

**REDEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY OF THE CITY OF BETHLEHEM
APRIL 22, 2021**

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, April 22, 2021 at 5:00 P.M. 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:

Lea B. Grigsby
Tracy Oscavich

The Chairman called a quorum present.

Board Member, Christopher Spadoni, joined the meeting while it was in progress.

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

Guests present were: Eric Evans, Business Administrator / City of Bethlehem
 Alicia Karner, Director of Community & Economic Development / City of Bethlehem

Board Member, Earl Bethel, contacted RDA Executive Director Tony Hanna prior to the meeting and indicated he was unable to participate in the meeting.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Ms. Oscavich made a motion to approve the minutes of the March 25, 2021 regular meeting of the Redevelopment Authority with a modification made to the minutes. Ms. Oscavich asked that the March 25, 2021 minutes reflect her having left the meeting early due to a work conflict. Ms. Bambu-Weiss indicated that minutes would be updated to reflect the fact that Ms. Oscavich left the March 25, 2021 meeting early due to a work conflict.

The minutes were emailed earlier to each member of the Board. With the modification noted, Ms. Grigsby seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously and the minutes of the March 25, 2021 regular meeting of the Redevelopment Authority were approved with the noted modification to be made to them.

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

- 1) **Hoover-Mason Trestle** – Mr. Hanna noted that the Hoover-Mason Trestle has opened as of April 19, 2021. He noted that volunteers did clean-up of the flower beds on the HMT prior to its opening. He also noted that the City of Bethlehem Public Works will be opening / closing the HMT daily.
- 2) **Bethlehem Landing Visitor Center** – Mr. Hanna stated that pricing has been received regarding the exterior masonry / sealing work needed at the Bethlehem Landing Visitor Center. He noted that the price for this work was less than the estimated project costs, resulting in some additional funds available. Mr. Hanna added that with money saved on this project some small other projects may be able to be completed.
- 3) **Levitt Pavilion** – Mr. Hanna indicated that concerns have been raised about an area of the Levitt Pavilion where crowds tend to gather and pass-through after some of the more crowded concerts. He noted that extending the existing Levitt Pavilion railings to close this area from public access would help with crowd control in these situations. Mr. Hanna noted he would discuss this matter with the City at its upcoming RDA transition meeting prior to moving forward with these railings.
- 4) **Skyline West Project** – Mr. Hanna reported that some recent reporting has occurred regarding the Skyline West Project and its possible impact of the Historic Bethlehem desire to become a World Heritage Site. Mr. Hanna explained that the project is working through some issues and assured the Board that this project will not jeopardize the World Heritage Designation being sought by Historic Bethlehem.

Ms. Oscavich asked what role, if any, the RDA has in this project. Mr. Riskin indicated that the RDA has an obligation to monitor the project until completion to ensure it is completed per the design and plans presented to the RDA when approval for the land purchase was sought. Mr. Riskin also indicated that the RDA would issue a certification of completion when the project is completed in an acceptable form.

Mr. Hanna added that although the RDA is not involved with the actual project development, it does continue to be actively engaged in monitoring the status of the project as it progresses through the City of Bethlehem land development and other approval processes. He noted that he continues to monitor the status of the Skyline West project and discusses any issues that arise with City of Bethlehem staff.

RESOLUTION NUMBER 1487

Mr. Heckman noted the RDA Board has been asked to review and consider for approval Resolution Number 1487, which authorizes the RDA to begin eminent domain proceedings to acquire the blight certified property located at 401-403 East Fourth Street and 405 East Fourth Street.

Mr. Hanna explained that an offer of just compensation has been made to the owner to purchase this property through an amicable sale to the RDA; however, to date the owner has been unwilling to sell the property to the RDA. The property located at 401-403 East Fourth Street and 405 East Fourth Street is being treated as single unit.

Mr. Hanna noted that after the declaration of taking is filed the owner can file preliminary objections to the taking of the property by the RDA. He added that the second step of the eminent domain process will be paying money into court and the court would then allocate the funds among the lienholders. Mr. Hanna noted that the liens on this property may be in excess of its value which would be paid for the RDA to acquire it.

Ms. Oscavich asked if the garage was included in this property acquisition. Mr. Hanna stated the garage is included and noted that due to its current condition the garage may need to be demolished.

