

Minutes
Railroad TIF Advisory Board Meeting
August 18, 2022, 10:00 a.m.
Held via Zoom Virtual Platform

Board Members Present:

(*Chair*) Max Pigman, L&C Brewery
(*Vice Chair*) Rose Casey, 6th Ward Neighbor
Anne Pichette, MBAC
Jon Iverson, Property Owner

City Staff Present:

Ellie Ray, City Planner II & Grants Coordinator
April Sparks, Administrative Assistant III
Chris Brink, Community Development Director

Members of the Board Absent:

Bruce Day, Helena Food Share
Janelle Mickelson, School District

Public in Attendance:

HCTV
Jackie Mohler
Ray Kuntz
Brad Koon

Call to Order & Staff Introduction:

(0:00:02) Meeting was called to order.

Minutes from Last Meetings:

(0:00:56) Minutes from May 19 and June 16, 2022 were approved.

Budget Report

(0:01:19) Ms. Ray presented the current budget report.

Discussion Topics

• **Ray Kuntz and Family Outreach 6th Ward Parking Application**

(0:03:08) Mr. Pigman introduced the application coming before the Board and invited the applicants to address the Board. Ray, Kuntz, of Ray Kuntz Development LLC, spoke about the timing of the proposed project and the estimated cost. Brad Koon, of Triple Tree Engineering, then spoke about the particulars of the project design. Mr. Kuntz made mention of commissioning a sculpture for the project, as well as other public art projects in the area, and there was discussion about the sculpture that is being commissioned.

(0:11:48) Ms. Casey expressed her pleasure in seeing proposed parking in the gravel area behind the Family Outreach building. Mr. Pigman asked if the crosswalks will just be painted on the road surface or if there will be any lights or other signals. It was confirmed that it would just be painted on the road surface. Ms. Casey asked if lane changes leading to "Malfunction Junction" on Helena Avenue are being kept the same. Mr. Koon stated

he did not see anything changing there and it is currently a single lane in each direction and did not see that changing at this time. Ms. Casey asked Mr. Koon were with a city department. Mr. Koon stated that he is with Triple Tree Engineering and Consulting and helping Mr. Kuntz. Mr. Kuntz stated that while he has worked with Mr. Koon and Slate Architecture on this project, the Transportation Systems Department at the city has provided input into the project as well. Mr. Koon stated that the Transportation Systems Department had a lot of input into the planning for the project. Mr. Pigman asked aside from the proposed new sidewalk, are there any proposed improvements to existing sidewalks or ADA access. Mr. Koon stated that the only other place that sidewalks are being proposed is behind the proposed parking area behind the Family Outreach building. Mr. Pigman asked if enhanced lighting for pedestrian flow has been looked at in this project. Mr. Kuntz stated that lighting is not in the budget for the project. Mr. Pigman stated that enhanced lighting for pedestrians is something that should be looked at for the future. Mr. Kuntz asked if TIF funding available for lighting, as he was of the understanding that it was not. Mr. Pigman stated that he thought it would be an eligible project. Ms. Ray stated that lighting would be an eligible project but it would be a more involved project and elaborated on what would be needed to complete that project. Mr. Iverson stated that it is a long-term goal of his as well.

(0:18:44) Ms. Pichette asked if with the one-way off of Gallatin and the one-way into what is now the gravel parking behind Family Outreach how that will now be putting all that traffic on to Montana [Ave] after the intersection ["Malfunction Junction"] and if there will be widening of the alley and will it cause any traffic or safety issues that it will be putting so many people onto Montana right there or is it not an issue. Mr. Koon stated that a "Do Not Enter" sign would be placed there so people do not try to access it from Montana [Ave], with regard to traffic entering to Montana, that can be discussed more with the City Transportation Department. Ms. Pichette stated that she drove it yesterday and that her experience made her wonder if funds had been set aside to address safety concerns in that spot. Ms. Pichette also asked if any of the other businesses benefiting from the updated parking are also supporting this project financially or otherwise in case the board recommends funding less than what is being requested. Mr. Kuntz stated that he thinks a lot of traffic will turn right on Bozeman and go to Roberts to address the first question, and that they own the Vanilla Bean and Burdick's building along with the non-profits center building, the non-profits are in there on reduced rent and don't have much money. Mr. Kuntz stated this is the reason they are funding the project, and there is the possibility of other partners contributing. Ms. Pichette asked if Family Outreach was in the meeting, and Ms. Ray stated that Jackie Mohler was in the meeting, and that the organization had pledged match funds to the project. Ms. Pichette stated that she had saw that match in the application but was curious as to why others in the area had not contributed to the match.

