



Westfield Redevelopment Authority Meeting

4-5-2022 Regular Meeting

Municipal Building, 59 Court Street, Westfield, MA, Room 315
8:00 AM.

MEMBERS PRESENT

MEMBERS ABSENT

Kathy Witalisz, Chair

William Parks, Vice-Chair

Mark Morin

Tom Woodson

STAFF

Peter J. Miller, Acting Executive Director

Christine Fedora, Office Manager

1.) Roll call

Chair Witalisz called the meeting of the Westfield Redevelopment Authority to order at 8:05 am. The above members were in attendance.

2.) Approve minutes of February 1, 2022.

Chair Witalisz asked members if there are any changes or additions to the minutes of February 1, 2022.

Member Woodson MOTIONED, seconded by Member Parks to approve the February 1, 2022 minutes. Chair Witalisz asked if there was any further discussion, there being none. The motion was unanimously approved.

3.) Reports of Committees

a. WRA Financial Summary

Executive Director Miller updated the members on the financials. The money from the FY 21 budget has been transferred to the WRA account, with the additional 15,000.00 the total is 55,926.52.

Chair Witalisz asked if there are any pending outside needs to expend funds? Mr. Miller stated currently there are none, there may be some in the future in regards to possible geotechnical reports for soil testing at the Elm Street site. Members mentioned they thought this was resolved. Mr. Miller to further review.

4.) Report of Executive Director

5.) Unfinished Business

a. Discussion to consider next steps on Elm Street Urban Renewal Plan

Chair Witalisz gave a summary of previous uses for the site. Considerations were given to housing, mixed retail, parking, she further noted she has had inquiries regarding food trucks coming to the site as well. She further noted she had meetings with Mayor McCabe and Peter Miller. During the meeting it was decided to have Levesque Associate design some plans as what other type of uses could be done at the site. She felt this would be something that should be looked at during Mayor McCabe's tenure.

She gave a summary of each of the plans received. One of the plans showed a parking facility in the back while the other plan showed a park in the front. Her main concern was that it showed activity and vitality.

Mr. Miller stated the plans were done at the request of the Mayor, the funding came from the Community Development budget. The Mayor wants to clean up the site. One of the main ideas is he wants to use this site for events that used to take place at "The Green". As of July 1st the funding for the police during events at the green will not be available that is why the green will not be used for events.

Mr. Miller further noted that Westfield Bank is looking for a new location for their office on Arnold Street as they are having problems with their parking lot. They have looked at Santander's location but it did not fit their needs. He further added the Planning Board does not like drive-throughs in the downtown.

He further noted the Mayor has suggested pickle ball, noting there are 30 people using the facility on Franklin Street. Chair Witalisz further asked what does the city need? Further discussion regarding people who want it and others who don't.

Mr. Miller stated the URP does not mention recreation facilities, the members also discussed whether this is within the U.R.P. and whether the City would have to modify the U.R.P. Chair Witalisz inquired how long the U.R.P. is in effect and if any of the money would have to be paid back? Mr. Miller stated the U.R.P. stays in effect until something takes place, something gets built. Members inquired if the City makes money on it would they have to repay the funding? Mr. Miller replied it would have to be paid back based on the net.

Member Parks mentioned that congress has ear marked up to 2 million dollars that he felt this would fit in, the money is still available. Mr. Miller also felt that a scaled back version of the performance center Member Parks had mentioned in earlier meetings might be something that could be considered.

Further discussion about possible uses.

- Venue space
- Park like setting
- Additional amenities
- Covered stage for bands

Member Parks asked if ARPA money or free cash could be used? Mr. Miller stated the Mayor would have to propose something like that. Chair Witalisz asked if we should continue with an RFP? Mr. Miller felt a break should be taken regarding the RFP's and wait to see what happens. Mr. Miller further stated he would like to get the back portion of the parcel cleaned up.

The committee further reviewed the plans as presented, members inquired how large this parcel is? Mr Miller noted it is almost the size of the grass area at the green. Chair Witalisz how long this would go on? Mr. Miller stated it would be to the Mayor, he does not

want to leave it as gravel. Chair Witalisz felt the Mayor should come to the Board she felt by doing this it would benefit the Mayor as well as the community.

Member Parks MOTIONED, duly seconded to adjourn at 8:55.

APPROVED