



CITY OF PORTAGE  
**REDEVELOPMENT  
 COMMISSION**



REGULAR MEETING  
 August 24, 2023

**PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:** Led by Al Ekdahl

**Commissioners Present:** Mayor Lynch, Lach, Czilli, Ekdahl, Mundt,

**Commissioners Absent:** Finley

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES:**

Commissioner Czilli made a motion to approve the minutes from the regular meeting of July 27, 2023. Commissioner Mundt seconded the motion.  
 5 yes 0 nays

**APPROVAL OF CLAIMS:**

Commissioner Czilli made a motion to approve the claims presented to the RDC on August 24, 2023. Commissioner Mundt seconded the motion.  
 5 yes 0 nays

Discussion was held on property taxes.

**STAFF REPORTS:**

Director AJ Monroe stated there were several people present who would be providing updates on a few projects and he would conclude with remaining updates.

Mr. Rich Piazza, with Abonmarche spoke on the following:

- **Portage Library Garden**  
 Director Monroe invited Mr. Rich Piazza with Abonmarche to provide an update on the Library Garden Project. Mr. Piazza stated that the work has begun on site. He stated that the old overflow parking lot had been demolished, the pond has begun to be removed, and mass grading has taken place. They anticipate more mass grading, hauling of spoils, grading for sidewalks and excavation for retaining walls and foundations to take place over the next few weeks. He stated that a communication cable that had not been identified in their initial locate has been discovered and are working to determine ownership and function of this cable. He stated that the project is progressing as scheduled.

Mr. Matt Reardon spoke on behalf of the following:

- **Downtown Development Corporation (Reactivation and Implementation of the Downtown Plan)**

**President**  
 Sue Lynch  
*Mayor*

**Vice President**  
 Collin Czilli  
*Councilperson*

**Secretary**  
 Greg Lach

**Members**  
 Allen Ekdahl  
 Ralph Mundt

**School Board Liaison**  
 Dr. Shauna Finley

**Director**  
 A.J. Monroe

**Legal**  
 Dan Whitten

**Recording Secretary**  
 Sonya Lindgren

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 Portage, IN 46368  
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Director Monroe invited Mr. Matt Reardon with MRC-HWC to provide the Commission with the efforts on the reactivation of the Downtown Development Corporation as well as the implantation of the Downtown Plan. Mr. Reardon provided the Commission with a copy of the Economic Assessment that was done for the Downtown Plan. This was done to analyze the current use and the projected new use that was developed in the plan. He stated that current market Rem rates will not support much new development, which has led to discussions with Mayor Lynch and Director Monroe regarding incentives and where does the Downtown Development Corporation fit in. He further stated that in order to achieve the desired plan document there is a gap in financing of about \$500,000. The analysis also looked at different kinds of opportunities to assist businesses. He stated that it is their recommendation to set aside for the 2024 Redevelopment Commission Budget an amount of roughly \$1million for private activities in the Downtown area.

Mr. Reardon stated that with the different challenges of vacant properties, existing businesses that could use some help and façade opportunities that could use assistance, it would be good to have this funding set aside for when requests are made. He stated that they are researching different programs this body can consider. Façade rebates are good, but what isn't available is how to help the existing businesses with what is going on inside their building and what is the methodology for doing so? Such as, forgivable loans for activity and job creation, or new business to help subsidize rent for a period. He recommended offering tax abatements for new businesses in this area. He further stated that within this request for funding, it suggests including administrative dollars for the re-establishment and a person or persons to operate the Downtown Council. He reiterated the fact that this type of redevelopment is hard work. He further stated that they see no reason why the existing businesses in this corridor shouldn't have the same opportunities to seek help or get incentives just like the new businesses, providing it makes economic sense for the City and continues growth in that area. He stated that formulating and marketing this will help and stated this would be the duty of the person who will spearhead this. Discussion was held. Commissioner Czilli asked what was next. Mr. Reardon stated that setting aside the funds in their 2024 Budget and continuing to work on the programing specifics.

