets. Mr. Wolfe is currently accepting responses.

Mr. Wolfe stated, “We are spending more money than we should be for projects for out of town people... I wish the Urban Renewal Board to consider my historic preservation intentions and consider me, as a community member, to oversee development concepts.”

**ACTION ITEMS**

Intergovernmental Development Agreement: City of The Dalles / Columbia Gateway Urban Renewal Agency – Parking Lot Development, 600 and 608 E. 3rd Street

Director Chandler presented the staff report.

Board Member Wring stated the last parking study determined there is adequate on-street parking. He asked how much surplus parking exists. Director Chandler replied there is a significant amount. The subject lots were not included in that study; it was a site-specific study for Basalt Commons. Director Chandler added a downtown parking assessment is tentatively scheduled for Spring, 2024.

Board Member Denstedt stated he is looking for projects to add to the tax rolls or complete existing projects. He added the Mid-Columbia Fire & Rescue Board Members are opposed to any use of Urban Renewal funds for a parking lot. Board Member Denstedt will vote to decline the project.

Board Member Swift asked if the Agency declined, would any of the funds go directly to the Fire District. Director Chandler replied, not directly.

Board Member Saldivar asked if any other locations were considered for parking. City Attorney Kara stated the City considered other lots. None of the other lots were as promising for development due to location and asking price.

Board Member Saldivar then asked if the seller is related to anyone working for the City or a prior grant recipient. Attorney Kara replied the seller was not.

Board Member Wring asked if there is adequate parking, potentially even a surplus, why we need additional parking in the downtown area. Director Chandler replied much of it is part of planning for the future. Efforts continue to redevelop our downtown. Many upstairs levels, suitable for residential units, remain vacant. Purchase of this parcel provides the City to land-bank this property.

Chair Long stated the City’s plan requires us to look 20 years forward; her preference is to look further. There is not a lot of available land downtown. Parking structures, while considered, are extremely expensive. Taking this opportunity now will set ourselves up for future development, when land is unavailable for on street or off-street parking. Hopefully, this will spur additional development that will increase the tax base.

Board Member Hege asked if the City had already purchased lots. City Attorney Kara replied City Council adopted a special ordinance at the November 27, 2023 meeting. The ordinance will take effect December 26, 2023, and authorizes the City Manager to sign an agreement, which will transfer title to the City once the deeds are recorded.

Board Member Hege was asked if, when the County moved to the GOBHI building, enough parking would be available for County employees. Board Member Hege replied the County has been researching parking alternatives, and thought they would be looking for City lots for a large portion of parking required by staff.

It was moved by Hege and seconded by Coburn to authorize the Agency Manager to execute an Intergovernmental Development Agreement with the City of The Dalles as presented. The motion carried 7/2; Baker, Coburn, Hege, Long, McGlothlin, Richardson, and Saldivar voting in favor, Denstedt and Wring opposed.

### **DISCUSSION ITEM**

#### **Agency Goals and Objectives – Urban Renewal Plan Review: Affirmation or modification of Columbia Gateway Urban Renewal Agency Goals and Objectives**

EDO Spatz requested the Board's guidance as we launch the next phase of updating the Urban Renewal Plan, thus setting guidance for the Agency going forward.

EDO Spatz provided the Agency mission statement:

*The mission of the urban renewal agency is to eliminate blight and depreciating property values within the agency's jurisdiction and in the process, attract aesthetically pleasing, job-producing private investments that will stabilize or increase property values and protect the area's historic places and values.*

EDO Spatz asked, "Has the Urban Renewal Agency achieved its purpose? What problems was it designed to address? Have those problems been resolved?" Board responses follow.

- Our goals were to reduce blight, increase tax values, and assist agencies temporarily forgoing their tax revenue. The Agency has been moving toward that, much more rapidly in recent years.
- Concur largely with earlier comments. Progress has been made.
- Suggest we are better off for Sunshine Mill's prosperous operation, in part an Urban Renewal subsidized project. Also, redevelopment and occupation of the Recreation building and the Granada Theatre. We need to keep working and trying to make improvements and upgrades. It would be interesting to see a story map or report of completed Urban Renewal projects.
- The east side of town will be our next development, especially with the buildings being marketed and sold, a lot of potential in that. The City has changed in the last 50 years. At one time, it was Mode O' Day, clothing stores, two drugstores; those are all gone. What have we replaced them with? That is where the Agency can help guide development, to make it prosperous and vital. The underpass was a sizeable move to open the downtown corridor. Lewis & Clark Festival Park is growing in popularity and use.

