

GREENVILLE REDEVELOPMENT COMMISSION MINUTES

September 3, 2013
Greenville, NC

The Greenville Redevelopment Commission met on the above date for a meeting at 5:30 p.m. in the City Council Chambers of the City Hall Building located at 200 West Fifth Street.

COMMISSION MEMBERS PRESENT:

Jeremy King
Chris Mansfield, Chair
Sharif Hatoum

Angela Marshall
Richard Patterson

Judy Siguaw
Mark Woodson, Vice Chair

STAFF MEMBERS PRESENT: Jonathan Edwards, Audio; Merrill Flood, Director of Community Development; Tiana Keith, Secretary; and Carl Rees, Economic Development Manager

APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF June 4, 2013

Motion was made by Mr. Jeremy King and seconded by Mr. Richard Patterson to approve the August 6, 2013 minutes. Motion carried unanimously.

PUBLIC COMMENT

There was no public comment.

Consideration of construction Management Contract for Uptown Theatre

Mr. Rees: The Redevelopment Commission purchased the State Theatre Building on 5th Street in 2008. The property changed hands over a half dozen times with no one taking the initiative to do anything with the building. The RDC decided to purchase it with the hope and promise that there would be a community fund raising effort and a historic adaptive reuse of the theatre which would turn it into a multiuse facility. With the best of intentions members of the community participated on a committee that gauged interest of the community and met with potential donors but there was not much forward momentum on the project to raise \$2.5-3 million. Discussions shifted to public/private partnership with the private sector partner bearing the larger portion of the cost for restoration. Uptown as taken the lead on the project and will develop a RFI that will go out to private sector management groups that might be interested in doing something with the building. In the meantime it seems it would be important to stabilize the building. Devin Thompson and Ken Jackson are here to represent Public Works who are helping with a plan of action to keep water out of the facility as it is open to the elements.

Mr. Thompson- My role is project manager; I am the building facility coordinator for the City of Greenville in Public Works. We have put together an overview of the project for tonight. The renovation of the building will take place in two phases. The first is repairing the exterior shell making the structure water tight and eliminating the pigeons. After this the building will be safe to go inside. The design phase has been completed. Projected dates of final plan are expected in 30 days. The bid process will take about 60 days and precede the project pre-bid meeting with prospective contractors. Once that is completed we will enter the four month construction schedule. Then a partial demolition of the fly loft, pigeon eradication, safe entry verification, and interior cleaning will conclude this phase of the project.

Mr. Rees: We want to time this project out during the winter months as to not disrupt outdoor diners. We hope it does not have to sit and a private partner comes along soon who will do the bulk of the up fitting, but even if it does have to sit, it will be weather tight and will not deteriorate anymore and the RDC lose money on its investment.

Mr. Mansfield: Questions for Devin or Carl?

Mr. Woodson: How do we know we will find a partner and we are not putting money into a building that will have to be torn down?

Mr. Rees: That is a fair question. We do have 2-3 potential suitors from the private sector that have shown interest. This is the only historic theatre in the area and maybe it can also be turned into another business or apartments if it is not used as a theatre.

Ms. Marshall: How long have businesses been showing interest? What would it take to close the deal?

Mr. Rees: Four months or so. Closing the deal would likely require long term inexpensive lease and commitments from local entities that provide additional streams of revenue to that private sector investor.

Ms. Siguaw: Given the historical nature, are there opportunities for grants?

Mr. Rees: I am not aware of grants but there are some tax credits.

Mr. King: I applaud the effort. The RDC has an asset that is deteriorating we paid \$180,000 in 2008 and if we do not do anything it will be less than it is now, correct?

Mr. Rees: Yes

Mr. King: So today are we being asked to just approve phase 1?

Mr. Rees: Yes. You have \$150,000 that are budgeted for these repairs.

Mr. King: So at the end of the day we will end up with a weather tight building that is more attractive to potential buyers instead of a bird coop.

