

Redevelopment Authority of the City of Allentown
Special Meeting Minutes
May 10th, 2023
2:00 PM

The following are meeting minutes of the Redevelopment Authority of the City of Allentown pertaining to the special meeting held on **Wednesday May 10h, 2023** at 2:00 pm Via Teams Virtual Meeting.

Board in Attendance

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

Staff in Attendance

Megan Hart
Scotty Smith
Joshua Gildea, Solicitor

Public in Attendance:

Milagros Canelés

Determination of a Quorum

Daniel Schmidt determined a quorum was in place and called the meeting to order at 2:01.

Tyrone Russell made a motion to approve the minutes from April 12, 2023, Jessica Ortiz seconded and all were in favor.

Old Business

Megan Hart provided an inventory update and stated no new inventory has been added. Megan Hart stated 802 W. Walnut Street and 540 Hamilton Street are still in litigation. Jessica Ortiz asked which property was in discussion with the Parking Authority. Megan Hart stated it is 411 Ridge Ave and she is waiting for confirmation from the City as to whether selling it to the Parking Authority. Jessica Ortiz stated that area is the second highest with number of tickets issued. Tyrone Russell asked for confirmation regarding 802 W. Walnut and 540 W. Hamilton and Megan Hart stated it is in litigation. Joshua Gildea stated it is moving forward and hopefully will have some progress in the near future. Megan Hart for any questions to which there were none.

Jessica Ortiz asked if the RFP's were standard and Megan Hart stated it depends on the property. Tyrone Russell stated he was in agreement with the RFP for the property at 725 N. 10th Street but would like to uncouple the previous vote and is disappointed with the inability to look past what we see and didn't take interest in other properties because this has been more of the same talk and no action and broken approaches and his goal was to be a passive board member which usually goes over well but when he hears about doing something different he gets excited but he sees the same energy and is reflecting on a ridiculous amount of gaslighting. Tyrone Russell continued that he sat on this board at a previous meeting regarding the payment terms of a proposal and only one person agreed they saw the monthly payment and everyone else is anti real risk and intentionally became blind to it when it was in black and white and would like to move the vote to document the hypocrisy because there is something deeper here and is not here to argue, he is here for impact. Daniel Schmidt said there is not any black white hypocrisy going on, the unsolicited proposals thru the board off because at the previous meeting, we were going to renovate the property. Daniel Schmidt said it would not have been a fair or open process because it was never RFP's and if you're talking about fairness and equity, it must be open to

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everyone. Daniel Schmidt said decisions are based on proposals that make the most sense. Tyrone Russell stated everything we do has a certain underbelly and undertone that reflects a particular group of people. Tyrone Russell stated to vote on the proposals on the table to tell them no we are going to RFP it out and let the people know. Jessica Ortiz stated we are not saying no, we are just saying we need a minute to which Tyrone Russell stated that is a practice of deny, delay and decline. Daniel Schmidt states people have to wait using obtaining a mortgage is not overnight to which Tyrone Russell interrupted and stated that is part of the problem. Rodney Bushe added folks are getting away from the conversation of race but the Redevelopment Authority's Board has been historically operated under racial terms that need to be addressed and a history that needs to be fixed. Daniel Schmidt objected to that statement and included the fact this is a new Board and the Authority has not and does not operate like that.

RESOLUTION: Rodney Bushe motioned to vote on the 2 proposals received for 725 N. 10th Street seconded by Rodney Bushe, Daniel Schmidt was in favor, Jessica Ortiz voted no.

RESOLUTION: Rodney Bushe motioned to deny the boxing gym proposal, seconded by Tyrone Russell, all were in favor.

RESOLUTION: Rodney Bushe motioned to accept the Islamic Society proposal, seconded by Tyrone Russell, Daniel Schmidt and Jessica Ortiz voted no.

Joshua Gildea this is a stale mate since there is not a 5th Board Member has not been appointed.

Tyrone Russell he voted in favor of the RFP but the decision was made in the haste and wants to make sure the board wants to do that. Daniel Schmidt said no he did not want to based on previous discussions and as of the workshop he did not think the board did either and the fair process is to RFP. Jessica Ortiz said it was not about who submitted the RFP or where they come from, it doesn't matter and we do need to make a decision. Tyrone Russell stated he thought about if the Authority has the capacity with the team that we have and is that what we are supposed to be doing. Jessica Ortiz stated her impression was we were going to keep the building and find collaboration with stakeholders to invest in our vision. Daniel Schmidt said his vision was to partner with someone on the first floor and put housing on the second floor. Milagros Canelés stated she was previously on the Authority's board and one of the struggles was sustainability and that's where partnering with a variety of non profits assisted and is excited to see the RFP. Milagros Caneles asked if the parking is included in the RFP and Megan Hart responded yes, the stoned lot is included and would need to be paved. Tyrone Russell stated the draft of the RFP indicates no mention of keeping the building and not a collaboration or specification to what we are looking for. Jessica Ortiz stated there are Fair Housing Regulations. Megan Hart stated the RFP was based on the conversation that changed to the Authority not keeping the building. Tyrone Russell stated parameters were cut off to cut certain people out to which Megan Hart said the RFP is so generalized on purpose to not exclude anyone. Tyrone Russell asked if there are things we can do to the RFP and what is language we can put in there. Jessica Ortiz said then we need to decide which way we are going with the building, lock it in and make it official and that's it instead of