Director AJ Monroe shared the staff report:

- **Central Avenue West – Phase 1B.** Land acquisition continues. Bid Letting for Phase Two is scheduled for FY 2024 (January 2024).
- **Open Air Pavilion / Craftsman Community Maker Labs of Indiana, Inc.** Work continues. A meeting was held with Tom Kuhn with CSK and the Makers Space Group. Some more information was shared with the group at this meeting. Mr. Kuhn anticipates having a proposal to the Redevelopment Commission for consideration next month. The lines of communication between the City and the Makers Space Group are open and they are aware of the progress that has been made and are excited to be here next month.

**OLD BUSINESS:**

None.

**NEW BUSINESS:**

**Purchase Agreement for 6051-6071 Central Avenue**

Mr. Bill Rathjen with McColly Real Estate informed the Commission that they have a purchase agreement for 6051-6071 Central Avenue which is in the final stages of legal review with

Attorney Whitten. He requested the Commission approve Mayor Lynch signing the agreement via eSign once legal review is complete.

Commission Czilli moved to approve the purchase agreement and for the Mayor to sign the legal agreement subject to legal review. Commissioner Ekdahl seconded the motion.

5 Yes – 0 Nays

### **Professional Services – Alta Survey of 6051-6071 Central Avenue**

Mr. Rathjen stated that the Redevelopment Commission is responsible for the Alta Survey on the 6051-6071 Central Avenue. He noted that five requests were sent for surveying services, and three bids were received. He recommends awarding the contract to Krul /Abonmarche pending legal review.

Commissioner Czilli moved to award the contract to Krul/Abonmarche pending legal review. Commissioner Lach seconded the motion.

5 Yes 0 Nays

### **Opening of Bids for Founders Square Lighting**

Director Monroe stated three bids have been received. Mr. Monroe stated the Commission had contracted DLZ to investigate the lighting levels within Founders Square in the areas at the north end of the park east and north of the water tower and in and around Hannah’s Hope Playground. He reminded the Commission that this project was identified in the Downtown Plan. He opened the three bids received as follows:

- |                                   |              |
|-----------------------------------|--------------|
| 1) Circle R Electric, Inc.        | \$190,615.00 |
| 2) Midwestern Electric, LLC       | \$374,283.75 |
| 3) Continental Electric Co., Inc. | \$258,891.00 |

Mr. Monroe stated that it was staff’s recommendation to take the bids under advisement.

Commissioner Czilli moved to take the bids under advisement. Commissioner Ekdahl seconded the motion.

5 Yes 0 Nays

Commissioner Czilli asked if these poles would include outlets for additional lighting. Mr. Monroe stated that these are just new poles and lights as per DLZ’s study delivered last fall. Mr. Czilli asked to see if they would be able to install small cells to make the downtown a Wi-Fi hotspot. Mr. Monroe stated he would look into this request.

Mayor Lynch asked if the poles would have the ability to hook up for electricity. Mr. Monroe stated that this project was strictly for replacement poles and lighting levels, but would look into this request.

## **Declaratory Resolution for Southport Allocation Area No. 2**

Karl Cender came before the Commission and stated that today is the Public Hearing for the Declaratory Resolution Southport Allocation Area No. 2 which carved out several parcels off Coca-Cola Avenue for the Dayton Street Partners Development Phase I. This will create a separate allocation area with the intention of supporting an Economic Development Bond with the Redevelopment Commission's Tif pledge.

Mayor Lynch opened the Public Hearing.

With no one present to speak for or against the Declaratory Resolution Southport Allocation Area No. 2, Mayor Lynch closed the Public Hearing.

