

Wednesday May 19, 2021

6:30 pm

In-PERSON/VIRTUAL MEETING

Council Chambers, City Hall

MINUTES

1. Pledge of Allegiance
2. Roll Call

Present: Rob Marchant, Nate Salas, Dave Zimmerman,
Matt Zastrow, Chris Ruetten, Dan Bartz

Absent: Brad Kuenzi

3. Determination of Quorum and Call to Order
4. Approval of Minutes of Previous Meeting – April 14, 2021

There was a motion by Zastrow, seconded by Ruetten to approve the minutes of April 14, 2021 meeting. Motion carried 6-0.

5. Public Comment

Member of the public, Dan Rahfaldt, thanked the RDA for supporting his project on 117 N 2nd Street through the revolving loan program. Mr. Rahfaldt shared his opinion that the City's RFP for development on 1st street parking lot site is inhibiting downtown development, particularly as it relates to buildings on Main Street. He mentioned the need for maintaining that as parking in order to facilitate other projects downtown and requested the RDA discuss and see if anything could be done.

Mr. Marchant asked that a future agenda item be added to present background information to the RDA regarding the RFP for 1st street development.

6. Status reports
 - a. Community Support/Communication - Mueller
 - i. Town Square Art Project:

Installation of fence decorations will be taking place on May 27th and 28th, spearheaded by the Watertown Arts Council.

- ii. Tour of RDA website:

Jeanne offered to run through the RDA website if any members had an interest.

RDA STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

- 1) ~~400 W. Main St. block demolition, Town Square design etc., and publicizing town square project for possible funding from sources other than the City.~~
- 2) Facilitating quality development in downtown, and
- 3) Creating an approach and working to attract development projects downtown.

iii. Discussion on RDA booth at Watertown Chamber 100th Anniversary:

Jeanne was in contact with the Watertown Chamber of Commerce to see if the RDA could occupy a booth at the festival. Mr. Allon mentioned that there was concern regarding opening the RDA up to negative comments at the event. Mr. Salas expressed that having a presence at the celebration would provide the RDA an opportunity to clear up any misinformation and communicate the good work the RDA is performing. There was broad agreement among the other members. Mr. Allon will reach out to the Chamber to secure a booth.

b. Common Council update – Ruetten

District 5 has a new alder: Will Licht. There are only four active cases of Covid-19 right now. There is more vaccine than demand. 30% of the City is fully vaccinated. The City is negotiating with an appraisal company to perform appraisals next year.

c. Fundraising – Zimmerman

The Watertown Community Health Foundation is contributing \$300,000 toward Town Square construction, with \$50,000 desired to be allocated toward interactive learning features. Mr. Zimmerman met with an individual who had originally expressed interest in donating \$50,000 to the Town Square construction. The individual is now considering a donation of up to \$500,000 pending personal financial situation. The fundraising team is focusing on obtaining large private donations prior to undertaking a public crowd-fundraising campaign. The public campaign would take place closer to August. The fundraising team went through a list of donors and assigned outreach to members of the team.

d. Executive Director update – Allon
Town Square

Coordination between SmithGroup and TWall has been ongoing and has led to redesigns on the way the two sites interface. An additional survey was required along the banks of the town square in order to provide more accurate data for hydronic modeling. Trees and fence on site had to be removed and the bank had to be restabilized. The additional survey cost was \$3,000 while the additional bank stabilization costs were \$1200 for riprap and \$800 for other materials. The City performed labor free of charge. SmithGroup submitted application for Stewardship, Conservation and Rec. Trails grant in the amount of \$1.3 million. An audit was required for SAG grant award due to the disbursement being over \$100,000. The additional cost estimate for this was between \$3250 and \$4250.

Mr. Salas requested that Mr. Allon determine whether there were less expensive options for the audit than using Baker Tilly. Mr. Allon said he would also check with the City Clerk to see if there were any requisites for the type of auditors the municipality could use.

The Town Square qualifies for an environmental exemption because the properties acquired were deemed blighted. DNR representatives said that it was not required to have this determination in writing, but if the RDA wanted it, it would cost \$700. Sigma

group completed their site assessment for contaminants. Representatives from the DNR suggested it may be beneficial to perform further soil characterization to save costs in soil management and environmental capping during construction. Additional costs for phone and electrical line removal from ATT and We Energies came in at roughly \$62,000 and \$90,000 respectively. Mr. Allon discussed Town Square maintenance with the City Parks Department. They voiced concerns about trampled grass and areas of increased mud. They also voiced concern about the use of salt and how that would affect permeable pavers and the splash pad.

TWall

TWall is requesting an 8-9 foot easement along the north side of their building. They are refining this request based on drawings and CAD files provided by SmithGroup. TWall is projecting a break-ground date of March 2022 with a construction period of 12-13 months. The existing MOU will expire June 1. Mr. Allon requested approval to extend the MOU.

Mr. Salas made a motion to authorize Mr. Allon to finalize an MOU extension with TWall not to exceed 75 days past June 1. Mr. Marchant seconded. The motion passed 6-0.

Revolving Loan Fund

Monthly statements to borrowers are now being sent out.

Misti Hawn is requesting funds through the revolving loan program to remove siding, repair brick as needed, paint and reinstall windows for her property on 415 E Main. Ms. Hawn submitted an application and estimates the repairs to be between \$25,000 and \$32,000 based on last year's estimates.

f. Presentation – SmithGroup: Project Update, Phase 2 engineering, Main Sign Design.

- i. **Discussion and potential decision:** Authorization of SmithGroup for Phase Two engineering.

Mr. Zastrow motioned to authorize SmithGroup for Phase Two engineering, seconded by Mr. Ruetten. Motion passed 6-0.

- ii. **Discussion and potential decision:** Finalization of Main Sign Design.

Mr. Salas motioned to approve adopting option B from SmithGroup presentation with the addition of black lettering and incorporation of Watertown Brick. Roll call vote ensued. Salas – Aye; Zastrow – Aye; Zimmerman – Aye; Bartz – Aye; Ruetten – Nay; Marchant – Nay. Motion passed 4-2.

7. **Review/Approve:** April financial reports.

Zastrow motioned to approve the April financial reports, seconded by Zimmerman. Motion passed 6-0.

8. Future possible agenda items. – none.
9. Next meeting date and time. – June 24, 2021, 6:30pm
10. Adjournment. – There was a motion by Zimmerman, seconded by Marchant to adjourn.