



Westfield Redevelopment Authority Meeting

January 4, 2022

Municipal Building, 59 Court Street, Westfield, MA, Room 315
8:00 AM.

MEMBERS PRESENT

STAFF

MEMBERS ABSENT

Kathy Witalisz, Chair

Peter J. Miller, Acting Executive Director

William Parks, Vice-Chair

Christine Fedora, Office Manager

Mark Morin

Tom Woodson

1.) Roll call

Chair Witalisz called the meeting of the Westfield Redevelopment Authority to order at 8:04 am. The above members were in attendance.

Chair Witalisz stated Acting Executive Director Peter Miller did a stellar job on the letter to Mayor McCabe. Members agreed.

2.) Approve minutes of December 14, 2021.

Chair Witalisz asked members if there are any changes or additions to the minutes of December 14, 2021.

Member Parks MOTIONED, seconded by Member Woodson to approve the December 14, 2021 meeting minutes. Chair Witalisz asked if there was any further discussion, there being none. The motion was unanimously approved.

3.) Reports of Committees

a. WRA Financial Summary

Mr. Miller stated nothing has changed since the Board's last meeting. The additional funding will be forwarded to the Council in February. No additional expenditures.

4.) Report of the Executive Director

Mr. Miller stated the letter for Mayor McCabe has been signed and forwarded to him. Within the next few weeks Mr. Miller will submit possible uses for the ARPA funding that would be beneficial to the downtown. He further noted there will be a committee to determine what the ARPA funding will be used for, one of the committee members will be Tammy Tefft.

Mr. Miller stated Mayor Humason allocated the first half of the ARPA funding, his portion was 8.5 million, there is a balance that has not been allocated in the amount of 80,000.00. Of the first portion of the ARPA funding the Mayor has allocated \$500,000.00 to Community Development.

- 250,000.00 will be used to help small businesses.
- 75,000.00 will be for agencies dealing with tourism to supplement existing organizations.
- 175,000.00 towards public service agencies.

The bulk of the Mayor Humason's funding is going towards Stormwater, sewer projects and the culvert on City View Road.

Chair Witalisz asked if it would be possible to hire an intern to help out. This generated a brief discussion regarding hiring interns, or consultants. After discussion it was felt the discussion regarding interns/consultants should be put off until there is something more definite lined up.

Mr. Miller was hoping with the next 8 million the city will be able to get some funding for the WRA parcel to help subsidize the first floor of a development. He further noted it would be the same amount of work for the WRA whether it's 6,000. or 6 million dollars.

Member Woodson felt without seed money they will be not able to get interest from developers. Members felt they should be aggressive and express reasons why they need the funding and felt they should have something concrete to ask the money for.

Mr. Miller felt a slideshow about the work of the WRA would be beneficial such things to include would be:

- Projects & parcels description
 - ✓ History
 - Elm Street Commons
 - Reid Hotel
 - Utile Project
 - ✓ Parcel assembly portion
 - Time requirements
 - U.R.P.
 - Goals
 - 2-3 scenarios that fit

Chair Witalisz asked how long the URP is good for. Mr. Miller informed her it stays until it is changed, it is locked in unless there is a public process to amend it. Chair Witalisz also felt there should be some type of leadership, direction or suggestions some kind of direction for the WRA. Member Woodson felt there should be "Command Guidance."

Mr. Miller remarked when they present their plan to the Council they should state this is what they are doing, we are not asking them. Member Morin asked if the money the Authority received would have to be paid back. Mr. Miller noted it would have to be paid back if they make money. Mr. Miller noted if they go the route of a mixed use the first floor build out with subsidizing could have a master lease for the first floor and lease out the other floors, there cannot be a master lease if it is a single floor.

Member Parks noted a butler building would allow activities to be inside as well as having other options. He further added he would contact Turners Falls to see if he could get information.

Mr. Miller noted he would have something by the 18th for review, the next meeting scheduled for 2-1-22.

Further discussion regarding what type of a building. If this were a butler building it could be a multi-use building which could offer arts, training, performance, wreck center. Mr. Miller noted this would meet the URP to an extent, this would be owned by the WRA and it would have an agreement with someone to run it. Mr. Miller added he would be meeting with the mayor and presenting the history to him first.

Mr. Parks stated he would touch base with 1 Construction to see if they could give a ball park figure. Mr. Woodson suggested that Jay Pagluka also be contacted.

For information Mr. Miller further noted he received a PowerPoint from the Mayor regarding a One Stop 4 Growth application and the city is looking for 5 projects to be submitted, the deadline for submission is due February.

Mr. Miller gave a brief review of the programs that will be coming up in Westfield.

- Vacant storefront
Which will provide repayment of 50% of the first years rent.
25% of the second years rent.
- Mass Works
Possibly for a parking garage

MOTION made and seconded to adjourn at 9:15.

APPROVED