



FITCHBURG REDEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY
renewing • revitalizing • rebuilding

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MEETING MINUTES

November 20, 2024
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
Maribel Cruz, Treasurer
Laura O’Kane, Member
Laura Bayless, Member

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

1. MEETING CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Caron called meeting to order at 7:35 a.m.

2. READING AND APPROVAL OF REGULAR MEETING MINUTES FROM OCTOBER 16, 2024

Ms. Cruz motioned to accept the regular meeting minutes from October 16, 2024 and enter them into the FRA’s minute book. Seconded by Ms. O’Kane. The motion carried by 3-0 vote. Dr. Bayless abstained.

3. BUDGET AND FINANCE

A. Summary Report

Ms. Stebulis stated all bills were on normal course.

Ms. O’Kane motioned to approve the payment of the attached list of bills. Seconded by Ms. Cruz. Motion carried by 4-0 vote.

4. GENERAL BUSINESS

A. Local Delegation Earmark

1. Discuss and Vote to Accept

Ms. Donoghue stated that our local delegation has again secured us a \$750,000 earmark in the upcoming budget. Senator Cronin has some ideas of which projects he would like it allocated to, including Nick Pelletier’s project on Main Street and Paul Tocci’s YMCA project.

2. Discuss and Vote to Allocate

Ms. O’Kane motioned to accept the \$750,000 earmark and allocate it under the direction of Senator Cronin. Seconded by Ms. Cruz. Motion carried by 4-0 vote.

Mr. Roy arrived at 7:51 a.m.

B. Fundraising Request

1. Annual Renewal of the Fitchburg Art Museum Corporate Sponsorship

Ms. O’Kane motioned to continue FRA’s Corporate Sponsorship of the Fitchburg Art Museum for \$1,000. Seconded by Dr. Bayless. Motion carried by 5-0 vote.

2. Rotary “Breakfast for the Bands”

Ms. O’Kane motioned to donate \$250 to the Rotary’s “Breakfast for the Bands” fundraiser. Seconded by Ms. Cruz. Motion carried by 5-0 vote.

3. Fitchburg Holiday Lights Ceremony

Mr. Roy motioned to donate \$2,500 to Fitchburg’s Holiday Lights. Seconded by Ms. Cruz. Motion carried by 5-0 vote.

4. MOC Holiday Cheer

Ms. O’Kane motioned to donate \$100 to MOC’s Holiday Cheer Gift Distribution. Seconded by Mr. Roy. Motion carried by 5-0 vote.

Dr. Bayless left the meeting at 8:00 a.m.

C. 60th Anniversary Open House

1. Discuss Details

Ms. Donoghue opened a discussion about ideas for celebrating the FRA’s 60th anniversary before the end of the year. The Board discussed and agreed on having an open house on

Thursday, December 12th from 4pm-7pm. The FRA will have catered appetizers by a local business.

Ms. O’Kane motioned to allocate the remaining \$1,900 in the gifts/donations budget for catering of FRA open house event. Seconded by Ms. Cruz. Motion carried by 4-0 vote.

D. Administrative Reports

1. Business Administrator’s Update

Ms. Stebulis stated that the latest FRA Connector Newsletter was sent out to our mailing list via MailChimp this week, as well as posted on our website and social media. There will be another newsletter in December as well. She spent a lot of time and attention this month making sure our website is updated. The data entry for the GASB software is nearly complete.

Ms. Stebulis left the meeting at 8:15 a.m.

2. Facility Manager Update

Mr. Hasche discussed the moving of the historic GE turbine located on the Library’s which will include excavation due to the intricacies of the base. Ms. Donoghue suggested she reach out to the Historical Society to see if there are any grants to put toward this project.

The next item to be discussed was roof repairs. Mr. Hasche indicated the repairs are complete, but he wants to see a rainstorm to see if fixed.

He also discussed that drywall needed to be done, which was accomplished.

Mr. Hasche indicated there is only one key for the former brewery space and asked who is responsible for new keys. Mr. Caron requested having all front doors re-keyed.

Gridwealth is looking to put solar on the roof and will give provide advice and repair of the roof. Also, the FRA will receive \$60,000 monthly. However, none of the electricity would go to the building.

Mr. Hasche discussed the demolition of the power plant. He stated he was looking for a DCAM approved company to see how far the grant money (\$250,000) will go.

Parking lot holes are filled and playground equipment is out of Building 3. Sprinkler and backflow drains are being looked at. Mr. Hasche said he had a discussion with a roofer who suggested putting drains in that would empty on both sides of the building. He indicated he did not like this and supports having the current internal system updated.

3. Executive Director's Update

Ms. Donoghue spoke of the ribbon cutting event that Paul Tocci held and participating in Trick or Treat on Main Street. . She also talked about the Library lease has been renewed for another year, and she alerted the Registry of Deeds theirs is due in 2025. Ms. Donoghue also indicated the DEP visited the property to ensure that the GE contractors who are monitoring the internal sub slab flooring contamination that the AUL must be updated to state the measures being taken. The FRA was not part of this walk-through, but was notified of the visit.

5. PLANNING & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT UPDATE

Ms. Liz Murphy Executive Director of the Office of Planning and Community Development for the City stated that at the previous night's dual meeting with the Planning Board and the City Council meeting, the MBTA Communities agenda item was approved to move forward. She also spoke of the MASSInc. Housing Monitoring Report, which can be found on their website. The document really digs into how Gateway Cities can be a part of the solution for the housing crisis. Mr. Caron suggested changing the ordinance in Fitchburg to allow for mobile homes. Ms. Murphy followed with Accessory Dwelling Units (ADU) were approved state-wide.

She also indicated that Mr. Bill Krikorian has a buyer for both Main and Snow Streets properties but will have to go before the Planning Board again as his Special Permits had since expired.

Ms. Murphy is meeting with the new president at Fitchburg State University. President Hodge is committed to sharing funding for a new Downtown Coordinator. They are hoping with the Downtown Vitality Act funding will be available for the position.

Creative Cities is hosting the Creative Network Summit in February, a day-long event to bring creatives together. The event will be held at the Senior Center and Christ Church.

Harold Mateo recently purchased 350-356 Main Street. Ms. Murphy opined that his proof of concept will have to prove that he can redevelop a mixed-use property.

Ms. Murphy met with Leo Zaris regarding the K-Mart property. He is proposing a hotel and housing.

The Superior Court RFP is moving forward. DCAM is drafting a land disposition agreement. It will have to go through the MEPA process.

Dr. Bayless motioned to end and not return to the regular meeting and go into Executive Session, . Seconded by Mr. Roy. Motion carried by 5-0 vote.

6. EXECUTIVE SESSION

7. ADJOURNMENT

NEXT MEETING SCHEDULED: December 18, 2024

Respectfully submitted,

Sarah U. Stebulis
Business Administrator