

HIGHLAND REDEVELOPMENT COMMISSION

STUDY SESSION MINUTES

MONDAY APRIL 14TH, 2025

The Highland Redevelopment Commission ("Commission", "RC") met in person at Town Hall on Monday April 14th, 2025. The regular scheduled study session meeting was called to order at 6:00 P.M. by President, Alex Robertson.

Roll Call: Commissioners Phil Scheeringa, Commissioner Tom Black, Commissioner George Georgeff and Commissioner Alex Robertson were present in person at Town Hall). Commissioner Doug Turich and Patrick Krull (non -voting) was excused.

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

Also Present: Several people were present from the public.

New Business: Main Square Fence Bid Presentation by Derek Snyder of Nies Engineering

Derek Snyder from NIES Eng. spoke So last Thursday we opened bids for the fence project that Main Square Park. We got a total of 3 bids. Our estimate was about \$696,000. The bids range from \$593,000 to \$817,000. So 2 were under the estimate ones above . There were no errors in any of the bids, so everyone had the proper documentation and the lowest, lowest bid is about 14% lower than our estimate. And that's Gariup Construction Company. I reviewed all information. Everything looks good. We recommend awarding it to them and the completion time for this project is 50 calendar days. So if it gets awarded tonight, we send it tomorrow to Gariup. They've got 7 days to get their bonds, insurance, everything in order, and then we got 7 days after that to execute it but we want to try to shorten that as much as possible and once that's all that works done you'd be able to get those proceed. And that starts the 50-day clock and so the intent is that that 50 days are down in the middle of June. So it'd be ahead of the 4th of July festival.

Attorney Reed asked Is that including the 7 and 7 days, to get his bonds in order ?

Derek answered yes

Commissioner Georgeff asked Your estimates for disposing of the trees was that based upon the bid the town bids from our town bids that we use ?

Derek answered no, and if you tried to do that, you kind of piecemeal things together. So just for this contract. So it's all on the contractor to provide everything. We had them give prices for each of these. so their prices are reasonable for the trees. They had 12-inch trees, \$500, 18-inch trees, \$750, but the big one's a 42-inch tree, and that's \$4500 and all of those are under our estimated cost.

Commissioner Robertson asked Any other questions I do know anybody else.

Commissioner Robertson then asked I've got a couple of questions. since this is being brought before the Redevelopment Commission to fund the project after it's all complete. I expect there would be some sort of maintenance activities at some point down the road. Will that be handled by Parks Department?

Alex Brown from the Parks Department stated Yes, since it's going to the park, it'll become our property.

Commissioner Robertson then went on to state So it's no secret that I am opposed to redevelopment funding this and a question I want to raise to the Commission when we're spending redevelopment money. The funds, especially when you go outside of an allocation area, are supposed to directly benefit the allocation area or create and retain jobs in the private sector. Obviously the fence is not going to create or retain jobs. I personally think it's a stretch to say that this project would directly benefit the allocation area but it's definitely highly subjective, the way it's written. I don't know if you guys had any thoughts on that or even that consideration.

Commissioner Georgeff stated I think the Redevelopment Commission funds. It's not direct directly benefit the Allocation districts. I think the way it's worded, if it benefits the entire community, and I would say a park would be a benefit to the entire community.

Commissioner Black stated also the lighting project. We've done downtown benefits the downtown and residents redevelopment paid for that. So I think this project is along similar lines.

Commissioner Robertson stated right and that lighting project was within the allocation area. And asked Maria if this was correct.

Maria stated Yes.

Commissioner Robertson added that the park is just outside the allocation agreement.

Commissioner Black asked isn't the park in the redrawn, allocation area.

Maris answered it abuts it, it's right where the park starts.

Attorney Reed added it is extra territorial.

Commissioner Scheeringa stated I mean isn't that what it states it has to be abutted to the allocation area actually,

Attorney Reed I don't think so. I think what it says is. if it's not, if the funds from redevelopment aren't used within the allocation area. There're those 2 qualifications. The 1st one is very subjective. It says, if you know your position is that it will help entice development in the town, make town a better place, and draw people and developers in Then you can use redevelopment funds for that, not for the maintenance, once it's built, but but that's what's subjective about it, that determination is then up to you and there's no objective criteria.

