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MEETING MINUTES

October 18, 2022
Fitchburg Redevelopment Authority Office
166 Boulder Drive, Suite 104 East, Fitchburg, Massachusetts

Meeting held in person and via Zoom

MEMBERS PRESENT: Charles Caron, Chair
Jay Roy, Vice Chair
Laura O’Kane, Member

OTHERS PRESENT: Hayley Palazola, Project Manager, GFI Properties
Bob LaRochelle, GFI Properties
Scott Cullen, Owner, River Styx Brewing
Mary Jo Bohart, Economic Development Director, City of Fitchburg
(arrived at 7:44 a.m.)
Meagen Donoghue, Executive Director, FRA
Tony Amico, Facilities Manager, FRA
Sarah Stebulis, Business Administrator, FRA

1. MEETING CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Caron called meeting to order at 7:31 a.m.

2. READING AND APPROVAL OF REGULAR MEETING MINUTES FROM SEPTEMBER 20, 2022

Ms. O’Kane motioned to accept the regular meeting minutes from September 20, 2022 and enter them into the FRA’s minute’s book. Seconded by Mr. Roy. The motion carried by 3-0 vote.

3. READING AND APPROVAL OF EXECUTIVE SESSION MEETING MINUTES FROM OCTOBER 7, 2022

Ms. O’Kane motioned to accept the executive session meeting minutes from October 7, 2022 and enter them into the FRA’s minute’s book. Seconded by Mr. Caron. Mr. Roy Abstained. The motion carried by 2-0 vote.

Ms. O’Kane motioned to release the executive session meeting minutes from October 7, 2022. Seconded by Mr. Caron. Mr. Roy Abstained. The motion held by 2-0 vote.

4. BUDGET AND FINANCE

1. Summary Report

Ms. Stebulis stated all bills were on normal course. Ms. Stebulis provided the Board with a report of the budget vs. actual accounts receivable/payable. She said there are some inaccuracies which she is aware of, but this is a good tool to get an idea of if we are on track for the year and will also help us in creating a more accurate budget for upcoming years.

Mr. Caron motioned to approve the payment of the attached list of bills. Seconded by Mr. Roy. Motion carried by 3-0 vote.

5. GENERAL BUSINESS

A. 0 Airport Road

1. Update from GFI Properties Project Manager Hayley Palazola

Ms. Palazola updated the Board that PFAs were found in the property's soil and because of this it effected the zoned site use. The building proposed will be a distribution warehouse with multiple users. She also stated that they have come to an agreement with abutter at 20 Crawford Street. GFI is requesting an extension of 90 days for the permitting period with a 30 day closing thereafter. For this extension, they will provide the FRA with an additional \$50,000 deposit.

Mr. Caron motioned to approve the 90 day extension for the permitting period for 0 Airport Road. Seconded by Ms. O'Kane. Motion carried by 3-0 vote.

Hayley Palazola and Bob LaRochelle, left the meeting at 7:41 a.m.

B. Putnam Place

1. River Styx

a. Discuss Mechanics Lien regarding FRA Lease

Scott Cullen updated the Board on River Styx's progress on coming to a resolution on outstanding legal issues with their former contractor, Stack & Co. Mr. Roy asked if Stack & Co. will be the ones fixing the outstanding issues. Mr. Cullen stated that once an agreement is reached, Stack & Co. will do the site repairs. Mr. Caron asked if there is a mechanical lien on the property currently. Mr. Cullen stated that only a statement of account has been filed and they are currently in the 90-day waiting period to work out a resolution. He said both attorneys are working diligently and he feels confident that it will be resolved in a timely manner, well before that waiting period expires. The Board thanked Mr. Cullen for the update.

Scott Cullen left the meeting at 7:51 a.m.

2. Car Charging Stations

The Board was provided with 3 different options for level 3 (high speed) charging stations. Mr. Caron asked for the pricing of level 2 to compare. Mr. Roy asked if Mr. Amico could put together a more comprehensive presentation of the differences between the two options. Ms. Donoghue stated that we can have Kristin from the energy non-profit that we work with present to the Board at the next meeting.

3. Temporary Library Space Update

Ms. Donoghue stated that the Letter of Intent has been signed by the mayor. A lease is currently being drawn up with a start date of November 1, 2022. The library does not want Suites 102 and 103 as part of the package, so they remain available for lease.

