

**REDEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY OF THE CITY OF BETHLEHEM
SEPTEMBER 23, 2021**

Conference Room A-109 at
Bethlehem City Hall
10 East Church Street
Bethlehem, PA 18018
and via GoToMeeting

MINUTES

The Board of the Redevelopment Authority of the City of Bethlehem met for a regular meeting on Thursday, September 23, 2021 at 5:00 P.M. This meeting occurred both in-person in Conference Room A-109 (the Information Technology (I.T.) Conference Room) at Bethlehem City Hall; 10 East Church Street, Bethlehem, Pennsylvania as well as via GoToMeeting. The place, the hour and the date duly noted for the holding of this meeting was publicized.

Chairman Ronald Heckman called the meeting to order and the following members were present:

Earl Bethel
Tracy Oscavich
Christopher Spadoni

The Chairman called a quorum present.

Also present were:

Tony Hanna, Executive Director (via GoToMeeting)
Michael E. Riskin, Esq., Solicitor
Heather M. Bambu-Weiss, Board Secretary

RDA Board Member, Lea Grigsby, contacted the RDA office and indicated she would not be able to participate in the meeting.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Ms. Oscavich made a motion to approve the minutes of the August 26, 2021 regular meeting of the Redevelopment Authority. The minutes were emailed earlier to each member of the Board. Mr. Bethel seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously and the minutes of the August 26, 2021 regular meeting of the Redevelopment Authority were approved.

APPROVAL OF CASH REPORTS

Mr. Bethel made a motion to approve the cash reports for the month ended July 31, 2021. 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 month ended July 31, 2021 were approved.

COURTESY OF THE FLOOR

There were no guests present at Town Hall or via GoToMeeting. As a result, there were no comments during Courtesy of the Floor and the Chairman moved onto the next agenda item for the RDA meeting.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR REPORT

Mr. Heckman turned the meeting over to Mr. Hanna for his Executive Director Report. Mr. Hanna provided updates to the Board regarding RDA activities.

- 1) **Skyline West Project** – Mr. Hanna stated that progress is continuing on the Skyline West and noted that it is being reviewed by the City of Bethlehem. He added that it is anticipated the project will be considered by the Planning Commission at a meeting in the near future. He noted that the project will also need to be considered by the Zoning Board due to the need for a zoning variance and added this this would likely be occurring after Planning Commission consideration.

Mr. Hanna explained that due to world heritage designation concerns by Historic Bethlehem, the building has been redesigned to be lower in height and more spread out in size. As a result, Mr. Hanna indicated the updated project would have to be evaluated from a historic perspective through the Historic Board which addresses these issues in Downtown Bethlehem.

Mr. Hanna noted that he expects closing for the RDA property connected with this project to occur prior to the end of 2021.

- 2) **Apollo Grill** – Mr. Hanna explained that based upon the last Use Permit agreement between the RDA and Apollo Grill for the RDA property located within the Sun Inn Courtyard area, the Apollo Grill use was scheduled to expire in October 2021. He indicated the Apollo has requested an extension of its use for this site until mid-November 2021 due to the Covid pandemic and desire of diners still requesting outdoor seating. He noted that no action by the RDA Board was required to extend their use time.

Mr. Hanna stated that the Apollo Grill may be approaching the RDA, in Spring 2022, regarding a more permanent arrangement for using this property for outdoor dining. Mr. Hanna added that at such a time the Apollo will likely have to purchase a tent to use, rather than renting as they currently are doing, and the RDA may want to consider charging a nominal monthly fee for the use of this RDA property.

- 3) **Hotel Bethlehem** – Mr. Hanna indicated that discussions have been occurring with members of Bethlehem City Council regarding the properties owned by the RDA and City which are being used for parking by the Hotel Bethlehem. He also noted that property owned by the RDA which would be impacted by a Hotel Bethlehem expansion has also been discussed. Mr. Hanna noted that he may have something for the RDA Board to consider regarding the parking parcels at its October 2021 meeting.