- One goal is to increase the tax base. Beautification of the City is a high priority. Everyone wants to live in an attractive, safe environment. The decreased mean income of the community threatens further deterioration.
- Many problems have been addressed. In the past 10-15 years, how have these problems changed? What issues are we faced with now, and how will they be addressed?

EDO Spatz read the Agency's goals and objectives, then requested comment.

A. *To make strategic investments of urban renewal funds and engage in various urban renewal activities which increase the value of properties within the Urban Renewal District.*

- These goals are the core of Urban Renewal, our focus.
- Agreed.
- This is taking the next step to increase property values and tax revenues.

B. *To make strategic investments of urban renewal funds so that unused and underused properties can be placed in productive condition and utilized in a manner consistent with the City's Comprehensive Plan and implementing ordinances.*

- Some activities may not necessarily increase the tax base. Item A. states specifically, "...increase the value of properties..." A second step could be to place something unused or underused in productive condition, i.e., a parking lot, though it will not necessarily add to the tax base.
- I would hope we are not doing that just to gain a parking lot. I hope that is done to entice business, and make life easier for businesses that are generating revenue.
- Perhaps this should have a clarifying sentence added.

EDO Spatz added staff would return with a revision. If the Board approves, this will go forward to City Council.

C. *To participate by means of various urban renewal activities (e.g., land acquisition and disposition, rehabilitation loans, etc.) in specific opportunities for business, civic, residential, cultural, and tourist-related property to be developed, redeveloped, improved, rehabilitated and conserved in ways which will:*

1. *Encourage the expansion and development of businesses that will produce jobs for the people of The Dalles and Wasco County; or*
2. *Increase property values so that the area will contribute its fair share to the costs of public services, provided by the city, county, schools, community college, port and park and recreation district; or*
3. *Ensure a more attractive, functional and economically viable city; or*
4. *Conserve historically significant places and properties;*

- This is still relevant.
- Item C. 2. is redundant. Item A states, "...increase the value of properties..." In my opinion, Item 4 could be dropped. As local government, we need to be responsive to needs and concerns, but we have 16 goals – rather a lot for an Agency.

- Understanding historical places are important, when I read this I struggle to make the connection between Urban Renewal and historically significant places and properties [Item C.4.]. This seems a bit out of place.
- We are not spending urban renewal money to conserve historical places; we could probably lose that one.
- I agree it may be redundant, but it is more specific to me than the previous goal; I like that. Also, we name everyone except the fire district. The fire district has increased costs to enable public services. We should add it, unless we eliminate Item 2.
- This document needs to be the version of Urban Renewal intentions for dummies, so future Board Members do not need to reinterpret the goals.
- It may be easier to list the things we are unable to do, rather than define all the things we can, and want, to do.
- Staff needs goals and objectives to determine success. If necessary, the Board should work to provide clear expectations.

EDO Spatz stated program eligibility is a policy decision, and will be discussed in greater depth at a later meeting.

*D. To be responsive to the needs and the concerns of all people of the City of The Dalles in the details of amending and implementing the Urban Renewal Plan using multiple forms of outreach including: town hall meetings, the internet, news releases, and signs on projects; and*

*E. To encourage the maximum amount of public involvement and citizen participation in the formation and implementation of the Urban Renewal Plan by explaining and discussing the details of the Urban Renewal process:*

- 1. To the public at town hall type gatherings;*
- 2. To special interest groups, public service organizations, public bodies and the general public by invitation to Agency meetings;*
- 3. By issuing periodic news releases;*
- 4. By cooperating with the print and electronic news media by being available to discuss the Urban Renewal Plan and process;*
- 5. By use of the Internet;*

- It appears Items D and E are closely related; they could be merged into one.
- Agreed; this is still a valuable component. For many in the community, the deciding factors behind Urban Renewal projects are unclear. Success is difficult to measure. The more we communicate what we are doing, and why we do these things, cannot be communicated enough.
- We need to be more proactive in sharing the vision, success and challenges to eliminate the myths, build trust, and provide the opportunity for the community to be heard. I would like to see the Agency become more aggressive in lobbying officials at the state and federal level to ensure we receive all the grant money and funding we can.

- Agreed. The Agency should evangelize the good things that have happened. It's too easy for people to focus on negativity or the rumor mill. The Agency should identify a venue to share successes and receive community input.
- This is the perfect candidate for a story map with a geographic format.