Mr. Mansfield: The fly loft needs to be there even if not in use for historic preservation tax credits. Are masonry repairs to the front façade still included? Maybe if the masonry repairs were there people could drive by and imagine what it is going to look like.

Mr. Rees: I am not confident we have the budget.

Mr. Mansfield: I am not sure who we have to thank in the arts community for having it painted.

Mr. King: Down the road it would probably be eligible for historic façade improvement grants.

Ms. Marshall: My concern is the amount going in financially when a potential private group would be eligible for grants. Maybe we should just do what is absolutely necessary until we get commitment from an interested party before we do too much.

Mr. King: The patch job to make it structurally sound is \$150,000?

Mr. Rees: Yes.

Staff Recommendation: The Redevelopment Commission authorize construction management agreement with RPA Engineering in the amount of \$85,000.

Motion was made by Mr. Jeremy King and seconded by Ms. Judy Siguaw to authorize construction management agreement. Motion carried unanimously.

Go Science Project Update and Lease Approval

Mr. Rees: Much like the theatre, RDC purchased the old Pugh's tire building to create a space for a children's science and educational center. Go Science has been participating in the community for more than a decade. Currently the Greenville Police Department is storing some equipment in exchange for paying the utilities. The tire racks will be bid for sale. In May we talked about lease terms and tonight we want to revisit those. There is a creative and inexpensive treatment for façade work.

Mr. Roger Conner discussed blueprint plans for proposed Go Science space.

Mr. Rees: In order to advance this project the RDC agreed to put \$2,000 toward the building to allow Go Science occupancy of the building including fire safety, roofing, and minor electrical repairs, floor repairs, façade repair, and up-fitting. We fully expect this will be their launching point.

Staff Recommendation: The Redevelopment Commission authorize staff to develop a lease with Go-Science that includes allowances for up to \$200,000 in owner improvements to the building at 729 Dickinson Avenue.

Mr. Woodson: I am concerned, and it has nothing to do with Go Science, specifically, that the RDC is a major landowner. We need to move this to private hands to create jobs in this community.

Mr. King: We certainly committed to Go Science and it is not a long term lease yet but this is an amenity to bring people in the area. But I would like to know the time table to bring people into its seats.

Mr. Conner: As a non-profit we are not traditionally recognized on tax rolls. We are in the silent phase of the capital campaign. Having the first phase open will encourage donors to contribute because they want to see progress. We have major equipment we are looking to bring in soon.

Mr. King: We are not looking for you to be on a tax roll but we are looking to have you bring people in.

Mr. Conner: If we can get the lease authorized we are looking at 10 weeks for construction.

Mr. Rees: Go Science has hired an architect and contractor so we just need to get the lease signed.

Mr. Mansfield: These renovations will be generic so it is not just fir for only one type of operation?

Mr. Conner: Yes, there will be a generic office up fitting. We do not want to do anything that will have to be undone. Our board of directors has asked we consider increasing our lease agreement to more than two years to assure donors we will be here for a while.

Mr. Woodson: There were EPA issues when we first purchased the building; has that been cleared?

Mr. Rees: Yes, the City's Brownfield grant took care of that.

Mr. King: Go Science pays for their own operation we are involved in getting the buildings ready and transition to private lease. I understand your concern is that it is hard to solicit big time capital donations if you only have a two year lease. From our perspective we want to see that building in use and not sitting vacant so there has to be a two-way street. With that being said, I would be in favor of putting options into that lease if you achieve certain donations.

Mr. Conner: If we had a significant donation would it be an appropriate time to revisit?

Mr. King: Yes.

Mr. King: The City has reviewed Go Sciences plans to ensure they are ok?

Mr. Rees: We have and we will review again before they begin.

Staff Recommendation: The Redevelopment Commission allow staff develop a lease with Go Science that includes allowances for up to \$200,000 in owner improvements to the building at 729 Dickinson Avenue.

Motion was made by Mr. Richard Patterson and seconded by Mr. Mark Woodson to allow staff to develop a lease with Go Science. Motion carried unanimously.