Mr. Hanna explained that the City of Bethlehem has suggested the RDA negotiate, on behalf of the City and RDA parcels, with the Hotel Bethlehem to sell the parcels currently being used for Hotel parking, as well as for an easement agreement for the RDA parcels needed for the hotel expansion. He further explained that sale proceeds for the parking area parcels would be appropriately between the parties.

- 4) **Bethlehem Steel Number 2 Machine Shop** – Mr. Spadoni asked Mr. Hanna about the status of development of the Number 2 Machine Shop, located on the former Bethlehem Steel site. Mr. Hanna explained that Wind Creek has been reviewing its plans for the use of this structure and noted that it no longer appears a water park, as first suggested, would be something feasible at this site. He added that based upon his understanding Wind Creek would still like the reuse to be family oriented and noted it would likely include additional restaurants and retail.

Mr. Hanna noted that there may be a role for the RDA in this project in the form of a special Tax Incremental Financing (TIF) District to assist with infrastructure and public space development. Mr. Hanna noted that even though the current Northampton County Executive does not appear to want to be involved with another TIF, the Bethlehem Area School District (BASD) appeared more favorable with participating in specific project TIFs especially if such TIF was supportive of additional projects to be done by ArtsQuest. Mr. Heckman noted that atmosphere at the Steel Stacks Campus and within the previously designated TIF District as being a more relaxed environment than other areas and urged any new development and projects within this area to maintain that same atmosphere.

HARVEST FEST 2021

Mr. Heckman noted that the RDA has been asked to review and consider for approval a Use Permit Agreement, authorizing the Downtown Bethlehem Association (DBA) to use RDA land parcels located along Main Street, in front of the Moravian Blacksmith Shop, for its Harvest Fest 2021. He noted that if acceptable, the agreement could be passed via motion.

Mr. Hanna explained that an area in front of the Bethlehem Blacksmith Shop, referred to as “The Smithy”, was discovered to be owned by the RDA and City of Bethlehem. Mr. Hanna added that these parcels were never transferred when Urban Renewal transfers occurred in the downtown nor were they included in the Historic Bethlehem ground lease. Therefore, he indicated the Use Permit Agreement was being requested so the DBA could use these parcels during Harvest Fest 2021.

Mr. Heckman inquired about having research done to identify all property the RDA owns, especially in the Downtown Bethlehem, noting the various parcels such as this being found from time-to-time. Mr. Hanna indicated that this information could be researched by a title search and Mr. Spadoni suggested working with Northampton County GIS department to research this information as well. Mr. Hanna indicated that as he understands it there are even areas around Bethlehem City Hall that are owned by the RDA. The RDA encouraged research be done to determine all residual land parcels the RDA may own, especially in Downtown Bethlehem.

Following this discussion, Mr. Bethel made a motion to approve the Use Permit Agreement, authorizing the Downtown Bethlehem Association to use RDA land parcels located along Main Street, in front of the Moravian Blacksmith Shop, for its Harvest Fest 2021. Mr. Spadoni seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved. As a result, the RDA approved a Use Permit Agreement, authorizing the Downtown Bethlehem Association to use RDA land parcels located along Main Street, in front of the Moravian Blacksmith Shop, for its Harvest Fest 2021.

APPROVAL OF INVOICES – SEPTEMBER 2021

Mr. Heckman stated that the RDA Board has been asked to review and consider for approval the invoices and reimbursements as detailed on the invoice summary for September 2021.

Ms. Oscavich made a motion to approve of the payments / invoices as outlined on the September 2021 invoice summary. Mr. Bethel seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved and the following payments were approved:

- 1) \$1,674.23 represents reimbursement to the RDA from the Authority Fund account for various costs related to the Bethlehem Works / TIF District.

ADJOURNMENT

As there was no further business, Mr. Bethel made a motion to adjourn this September 23, 2021 RDA Board meeting. Mr. Spadoni seconded the motion and the motion was unanimously carried. As a result, the meeting adjourned at 5:40 P.M.

Submitted by,

Heather M. Bambu-Weiss
Board Secretary