Commissioner Scheeringa stated Yeah, and that, in my opinion is what this does. It helps make downtown more attractive for business and also I think it's better for our community. That's my opinion.

Commissioner Robertson stated I do think that you know this is a sizable project. It's a lot of money. Luckily it came in below what we were expecting, so it takes some sting off, for sure. I think that redevelopment funds could be better utilized especially as we continue to try to have talks with developers and continue on with the plan. We've got the Master Plan in the works. A lot of those activities will be supported through our tip funds. I, personally don't think it's a wise use of our redevelopment money, but just stating my opinion. if there are any change orders, I take it redevelopment would be expected to pay the change orders, or that'd be supported from a different department.

Commissioner Georgeff stated You've got it included in the bid package, too.

Derek answered Well, we have a \$20,000 changeover allowance. But yes, if anything is above that the contract would be between the contractor and the Redevelopment Commission, so it would be contractually with the redevelopment.

Commissioner Robertson stated you'll be managing the project. So because you've given out the numbers for your cost for NIES to be on site and manage as what \$34,000 or something not to exceed correct.

Derek stated it would be \$39,000 total

Commissioner Roberson went on to state then there were some material considerations. I think, with what we presented to the bidders.it was recommended to shoot high as far as cost of material for the brickwork and then that could be backed out later. Once we decide, or someone decides on the brickwork.

Derek answered Yes, I mean the spec. We have a brick specified as basically the basis of design, which was a smooth type brick, but multicolored shades of red and brown things. I can't see the difference between. But yeah, you could select a different type of brick but there's a limited amount of wiggle room and time you take trying to pick that out and try to save a little bit.

Commissioner Robertson stated my question. You know some of these things that the questions that haven't been answered as far as the material or anything else that comes up. Who's going to be taking the ball on that is that Parks department, Alex, or will you be working with redevelopment on that?

Alex Brown from Parks stated I'm not sure what material you're talking about that hasn't been decided yet, so you'd be talking about the bricks?

Commissioner Robertson answered Yes, the brick. Or if any other changes come up as construction proceeds.

Alex Brown from Parks stated this has been a weird project, because it's got a lot of cooks involved in it. So I really don't know whose decision the brick is going to be right.

Commissioner Robertson stated I just want to make sure we know which chef is cooking.
Well, any thoughts commissioners,

Commissioner Scheeringa stated I mean, I would say, Alex. I would trust Alex. I mean, it's Mark.
If you've earned that how many years you've dedicated to this town?

Alex Brown from Parks I just think the coarser brick is less susceptible to graffiti and vandalism,
so I think we could go a little cheaper on that is, the smoother ones were the more expensive but
that's just my personal opinion.

Commissioner Robertson stated I think we were both surprised when we looked at the material
that the coarser brick was cheaper

Alex Brown from Parks stated because it's much more work to be done to smooth that material
out and that's why it's smoother the brick, the higher the cost.

Commissioner Black stated Were there any considerations for the additional electric.

Alex Brown from Parks it was included it was included.

Derek answered Yeah. So we added that to the scope to run conduit to each of the pillars with the
box and later you could run wire.

Commissioner Robertson stated So there's no actual electric work is just futures for pulling wire.

Derek stated It's just basically the conduit there, the bones for it.

Alex Brown from Parks stated we're waiting to get a hold of an irrigation contractor to move the
irrigation. So we will cover that cost and we're waiting to see if they get approved before we create
any of those costs.

Commissioner Robertson stated I know after the pre-bid meeting there were some questions as to
the height of the fence. Just make sure everybody's on the same page. It was a nominal 4 feet, and
then there's a 4-inch gap underneath. Is that correct?

Derek answered It's about 2 to 3 inches

Commissioner Georgeff asked about the tips of the fence

Derek stated It's solid.

Commissioner Georgeff stated It shouldn't be solid their kids are going to be able to jump over it.
I thought we had discussed before

Commissioner Robertson stated I think that's that goes back to the cooks in the kitchen trying to figure this out. There's so many there're questions, you know, questions with, you know the material that the height call out. you know, we have to make sure that someone's designated to filter this information through which think it should be Alex.

