

GREEN RIVER URBAN RENEWAL AGENCY
Board of Directors Minutes
October 22, 2013 - 6:00 p.m.
City Hall Council Chambers

Board Members Present:

Nina Kessner, Chair; Robert Berg, Vice Chair; Michael Brown, Treasurer; Cathie Hughes, Secretary; Nick Montgomery

Board Members Absent:

None

Staff Present:

Misty Springer, Grant Specialist; Jennie Melvin, Zoning & Building Technician; Yvonne Castillo, Recording Secretary

Committee Members:

None

Guests:

Mark Peterson, City Council Member

Call to Order

Chair Kessner called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

Approval of Agenda

6:00 p.m. – 6:01 p.m.

Board Member Hughes moved to approve the agenda. Board Member Montgomery seconded. Motion carried. (5-0)

Approval of Minutes

6:01 p.m. – 6:03 p.m.

Board Member Brown moved to approve the minutes of September 19, 2013. Board Member Hughes seconded. Motion carried. (5-0)

Treasurer's Report

6:03 p.m. – 6:08 p.m.

Board Member Brown reported the only change from last month is the \$3,000 check for the façade grant to White Mountain Lumber and the current balance is \$8,045 of which \$1,100 is URA money and \$6,900 is seed money from the City of Green River.

Ms. Melvin reported money was made from donations at Trunk or Treat and the sale of pumpkins. Very few pumpkins were sold and the unsold pumpkins were returned.

Board Member Hughes moved to approve the Treasurer's Report. Board Member Montgomery seconded. Motion carried. (5-0)

Announcements

6:08 p.m. – 6:10 p.m.

Ms. Melvin requested for the board to attend the Community Assessment meeting this evening for a few minutes and fill out the survey.

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Citizen Comments

6:10 p.m. – 6:11 p.m.

Ms. Melvin reported Ms. Springer will stop by later to discuss the Carnegie Library.

Old Business

6:11 p.m. – 7:52 p.m.

1) Board Evaluation Forms

Chair Kessner requested the completed board evaluation forms from the board members. She requested input from the City Administration also and will compile the results and provide the board with a report.

2) Status of Non-Profit-Mike

Board Member Brown said he met with Mr. Brad Radakovich and Ms. Laura Leigh. Mr. Radakovich provided a lot of information on how to proceed with the process to become a non-profit. It is a twenty eight (28) page application and it is not an easy process. We are in the process of rewriting the articles of incorporation for the third time to include the language the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) will accept. From the time we submit the paperwork it will take at least four (4) months. The IRS charges a \$750 application fee and Mr. Radakovich's fee is about \$1,000.

3) Decision on Grant Opportunity-Carnegie Library

Chair Kessner requested comments from the board regarding pursuing grant opportunities including the Carnegie Library.

Ms. Springer said there are many grant opportunities from the business council but we just have to see what the best fit is. The City would put the grant together on your behalf and the City would oversee the construction and you wouldn't be writing the grant or managing the project. Your voice would be heard and Main Street would take credit for having engineered and funding the project. I may need some information about URA/Main Street for purposes of the grant.

The board was in consensus to pursue the grant for renovation of the Carnegie Library.

Ms. Springer said I am here tonight to discuss the Depot and request a letter of support from the URA/Main Street. Last year you received from the Wyoming Business Council a \$1,000,000 grant for the renovation of the Depot. There was a feasibility study completed on what the steering committee wanted the Depot to look like with an architect's plans. The grant I am currently working on regarding the Depot is for the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). It is complicated, long and for hazardous waste abatement. Before the City took ownership of the building they had a Phase I Assessment done to look at what the hazards are in the building. There was a Phase II Assessment that lists what hazardous materials; asbestos, lead based paints and polychlorinated biphenyls (PCB's) need to be abated before construction begins. It is the natural next step in the process of the renovation. The City has taken ownership; it was a donation from Union Pacific as is. We cannot take ownership of the land because of congressional constraints regarding Union Pacific from a long time ago. It is very difficult for the Union Pacific to give away or sell the land so the City is in a thirty (30) year revolving lease and it is free. There is an almost 90% chance there are plenty of contaminants in the land under

the Depot. We are not addressing that because we don't own it and the testing is costly. They are going to cap it. They will put asphalt down and the green area that is already there is safe and other places will be capped. In the process of the EPA grant they want public comment and participation, which is why I am here today because you are a stakeholder in the grant project. I want to know your comments and if it is okay if I move forward with the EPA grant for hazardous waste abatement. The community needs to be aware so there will be public hearings during city council meetings.

Board Member Brown asked if the grant is to do the actual abatement and not study it further.

Ms. Springer said it is for the abatement, it has been studied already. The Wyoming Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) did those studies for us free of charge. This is for a \$200,000 grant for the abatement itself.

Board Member Brown asked if there are limits on grants because the City doesn't own it, because it is being leased.

Ms. Springer said we do own the building that is why we are not addressing the land. There is no limit.

Board Member Brown asked if there are any stipulations from Union Pacific that they would give the building to the City if we do something to it in five (5) to ten (10) years.

Ms. Springer said there are none in any of the contracts I read. It is implicitly implied that the City wants it in order to do something with it.

