

**REDEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY OF THE CITY OF BETHLEHEM
MARCH 16, 2017**

A-205 – Public Safety Building
Bethlehem City Hall
10 East Church Street
Bethlehem, PA 18018

MINUTES

The Board of the Redevelopment Authority of the City of Bethlehem met for a regular meeting on Thursday, March 16, 2017 at 4:00 P.M. in Room A-205 of the Public Safety Building at Bethlehem City Hall, 10 East Church Street, Bethlehem, PA. The place, the hour and the date duly noted for the holding of this meeting was publicized.

Chairman Jason Henninger called the meeting to order and the following members were present:

Earl Bethel
Ronald Heckman

The Chairman called a quorum present.

Also present were: Tony Hanna, Executive Director
 Michael E. Riskin, Esq., Solicitor
 Heather M. Bambu, Board Secretary

Also present at the meeting was Nicole Radzевич, report for The Morning Call newspaper.

RDA Board Members Dennis Cuner and Christopher Spadoni, Esq. contacted the RDA office prior to the meeting and indicated that they were unable to attend due to a work conflict.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Mr. Bethel made a motion to approve the minutes of the January 19, 2017 regular meeting of the Redevelopment Authority. The minutes were mailed earlier to each member of the Board. As there were no errors or changes reported, Mr. Heckman seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously and the minutes of the January 19, 2017 regular meeting of the Redevelopment Authority were approved.

FINANCIAL REPORTS

The Financial Reports for the months ended December 31, 2016 and January 31, 2017 were mailed to the Redevelopment Authority Board members prior to the meeting. As there were no changes or errors noted in these reports, Mr. Heckman made a motion that the cash reports for the months ended December 31, 2016 and January 31, 2017 be accepted as presented. Mr. Bethel seconded the motion. Motion unanimously carried and the cash reports for the months ended December 31, 2016 and January 31, 2017 were accepted as presented.

COURTESY OF THE FLOOR

Since no guests were present at this meeting, Mr. Henninger asked if any of the guests wanted to address the RDA at this time. No one in attendance addressed the RDA during this courtesy of the floor portion of the meeting.

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PROPOSED LERTA DISTRICT – EXPANSION – Mr. Hanna explained that the RDA has been asked to consider officially providing a resolution of support for the City of Bethlehem proposed LERTA District expansion to include areas as detailed in the map provided to the RDA Board members and attached to these minutes. Mr. Hanna explained that in July 2016 the RDA Board reviewed and provided support for a proposed LERTA District in north Bethlehem. He added that the Bethlehem Area School District and Moravian College had requested the City consider an expansion of that proposed district to include some additional neighborhoods being along the border of the proposed boundaries. The City evaluated the request and has decided to recommend including these additional neighborhoods to this LERTA District. Mr. Hanna stated that much of the area included in this proposed expanded LERTA District were part of a prominent Urban Renewal area within the City of Bethlehem. He added that Urban Renewal ended with the establishment of Community Development Block Grant Funding and noted that this area was one of the last Urban Renewal areas to be dissolved.

Mr. Hanna stated that LERTA legislation requires either a Planning Commission or a Redevelopment Authority to provide formal support for the establishment of a LERTA District. Mr. Hanna indicated that in July 2016 the Planning Commission provided a formal resolution of support for the establishment of that LERTA District proposal while the RDA provided a letter of support the establishment of this same proposed district. Mr. Hanna stated that with the timeline involved for this expanded LERTA District to be considered by City Council, the Redevelopment Authority was asked to consider providing a formal resolution of support the establishment of this expanded LERTA District. Therefore, Mr. Hanna added, the RDA is being asked to consider this request at this time at this meeting.