Selection of Designer for 423 Evans Street Access Project

Mr. Rees: This lot was purchased with hopes of private interest and access to the Moseley Lot. With tow failed attempts the RDC is left with a vacant lot for at least a short while. The walls will not collapse but are unattractive. The City has hired Walker Parking to be designers for parking deck and areas around it. The intersection to access the deck is important in the design. There needs to be fill and landscaping work. The quickest way is to use the on call landscaping team with Rivers & Associates for interim use. We do not want to do too much in case of future private interest.

Staff Recommendation: The Redevelopment Commission authorize development of a scope of services with Rivers and Associates under the existing "on-call" contract. The fee for said services will not exceed \$30,000.

Mr. King: We do not know what they are going to plan?

Mr. Rees: It has been identified that the intersection is key. The grade needs to be straightened out, there is an opportunity for public art, so we need a minimal amount of landscaping.

Mr. Mansfield: Would Rivers & Associates bring back options or one plan?

Mr. Rees: Possibly options for planting, walkway and lighting.

Mr. King: If we have an asset we need to protect it until we have secured private buy in.

Mr. Mansfield: Does it include access to 5th Street?

Mr. Rees: Yes, it would include opening that up.

Mr. Woodson: Long term it should be our goal to turn it over to a long term investor.

Mr. King: Is 3 the maximum building height you can put up there?

Mr. Rees: No, maybe 6 or 7. It would not shock me if you had an offer in 3-6 months.

Motion was made by Mr. Jeremy King and seconded by Ms. Judy Siguaw to authorize development of scope of services. Motion carried unanimously.

Award of Small Business Plan Competition Grants

Mr. Mansfield: I want to thank Mark and Judy for putting in the time to review these. I looked at all of the applications but not with the scrutiny

Mr. Rees gave an overview of each business.

Ms. Siguaw: eAudit is a safe bet with substantial number of clients. Courtside, when I visited, there were three employees and quite a bit of traffic. Art Avenue can show previous artists from incubators who are looking to start their businesses.

Mr. Woodson: We were very tough and challenged to see if they knew their business and where it was going. I see a lot of success from these businesses.

Mr. King: I do not remember us ever giving \$30,000 to a business of this caliber.

Motion was made by Mr. Jeremy King and seconded by Mr. Sharif Hatoum to award \$15,000 to Courtside Cafe.

Ms. Siguaw: How will we determine quality of jobs?

Mr. Rees: We can discuss that and have a presentation as early as next meeting.

Ms. Marshall: I think quality of jobs is the wrong term. We need to find a less subjective term that is not demeaning.

Mr. Jeremy King and Mr. Sharif Hatoum in favor of approving Courtside for \$15,000. All others opposed.

Motion was made by Mr. Richard Patterson and seconded by Mr. Mark Woodson to award Courtside \$30,000. Motion carried with Ms. Angela Marshall, Mr. Chris Mansfield, Ms. Judy Siguaw, and Mr. Mark Woodson in favor. Mr Sharif Hatoum and Mr. Jeremy King opposed.

Motion was made by Mr. Richard Patterson and seconded by Mr. Mark Woodson to award Art Avenue \$15,000. Motion carried unanimously.

Motion was made by Mr. Richard Patterson and seconded by Mr. Mark Woodson to award eAudit \$15,000. Motion carried unanimously.

REPORT FROM SECRETARY

Monthly Financial Report

Mr. Flood: The expenditure reports for West Greenville and the Center City have been submitted for review by the Commission.

COMMENTS FROM COMMISSION MEMBERS

Ms. Marshall: We talk about businesses in downtown but I am interested in families in downtown. I would like to see us talk more about families in the area and I am not sure where that fits in yet, but I think it works well with the purpose. When we redevelop I do not see family oriented businesses.

Mr. Mansfield: Very good point. Let the children spend the money. I would also like to congratulate Uptown on a phenomenal Freeboot Friday.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion was made by Mr. Jeremy King and seconded by Mr. Richard Patterson to adjourn the meeting. Motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,



Carl J. Rees, Economic Development Manager
The City of Greenville Community Development Department