## **Resolution No. 2023-4 Confirmatory Resolution**

Karl Cender stated that this resolution confirms the Declaratory Resolution. That the Redevelopment Commission has approved the Declaratory Resolution. It also confirms that the Resolution has been before the Plan Commission with them having issued their Letter of Findings that it conforms to the City's Comprehensive Plan and that the City Council has affirmed the Plan Commissions findings. He stated the approval of the Confirmatory Resolution makes it official.

Commission Czilli moved to adopt Resolution No. 2023-4 Confirmatory Resolution.  
Commissioner Lach seconded the motion.

5 Yes 0 Nays

## **Resolution No. 23-5 Tax Revenue bond Series 2023**

Karl Cender stated that this resolution refers to the pledging of tax increment funds from the Southport Allocation Area No. 2 to the payment of anticipated taxable Economic Development Revenue Bonds Series 2023, which is for Phase 1 of the Dayton Street Project. He stated that the resolution states that the Redevelopment Commission is going to pledge increments to whatever the final bond amount is over the life of the bond up to 85% of the annual incremental property tax value, and that the Redevelopment Commission will retain 15%.

Commission Czilli moved to adopt Resolution No. 23-5 Tax Revenue bond Series 2023.  
Commissioner Lach seconded the motion.

5 Yes – 0 Nays

## **Lakeshore Landscaping Proposal – Planting of Trees at Founders Square**

Community Project Manager, Bailey McGrath stated that the Department of Planning and Community Development applied for the CommuniTree Grant program to receive 16 trees. She further stated that we received 15 and they will be planted in Founders Square following the DLZ landscape plan. She stated that Lakeshore Landscaping's Proposal is for them to plant and

maintain them for the rest of the year and to attend NIRPC's education program on how to plant them to prevent loss of any trees.

Mayor Lynch asked about the size of the trees. Ms. McGrath stated that they are about three years old and are a decent size. Discussion was held on location of the plantings. Ms. McGrath did state that even though the landscape plans call for 32 trees, we only applied for 16 to make sure we could maintain and manage the new trees. Discussion was held on providing protection for them.

Commissioner Czilli moved to approve Lakeshore Landscaping's Proposal in the amount of \$2,725.53. Commission Mundt seconded the motion.

5 Yes 0 Nays

### **Utility & Streetlight Locates for Founders Square Tree Planting**

Assistant Director, Sandra McDaniel informed the Commission that prior to planting of the trees just discussed, utility locates need to be performed. She stated that the City does have streetlights and utilities that run throughout the area where the plantings will take place. She stated that she had received four quotes that vary in price due to the time each one is stating that it will take. She therefore referred the Commission members to the spreadsheet detailing each company's times and variations. Discussion was held.

Commissioner Lach moved to have staff choose the desired utility locate company and approves it upon legal review. Commission Czilli seconded the motion.

5 Yes 0 Nays

### **Pay App No. 5 – Founders Square Park Improvement**

Director Monroe stated that it is DLZ's, who served as construction oversight on this project recommendation to approve Pay App No. 5 in the amount of \$36,216.75 as stated in their cover letter attached. Based on DLZ's recommendation, it is staff's recommendation to approve Pay App No. 5.

Commissioner Lach moved to approve Pay App No. 5 in the amount of \$36,216.75.

Commissioner Czilli seconded the motion.

5 Yes 0 Nays

### **Pay App No. 6 – Founders Square Park Improvement**

Director Monroe stated that this is the final payment due for Founders Square Improvements Project. He further stated that it is DLZ's recommendation to approve Pay App No. 6 in the amount of \$34,212.67. Based on DLZ's recommendation, it is staff's recommendation to approve Pay App No. 6, acknowledging that it is the final Pay App for this project.

Commissioner Czilli moved to approve the Final Pay App No. 6 in the amount of \$34,212.67. Commissioner Lach seconded the motion.

