

**REDEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY OF THE CITY OF BETHLEHEM
SEPTEMBER 24, 2020**

Virtual Meeting via GoToMeeting
Bethlehem, PA 18018

MINUTES

The Board of the Redevelopment Authority of the City of Bethlehem met for a regular meeting on Thursday, September 24, 2020 at 5:00 P.M. via GoToMeeting. The place, the hour and the date duly noted for the holding of this meeting was publicized.

Vice-Chairman Earl Bethel called the meeting to order and the following members were present:

Ronald Heckman
Tracy Oscavich

The Vice-Chairman called a quorum present.

Also present were:

Tony Hanna, Executive Director
Michael E. Riskin, Esq., Solicitor
Heather M. Bambu-Weiss, Board Secretary
Eric Evans, Business Administrator / City of Bethlehem

RDA Board Members, Lea Grigsby and Christopher Spadoni contacted the RDA office prior to the meeting and indicated they had conflicts and were unable to participate in the virtual meeting.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Mr. Heckman made a motion to approve the minutes of the August 27, 2020 regular meeting of the Redevelopment Authority. The minutes were emailed earlier to each member of the Board. As there were no changes notes, Ms. Oscavich seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously and the minutes of the August 27, 2020 regular meeting of the Redevelopment Authority were approved.

APPROVAL OF CASH REPORTS

Mr. Heckman made a motion to approve the cash reports for the months ended June 30, 2020 and July 31, 2020. These cash reports were emailed earlier to each member of the Board. As there were no errors or changes reported, Ms. Oscavich seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously and the cash reports for the months ended June 30, 2020 and July 31, 2020 were approved.

COURTESY OF THE FLOOR

Due the Covid-19 situation, the RDA meeting was conducted virtually via GoToMeeting. To provide an opportunity for guests to share any thoughts about the RDA agenda items, or other Authority business, the virtual meeting information was posted on the RDA website on September 21, 2020 and included instructions to contact the RDA office if any members of the community had any thoughts about RDA business to share with the RDA Board during this meeting. The RDA phone line was available and monitored during the meeting by the Administrative Coordinator. No phone calls were received during meeting. In addition, no messages to be shared at the meeting were provided to the RDA prior to or during the meeting.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR REPORT

Mr. Bethel turned the meeting over to Mr. Hanna for his Executive Director Report. Mr. Hanna presented a verbal report of events involving the RDA, as summarized below.

1. **Hoover-Mason Trestle (HMT)** – Mr. Hanna stated that the Hoover-Mason Trestle has been closed since March when the pandemic situation began. He noted that he recently met with the Mayor and discussions it was agreed that the HMT would remain closed due to the lack of activity currently occurring at Steel Stacks and lack of supervision for the trestle at this time. Mr. Hanna added that he has been receiving messages about individuals traveling to Bethlehem and wanting to visit the Hoover-Mason Trestle, only to learn of its closure after their arrival. Mr. Hanna added that while the Bethlehem Landing Visitor Center at Steel Stacks has been closed, and is aware of the HMT closing, the Downtown Bethlehem and Historic Bethlehem visitor centers were not aware of it being closed. Mr. Hanna indicated he updated all that the Hoover-Mason Trestle is currently closed and all indications are that it will remain closed into the foreseeable future until things return to a normal.
2. **Hoover-Mason Trestle – Project / Maintenance Work** – Mr. Hanna indicated that with the HMT being closed it has allowed time for there to be some maintenance to the trestle. He noted that some maintenance work was done as was some clean-up of the trestle. In addition, some plantings have been done to fill in some of the open landscaped area. Mr. Hanna stated that this project will be presented to the RDA Board for their review and approval at the October 2020 RDA Board meeting.
3. **Bethlehem Landing Visitor Center / Stock House** – Mr. Hanna stated that he and others are still working to identify the water seepage problem at the Visitor Center. He noted that water seepage has been an issue due, partially, to lime mortar having been used for the stone walls, allowing water to seep through some of the mortar openings. He also noted that their evaluation has indicated the north wall of the Visitor Center is the wall hardest hit with rain and that is where a majority of the seepage is occurring. He also stated that this situation has been discussed and reviewed by various consultants, including a water consultant, and it is his opinion that a plan to correct to the condition has been made. He noted that it will be costly to repair this issue but the funds available should be adequate for the cost. Mr. Hanna explained the scaffolding and equipment need to be used at the site to repair the water seepage issue.
4. **National Museum of Industrial History (NMIH) Plaza** – Mr. Hanna stated that work is continuing for the new plaza at the National Museum of Industrial History. He added that the landscaping was started earlier this week. He noted that the Steel Workers Memorial relocation will be done soon and added that a dedication ceremony is scheduled for November 11, 2020. Mr. Hanna added that he will be sure the RDA Board members receive the details on that event. Mr. Hanna also reported that the Bethlehem Steel Press has been relocated from the area near the Wind Creek Hotel to the NMIH Plaza area. He added that some finishing touches are still being done to the press at its new location. Mr. Hanna stated that this was a large undertaking but was pleased that the artifact could be saved as it fits into the NMIH Plaza area.
5. **Steel Stacks Campus – Lights** – Mr. Hanna stated that the lights for the Steel Stacks Campus have been ordered. He reminded the Board that the City of Bethlehem will be installing the lights and the RDA would be paying for the light fixtures from the 2020 TIF revenue.
6. **Steel Stacks Campus – Street Work** – Mr. Hanna stated that bids were received for the streetwork planned for the Steel Stacks Campus, including the paving rehabilitation. He noted that Barker & Barker was the low bidder for the project and noted that the difference between this low bid and the next bid was only \$500. He added that the bid cost was less than the estimated amount for the work, and noted that any excess funds would be available for any contingency costs associated with the project and could be used to fund other project cost work in need of attention. Mr. Hanna indicated that the work should be completed in November and the RDA Board would be presented with all the details for review and consideration at its October meeting. Mr. Hanna explained that he is trying to coordinate the work schedule to not interfere with upcoming events for ArtsQuest at the Steel Stacks campus.

