



FITCHBURG REDEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY
renewing • revitalizing • rebuilding

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MEETING MINUTES

November 17, 2020

Fitchburg Redevelopment Authority Office
166 Boulder Drive, Suite 104 East, Fitchburg, Massachusetts

This meeting was conducted over Zoom.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Tom Donnelly, Chairman (*Joined at 8:07 a.m.*)
Jay Roy, Vice President
Charles Caron, Treasurer
Bud Leonhardt, Member
Laura Bayless, PhD, Member

OTHERS PRESENT: Michael Gonzalez, Eden Edibles
Mary Jo Bohart, Economic Development Director, City of Fitchburg
Meagen Donoghue, Executive Director, FRA
Tony Amico, Facilities Director, FRA
Jennifer Zumwalt, Bookkeeping Contractor, FRA

1. **MEETING CALL TO ORDER**

Treasurer Charles Caron called meeting to order 7:34 a.m.

2. **READING AND APPROVAL OF OCTOBER 20 AND NOVEMBER 12, 2020 MEETING MINUTES**

Mr. Leonhardt motioned to accept the Meeting Minutes from October 20 and November 12, 2020 and enter them into the FRA's minute's book. Seconded by Mr. Caron. The motion carried by 4-0 vote.

3. **BUDGET & FINANCE**

(1) **Bills to Pay**

Ms. Zumwalt informed the Board that all bills for this month are normal course. She also suggested looking closer at the individual bills rather than looking at a list and voting without explanation. Ms. Donoghue

suggested if Mr. Amico could provide a written summary of each bill to provide the background and better inform the Board prior to voting.

Mr. Leonhardt also asked about payments regarding the switchgear project. Mr. Amico explained the process of the project and indicated the fees were mostly related to labor.

Mr. Leonhardt also asked how long will the FRA be paying for Mrs. Curley's health insurance. Ms. Zumwalt indicated when former director Dan Curley passed away, his wife began receiving survivor retirement benefits. As a survivor, she is entitled to continue with the City's health insurance plan. She has the option for indefinite benefits, as she is considered a City survivor. If she chose to terminate her coverage with the city, that is fine, but in the future, she could come back during an open enrollment period and pick up City benefits again. As the employer, the FRA pays the City's employer portion of the health premium.

Mr. Leonhardt motioned to approve payment of the attached list of bills electronically. Seconded by Dr. Bayless. Motion carried 4-0.

4. GENERAL BUSINESS

A. 166 Boulder Drive Lease Opportunity

(1) Michael Gonzalez to Present

Ms. Donoghue introduced Mr. Michael Gonzalez from Eden Edibles who presented on a proposal for the cannabis company to lease space in Putnam Place. Mr. Gonzalez indicated his company is seeking to rent approximately 6,000 square feet and will be used for an artisanal kitchen to manufacture baked goods infused with extracted cannabis oils. Eden Edibles will be going for a manufacturer's license with the Cannabis Control Commission and the City to sell their products to stores in the region. Therefore, the space will not be a storefront. Mr. Gonzalez added that the space will have a commercial kitchen in the rear and offices in the front and would like the use of the loading dock (which is shared with the other tenants).

Mr. Caron and Mr. Leonhardt inquired about the smell. Mr. Gonzalez said the extracted oils are odorless and tasteless and are working with an architect on ventilation of the space. He added the chef will clean every day and the windows will be blacked out.

Mr. Caron asked what is necessary with the CDC regulations. Mr. Gonzalez said because the site would have a commercial kitchen, all CDC regulations have been taken into consideration. He added Eden Edibles is going through the permitting process with the City and after approval, the company will have to go through the State's process.

Mr. Caron stated he could not find the company listed with the state, but found it on social media. Mr. Gonzalez said the company is currently bringing together investors and once there is a partnership formed, then the LLC will be filed, but the company is on Facebook.

The Board thanked Mr. Gonzalez for his time and he left the discussion.

The Board later continued the discussion and asked Ms. Donoghue to get more information regarding the smell and if it will affect the other tenants.

B. Nextgrid Solar Proposal

(1) Ms. Donoghue indicated she spoke to Nextgrid's Mr. Culig who asked if the FRA was on a particular public entity list that would allow for solar. After doing research, Ms. Donoghue could not find the FRA on the list. Mr. Culig told Ms. Donoghue that because of this, he didn't want to waste the Board's time. He also said that Fitchburg State University was interning into an agreement with Nextgrid.

C. 642 River Street

(1) Opportunity to Purchase

Ms. Donoghue informed the Board that the broker for the property called to see if the FRA would be interested in purchasing the former Munksjo property and emailed the listing materials. She also went on a tour of the property the Friday before the meeting. After further discussion, the Board indicated they were not interested, but asked Ms. Donoghue to assist the broker if needed.

Mr. Roy motioned to have the FRA purchase the property at 642 River Street. Seconded by Mr. Donnelly. The motion failed by 0-5 vote.

D. 0 Airport Road

Ms. Donoghue explained she had not heard from the attorney for Tango in months, even after reaching out. Ms. Donoghue and Ms. Bohart also discussed how this issue is important in terms of

MassDevelopment's Site Readiness Program. The Board suggested having Ms. Donoghue call the civil engineer.

E. Putnam Place

(1) River Styx

Ms. Donoghue shared the request from the owners of River Styx to defer their loans and rent. Mr. Donnelly suggested deferring until spring, however, Mr. Roy stated there is no telling when the current economic situation may end. Ms. Zumwalt asked about their open bills.

Ms. Zumwalt suggested getting clarification on their lease and current bill situation and she and Charles will meet to devise a strategy for the request and will report at the next meeting.

(2) Facilities Update

Mr. Amico indicated he provided the update during the discussion of the bills.

F. Funding Requests

(1) Music for Youth

Ms. Donoghue summarized to request that was discussed at October's meeting and updated the Board with the information she received from the organizer of the effort. Specifically, there is no need to get a building permit for a temporary stage that is being built at The Boulder, the money will go into a general fund to pay for various expenses and the timeline was pushed because some members of the organization contracted Covid-19.

The Board requested Ms. Donoghue find out for December's meeting if there are any other donation sources, how many kids are involved and to suggest CDBG funding as well.

5. ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT

(1) Ms. Donoghue stated she and Mr. Amico met with City Officials to discuss their move to City Hall and when the lease with the FRA will end. She noted the City intends to be fully out of the space by January 31, 2021.

(2) Mr. Donnelly discussed 61 and 62 Snow Street after having a conversation with Mr. Krikorian who showed interest in the two properties. With Mr. Krikorian's project at 49 Snow, he is looking to add

additional parking by obtaining the properties and may be interested in the FRA's property on the other side of the red house. Mr. Krikorian will be talking with the owners of the red house to see if there is an interest in selling, but if not, would the FRA be interested in taking the property through eminent domain. The Board discussed waiting to see what happens with Mr. Krikorian's discussion with the property owner.

Mr. Caron left at 9:27 a.m.

(3) Mr. Roy asked about the marquee signage over the doors at Putnam Place. Ms. Donoghue indicated she would look into it.

6. ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Donnelly motioned adjourn the meeting. Seconded by Mr. Roy. The motion carried by 4-0 vote.

NEXT MEETING SCHEDULED: December 15, 2020

Respectfully submitted,

Meagen P. Donoghue
Executive Director