

## HIGHLAND REDEVELOPMENT COMMISSION

### PLENARY BUSINESS MEETING MINUTES

MONDAY OCTOBER 21ST, 2024

The Highland Redevelopment Commission (“Commission”, “RC”) met in person at Town Hall on Monday October 21st, 2024. The regular scheduled plenary business meeting was called to order at 6:00 P.M. by President, George Georgeff

**Roll Call:** Commissioners Phil Scheeringa, Commissioner Tom Black, Commissioner Alex Robertson, Commissioner Georgeff and Pat Krull, Non-Voting Member/School Board Representative were present in person at Town Hall. Commissioner Doug Turich was excused.

**Additional Officials Present:** Maria Becerra, Redevelopment Director, Attorney Reed, Kendra Hernandez, Redevelopment Assistant

**Also Present:** Several people were present from the public.

**Public Comment:** 1 comment was made by a member of the public

**Approval of the Minutes :** 9-16-2024, 10-7-2024, Minutes were approved. All in Favor 4-0

**New Business:** None

**Old Business: Expansion Final Draft -Dan Botich Resolution- 2024-21** a declaratory resolution for the expansion of the Highland Consolidated Redevelopment area for the Kennedy Avenue South sub Area expansion in general. It is the property within the town of Highland.

It's west of Kennedy Avenue, north of Main Street, south of the Grand Trunk Railroad, and east of the Norfolk Southern Railroad tracks, but it also includes a stem just on the west side of the Norfolk Southern Railroad tracks, and a property south of the Grand Trunk. That is currently a detention pond. Retention Pond is about 7 acres that currently provides very little taxes. It's meant for holding water, and it's privately owned.

There is an opportunity to acquire that through a willing buyer, willing seller and have that be a town retention center. It would amend the redevelopment plan for the Highland Consolidated Redevelopment area. What you have attached is the final plan. The only difference from what you received last week was, the information in the budget.

It's to approve the allocation provision for the Kennedy Avenue South sub area of expansion as the Kennedy Avenue South sub area expansion allocation area, and then merge that allocation area with the Highland Consolidated area and to expand the Allocation Area Fund to include both because by statute you have to have a separate allocation fund set up whenever you establish or designate an allocation area.

Now it's taking the fund and merging it with the Highland Consolidated Allocation Fund and this is what you did last fall with merging both allocation areas. You're just taking this area and merging it all together into one that is before you. The evening as a declaratory in general by definition and statute.

If approved, it would go to the Plan Commission. The Plan Commission takes advisory recommendation to the town Council, as the plan is within the official planning documents of the town. If that written order is approved, it then goes to the town Council for their consideration, because the Plan Commission is only advisory. The Town Council has to approve that, within the official plans of the city. Once that the Town Council takes its action, The Redevelopment Commission may then schedule a public hearing for a subsequent meeting.

At that time a public hearing would be held and property owners within the allocation area and redevelopment plan. Any individuals identified on the property acquisition list, which is only the detention pond. Again, it's not under eminent domain. It's just willing buyer, willing seller statute, says it has to be on that list in order to be purchased for that purpose.

A tax impact would have been sent to the overlapping taxing units being the schools, the township, the library, the county, any special taxing districts within and under the city's tax levy at that point. Once the public hearing is completed and closed. The Redevelopment Commission may consider a confirmatory resolution just for the purposes of understanding. Nothing is complete until the redevelopment plan and the amendment in this amending declaratory is confirmed.

In essence, you're just declaring this to initiate the process for further public input a couple of things of note to take into consideration is the allocation provision. Because, if approved today, the statute is that the base assessment date would be the previous assessment date. That would be January 1st 2024 is the base assessment date.

It would establish once again the Kennedy Avenue South sub area sub Allocation Area Allocation Fund, and then merge that into the Consolidated.

Commissioner Scheeringa asked about the tax impact

Mr. Botich said he has done a preliminary tax impact on the project itself. The investment as far as public investment. It's anticipated to be about 1.5 million dollars potentially, and the under-exhibit A for the budget. It does go into detail of potential cost that does. It is a fluid budget document meaning that we've identified public utilities, other public improvements right away, demolition surveying environmental testing, wetland mitigation and additional site preparation work and that would lead potentially to know that could also be done by the private investor. The assumption is they would pick up that cost. But we do have to identify as a public investment the private investment and potential light industrial facilities would be about 20 million dollars. Commercial office structure investments would be another additional 12.5 million. That's 30 totals of 32.5 million. For every dollar of private investment there would be 95 cents of private investment for every dollar, which is a good leverage. Perspective state usually considers one to 7. This is one to 95. As far as the tax impact the impact itself to the county would be to all. The overlapping taxing units would be prepared after the Town Council takes action on the official plan. and then that is sent out to all the overlapping units and the fiscal officers of those overlapping units.