5 Yes 0 Nays

### **Replacement of Furnace/Air Conditioner at 6100 Southport Road**

Director Monroe informed the Commission that Tiana McQueen with Holladay Properties, presented the request for a replacement unit at 6100 Southport Road. Mr. Monroe asked why the recommendation letter dated August 24, 2023 and the backup from Circle R Mechanical's pricing attached is different than what the members were given in their packet. Recording Secretary, Sonya Lindgren stated that Ms. McQueen informed her that when they first noticed the unit was going bad was in September of 2022 and requested quotes at that time and the new cost reflects the price difference since that time of \$12,455.00 to \$13,340.00.

Commissioner Czilli moved to award the quote to Circle R Mechanical in the amount of \$13,340.00. Commissioner Lach seconded the motion.

5 Yes 0 Nays

### **Funding Request for Portage Police Department**

Chief Candiano thanked the Commission for their help in funding these requests. He informed the Commission this is their second request for funding this year. He briefly went through the items being requested as follows:

- 2 AED's at \$700 each through Lakeshore CPR
- 6 sets of stop sticks at \$485.00 each plus shipping of \$120.00 for a total of \$3,030.00
- 2 new - 2023 Yamaha Kodiak 700ESP SE ATV's from Cycle Sports (after trade-in of two current machines and a UTV) for a total remaining of \$7,108.00
- 200 18" Traffic Cones from Traffic Safety Store at \$10.95 each for \$2,190.00 plus shipping at \$298.70 for a total of \$2,488.70.
- 3 6-packs of Matts for workout room at \$100.00 each for a total of \$300.00
- 2 DJI Avata (Explorer Combo) Drones from Avata for \$6,537.98

Chief Candiano stated that the grand total would be \$20,864.68 that they are requesting today and further stated that they have used approximately \$45,000.00 to date.

Commissioner Lach moved to approve the funding request. Commissioner Czilli seconded the motion.

5 Yes 0 Nays

### **Change Order No. 1 – Central Avenue**

Director Monroe invited John Tucker with American Structurepoint to speak on behalf of this request. Mr. Tucker stated that this change order is for additional work due to the peat soil found on site which includes the additional Geo-Tech report and soil borings, design fee for a load transfer option, as well as additional support staff from Dunnett Bay. He informed the

Commissioner that the change order is eligible for funding through the state at an 80/20 share. Mr. Tucker stated approving the change order would allow them to work off alignment during the winter months, which will enable them to keep the road open during the winter.

Commissioner Lach moved to approve Change Order No. 1 in the amount of \$74,608.00. Commission Czilli seconded the motion.

Discussion was held on the location of the original soil borings and why they were not performed in the appropriate location. Mr. Greg Lorig with American Structurepoint, stated that the report and table provided to American Structurepoint by K & S, the company who performed the soil borings, showed a boring was taken in the new alignment area. However, when pressed, they admitted that they did not do the one boring where the new alignment was as their report reflected due to heavy trees in the area. Discussion was held.

Mayor Lynch requested a Roll Call vote:

Commissioner Lach: Yes

Commission Czilli: No

Commissioner Ekdal: Yes

Commissioner: Mundt: Yes

Mayor Lynch: No

Commissioner Czilli asked if this was going to cause us to run into additional costs down the road due to the project being delayed. Mr. Tucker stated that he does not have the complete answer to that, but did state that having the ability to work during the winter would help.

Mayor Lynch stated that the site needs to be maintained. Mr. Tucker stated that they did have the contractor bushhog last week, and will continue to make sure it is maintained.

Commissioner Czilli asked if they did other borings in other locations that weren't planned how certain are we that we are not going to run into this again. Mr. Lorig stated that they are not anticipating this being an issue.

### **Founders Square Irrigation Repair**

Assistant Director Sandra McDaniel stated that Lakeshore Landscaping has been doing work in this area and found that there were not any boxes installed to protect the joints of the existing irrigation system. So, over the years traffic and tractors have caused them to break. They have provided a proposal to find these junctions and place them in boxes and then locate all the heads to make sure they are spraying where they should be spraying. Our hope is this should help with watering some of the trees we are getting that are planted in this area.

