



FITCHBURG REDEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY
renewing • revitalizing • rebuilding

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MEETING MINUTES

October 17, 2023

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

Meeting held in Person and via Zoom

MEMBERS PRESENT: Jay Roy, Vice Chair
Maribel Cruz, Treasurer
Laura O’Kane, Member

OTHERS PRESENT: Liz Murphy, Community Development & Planning Director, City of Fitchburg
MaryJo Bohart, Economic Development Director, City of Fitchburg
Meagen Donoghue, Executive Director, FRA
Sarah Stebulis, Business Administrator, FRA
Bob Hasche, Facilities Manager, FRA

1. MEETING CALL TO ORDER

Vice Chairman Roy called meeting to order at 7:32 a.m.

2. READING AND APPROVAL OF REGULAR MEETING MINUTES FROM SEPTEMBER 19, 2023 AND SEPTEMBER 26, 2023, AND VOTE TO APPROVE AND RELEASE EXECUTIVE SESSION MEETING MINUTES FROM SEPTEMBER 19 & 26, 2023, AND VOTE TO RELEASE EXECUTIVE SESSION MEETING MINUTES FROM AUGUST 15, 2023.

Ms. O’Kane motioned to accept the regular meeting minutes and executive session meeting minutes from September 19 & 26, 2023 and enter them into the FRA’s minute’s book. Seconded by Ms. Cruz. The motion carried by 3-0 vote.

Ms. O’Kane motioned to release the executive session meeting minutes from September 19, 2023. Seconded by Ms. Cruz. The motion held by 0-3 vote.

Ms. O’Kane motioned to release the executive session meeting minutes from September 26, 2023. Seconded by Ms. Cruz. The motion held by 0-3 vote.

Ms. O’Kane motioned to release the executive session meeting minutes from August 15, 2023. Seconded by Ms. Cruz. The motion held by 0-3 vote.

3. BUDGET AND FINANCE

A. Summary Report

Ms. Stebulis stated all bills were on normal course. She added that there were two edits to the list of bills provided to the Board: First being to Either Lock - payment should be edited to reflect \$68, not \$25. Also, to add an additional invoice to be paid to Either Lock in the amount of \$710.

Ms. O’Kane motioned to approve the payment of the attached list of bills with stated amendments. Seconded by Ms. Cruz. Motion carried by 3-0 vote.

4. GENERAL BUSINESS

A. Iver Johnson Development Request - CONTINUED

At our last meeting, IVJ Group requested to use Senator Cronin’s \$750,000 allocation to help close their fundraising gap. Ms. Donoghue stated that they have received funding from the Underutilized Properties Program through MassDevelopment. Mr. Roy asked if Ms. Donoghue could speak to Senator Cronin about where he wants the money to go and if he wants it to go to the Iver Johnson Project. Ms. Cruz agreed that it’s important to get that project funded and moving forward. Mr. Roy said that if the Senator wants the money to go towards that, he is fine with it and he agrees that it’s a priority to get done in Fitchburg.

B. Sculpture Park at 520 Main Street - Continued

Ms. Donoghue has been working on a Memorandum of Understanding with Tamar Russell-Brown of the Fitchburg Cultural Council for a 2-year sculpture park at 520 Main Street. Funding to pay sculptors still needs to be secured. Ms. Murphy said she could request that the Mayor get an allocation of free cash to pay for that if possible, or she could look into CBDG funds if sculptures can be placed throughout downtown. Mr. Roy asked if it is possible to make it a mixed use space that could attract more people and activity. He thinks the use should be expanded and not just be used as a sculpture park. There was a discussion that Creative Cities is also interested in using the property and does have funding secured, and will also have a quicker turnaround timeline. Mr. Roy asked Ms. Donoghue to reach out to Creative Cities, as he is not ready to approve just a sculpture park for the site. The Board will continue discussions at the next meeting.

C. Design Grant Program

1. 423 Main Street – Victor Vicioso Frias – Mamajuana Restaurant

Ms. O’Kane motioned to approve the design grant for \$2,000 to Mamajuana. Seconded by Ms. Cruz. Motion carried by 3-0 vote.