C. Funding Requests

1. Fitchburg Holiday Lights

Ms. Donoghue stated that we donated \$1,000 last year to this event. Mr. Roy said he likes that we support this event and wishes there could be a year round lighting initiative downtown. Ms. O’Kane stated that current codes make that difficult as the lights are seen as temporary.

Mr. Roy motioned to donate \$1,000 to Fitchburg’s Holiday Lights. Seconded by Ms. O’Kane. Motion carried by 3-0 vote.

2. Rotary Breakfast for the Bands

Ms. Donoghue stated that we donated \$350 last year to this program. Mr. Roy stated that if we don’t already have a corporate banner with our new logo, we should get one to display.

Mr. Roy motioned to donate \$300.00 to Rotary Breakfast for the Bands. Seconded by Ms. O’Kane. Motion carried by 3-0 vote.

6. ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT

A. Facilities Update

Mr. Amico stated that the roof over DRS is almost complete. This has led the FRA to hold weekly meetings with DRS from now on to make sure that the communication between the two improves. Mr. Amico said that ADA front door openers by the Registry of Deeds entrance are currently being replaced as the ones installed are no longer serviceable. He stated that the glass at the atrium of the Registry of Deeds was also replaced, but more window work still needs to be done. Mr. Roy asked if JR Glass will be evaluating the entire building. Mr. Amico said they are working through problem areas to start, but then will assess the rest of the building. Replacing these problem windows will hopefully also be a heat and air conditioning savings once repaired.

Mr. Amico said the library is interested in using some of the cubicles in the space they will be occupying. For the remaining cubicles, we may need to rent a container to store them. Mr. Roy suggested hiring out that labor as an option so Mr. Amico didn’t have to do it all himself. Ms. Donoghue also suggested that local prison maybe be able to help with this work as well.

Mr. Amico stated that the back of the building has been cleaned up. Mr. Roy asked if there is fencing we can use that cannot be cut by the homeless population using that area as a pass through. Mr. Amico stated that they have been just pulling the fence to the side as of now, not cutting it. Mr. Roy said that is probably better because once it can’t be pulled, it could potentially then be cut, causing more damage.

Mr. Amico said that DRS has an interior rain drain that goes into the concrete inside the building which has been leaking. He is unsure where the pipe leads to. DRS is requesting to have it fixed. Mr. Amico stated that we should hire out someone who can send a camera down to determine if its clogged or if the pipe has collapsed, so we know the best way to proceed in fixing the issue.

B. Business Administrator's Update

Ms. Stebulis stated that the most recent FRA Connector newsletter has been completed and added to our website and social media. She begins the Community Leadership Institute this Thursday and is excited to represent the FRA. The Audit has recently been completed and she worked closely with Mark Mueller to finalize entries in QuickBooks. Ms. Stebulis stated we continue to reach out to Workers Credit Union to update our accounts and it has been a very difficult process and the service has not been consistent or helpful. She recommended looking into moving the account to a different financial institution once the paperwork is completed, and the Board agreed that it would be good to look at other banking institutions and their rates.

C. Executive Director's Update

Ms. Donoghue said she would be representing the FRA at an upcoming citywide resource fair. She also said that she will set up a table on October 29 for InTown Fitchburg's downtown trick or treating event.

There have been seven (7) applicants for the Critical Needs Grant, all of which are Main Street properties. Ms. Donoghue asked if the Board would like to be involved in selecting the finalists, which all Board members agreed that they were interested in participating in.

The due diligence period for Building 3 ends on October 25th. The appraisal was not complete and needs to be redone, so they will probably be back to the Board to request an extension. Mr. Roy asked if we knew what the appraisal came in at, and Ms. Donoghue stated that we do not as that is property of the bank.

Ms. Donoghue stated that Senator Cronin has earmarked \$750,000 for the redevelopment of the Johnsonia lot at 520 Main Street, to hopefully spur interest in not only that site, but neighboring buildings in need of redevelopment.

Mary Jo Bohart left the meeting at 8:54 a.m.

7. ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Caron motioned to adjourn the Regular Board meeting at 8:56 p.m. Seconded by Ms. O'Kane.
The motion carried 3-0.

NEXT MEETING SCHEDULED: November 15, 2022

Respectfully submitted,

Sarah U. Stebulis
Business Administrator