Mr. Heckman stated that as he reviews the area included in the proposed LERTA District, he sees some areas which could benefit from such a designation. He added that some areas within this proposed district are a bit rundown and he considers the establishment of this LERTA District a good way to improve conditions. Mr. Hanna noted that one area of monitoring the Bethlehem Area School District does involve trends among their student bodies at their various schools. He noted that often times when certain trends are seen among the students, similar trends can be seen among the neighborhoods in which the students live. Mr. Hanna added that this proposed LERTA District may help spur development of the old Silk Mill property as well as a re-use of the old Miller Building.

Mr. Bethel asked if Moravian College has expressed any interest in properties within the proposed LERTA District. Mr. Hanna stated that he has not heard of any such interest being expressed by Moravian College. Mr. Hanna added that it is his opinion that Moravian has an interest in the establishment of this LERTA District in the vicinity of its school to help stabilize and improve the condition of properties within this area.

Mr. Henninger asked if the establishment of this LERTA District will help with the redevelopment of the Boyd Theater in Downtown Bethlehem. Mr. Hanna stated that the Boyd Theater is located within the boundaries originally including in the establishment of this LERTA District and that there will likely be positive benefits to the establishment of this district to both to Boyd and other development within that Downtown portion of Bethlehem.

Following this presentation and discussion, Mr. Bethel presented the following resolution to the Board and moved for its adoption by the Board.

A RESOLUTION OF THE REDEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY OF THE CITY OF BETHLEHEM, SUPPORTING THE DESIGNATION OF AREAS OF THE CITY OF BETHLEHEM WITHIN WHICH EXEMPTIONS FROM TAX ASSESSMENTS MAY BE GRANTED FOR IMPROVEMENTS TO DETERIORATED INDUSTRIAL, COMMERCIAL AND OTHER BUSINESS PROPERTY AND/OR DETERIORATED RESIDENTIAL PROPERTY AND AREAS.

WHEREAS, in various areas of the City there are some deteriorated industrial, commercial and other business properties and/or deteriorated residential properties and areas; and

WHEREAS, the General Assembly of Pennsylvania has passed Act 76 of 1977, known as the Local Economic Revitalization Tax Assistance Act (“LERTA”), Act 42 of 1977, known as the Improvement of Deteriorating Real Property or Areas Tax Exemptions Act (“IDRPA”) authorizing local taxing authorities to exempt certain improvements to deteriorated industrial, commercial and other business property and/or deteriorated residential property and areas from taxation under certain terms and conditions; and

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WHEREAS, the City of Bethlehem wishes to take advantage of these authorizations for the purpose of fostering rehabilitation of said properties; and

WHEREAS, the Redevelopment Authority on July 21, 2016 passed a resolution endorsing the creation of a tax abatement area in a deteriorated area of the City of Bethlehem as more fully described in that resolution; and

WHEREAS, the City of Bethlehem is proposing to expand the boundaries of the tax abatement area to include an area beginning at Mauch Chunk and Laurel Streets south to Union Boulevard west on Union Boulevard to Main Street, south on Main Street to Broad Street, Broad Street east to Maple Street, then north on Maple Street to East Fairview Street, west on East Fairview Street to Grenadier Boulevard, north on Grenadier Boulevard to Laurel Street, then back to the starting point at Laurel and Mauch Chunk.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Redevelopment Authority of the City of Bethlehem the boundaries of an additionally-declared deteriorated area within the City of Bethlehem, County of Northampton, authorized for exemptions under Act 76 of 1977 and Act 42 of 1977, as more particularly described above are endorsed for adoption by the Council of City of Bethlehem.

This Resolution shall have no effect on any area designated under a prior Resolution for exemptions for improvements from real estate tax assessments.