(0:23:11) Ms. Ray pointed out an area on the proposed project that appears to be parkland, and that it is owned by private parties and the proposed sidewalk would be the owner's responsibility. Ms. Ray stated that she has recommended reaching out to the property owners as they need to be on board with the project, even if the owner is willing to cover 50% of the installation cost for the sidewalk, it is still legally under their care and some agreement needs to be made with them before this can proceed to City Commission for consideration. [Ms. Mohler via chat stated that Family Outreach is

dedicated to their portion of the match.] Ms. Ray noted that no matter the recommendation the Board makes to the City Commission, the issue of an agreement with the owners of that parcel needs to be resolved before this is taken to City Commission, and as the construction activities appear to be waiting until Spring there is still time to work with the property owners before taking this to City Commission. Mr. Kuntz stated he wasn't sure if he knew anyone had contact information for the owners. Ms. Casey stated that she has contact information and would reach out to the owners, and Mr. Kuntz stated that they need to really work with them on the snow removal arrangements. Ms. Casey stated that she would contact the owner and put Mr. Kuntz in contact with the owner. Ms. Casey also asked about how emergency snow removal would be handled with the new parking along Helena Ave. Ms. Ray stated that Transportation Systems were keen to see this proposal to narrow the driving surface on this road. Ms. Casey stated that a few years ago she had spoken to Family Outreach and they were quite frustrated that cars could not park in front of their building as it was an emergency snow removal day. Ms. Ray stated there is that and with Family Outreach creating parking spaces behind their building this will reduce or eliminate the conflict. Ms. Casey asked about the direction of traffic from the one-way parking area behind Family Outreach, and if a person could circle through and to the west side of the bus building and to the front of their parking lot so you wouldn't have to go to Montana. Mr. Koon stated he would look at it. Ms. Pichette stated once she did it, once you turn South [off Gallatin] it is one-way, and you must exit onto Montana as there is a fence [around the bus depot]. Ms. Casey stated she couldn't understand why a car couldn't turn around [and go back to Gallatin behind Family Outreach through the bus depot]. Ms. Ray stated that she did not think you would be able to make that turn, but that if you look at a map of that full structure, it continues west, and she is unsure of access through and that it could also create a conflict with the buses coming in and out of the depot. Mr. Koon confirmed that there is no other access to Montana. Ms. Casey stated she thought it is a wonderful plan.

(0:29:54) Mr. Pigman stated his thought that this is exactly why the TIF district was created and commended the work that has already been done in the area and the efforts of Mr. Kuntz to improve the district. Mr. Pigman reiterated his opinion that this project falls into the goals of the district, and for him parking is always an issue and parking in the neighborhood will be of benefit to everyone. [Ms. Mohler via chat stated that the parking below would greatly help on snow days.] Ms. Ray recommended to Mr. Pigman to assess the application against the application priority areas.

(0:32:18) Mr. Pigman started leading discussion of the application through the application priority areas. He noted that the project will encourage more businesses to move into the area which will increase the tax base to bring additional funds into the URD TIF, that there is nothing unusual about the cost, as well as that the match meets the ratio needed and it is likely going to be more difficult to getting people to invest that much into a project without an immediate economic return. It was also noted that the project would increase pedestrian flow with the new sidewalks and ADA improvements and improve traffic flow would contribute to safety in the area. There were not any historic preservation issues noted. Mr. Pigman stated that the plan does propose to utilizing some property in a more efficient manner than it is currently being used, both city and hopefully the previously mentioned private parcel. Traffic, sidewalks, and parking would

be better served with this project, and with more businesses potentially being attracted to the area, there would be more job opportunities. Mr. Pigman stated he thinks the project conforms with the goals for the area and for the TIF fund expenditures. Additionally, according to Mr. Pigman's evaluation there are a solid 7-8 of the priority areas that are included in this application and fortunately the TIF has the funds to do this project. Mr. Pigman acknowledged it would take a considerable amount of the available funds, the project can make an immediate impact, much like the last project approved.

(0:36:35) Mr. Kuntz stated that the thing that bothers him the most, is the safety issue in the area, and pedestrians trying to cross Helena Ave, is a big driver for them as the developer.

(0:37:38) Ms. Casey stated that this project will address a lot of current issues but paves the way for future development and considers it to be a great plan. Ms. Pichette agreed with the other Board members that the project is a good plan, looks nice, plans for more parking, and is well thought out to include future needs. Mr. Pigman also commended the developers for working with the city from the start of planning this project, as that makes the project work better and prevents major issues that will stop the project from going forward. Mr. Kuntz stated that they started the process by meeting with the Transportation Systems department and the project is overwhelmingly informed by that city department, and project plans follow almost all the direction from the city on how they want the area to be developed.