EDO Spatz stated Staff will work on Items D and E, and return with a draft in January.

*F. To provide an adequate amount of properly located and designed off-street parking, including disabled parking, in the downtown area, including a plan and program to effectively pay for, manage and maintain such parking;*

- After tonight's investment, we can declare victory on the parking.
- Change "disabled" to ADA accessible.
- Update the term but retain the goal.

*G. To create positive linkages among the two sectors of the Urban Renewal Area - i.e., the Downtown and the West Gateway Area;*

- No longer relevant.
- Let it go.
- Before the change in geographic area, this made more sense.

Director Chandler clarified, stating the west end of Second Street is still within the district.

*H. To cooperate, coordinate and assist in funding with the program to improve access and connections from downtown to the Riverfront and to provide facilities, such as trails and a public dock, to enhance public use of the Riverfront;*

- This goal would support enhanced public use of the Riverfront; keep.

*I. To improve the visual appearance, capacity, and traffic flow of streets that carry the major share of vehicular and pedestrian traffic in areas where development would otherwise be inhibited;*

- Cut this one; we have other agencies that focus on that. The original mission does not support that.
- Are the trees, matching lighting and benches covered somewhere else?  
EDO Spatz replied, "Yes, in Item K."
- It seems we could cut this without an issue.

Director Chandler noted the Agency could have referenced Goal I for the roundabout, Second Street Streetscape, the I-84 underpass, and First Street project.

- It is now outdated.
- This is an opportunity to declare victory in an honest way. We did the work.
- Consensus was to delete Item I.

- J. *To assist property owners in the rehabilitation of their buildings and property to the extent that it helps implement the intent of redevelopment goals, policies, and standards, especially where rehabilitation may spur additional redevelopment activity;*
- Look at the Neon Sign Museum/Elks Building, and the development that has transpired due to Agency investment. In my opinion Item J should stand.
- K. *To install and maintain coordinated street furniture, night lighting and landscaping in areas of maximum pedestrian concentration; including alley rights-of-way in the Downtown area;*
- Retain.
  - There are more opportunities there.
- L. *In conjunction with specific urban renewal development or redevelopment projects, supplement existing funding sources to construct, install or replace publicly owned utility systems such as water, storm drains, and sanitary sewers where existing facilities are inadequate, undersized or otherwise substandard; and*
- This needs to be more specific. Is the intent to help with SDC offsets? The way it reads, it suggests the Agency is tied in with Public Works.  
EDO Spatz there was infrastructure associated with the Second Street reconstruction and possible redevelopment of Third Street. First Street is now under way.  
Director Chandler did not think it would cover SDCs, but it could be added.
  - The Agency is now down to \$6 million; any one of these projects could deplete funds. Maybe it is time to let this one go.  
EDO Spatz said to keep in mind the blending of different funding sources, not relying heavily on urban renewal, but considering urban renewal as a component. In the future, if the Agency were to continue, and there were to be a new district on the west side, there will be a great need. Spatz encouraged retaining the goal, perhaps with modification.
  - It would be important to keep this for future residential needs.  
Director Chandler added if this goal is removed and a new district is established, the Agency would be unable to fund a new streetscape. These goals and objectives are for the entire Agency, not just one district.
  - Please strike my previous comments, retain this goal.
- M. *To leverage the Agency's financial resources to the maximum extent possible with other public and private investments and other public and private funding sources.*
- Consider making the Agency a partner in securing additional funding.  
EDO Spatz suggested the addition of, "...actively advocating in partnership with other agencies and organizations..." or something similar.
- N. *To install underground utilities in areas of urban renewal projects including alley rights-of-way in the downtown area.*
- Strike the specific "downtown area."

- Combine Item N with Item L.

Board consensus agreed to consolidate the two items.

City Attorney Kara asked Director Chandler if the Agency had supported Item N in recent years. Chandler replied the City completed a feasibility study on undergrounding utilities; he did not believe the Agency had.

Chair Long added this was part of the original consideration of the Basalt Commons, before it finalized into its current state. Also, for QLife, it was suggested the Agency pay a portion.

Board Member Coburn suggested grouping the goals in a major topic area.

EDO Spatz invited suggestions for additional goals.

Board Member Wring suggested the addition of advocating for a search into potential revenue sources. Director Chandler replied this may be a task for Staff.

