

**HIGHLAND REDEVELOPMENT COMMISSION
SPECIAL STUDY SESSION MINUTES
WEDNESDAY, August 24, 2016**

Members of the Highland Redevelopment Commission (“RC”, “Commission”) met on Wednesday, August 24, 2016, at 6:08 PM in the Upper Conference Room within the Municipal Building at 3333 Ridge Road, Highland, Indiana. President Greg Kuzmar called the meeting to order. Minutes were prepared by Cecile Petro, Redevelopment Director.

ROLL CALL: Commissioners present included Greg Kuzmar, Bill Leep, Ed Dabrowski, Dominic Noce, and Kathy DeGuilio-Fox. Also present included Attorney Carol Green-Fraley, Town Councilman Bernie Zemen, and Redevelopment Director Cecile Petro.

General Substance of the Discussion

1. **Eminent Domain**
Attorney Green-Fraley reviewed her document which outlined the steps of the eminent domain process in Indiana. She cautioned that this document was a summary outline and not intended to be relied upon for purposes of legal analysis. The six major steps are: 1) appraisals, 2) preliminary negotiations with property owners, landlords and tenants, 3) informal offer, 4) negotiations, 5) order of Town Council to proceed with formal condemnation process, and 6) relocation assistance for property owners and tenants under existing leases. She added that there are many sub-steps under the condemnation process. Discussion ensued.
2. **8616-8618 Kennedy (Town Theatre)**
President Kuzmar updated the Commission on the status of the architectural plans for the theatre. Conversations with the Morris Architects Planners are on-going regarding the second phase of the draft plan to resolve design issues. When the final draft of phase II is completed with the cost of work, the Commission will review and determine whether to go to phase III. That phase will include blueprints for the renovation and the bidding process.
3. **8630 Kennedy Avenue**
4. The Commission has not been informed if new owners have closed on the property.
5. **8620 Kennedy Avenue**
Attorney Green-Fraley stated that the owners of 8620 Kennedy Avenue are now represented by an attorney. He has requested and received the two Redevelopment Commission appraisals.
6. **8608 Kennedy Avenue**
Two appraisals are being conducted on the property.
7. **2711 & 2717 Condit Street**
Attorney Green-Fraley indicated that she has made two telephone calls and left messages for the owner. In addition, her office has received the certified letter’s returned receipt, demonstrating that the owners received the certified letter which provided a counter-offer for the property.
8. **Façade Improvement Grant for 2911 Jewett Street**
Commissioners discussed a possible Façade Improvement Grant for 2911 Jewett Street (Stirling Dental Laboratory, Inc.) owned by Mr. Cary Stirling. The Commission was concerned that the proposed façade looked more like maintenance and did not rise to the level of the intent of the program. The façade grant was started to improve the assessed value of buildings in the downtown and to make major improvements on the façade utilizing natural, sustainable materials.

They suggested that the Director speak with the owner and ask him to reconsider his project by reviewing the design standards.

9. **New Mural and Sculptural Walk Project**

A new mural will be painted on the Redevelopment Commission's building located at 2821 Jewett Street (south side of building). A committee from Highland Main Street and President Greg Kuzmar reviewed designs with these objectives: family friendly, non-controversial, colorful, and artistic. Liz Mares, an artist from Highland, was chosen for her abstract design. The mural was funded in part by a \$500 grant from Legacy Foundation. The Commission has offered \$400 for paint and the Public Works Department will provide in-kind services such as cleaning and prepping the masonry wall.

Solicitations have been sent out to the Northwest Indiana and Chicagoland areas for the first sculpture for the Art and Sculptural Walk project. Sculptors retain ownership of their art, but agree to display it for two years. A \$500 grant from the Northwest Indiana Forum will be given to the sculptor. The Commission will provide the pad or foundation for the art piece.

10. **Draft 2017 Commission Budget**

Commissioners reviewed the proposed 2017 budget. The Director stated that most line items remain the same, some have been reduced, and insurance has increased. She also stated that she is seeking to increase the number of working hours for her assistant. The Commission will discuss this issue further at their next meeting.

11. **Indianapolis Boulevard and Main Street**

The Director informed the Commission that the potential development within the northwest quadrant of Indianapolis Boulevard and Main Street continues to move forward. The developer will be presenting his concept at the next meeting of the Plan Commission for their initial review and comment.

12. **Highland Rookery**

A ribbon cutting ceremony will take place for the Highland Rookery on September 28, 2016 at 6:00 PM to unveil the new paved trail and parking lot for the Rookery. The public is invited to attend. The Commission will resume its Study Session in the Town Hall following the event.

13. **Housing Study**

This topic will be taken up at the next meeting.

14. **Maintenance Checklist**

This topic will be taken up at the next meeting.

15. **Updates on Highland Redevelopment**

The Director provided information on several possible developments.

Discussion ended at 8:35 PM