

**Redevelopment Authority of the City of Allentown**  
**Regular Meeting Minutes**  
**May 11th, 2022**  
**2:00 PM**

The following are meeting minutes of the Redevelopment Authority of the City of Allentown pertaining to the meeting held on **Wednesday May 11th, 2022** at 2:00 pm Via Teams Virtual Meeting.

**Board in Attendance**

Daniel Schmidt, Chair  
Tyrone Russell, Secretary  
Rodney Bushe, Treasurer  
Jessica Ortiz, Member

**Staff in Attendance**

Megan Hart  
Scotty Smith  
Joshua Gildea, Solicitor

**Public in Attendance:**

Ian Rawhauser, HDC

**Determination of a Quorum**

Daniel Schmidt determined a quorum was in place and called the meeting to order at 2:11.

**Approval of Meeting Minutes**

Jessica Ortiz made a motion to approve the minutes from the March 9<sup>th</sup>, 2022 Regular Meeting and April 19<sup>th</sup>, 2022 Special meeting, Rodney Bushe seconded, and all were in favor except for Tyrone Russell who was not present yet.

**Old Business**

Ian Rawhauser stated the awarded RFP to HDC/ABC for the property located at 332 Front Street was intended to be developed into 39 senior living 1 bedroom units utilizing 9% LIHTC/TE Bond PHFA submission. Ian Rawhauser explained that there is a significant funding gap which inhibited HDC/ABC from submitting their application to PHFA. Ian Rawhauser further explained with the upcoming plans for the Riverfront and surrounding area, senior living does not appear to be the most suitable housing and requested the Authority consider HDC/ABC to deviate from the original accepted terms and move toward family living and also requested approval for a 6-8 month extension in order to submit the next round of 4% LIHTC/TE Bond. Ian Rawhauser stated it would be more consistent with the neighborhood to provide 25 2 and 3 bedroom units. Daniel Schmidt asked why there is such a funding gap from the accepted terms. Ian Rawhauser responded the difference is equity was cut in half when looked at as a 4%. Tyrone Russell asked when the original proposal was submitted, was it based on creating housing for seniors to which Ian Rawhauser answered yes. Tyrone Russell stated he supports the change in order to be more conducive to the neighborhood however his concern is that other proposals may have been submitted and overlooked that had the same idea of what HDC/ABC now wants to revise theirs to and going forward wants to avoid people getting in the mode of being awarded projects with the assumption they can change it later without penalty. Daniel Schmidt agreed and said going forward that will be considered. Megan Hart stated we do have the option to put the RFP back out and keep the non-refundable deposit. Rodney Bushe asked if a strategy could be put in place to address the people that will be relocated due to the waterfront project. Ian Rawhauser answered it will have to be in line with all fair housing regulations. Jessica Ortiz said we are still in the middle of a pandemic and it may be best

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to work with what we have now and it may take more time to RFP it back out and go thru the whole process again. Tyrone Russell said his issue is not challenging current processes because that's how things have always been done and a system is created that never gets questioned. Megan Hart stated it isn't that our process is necessarily flawed, sometimes initial submittals need to be revised due to many different circumstances.

**RESOLUTION** - Jessica Ortiz made a motion to approve HDC/ABC to change from 39 senior housing units to 25 multi-family units and approve an 8 month extension for settlement, Tyrone Russell seconded. Rodney Bushe voted no.

Inventory Update - Megan Hart stated one property has been added to our inventory, 725 N. 10<sup>th</sup> Street. 509 N 7<sup>th</sup> Street is moving along and 532 W. Allen Street will be ready before the deadline. Megan Hart said 323 N. 9<sup>th</sup> Street 2 unit will be completed in a month or so.

Marketing of Properties - Megan Hart stated R2019-26 to list properties for sale expired in March. Jessica Ortiz asked if this is just an extension of the listing contract and Megan Hart answered yes.

**RESOLUTION** - Jessica Ortiz made a motion to allow employee(s) of the Authority to market the properties for sale or rent thru March 2023 with no commission to be paid direct to the Authority's employee(s).

**New Business**

Strategic Plan - Megan Hart stated she wanted to get a feel from the Board Members on what direction they would like to see the Authority move in. Daniel Schmidt said the Authority is the only organization that can acquire blighted properties thru eminent domain and as long as we keep following the processes we are on the right track. Megan Hart stated there was really not any reason when selecting properties to acquire. Megan Hart continued that the last group of properties were the oldest – the longest certified blighted properties from a few years ago and going forward perhaps it would be best to focus on the most distressed census tracks. Megan Hart said maybe the Authority can get additional grant funding to go into neighboring houses on the block to bring them up to code compliance at least since there is so much aging housing stock, that way we can have an impact on the neighborhood opposed to rehabbing one house on the block and leaving. Daniel Schmidt asked how this could be done. Megan Hart answered the census information can be obtained by the address and regarding the neighboring houses, we would have to put guidelines in place regarding improvements similar to the City's façade program. Scotty Smith added for an example, the Authority's rehab on W. Allen Street had some front porch roof issues and it would be nice to be able to carry the updates to our project to the attached homes on both sides to make them similar and consistent. Tyrone Russell said he likes the idea. Jessica Ortiz added communities improve by doing things like this, property values increase as she has seen in her own neighborhood.

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Megan Hart stated the City of Allentown is working with ASD students for concept park designs and may want to use the property located at 411-413 Ridge Avenue for a temporary build out for the designs. Megan Hart said she will keep the board updated and have a MOU prepared if anything comes to fruition.

**Financial Report**

Megan Hart provided the Board with March and April's profit and loss.

**Executive Session** called by Daniel Schmidt to discuss employment.

**RESOLUTION** -Jessica Ortiz made a motion to appoint Megan Hart as the Executive Director of the Allentown Redevelopment Authority, Tyrone Russell seconded and all were in favor.

**Public Comment**

None

**Adjournment**

3:22 pm