But I can tell you one of the biggest questions, and it was brought up today. What is the tax impact to the schools? Since the schools are no longer have a general fund tax levy. There is no impact to the schools. There is no cumulative fund. I'm sorry, since the schools no longer have a Qm fund. There is no tax impact to the schools.

The assessed value would be captured over a potential period of time. Whether that's 10,15 or 20 years. If there were bonds issued. the matter of any tax impact would be formally prepared before that public hearing and sent but the schools are not impacted.

Commissioner Black stated what I'm understanding this, if we adopted this declaratory resolution tonight, that would just start the process. Nothing would take place until after the Council approves it, which would be again. This could take a year. This could take quite some time.

Typically, the process takes a normal meeting period time anywhere from 2 and a half to 4 months to get through the planning commission. The Town Council would schedule a public hearing that commission to take their action. I can tell you that in some instances redevelopment commissions the starting, the approval process they will go through the entire process through the public hearing, and in some instances hold off on the confirmatory until such time that they can use that in negotiating purposes, because until it's confirmed. Technically, you don't have a redevelopment plan or redevelopment area.

Commissioner Robertson moved to adopt Resolution 2024-21 seconded by Commissioner Black All in Favor 4-0.

**Resolution 2024-22** - Northwest Indiana Parkinson's additional appropriations – Commissioner Georgeff stated in addition to the grant that was provide it to them. It'll increase the town's contribution by \$12,415. It'll still keep their total under the \$40,000 limit. It'll put it at \$32,933.50 and before we take any action on this, I had asked Don Nagdeman and Elizabeth Woodbury, if they would attend and like to say a few words.

Don Nagdeman is the Vice President of Northwest Indiana Parkinson's, stated the only reason that we are bringing this forward right now is because we have a roofing problem in the middle of the winter and it's been like clockwork? The last 4 winters is managed to raise the roof when it freezes and then melts down, and the water comes into the upper area of our second floor, literally dilapidating everything that's around it. We would like to get the work done before the first freeze happens.

Commissioner Georgeff stated, this money is not paying for the entire costs. It's just a small percentage of that.

Commissioner Georgeff asked do you have residents or participants in your programs there on Jewett Street that live in Highland?

Mr. Nagdeman stated he lives in Munster but practically lives at the building and there are several participants that live in Highland and they pay taxes.

Commissioner Robertson stated part of this program is to assist with redeveloping older buildings downtown. So, I assume, then, that a project like this would at least raise the assessed value. So, there's some tax impact there.

Attorney Reed then stated no, because the building is exempt the only money that it pays toward governmental entities is, it pays a little Cal fee \$180 a year, and it pays the Highlands storm water fee other than that. It is not taxable because it's a 501C.3 charitable organization., it doesn't unless they elect to, or if the assessor's office challenges the reason for the exemption which in this circumstance I highly doubt. This is not a for-profit organization, right? when they determine the value of the town, that particular assessment of that property is not taken. I mean the assessment might go up. But it's still going to 0 for taxes.

Commissioner Georgeff stated the total assessed value would go up but the tax on it would not be paid.

Attorney Reed then stated it doesn't matter if it's a million or 10 million. It's still going to pay. However, they do provide services to our residents that do live in town.

Commissioner Black moved to adopt Resolution 2024-22 seconded by Commissioner Scheeringa. 3 in Favor 2- abstained

**Communications:** None

**Action to Pay Account Payable Vouchers \$262,985.18** Motion made by Commissioner Scheeringa seconded by Commissioner Robertson. Motion approved 4 to 0.

**Adjournment:** Meeting was adjourned by President Georgeff at 6:22 PM.

**DULY PASSED AND RESOLVED** by the Highland Redevelopment Commission, Highland, Lake County, Indiana, this 18 day of 2024, having passed by a vote 4 in favor and 0 opposed.

Highland Redevelopment Commission

  
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President

ATTEST:   
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Secretary