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going back and forth. Tyrone Russell stated he is not comfortable with the verbiage. Daniel Schmidt stated the first question to answer is if we are asked the board which way they want to go with the building. Megan Hart stated the first question to answer is if we are keeping the building and this is like a tennis match going back and forth. Tyrone Russell stated this is what boards don't do because people like Megan Hart get offended by having cross conversation and challenging processes. Megan Hart stated if you want to change or challenge processes, be more involved because it won't be squared away in an hour meeting a month. Rodney said processes not conversation and labeling it as a table match is condensing and non productive. Megan Hart said this is not how we should be operating. Rodney Bushe said he welcomes conflict because good things are birthed from that. Tyrone Russell stated he is seeking clarification and looked to Joshua Gildea for guidance relating verbiage, so we do not fall into a trap of certain verbiage. Jessica Ortiz stated Megan Hart has asked us at every meeting which direction to take and said there was not even a conversation about what will be done with the property. Tyrone Russell asked for research to be done on the verbiage that can be used and please keep in mind he voted for the RFP.

Jessica Ortiz made a motion to table further discussions regarding 725 N. 10th Street which was not seconded.

Rodney Bushe asked for clarification of what conversation would be tabled because tabling all conversations sounds oppressive. Jessica Ortiz stated all conversations should be tabled until the board decides as the board what we are going to do. Rodney Bushe says he doesn't like to say all conversations. Joshua Gildea asked for clarification from Jessica Ortiz to which she answered she is proposing until a decision is made for what we are going to do with the building, it should be tabled.

RESOLUTION: Jessica Ortiz made a motion to table 725 N. 10th Street of public discussion until the Board decides on a use for the property, seconded by Daniel Schmidt, Rodney Bushe voted nay and Tyrone Russell abstained.

Megan Hart stated the submissions from the RFP for 332 N. Front Street will be due and is trying to determine who is going to be on the scoring committee. Jessica Ortiz asked since there was an issue with the RFP for 10th Street, will there be an issue for N. Front Street or is it just for 10th Street? Tyrone Russell stated he doesn't feel comfortable going back to the people that were already submitting and going forward investigate the policy of what we can do so we are not relying on broken systems that guide us and let's move forward with how this is and develop a scoring committee. Jessica Ortiz stated a few big community groups in that area are Casa Guadalupe and Cohesion as well as ward captains and Daniel Schmidt added neighbors. Tyrone Russell asked what the turnaround time is and Megan Hart stated 30-60 days. Jessica Ortiz asked if the highest scoring proposal automatically gets it and Megan Hart answered not necessarily, the highest bidder may not be the best.

Megan Hart asked if there were any questions regarding the Profit and Loss to which there were none.

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Megan Hart asked for any additional questions or comments. Tyrone Russell stated his comment is when we are getting into good work, if it too easy, we're doing something wrong. Scotty Smith stated he has been hearing the same comments over and over about redevelopment and how it was before and is tired of hearing that and takes it personally because he would not be part of that type of organization from things that happened over 50 years. Daniel Schmidt said moving forward, we need to be careful on verbiage and be respectful to each other, make sure there are fair and equitable process in order and we all need to be on the same page with clear discussion. Jessica Ortiz stated she wants to be part of change and healthy conversations but without confrontation. Rodney Bushe stated his focus is making sure we have detailed and deep conversations. Daniel Schmidt stated none of us were born in the 60's except Scotty Smith and is about moving forward and we can't make reparations for the past or give an advantage to someone for something in the past. Rodney Bushe stated we do have to correct the mistakes from the past and the folks disenfranchised. Tyrone Russell stated that is part of the reconciliation and the correction of the board is finding out where those broken policies still guide u and prevent us from being fair and equitable and we are talking about helping people out in forging our community forward and we're talking about purchasing property and we have the ability to be lenient on some of the costs we owe it to the Community to do so. Daniel Schmidt stated there are things in place including federal guidelines to which Tyrone Russell added that prevent equity and inclusion.

Public Comment

None

Adjournment

3:24 pm