(Resolution Number 1442)

Mr. Heckman seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved and, as a result, Resolution Number 1442 was unanimously adopted by the RDA Board.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR REPORT

Mr. Henninger turned the meeting over to Mr. Hanna for his Executive Director Report. Mr. Hanna did not have a written report for the RDA Board but updated the Board as follows:

1. **Rudy Bruner Award** – Mr. Hanna noted that the RDA Steel Stacks project has been selected as a finalist in the competition for the Rudy Bruner Award. Mr. Hanna indicated that this project was selected as 1 of 5 finalists and explained that a review team will be Bethlehem March 29 to 31, 2017 and on April 1, 2017. He noted at the Chair of the review team is a dean at the Architecture School of Buffalo in New York. He noted that the Executive Director of the award will be visiting Bethlehem with the rest of the review team and added that travel such as this is not something this individual typically does. Mr. Hanna also noted some of the others who will be visiting as part of the review team for this award consideration. Mr. Hanna stated that the team has requested speaking with and seeing a lot of different aspects of the project during their visit. He noted that Bethlehem has a lot to offer and it is his opinion that the review team will be very impressed with not only the project but also with our entire community.
2. **Sands Casino** – Mr. Hanna explained to the RDA Board some information regarding the recent press about a possible sale of the Sands Casino. He noted that the sale details have not been finalized and that the possible new owner of the casino has not been formally stated. Mr. Hanna stated that he is hopeful that any new owners to the casino will continue positive operations with regards to the existing facility as well as be a positive visionary and community partner to work with in regards to continued and future development at the site.

APPROVAL OF INVOICES – MARCH 2017

Mr. Henninger stated that the RDA has been asked to review and consider for approval the invoices / reimbursement as outlined on the March 2017 invoice summary.

Mr. Bethel made a motion to approve the invoices as outlined on the March 2017 invoice summary. Mr. Heckman seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved and the following payments were authorized to occur:

- 1) \$8,124.58 represents costs associated with On-Going and Maintenance Costs and payment of such costs to be made immediately from funds held in the TIF Project Fund checking account received by the RDA from insurance proceeds received by the RDA to repair damage to the Hoover-Mason Trestle canopy.
- 2) \$21,945.95 represents costs associated with On-Going and Maintenance Costs and payment of such costs to be made from the 2016 financing funds.
- 3) \$1,750.00 represents costs associated with Phase III Memorial Plaza / Miscellaneous Costs and payment of such costs to be made from the 2016 financing funds.
- 4) \$10,687.97 represents reimbursement to the RDA from the TIF Administrative Expense Fund account for administrative costs associated with the overall Bethlehem Works / TIF District project.
- 5) \$2,141.52 represents reimbursement to the RDA from the Authority Fund account for various costs associated with the overall Bethlehem Works / TIF District project.

BUDGET ADJUSTMENT

Chairman Henninger stated that the RDA Executive Director needed to replace his laptop computer and was able to do so at a competitive price through a City of Bethlehem vendor. He noted that the total cost of the computer, including various software and other costs, was \$1,977.27. He added that a cost such as this is paid using the Non-Expendable Equipment budget line item; however, the balance available in this account is only \$900.00 at this time. Therefore, the RDA Board has been asked to consider the transfer of \$1,500.00 from the Contingency budget account to the Non-Expendable Equipment budget account to cover this expense as well as provide funds in case any additional costs arise during the remaining months of this budget period. Mr. Henninger stated that this transfer can be approved via motion as has been done by the RDA Board in the past.

Mr. Heckman made a motion to approve a transfer of \$1,500.00 from the Contingency budget account to the Non-Expendable Equipment budget account to cover the laptop computer expense, as well as provide funds in case any additional Non-Expendable Equipment costs arise during the remaining months of this budget period. Mr. Bethel seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved. As a result, a transfer of \$1,500.00 from the Contingency budget account to the Non-Expendable Equipment budget account has been approved to cover the laptop computer expense, as well as funds in case any additional Non-Expendable Equipment costs arise during the remaining months of this budget period.

ADJOURNMENT

As there was no further business, Mr. Heckman made a motion to adjourn the meeting of the RDA. Mr. Bethel seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved and the meeting of the Bethlehem RDA was adjourned at 4:30 P.M.

Submitted by,

Heather M. Bambu
Board Secretary