7. **723 Broadway** – Mr. Hanna reminded the Board that this property has been certified as blighted and the RDA approved acquisition of this property using eminent domain at the last RDA Board meeting. Mr. Hanna indicated that updated appraisals have been requested due to the age of the existing appraisals and the current market trends. Mr. Hanna explained that the Declaration of Taking documents have been signed and Mr. Riskin noted that they would be filed at Northampton County within approximately 2-weeks. Mr. Hanna also noted that the multiple liens on this property complicate things but noted that the City, County and Bethlehem Area School District municipal liens would be paid first and the balance of funds would be allocated among the remaining lienholders.

APPROVAL OF INVOICES – SEPTEMBER 2020

Mr. Bethel stated that the RDA Board has been asked to review and consider for approval the invoices / reimbursements as outlined on the September 2020 invoice summary.

Ms. Oscavich made a motion to approve of the payments / invoices as outlined on the September 2020 invoice summary. Mr. Heckman seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved and the following payments were approved:

- 1) \$14,155.96 represents costs associated with On-Going and Maintenance Costs and payment of such costs to be made from the Authority Fund. Of the total invoice amount of \$7,167.73, the RDA General Fund will pay \$3,462.50 of the Simone Collins invoice since those costs pertain to the relocation of the Bethlehem Steel Press artifact and the RDA will be reimbursed for these costs associated by Wind Creek. The balance of \$3,705.23 from this Simone Collins invoice will be paid from Authority Fund monies. The other invoice included from Boyle Construction and Keystone Consulting Engineers will also be paid from Authority Fund monies.
- 2) \$7,458.92 represents reimbursement to the RDA from the Administrative Expense Fund for various administrative costs associated with overall / general TIF project work.
- 3) \$6,411.10 represents reimbursement to the RDA from the Authority Fund account for various administrative costs associated with TIF Other Project work.
- 4) \$815.15 represents reimbursement to the RDA from the Authority Fund account for various costs related to the Bethlehem Works / TIF District.

GENERAL DISCUSSION

RDA Meetings – Mr. Heckman asked Mr. Hanna and Mr. Evans if virtual meetings were going to be continuing or if there were plans for in-person meetings to resume in the near future for City of Bethlehem meetings. Mr. Evans indicated that things are continuing as they have been occurring with meetings being conducted virtually. He noted that when City Council meets one Council Member, the City Clerk, the Mayor and Business Administrator are all that are present at Town Hall with all other participation being done remotely through GoToMeetings.

October RDA Board Meeting – Mr. Hanna reminded the Board that the agenda for the October 2020 RDA Board meeting will be a full one. He noted that plans for the Visitor Center, Hoover-Mason Trestle, and Steel Stacks Campus roadway projects will all be ready for Board review and consideration. He noted if additional funds are determined to be available for any additional projects, that will be presented to the RDA Board as well.

BETHLEHEM REDEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY
MINUTES – SEPTEMBER 24, 2020
PAGE – 4

Mr. Evans asked if the RDA Board will need to have a special meeting prior to the next scheduled meeting for the Steel Stacks roadwork to begin. Mr. Hanna indicated that based upon the work specifications and timeframe, the order to proceed is scheduled to be issued within a day or so of the next scheduled RDA meeting. As a result, Mr. Hanna stated he did not anticipate needing a special meeting for this work to be approved but noted if it is determined one is necessary a special meeting would then be scheduled with the RDA Board and be conducted via GoToMeeting.

Mr. Evans indicated that his question was due to the paving season winding down and the deadline for the spending of the 2020 TIF monies. Mr. Hanna stated that he is confident that the RDA will have all TIF monies spent and/or committed to be spent by RDA Board action prior to the November 20, 2020 deadline of the TIF. Ms. Oscavich asked for an estimate of the anticipated amount of funds that may be available for other project costs. Mr. Hanna stated that he is estimating there may be approximately \$50,000 available due to the lower than estimated bid for the Steel Stacks Campus roadwork. He added that the scope of this roadwork has been expanded to include new crosswalks and new curb cuts. He noted that before any additional projects are funded, the RDA will be sure all aspects of the existing projects are being addressed adequately and fully.

ADJOURNMENT

As there was no further business, Ms. Oscavich made a motion to adjourn this September 24, 2020 RDA Board meeting. Mr. Heckman seconded the motion and the motion was unanimously carried. As a result, the meeting adjourned at 5:25 P.M.

Submitted by,

Heather M. Bambu-Weiss
Board Secretary