



FITCHBURG REDEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY
renewing • revitalizing • rebuilding

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MEETING MINUTES

December 20, 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: Paul Tocci, Tocci Group
Joe Fergusson, Executive Director, InTown Fitchburg
Liz Murphy, Director of Housing and Development, City of Fitchburg
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 7:34 a.m.

2. READING AND APPROVAL OF REGULAR MEETING MINUTES FROM NOVEMBER 15, 2022

Ms. O’Kane motioned to accept the regular meeting minutes from November 15, 2022 and enter them into the FRA’s minute’s book. Seconded by Mr. Roy. The motion carried by 3-0 vote.

3. BUDGET AND FINANCE

A. Summary Report

Ms. Stebulis stated all bills were on normal course. She stated that there was one addition to the list of bills to pay, which is a reimbursement to Meagen Donoghue for \$21.77.

Mr. Roy motioned to approve the payment of the attached list of bills with addition of reimbursement to Ms. Donoghue. Seconded by Ms. O’Kane. Motion carried by 3-0 vote.

4. GENERAL BUSINESS

A. Developer Introduction

1. Paul Tocci of the Tocci Group to present

Mr. Tocci introduced himself and thanked the Board for their recent granting of the Critical Infrastructure Grant for his property at 298-300 Main Street. He gave a brief history of his company and his mission to continue his father's dreams of redeveloping buildings in Fitchburg. He stated that the cost of the required sprinkler systems is about half of his construction budget, which would have made the project unfeasible, which is why he is so appreciative of the FRA's work and available grants. He hopes this redevelopment will also help to spur interest in banks financing more projects downtown. Mr. Caron asked if he is in a contract with a sprinkler company yet. Mr. Tocci said he has three companies that he is currently working on the system with: one for design, one for interior connection and one for exterior connection.

B. Memorandum of Understanding with InTown Fitchburg

1. Joe Fergusson, Executive Director of InTown Fitchburg to present
Mr. Fergusson discussed the Memorandum of Understanding between InTown Fitchburg and the Fitchburg Redevelopment Authority towards the common goal of the beautification of downtown and the impact it has in sending the message about where the city is headed. Through the MOU, the FRA will act as the fiscal agent for a strategic fundraising campaign. Last year InTown was able to purchase urban based self-watering planters and hanging baskets. With the expansion of the cannabis industry in Fitchburg, cannabis companies are required to put money back into their communities and InTown is hoping to tap into some of those funds to help continue and maintain downtown beautification efforts. Ms. Donoghue also added that beautification is included in our Urban Renewal Plan. Mr. Roy asked what the next steps are. Mr. Fergusson stated that he and Ms. Donoghue would be project managing together, working to get local garden groups involved and to create a schedule and fundraising plan. Mr. Caron asked if there were any other grants that he is currently pursuing. Mr. Fergusson said yes, but the main one he applied for recently he was not granted. Ms. Donoghue added that grants have become very hard to secure lately, especially since Fitchburg has received so much funding in the past. She stated that the Board just needs to approve this partnership to move forward. Mr. Roy stated that he has no issue approving the partnership but was curious what the DPW was responsible for downtown, particularly in regards with mulching, which is a constant issue for the fire department, and they get mulch fire calls almost daily. Mr. Caron stated the DPW's limited funding doesn't allow them to keep the downtown to the caliber that many would like to see. He added that increased signage would be a great next step for downtown. Ms. Murphy added that upgraded wayfinding is on the horizon for downtown. Mr. Caron added that he would hope the focus of the partnership not be only on Main Street, but also the surrounding streets.

Mr. Roy motioned to approve the Memorandum of Understanding between InTown Fitchburg and the Fitchburg Redevelopment Authority. Seconded by Ms. O'Kane. Motion carried by 3-0 vote.

C. Putnam Place

1. Continued discussion of EV Charging Stations
Mr. Caron suggested holding off on further discussion of this until Dr. Bayless and Jay Bry are able to be present. Ms. Murphy stated that Ms. Bohart has received an inquiry from someone who wants to bring charging stations to the city, but does not yet have a proposed site, and it was just mentioned as a preliminary interest inquiry.
2. River Styx

Ms. Donoghue updated the Board that River Styx has informed her they are working towards a legal solution, and they expect the lien issue to dissolve.

3. Library Lease

The library lease has been sent to and approved by Library Director, Deb Hinkle. It also has been approved by the Library Board of Trustees. It is currently at the mayor's office awaiting signatures. The estimated move in date will be February 1, 2023.