Ms. Springer said there is a possibility that we won't get the grant simply because of the competition for it. We will be competing with the rest of the country and with projects that are more compelling. We have a very rich, white community. If the EPA is looking at another brownfield (an area that has been contaminated) like in the heart of Detroit; the city is going to clean up a meth lab and turn it into a home for young teenagers and childhood development. How are we competing against that? I had some economic studies done of the neighborhoods directly around the Depot to see if we might be able to make a compelling economic argument. Will the impact of this renovation positively impact this quarter which you might be able to say is somewhat more economically depressed than the rest of Green River? The statistics played out more or less to that but not that necessarily that compelling and a lot of the people living there are senior citizens so job creation is not going to matter to them so I am not going to make that track as the thrust in my argument. What we do have going for us and what I want you to address in your letter of support is that the Depot is a tangible expression of the identity of Green River. It was here long before trona mining; it was here before the oil. Buffalo were still here when the first Depot was made in 1886. The City was incorporated in 1891. I think I can make an argument that it is a part of the community's identity and a community needs a sense of identity. When that renovation has happened you can say this is who we are especially if it has ideally cultural representation within the building of the history of your community and therefore the Depot and the railroad is a part of Green River and a part of the history of the American West. The railroad is intrinsic to the expansion of America. It is intrinsic to the identity of the American West. It is embedded in the culture and history of America as a country.

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Board Member Hughes asked what the depot is going to be used for.

Ms. Springer said in the grant we received last year it is going to be used as a cultural arts center, that is valuable but I don't know if the city of this size can fully sustain that large of a building only for cultural arts. There is potential for Lynch Hall which used to be a restaurant. They want to renovate it so that it can still be a restaurant like a microbrewery to suit the atmosphere. The main hall of the Depot would be used potentially as a performance venue, a gathering space for the community for weddings, graduations and parties. They have talked about having incubator businesses, places for kiosks. The last part of the building which is the offices is designed at this point to be an arts center. The depot will be the catalyst for economic regeneration in the downtown. If you have more foot traffic coming to the Depot you have more people going by those businesses. It has the possibility to be an economic driver.

Chair Kessner asked how soon will you need the letter of support.

Ms. Springer said I do not know because they have not released the guidelines. It was supposed to be on October 1st when the government closed. Ms. Vickie Meredith at the Wyoming DEQ will let us know when the guidelines have been released then I will have thirty (30) to sixty (60) days. As soon as they are released I will let you know.

Chair Kessner said we would be more than willing to provide you with a letter of support.

4) Report re: WYMS Training

Ms. Melvin said the trainings were good. On Friday was the Main Street Managers' meeting in Rock Springs at the Broadway Theater. They are looking to add four (4) or five (5) new Main Street communities in the state. On Saturday I attended the training at the college in Green River on the Economic Restructuring Committee. I learned a lot and we will be having an Economic Restructuring Committee training as soon as we can schedule one. We need to get our committees active and recruit volunteers.

Discussion was had regarding establishing regular committee meetings, chair positions and volunteer recruitment.

5) Recommendation to City Council re: Structure/MoU

Chair Kessner said the information I received from other Main Street programs was sparse and limited. We need to schedule another workshop with Ms. Mary Randolph.

Discussion was had regarding how to structure the MoU, developing the job description and policies to manage the employee.

The board came to a consensus to have a brainstorming session to discuss what elements they want and have their attorney draft it. Ms. Randolph will be invited to assist the board.

6) Trunk or Treat Processing

Ms. Melvin said there were about 1,500 attendees. People had a great time. Trunk or Treating took over an hour. The vendors were prepared and didn't run out of candy. I received a lot of good feedback. We need more board presence at all our events. The Window and Door Store won the traveling trophy.

Discussion was had regarding how to improve the event for next year.

7) URA Plan

Board Member Brown said last time we talked about Gillette's downtown plan. They hired a professional consulting firm to do their plan for about \$50,000. I will call Ms. Pat Robbins from the business council to inquire about applying for the grant.

New Business

7:52 p.m. – 8:17 p.m.

1) Santa's Arrival Planning

Ms. Melvin reported the chamber has scheduled Santa's Arrival for December 7th.

Discussion was had regarding the planning of the event including duration, location, volunteers, fire pits, heaters and the Mayor's Tree Lighting. Santa's Arrival is on December 7, 2013 from 3:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. at Centennial Park concluding with the Mayor's Tree Lighting ceremony.

Board Member Hughes moved to approve up to \$2,000 for propane heaters and accessories. Board Member Brown seconded. Motion carried. (5-0)

2) Christmas Lighting

Ms. Melvin said last year we paid for the wiring of the poles for the Christmas lighting. We have \$10,000 in the budget.

Discussion was had regarding ordering more Christmas lighting for the viaduct. The board came to a consensus to order more lighting.

Ms. Melvin will research the pricing.

3) Community Garden

Ms. Melvin reported there is a lot of interest for a community garden. There is also grant funding available. She requested the board's comments in sponsoring a community garden.

Discussion was had regarding forming a steering committee and having the URA/Main Street sponsor it. Chair Kessner will serve on the steering committee.

(Note: The foregoing is intended as a general summary of the proceedings before the Board. It is not a verbatim transcript of the taped proceedings. Digital recordings are maintained in the Community Development Department).

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Adjournment

Board Member Hughes moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:17 p.m. Board Member Brown seconded. Motion carried. (5-0)