Commissioner Czilli moved to approve the proposal. Commissioner Ekdahl seconded the motion.

5 Yes 0 Nays

Mayor Lynch asked how we can prevent damage to the system. Ms. McDaniel stated that once the system is completely repaired and located, that we can they somehow map it out. Discussion was held.

### **Downtown Engineering Services Solicitation**

Director Monroe stated that the information provided is for their review and that staff is not seeking any action at this time. He stated the Department of Planning and Community Development solicited for Professional Engineering Services for the next phase of the Downtown Project at the Commission's request. He stated that the Department solicited five firms with a sixth firm requesting the RFP and it was provided. He stated that three responses were received, and two firms solicited their letter of regret. He asked the Commission to take this next month to review the proposals before them and asked for feedback on them. He stated if it's the Commission's pleasure to move forward, we could begin to take action in September or a later meeting.

Commissioner Czilli asked about conducting interviews. Mr. Monroe stated that it is the Commission's decision whether to have interviews. Commissioner Czilli stated he would like to have interviews. Discussion was held. Mr. Monroe asked for volunteers to sit in on the interviews. Commissioners Lach and Mundt volunteered to conduct interviews along with staff.

### **Installation of ComCast Fiber Optic Cables along Riverwalk Drive and Ogden Avenue – Portage Lakefront South Properties**

Assistant Director, Sandra McDaniel stated that last year at this time Frontier had requested permission to install Fiber Optic Cables in this area and since the property is owned by the Redevelopment Commission, they permitted them to do so. This year Comcast is looking to do the same. Discussion was held.

Commission Czilli moved to approve the application. Commissioner Lach seconded the motion.  
5 Yes 0 Nays

### **Security Cameras for 5391 Central Avenue (Garyton School)**

Assistant Director, Sandra McDaniel stated that Sonya Lindgren had reached out to three different companies seeking quotes, and ADT was the only one to step up to do so. Ms. McDaniel spoke on the different options ADT provided. Discussion was held.

Director Monroe stated that this is for ADT's portion, the next step would be to solicit electricians for the installation.

Commissioner Czilli moved to approve ADT's proposal for the six (6) Fisheye Cameras in the cost of \$32,874.25. Commissioner Lach seconded the motion.  
5 Yes 0 Nays

Discussion was held on whether a modem was to be onsite.

Commissioner Lach moved to approve up to \$10,000.00 for electrical contracting services and researching additional functions for the cameras for notifications in recording. Commissioner Czilli seconded the Motion.

Mayor Lynch requested a Roll Call vote:

Commissioner Lach: Yes

Commission Czilli: Yes

Commissioner Ekdal: Yes

Commissioner: Mundt: Yes

Mayor Lynch: Yes

**OTHER BUSINESS:**

**Purchase Agreement for 2508 Hamstrom Road**

Mr. Bill Rathjen with McColly Real Estate informed the Commission that a Purchase Agreement has been submitted to the Redevelopment Commission by Holladay Properties for the purchase of 2508 Hamstrom Road. It is a net contract to the RDC. He stated it is his recommendation that the contract be signed pending legal review.

Commissioner Czilli moved to approve the Purchase Agreement and authorizes the Mayor Lynch to sign on behalf of the Redevelopment Commission. Commissioner Lach seconded the motion.

5 Yes 0 Nays

**Extension of Founders Square Lot**

Mr. Rathjen stated that the Commission has an agreement pending on the Founders Square lot and that we are now entering the second and final due diligence stage. He is asking for permission for the Mayor to sign this on behalf of the Commission.

Commissioner Czilli moved to approve the Mayor signing the second and final due diligence extension. Commissioner Lach seconded the motion.

5 Yes 0 Nays

With no further business to become before the Commission, Commissioner Czilli moved to adjourn.

Commissioner Czilli seconded the motion.

5 Yes 0 Nays

  
Sue Lynch, Mayor

  
Sonya Lindgren, Recording Secretary