

MINUTES
WHITLEY COUNTY REDEVELOPMENT COMMISSION

Tuesday, October 27, 2020

WHITLEY COUNTY GOVERNMENT CENTER
1st FLOOR-COMMISSIONERS/COUNCIL MEETING ROOM

MEMBERS PRESENT

Jim Argerbright
Frank Kessler
Michael Schrader
Kim Wheeler
Jill Western

MEMBERS ABSENT

George Schrupf

STAFF

Nathan Bilger
Mark Cullnane
Cami Hippenhammer
Riley Hollenbaugh
Scott Wagner

GUESTS IN ATTENDANCE

Steve Western

GUESTS ON-LINE/PHONE

Lana Beregszazi (text)

LEGAL COUNSEL

Andy Boxberger

CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Argerbright called the meeting to order at 8:03 a.m. The meeting was not webcast due to technical difficulties.

ROLL CALL

Mr. Argerbright read roll call. All members present and absent are listed above.

LARWILL SEWER PROJECT

Ms. Beregszazi was unable to call in on the status of the Larwill sewer extension due to technical difficulties but texted several updates relayed by Mr. Bilger. He referred to the preliminary engineering design that was distributed with the packet, noting that the basic engineering was completed, other than the lateral connections. A large concern was that the plans showed a 15' easement for the main line located outside the right-of-way that was unexpected.

Mr. Boxberger stated that he was to have a call with Larwill's legal counsel Greg Hockemeyer to discuss the proposed transfer of the sewer line to the Town and preparation of easements for the grinder pumps. Mr. Wagner stated that one home along the route did apply for an exemption from connection due to being 900' from the road.

Mr. Bilger relayed an additional message from Ms. Beregszazi that the homeowners being connected were unhappy with the need to do so, but two of the three did not seem hostile to the project at this time. The third did seem opposed to connecting to the sewer, no matter the cost. Mr. Argerbright suggested that the Town Council and/or RDC members meet with the homeowners to try to address concerns. Mr. Boxberger asked about the waiver of connection fees; it was stated that the Town indicated they would but did not yet commit to an amount. He also asked about the use of the state road right-of-way; he and Mr. Bilger discussed the right-of-way.

After a brief discussion, it was decided to confer with Ms. Beregszazi on the updates on a conference call following the meeting. Mr. Wheeler, Argerbright, Boxberger, Wagner, and Bilger would participate.

103 W MAIN STREET BUILDING INQUIRY

Mr. Bilger stated that the owner of the building at 103 W. Main Street in Larwill is trying to plan for needed building renovations, including a major roof repair. They had been made aware of the Larwill TIF and inquired if there would be any aid available, now or in the future. Mr. Bilger made them aware of the newness of the TIF and lack of funds, but would bring it up for discussion with the Commission. The building is the location of the Post Office and Masonic Lodge. The Commission briefly discussed that might be a project that could be worked on in the future, but without any funds available in the TIF now, they could not offer aid at the present time.

INDIANA MATERIALS REQUEST

Mr. Hollenbaugh stated that Indiana Materials is planning to construct a \$350,000 addition to their facility to accommodate new processing requirements, and they are seeking some aid in its construction. Two new jobs would be created. The cost-benefit analysis indicated that a \$20,000 incentive would have a return within about two years.

Mr. Boxberger clarified that his firm now represents Briner Building, the contractor for the addition. He further stated the requirements for the incentive to be used for site preparation or other allowable public improvements. The Commission discussed the request further. Mr. Argerbright stated he was ok with the amount in lieu of a tax abatement; Mr. Kessler agreed. Mr. Argerbright called for a motion. Mr. Schrader made a motion to approve up to \$20,000 to be used for the Indiana Materials project; Mr. Kessler seconded. Motion carried, 4-0.

SAILRITE EXPANSION

Mr. Hollenbaugh described a proposed project by Sailrite to expand their operations at their current location. It would be an approximate total investment of \$3.25M and is expected to add about 50 new employees. A \$200,000 incentive toward the site work would be roughly comparable to a ten-year tax abatement. Mr. Boxberger explained that this would have the same requirements for expenditures as the Indiana Materials project, and most of the site preparation should qualify.

There was discussion about the scope of the project. Mr. Kessler asked about a timeframe; Mr. Hollenbaugh stated that a firm timeline was not yet established, but the company is wanting to move quickly. Mr. Wheeler stated that he prefers the site improvement incentive versus a tax abatement request given the possible fluctuations in property taxes in the near future. Mr. Argerbright agreed, adding that Sailrite has been a success here, and helping their expansion would further help the County.

The Commission had consensus to proceed with the incentives, and would consider a final request amount once more details on the site improvements were determined.

CHROMASOURCE

Mr. Hollenbaugh provided details on a possible expansion of Chromasource to the Rail Connect I building. They would add about 30 new employees and make an investment of about \$4.5M over three years. Mr. Boxberger stated that in discussing the project, there are fewer options for incentives since the building is ready for occupancy. He suggested that training grants or a tax abatement may be available. Mr. Argerbright asked for clarification on whether this would be a relocation from the current site or an expansion. Mr. Hollenbaugh confirmed that this would be in addition to the current facility. The Commission discussed further, but took no action on the matter.

2021 MEETING SCHEDULE

Mr. Bilger presented the proposed 2021 meeting schedule. He noted that no dates were changed due to holiday conflicts, though one or two were moved to third/fifth Tuesdays to avoid conflict with County Council. Mr. Kessler made a motion to approve the meeting schedule; Mr. Wheeler seconded. Motion passed, 4-0.

MISCELLANEOUS MATTERS

Mr. Bilger stated that the Rail Connect entrance widening project was nearing completion. He passed around photos that Mr. Schrader had taken the day before showing the work being done. The Commission agreed that this would greatly improve the accessibility to Rail Connect.

IN THE MATTER OF MINUTES

Minutes for the October 13th meeting were presented for review. Mr. Schrader made a motion to approve the minutes as presented, and Mr. Kessler seconded. Motion passed, 3-0-1, with Mr. Argerbright abstaining.

CLAIMS

Claims were reviewed and consisted of: Carson LLP, \$2,941.00.


Mr. Boxberger noted that the time period on the invoice was slightly longer due to the change in accounting software.


Mr. Schrader made a motion to approve the claim as presented; Mr. Wheeler seconded. Motion passed, 4-0.

Being no further business, Mr. Argerbright declared the meeting adjourned at 8:40 a.m.

**WHITLEY COUNTY
REDEVELOPMENT COMMISSION**

ATTEST:


James Argerbright, President


Michael Schrader, Secretary