Commissioner Scheeringa stated Yeah, I agree.

Alex Brown from Parks stated George, I disagree with the pickets. Kids are going to climb over the fence regardless, and picket is just in my mind inviting themselves to impale themselves. They're still going to climb over.

Commissioner Georgeff stated I talked to the people at the cemetery out there in Merrillville, and that's why they picked the picket top because the kids aren't able to scale the fence and get inside there.

Commissioner Robertson asked Is it correct that if there was a material change like that it would have to go out to rebid?

Alex Brown from Parks answered It'd be a change order but as long as we did it before, you don't want a contractor to go buy this and then change it. We're in.

Derek stated the 1st step is doing shop drawings. So where they basically submit what materials they are going to provide. You know our specs say this is the performance you need to meet, and then they provide a manufacturer model number that meets that, and if it meets the spec, then it was approved but there is a way for doing alternates and changes but if that is the case, it needs to be done sooner than later. Griffith's fence is also 4-foot-tall and smooth on the top as well.

Commissioner Robertson asked Commissioners is smooth Okay?

Commissioner Scheeringa stated I mean it is with it is with me. I think kids are more likely to scale a park fence than a cemetery fence.

Attorney Reed stated Yeah, and if you get impaled on a cemetery fence, you're already yeah.

Commissioner Scheeringa stated So touché great dad joke. Yeah. But like, in my opinion. this is a park project, and we are just helping fund it. I I'm truly confident in our park superintendent to handle this as

Alex Brown from Parks stated we kept hearing people like the look of the Griffith fence. That's what was modeled after that on terms of design and height.

Commissioner Scheeringa stated When we were here with Chris Moore, who cause. I believe you were ill. We wanted to model kind of Griffiths, but use the material from Wicker Park, because that was the reinforced aluminum. whereas Griffith's material was the enforced steel which was double the price. So that's why we chose the material from Wicker Park, but the model that was discussed in the last study session that we talked about this. And then at that point, I believe Chris started just dealing with you, Alex. Am I wrong in that? When the engineering plans came up they were submitted to you. I don't know where it went after that

Alex Brown from Parks stated I think I went back to you guys for a couple of things and back to the park board .

Commissioner Scheeringa commented that from here on out. I think it should be Alex and the park board to do.

Commissioner Georgeff stated Yeah, we're just we're just paying for it.

Alex Brown from Parks stated the goal is to get it done by the 4th of July, we need to go.

Derek stated the brick material and the fence material. Those are all based on a consensus of these meetings. We brought in samples of that. So we had a 2 scaled a small piece of the fence, and also the bricks. I think we brought 16 different types.

Alex Brown from Parks stated that never made it to a board meeting.

Commissioner Georgeff stated so if it's bid, and we can expedite it and Alex agrees the smooth top. Then I'm good with

Alex Brown from Parks asked if everyone's fine with the 4 feet ? Because if you're changing the fence site. You're also changing all the columns and you can't have 4-foot columns.

Attorney Reed stated Yeah, I mean, I think that would be considerably a material change but the rest are similar enough. Eventually, similar change order. Right?

Derek stated The limitation is both works projects. You can't have a change order seeing 20% and something like that going 4 to 5 feet, it would be 12%.

Attorney Reed Asked Derek, Yes, it looks like I always look for like, where's the Delta in the bids? Just to make sure nothing was you'd hate to have you know. You need to have a contractor come back and say, I missed. You know I missed it. It looks like the deltas in the concrete. The difference between what Gariup in the next low is Grimmer and it's like, so it'd be items 8 and 9. That's like a \$133,000 of the of the \$80,000 difference.

The rest is like mobilization and things where the things numbers are a little nebulous. But does Gariup? Have you heard any conversations with Gariup? If does he know

Derek answered Yes they know

Commissioner Robertson asked if any other comments before we wrap up. No, well, thank you very much. Derek, thank you, Alex.

Communications: None

Adjournment: Meeting was adjourned by President Robertson at 6:15 PM.

DULY PASSED AND RESOLVED by the Highland Redevelopment Commission, Highland, Lake County, Indiana, this day of 2025, having passed by a vote__ in favor and ____ opposed.

Highland Redevelopment Commission

President

ATTEST: _____

Secretary