Chair Long asked if this would be to bring funding into the Agency and distribute it as Agency funding, or would this be to assist projects in securing additional funding to complete their projects.

Board Member Wring replied, if there is a grant that fits the goals and objectives of the Agency, is it appropriate to bring it into a budget line item or leave this to other organizations like Main Street.

EDO Spatz replied the Agency should never close the door on grant opportunities. We are looking all the time, collaborating with Main Street, the City, and other organizations out there.

Chair Long stated grants typically are not general enough to be added in the Agency budget, but helping applicants with their projects, absolutely. Help applicants secure funding to complete their projects.

Director Chandler added the Mill Creek Greenway is a perfect example of that process.

EDO Spatz encouraged the Board to make additional suggestions in the coming weeks. Director Chandler stated suggestions could be made, and goals revised or removed, at the next meeting.

Director Chandler revisited Goal I. Regarding "improving the visual appearance, capacity, and traffic flow of streets," the First Street project is still ongoing. Cost escalations have significantly affected the project. Agency Staff will return requesting additional funds not already budgeted. Construction of a retaining wall has increased 300% in cost. Chandler urged retention of Goal I until First Street is complete.

EDO Spatz stated Staff has been working with consultants regarding the Agency's remaining Maximum Indebtedness (MI). Contingent upon the Finance Director's review, a close estimate of remaining maximum debt between now and 2029 is \$6,253,756. This is the remaining debt from the original authorization, approximately \$29 million.

Spatz added, while no fiscal impacts directly arise from any modification to goals and objectives of the Plan, there will be significant implications as the Agency identifies projects through which goals and objectives will be implemented. This discussion will be addressed in January or February.

He continued, the intent in reviewing and, if needed, modifying goals and objectives is to provide Agency direction in achieving MI by 2029. The Board could direct Staff to identify a



selected number of relatively large investments that would, in combination with existing and anticipated known commitments, fully commit MI by 2029. Alternatively, the Board could direct Staff to place priority upon opportunities that may arise in the coming four or five years, but which have not yet been identified or even envisioned, or a combination of both.

EDO Spatz asked the Board to consider those two questions. Any comments now would be welcome.

Board Member Richardson proposed a hybrid approach – identify a few key things, such as First Street, the Tony’s site, and the plaza or town square idea. Use the remaining funds for opportunities that arise.

Chair Long also supported a hybrid approach.

Chair Long invited comment from the audience.

Richard Wolfe, 4752 Simonelli Road, The Dalles

Mr. Wolfe said there is definite interest in the signage used on the property at 600 E. Third Street.

**BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS / QUESTIONS**

Board Member Swift thanked Staff for providing background on Urban Renewal.

Board Member Denstedt requested a meeting for Staff to further explain Urban Renewal.

Board Member Wring also thanked Staff for a better understanding of the Agency.

Chair Long thanked the Board for their review, thoughtfulness and contributions.

**STAFF COMMENTS / PROJECT UPDATES**

EDO Spatz shared the following information.

The next meeting will be held on January 30, not January 16. This change is driven by scheduling with the consultants.

In response to previous discussions, Staff is requesting quotes and exploring signage to reflect the Agency’s accomplishments.

The Recreation building is on track for a Certificate of Occupancy by March.

Michael Leash (Oak Hotel, now known as Sigman’s) is working with the Main Street Board on grant reporting. Urban Renewal could supplement their \$200,000 grant.

Director Chandler added repairs are underway at the Foley Building, E. 4<sup>th</sup> Street, to level a leaning pillar. The Incentive Program funded this project.

The Tony’s site will be fenced by the end of this year.

Staff is working with local sign experts to repurpose the sign at 600 E. Third Street.

Director Chandler, as Agency Manager, will waive conflict of interest for City Attorney Kara while representing both the City and Agency in a new Intergovernmental Agreement with the City and Northern Wasco County Parks and Recreation. This for disbursement of SDC funds within the Incentive Program. The Agency has committed \$855,000 for SDCs; funds will be disbursed to the developer at the time of building permit approval. This will ensure a mechanism is in place for the Agency to recoup funds if the project is not completed.

**ADJOURNMENT**

Being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 7:33 p.m.

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*Meeting conducted in a room in compliance with ADA standards.*

Submitted by/  
Paula Webb, Secretary  
Community Development Department

SIGNED:   
Darcy Long, Chair

ATTEST:   
Paula Webb, Secretary  
Community Development Department