D. Funding Request

1. Fitchburg Cultural Alliance – 45th Anniversary Event

Mr. Roy motioned to approve the contribution of \$250 to the Fitchburg Cultural Alliance's 45th Anniversary Event. Seconded by Ms. O'Kane. Motion carried by 3-0 vote.

2. Rotary “Breakfast with the Bands”

Mr. Roy motioned to approve the contribution of \$150 to Rotary's Breakfast with the Bands. Seconded by Ms. O'Kane. Motion carried by 3-0 vote.

5. ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT

A. Business Administrator's Update

Ms. Stebulis has been working on reviewing and cleaning out the FRA's files stored in Suite 103 ahead of it being rented. She presented the Board with an interest rate comparison from Enterprise Bank which shows the earned interest difference between our current accounts and the IntraFI accounts which offer higher FDIC coverage. The Board asked if Ms. Stebulis could inquire about better rates or at least matching rates to what we currently have based on our investment.

B. Facility Manager Update

Mr. Hasche reported that the roof drain repair approved at the last meeting has increased by \$3,000 to allow for better fitting pipe parts. The parking lot has been sealed and stripped. The job ended up being significantly larger than the contractor expected, so the area in front of Building 3 has not been done. The RFQ for the switch gear project is ready to post. Sprinkler repairs approved at the last meeting will be happening this week. Trespassing has become an issue onsite and no trespassing signs and brush removal by our landscape company has been completed to reduce likelihood of trespassing. This will be regularly maintained from now on. Mr. Hasche reached out to 3 pest control companies and only one was willing to take on our building, he is currently gathering materials to start on site and maintain monthly. The building will have a power shut down on November 8 so that Unitil can update their systems; all tenants have been contacted about this.

The HVAC system has been fired up and at this time both the chillers and boilers need to run at the same time to maintain proper settings. Mr. Hasche will be looking into how to change this and hopefully it is a simple fix, like a programming issue.

All suites have been having water damage / seepage from improper drainage where the sidewalk is pitched towards the building. He is having these regraded with concrete to temporarily fix the issue.

Bob Hasche left the meeting at 7:58 a.m.

C. Executive Director's Update

Ms. Donoghue updated the Board that she has met with the Registry of Deeds and they plan

to reduce their space. DRS and others have already expressed interest if that space becomes available. She is setting up at the Community Resource Fair representing the FRA. She and Ms. Stebulis will be setting up at the upcoming Trick or Treat on Main Street for the FRA.

Ms. Donoghue received a call from Bill McSheehy inquiring if we knew about vacant space that the Salvation Army could use for toy collection as they have lost the location that previously had secured. Ms. Donoghue stated that the FRA will be donating use of Suite 102 from late October through mid-December to the Salvation Army. She also updated that she spoke to Paul Tocci and they are currently working on the sprinkler update; ground has been broken and they expect it will be completed soon.

6. PLANNING & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT UPDATE

Ms. Murphy stated that they are looking to pull together business owners downtown in mid-November to share the market study and to work together on a cohesive way that they can manage and promote downtown businesses for the holiday season.

Because of the then approved dumping of street sweepings and as a police shooting range at the 0 Airport Road site and current changes to what is accepted for disposal, the EPA has now stated that the city cannot use funds to assess the site.

491 Main Street has been sold to the Colon family. They plan to turn it into a restaurant, performance space, office space, and a few rental units.

Ms. Bohart informed the Board that there is an economic development presentation to the City Council which covers progress that has been made in the last 5 years. This can be seen on FATV. There is also a slide deck of accomplishments on the City's website. These are both interesting to watch to see how much change has been made downtown in just 5 years.

Liz Murphy and MaryJo Bohart left the meeting at 8:57 a.m.

7. EXECUTIVE SESSION

1. M.G.L. c. 30A, §21 allows for any discussion of the lease of real property that may have a detrimental effect on the negotiating position of the public body.

Mr. Roy motioned to enter the executive session Board meeting at 9:00 a.m. Seconded by Ms. O'Kane. The motion carried 3-0.

8. ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Roy motioned to adjourn the Regular Board meeting at 9:37 a.m. Seconded by Ms. O'Kane. Motion carried 3-0.

NEXT MEETING SCHEDULED: November 21, 2023

Respectfully submitted,

Sarah U. Stebulis
Business Administrator