(0:39:39) Ms. Casey made a motion to approve of the project. Mr. Iverson seconded the motion. Mr. Pigman reminded the Board that this action would be to recommend this project to the City Commission and then they will make their decision, but he thinks this is a great project. Ms. Ray clarified, for the purposes for moving this forward, her understanding is that the Board is in favor of recommending approval of funding the request of \$133,033.80. All members present confirmed. Ms. Pichette asked if the motion needed to be changed about the section of sidewalk that is not a park. Ms. Ray thought that it was okay to not mention leaving that out of the motion. Mr. Kuntz stated that the cost of that sidewalk was included in the project cost, and they are working on getting the property owner's permission. Ms. Ray confirmed that it was included and that was approximately \$23,000. Mr. Koon said that part is approximately \$11,000.

(0:42:20) Mr. Pigman called for a vote. The motion passed unanimously. Mr. Kuntz asked Ms. Casey to set up a meeting with the owner of the parcel previously mentioned and she agreed.

- **Review of draft 2022 Railroad URD Work Plan**

(0:43:18) There was a brief discussion of postponing the discussion about the Workplan, but it was decided to complete the agenda. Ms. Ray took the Board through a review of the Workplan based upon the conversations about the prioritization matrix the Board members completed a few months before. Ms. Ray noted that one item on the workplan is the housing program, and while it was not ranked highly in the prioritization work, it is a priority of the City Commission,

and there is the set-aside that can be leveraged as gap financing with the Affordable Housing Trust Fund. Ms. Ray also noted that while infrastructure didn't rank highly during the exercise of reviewing the excel workbook [over the past few meetings] there had only been at most 3 members of the Board present each time, and overall, it was expressed as a priority by all 6 members of the Board. Transportation planning continues to be a priority and likely will until there is real movement on improvements to "Malfunction Junction". Historic façade and site improvements ranked highly, as well as marketing and branding, and the URD Planning Study Program was another that generally ranked highly with the Board, and as staff are currently in the process of initiating a Neighborhood Plan for the area that is part of the reason that this remains on the list as well, and interviews for consultants for this effort are happening soon. Ms. Ray stated to clarify process, if the Board recommends approval of this workplan it will move forward to the City Commission for approval. Mr. Pigman asked if the prioritization document or the workplan as the guideline as how it [applications] fits the requirements. Ms. Ray explained that the workplan is going to supersede the workplan from several years ago, and what the document outlines is what the Board feel are the most pressing to expend funding to when an application comes in, for example if multiple applications worthy of funding come in, the Board would still use the URD goals to evaluate all the applications, but the Board could then use the workplan to recommend applications that address the priorities identified in that document to above the applications that while still eligible do not address these priorities. Ms. Casey stated that there seemed to be a lot of interest in demolition or taking care of totally delapidated areas to prepare for [re-development] and could not see where that was included in the workplan, but it seemed like a priority. Ms. Ray showed a document of the priorities that had been ranked highest [in the prioritization exercise] and noted that it did not include an item for demolition. Ms. Ray also noted that it does not mean that demolition projects are not eligible. There was additional discussion about hypothetical applications related to demolition. Ms. Pichette wanted to clarify the intent of the workplan, by using the hypothetical situation of an application for a project such as the demolition of the Memorial Park Apartments and an application such as the one reviewed at this meeting, and that there is only a certain amount of money [not enough to fund them both], the Board would then have to use the workplan to decide which of the applications gets funding. Ms. Ray confirmed that is the purpose of the document, but that's not to say that you could not also recommend funding of a demolition project if there are funds available. Ms. Casey asked if there was a limit on the number of priorities that could be identified and could the Board think about it and add a few more. Ms. Ray stated that there is not a limit on the number of priorities. Mr. Pigman asked to see the workplan again. Ms. Ray stated that demolition or other activities that align with the goals and objectives of the URD can be brought forward to the Board and noted that applications can come before this Board at any time throughout the year unlike the Downtown TIF that set a semi-annual review schedule, which this Board could institute an application schedule if they would like. Ms. Casey reiterated that she would like something in the workplan that says, "to take care of blight". Ms. Ray stated that it could be added if the Board wants to. Mr. Pigman stated that it would be worth bringing back into the workplan. Consensus was to add demolition and blight back into the workplan. Ms. Casey made a motion to recommend approval [with the addition of demolition and blight]. Mr. Iverson seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Board Discussion

(0:56:54) Ms. Casey asked about the discussion about moving the time of the meeting. Ms. Ray stated that she believed that one other Board member had been amenable to moving it to 9:00 but there was one fast and hard no. Ms. Sparks confirmed that.

Public Comment:

(0:57:20) There was no public comment.

Next Meeting:

(0:57:30) The next meeting is scheduled for September 15, 2022, and there are currently no anticipated applications.

Adjournment:

(0:58:19) The meeting was adjourned.

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