

MINUTES OF
REDEVELOPMENT COMMISSION MEETING
Hearing: RC2023-02
Thursday March 16th, 2023 at 1:00 PM

The Rensselaer Redevelopment Commission held a Public Hearing on Thursday March 16th, 2023. Commission President Stan Haines brought the hearing to order at 1:05 pm.

Present: Stan Haines, Estel George, Kenny Haun, Bob Brenneman, Bill Hollerman, and Janice Deno

Absent:

City of Rensselaer: Mayor Wood, Shelby Keys, Kevin Cochran, Jessica Call, and Juanita Saucedo

Guests: Adam & Carlee Alson, Megan Inskeep, Carlos Vasquez, Lauren Brandenburg, Brienne Hooker, Tom & Lana Zimmer, Stephen Eastridge, Zyan Miller, Sara DeYoung, Bob Schenk, Curtis Craig, Rick & Linda Commingore and Rein Bontreger

Previous Minutes: Stan Haines asked for a motion to approve the minutes presented from Meeting RC2023-01 held on Thursday February 16th, 2023. Bill Hollerman made a motion to approve the minutes as presented, second by Estel George. President Haines said all in favor say Aye. All said Aye.

Motion Passed.

Old Business: None

Swear In of Officer: Mayor Wood swore in Estel George as a member of the Redevelopment Commission.

Motion Passed.

New Business:

A. Appleseed Childhood Education; Request of Funds

Adam Alson came to the Redevelopment Commission on behalf of Appleseed Childhood Education to request funding of \$130k to help support affordable, high-quality childcare in Rensselaer. He came with support from Rightsteps, Franciscan Health, the Jasper Newton Foundation, Fair Oaks Farms, Alliance Bank and many, many, more. He also shared support letters received from Kentland bank, Alliance bank, United Way Northwest Indiana, Kirpc Headstart and the Rensselaer Central School Corporation. Appletree opened its doors in March of 2023, and successfully provided fifteen new jobs in the city of Rensselaer. Mr. Alson stated that Appletree's request of funds falls under Indiana Code 36-7-25-7, which allows Redevelopment Commissions to fund eligible entities that promote education, to use 15% of TIF revenues. The requested amount of \$130k represents 14.4% of TIF revenues

for 2022. Adam also informed members that the use of requested funds would provide quality childcare in Rensselaer at affordable costs to families in the low – moderate-income bracket. Jasper County has donated \$150k to Appletree, in which those funds will be allocated for the same purpose. It was made clear that Appletree is an investment for the future of Rensselaer. Stan Haines inquired about the cost per student who attends Appletree. The average cost per child, per year at Appletree is \$14k. Adam Alson replied that he is aware families in Rensselaer cannot afford that cost. Appletree is utilizing an income sliding scale to ensure that childcare is affordable. Appleseed and Appletree are accepting CCDF Vouchers, which are intended for families who make up less than 127% of the federal poverty level, as well as Pre-K vouchers, which covers up to 185% of the federal poverty level with children ages four and five.

Estel George wanted confirmation on the number of children Appletree could hold. Adam reiterated that they were at a 75-child capacity, and they currently have 125 children on the waitlist. Mayor Wood commended Adam Alson and Appleseed Childhood Education for their hard work and commitment to Rensselaer. Mayor Wood has supported Adam from the beginning. In addition, continues to show his support. Amongst the many supporters who spoke out, Stephen Eastridge of Economic Development stated that supporting childcare was necessary for infrastructure in our community. He continued by saying that jobs do not attract people to a certain place, the state of the community and its amenities does and it needs to be taken into context when deciding the use of TIF funds. Estel George said Appleseed Childcare Education is a vital need that we must support for our community, and not just for the use of certain segments.

Stan Haines shared a letter he received from Dr. Anthony Butler, a three-year resident of Rensselaer. He and his family wanted to inform the members that they are in support of the Redevelopment Commission allocating funds for Appletree. Lastly, Kenny Haun asked what Adam Alson's plans were for the future and if they were seeking long-term commitments from the Redevelopment Commission. Adam reiterated from their previous meeting, 18 months ago, that it was year by year, unless they want to support a multi-year commitment. Adam did make it clear that he would be back on behalf of Appletree next year, for the request of additional funding.

Stan Haines entertained a motion for approval. Bill Hollerman wanted to confirm the Redevelopment Commission had \$130k in TIF revenue. Once confirmed, Bill Hollerman made a motion for approval, second by Estel George.

Motion Passed.

B. Façade Improvement Program

Kevin Cochran gave a brief update regarding the city of Rensselaer Façade Improvement Program. This program is still under development. Furthermore, the date to go before the Redevelopment Commission is TBD.

C. R&M

Kevin Cochran explained the plans of the Building Department is to seek out blighted structures in our community and the option to use TIF funds to beautify these areas. R&M has previously had three potential buyers, all of which have rejected the property. Kenny Haun asked what the cost of the property and demolition for the property was. Kevin Cochran answered that the value of the property is between \$180k and \$190k, with a list price of approximately \$130k (with a possible lower sell price). The cost of demolition is still unknown. The members all agreed that the property was an eye sore for our community; however, some of the concerns included list price and putting money

into a piece of property that is unable to regain the monies spent. Stephen Eastridge informed the members, and audience, that there were other opportunities besides reselling the property. Although reselling is the most obvious way for a quick turnaround, it is important to facilitate new growth in our downtown. There are options to collaborate with a developer to build townhomes. The property is within the TIF district, which allows for the generation of tax revenues in the future. We need leadership to drive that plan forward, because it would be a great opportunity for Rensselaer.

D. Claims

Kenny Haun received bills from Shelby Keys, regarding the Brick Street Project. The bills include the following:

- Kimley Horn; \$37,467.00
- Title company; \$300.00
- Riley Law Office; \$306.25

The total cost is \$38,073.26. Bill Hollerman made a motion for approval, second by Bob Brenneman.

Next Meeting: TBD

Redevelopment Commission President Stan Haines entertained a motion to adjourn the meeting. Motion made by Estel George, second by Bill Hollerman.

Motion Passed:

Meeting adjourned at 1:24 pm