D. FRA Property Updates

1. 0 Airport Road

There was an oversight regarding the 4.6 Acres of land sold by the FRA to Tango with the stipulation that they do environmental work on the extra property. Somehow FRA's Order of Conditions form was not sent to us originally and has just been received and signed. From here there is a 10-day appeal period and a 90-day waiting period.

2. Building 3

Ms. Donoghue updated the board that the contract has still not been signed by Mr. Coull for Building 3. The Board all agreed that it is time to move on from this deal and Ms. O'Kane suggested creating a new RFP for the property as soon as possible. Mr. Caron asked if we are legally out of the deal with Mr. Coull. Ms. Donoghue stated that as of January 31, 2023, if the contract is still unsigned, then the deal is off.

Mr. Roy motioned to approve the creation a new Request for Proposals for 200 Boulder Drive once we are out of contract with Mr. Coull. Seconded by Ms. O'Kane. Motion carried by 3-0 vote.

E. Funding Requests

1. FAM Annual Corporate Sponsorship Renewal

The Fitchburg Art Museum has sent a request for renewal of the FRA's corporate sponsorship. Last year we donated \$1,000.

Mr. Roy motioned to approve \$1,000 corporate sponsorship to the Fitchburg Art Museum. Seconded by Ms. O'Kane. Motion carried by 3-0 vote.

5. ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT

A. Facilities Update

DRS has secured Morse Plumbing to repair the rain drains that are leaking into their space. They are requesting the FRA pay for the repair, which is estimated to be around \$10,000.

Mr. Caron motioned to approve the payment of up to \$10,000 for the repair of the DRS drain. Seconded by Ms. O'Kane. Motion carried by 3-0 vote.

Mr. Amico stated that the individual exterior lighted building signs have been separated and are now individually controlled by each unit. He updated that Board that DRS is upgrading the floor and support structure in the main bay to allow for it to support 60 tons.

Mr. Amico said that glycol has been ordered for the system. He is also continuing to work on the RFP for the project manager for the switch gear project. Mr. Caron asked for an update on the switch gear project. The option of disconnecting Building 3 from the Building 2 switch gears was

discussed, and it was agreed that it would be better to keep Building 3 on the same power source so we could lease the building in the future.

B. Business Administrator's Update

Ms. Stebulis stated she has been working to close out Fiscal Year in 2022 in QuickBooks to make this year's audit an even smoother process. She is working on content for the next edition of the FRA Connector newsletter. She has arranged with Enterprise Bank to open our new Money Market account after January 1, to maximize our current interest due at Worker's Credit Union, which posts are the end of the month. Ms. Stebulis is also working to review and update the FRA Employee Manual and once ready, she will share with the Board for their feedback.

C. Executive Director's Update

Ms. Donoghue is planning to issue the 2023 Food Truck RFP in January, so trucks have more time to plan and apply. She stated there has been interest in Suite 102 by a lab who is working on a proposal for the space. Suite 103 also has interest by local muralist John Allen.

Ms. Donoghue announced that Maribel Cruz will be joining the Board and that she will be a great addition. Ms. Donoghue also invited Ms. Murphy to give the board updates on what the city is working on in the interest of being better community partners.

Paul Tocci left at 8:56 a.m.

Ms. Donoghue stated that she had a meeting with Mary Heafy of The Arc regarding her building at 564 Main Street and the \$700,000 earmarked for the redevelopment of 520 Main Street area. It was productive and a good opening to seeing what her upcoming needs may be.

Ms. Donoghue continues to work on the MEPA approval process. The directions to submit have become increasingly difficult, with additional approvals from the Planning Board and Conservation Commission now necessary, as well as at least 30-day posting times. We are also in an environmental justice area, which means we have a 90-day posting time, as well as requiring the documents to be translated into multiple languages. Ms. Donoghue has a meeting with the MEPA office on January 5th to discuss and clarify details.

Ms. Donoghue suggested that the FRA send flowers to Dr. Bayless.

Mr. Caron motioned to send flowers to Dr. Bayless from the FRA. Seconded by Mr. Roy. Motion carried by 3-0 vote.

6. ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Caron motioned to adjourn the Regular Board meeting at 9:21 a.m. Seconded by Mr. Roy. The motion carried 3-0.

NEXT MEETING SCHEDULED: January 17, 2023

Respectfully submitted,

Sarah U. Stebulis
Business Administrator