Ms. Grigsby asked if the property is currently occupied. Mr. Hanna stated that this property is vacant and explained that any property the RDA acquires must be certified as both vacant and blighted.

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

SELECTING AND APPROPRIATING PREMISES OWNED BY KALAVATHI SHUNMUGAM, KNOWN AS 401-403 EAST FOURTH STREET AND 405 EAST FOURTH STREET, BETHLEHEM, NORTHAMPTON COUNTY, PENNSYLVANIA, BEING PROPERTY DECLARED BLIGHTED BY THE BLIGHTED PROPERTY REVIEW COMMITTEE OF THE CITY OF BETHLEHEM UNDER CITY OF BETHLEHEM ARTICLE 149, AND AUTHORIZING THE INSTITUTION OF CONDEMNATION PROCEEDINGS FOR THE ACQUISITION THEREOF.

WHEREAS, the Redevelopment Authority of the City of Bethlehem pursuant to Ordinance of the Council of the City of Bethlehem proposes to acquire property declared to be blighted by the Blighted Property Review Committee of the City of Bethlehem; and

WHEREAS, in order to effectuate the terms of said ordinance, it is necessary that the Redevelopment Authority acquire title in fee simple to the premises to be redeveloped, including improvements and fixtures; and

WHEREAS, the Authority has determined the fair market value of the property to be One Hundred Two Thousand and 00/100 Dollars (\$102,000.00); and

WHEREAS, the Authority has been unable to agree with the owner (Kalavathi Shunmugam) of the property to be acquired as to price or damages to be paid; and

WHEREAS, in accordance with Section 12 and Section 12.1 of the Urban Redevelopment Law, being the Act of May 24, 1945, P.L. 991, as amended, the Authority is authorized to acquire title to said property through Eminent Domain proceedings.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Redevelopment Authority of the City of Bethlehem hereby selects and appropriates for the purposes of redevelopment in accordance with law the following described tracts or parcels of land together with the improvements and fixtures thereon:

401-403 East Fourth Street and 405 East Fourth Street, Bethlehem, Northampton County, Pennsylvania, as more fully described below in Exhibit “A”.

RESOLVED: That the title to be acquired should be absolute or fee simple title.

RESOLVED: The officers of the Redevelopment Authority are authorized to execute any and all documentation and take any and all action which may be required to implement this resolution.

RESOLVED: That the solicitor for the Redevelopment Authority is hereby authorized and directed to institute such proceedings, to enter such bond and to take such other action as may be necessary or desirable to carry out the purpose of this resolution.

RESOLVED: That the institution of such proceedings and any damages which may be awarded to the owner of the described premises be paid out of funds received by the Authority under a Cooperation Agreement with the City of Bethlehem which deals with Community Development Block Grant Funds or other funds as the City of Bethlehem may have allocated to the blight remediation program.

EXHIBIT “A”

TRACT I

“ALL that certain piece of parcel of land located in the City of Bethlehem, County of Northampton and the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania bounded and described to wit:

“BEGINNING at a point being the Northeast corner of Polk and Fourth Streets, thence extending easterly along the north side of Fourth Street, forty (40) feet to a point, thence extending of that width in depth northwardly one hundred twenty five and ten one hundredths (125.1) fee to the north side of a retaining wall.

“BOUNDED on the south by East Fourth Street on the west by Polk Street, on the north by land of H. P. McFadden and on the east by the land now or late of Michael Kokoc, being commonly known and designated as 401-403 East Fourth Street.”

TRACT II

“ALL that certain brick dwelling, tenement and lot of land known and designated as 405 East Fourth Street in the City of Bethlehem, County of Northampton and State of Pennsylvania, bounded on the north by land now or late of Mary G. McFadden, on the East by land now or late of Patrick Coyle, on the south by Fourth Street and on the west by other land now or late of Mary G. McFadden, continuing in front of Fourth Street twenty (20) feet and in depth of equal width one hundred twenty two feet, more or less to a retaining wall.”

ALSO KNOWN AS NORTHAMPTON COUNTY UNIFORM PARCEL IDENTIFIER:

	MAP: <u> P6SE1B </u>	BLOCK: <u> 15 </u>	LOT: <u> 17 0204 </u>
and	MAP: <u> P6SE1B </u>	BLOCK: <u> 15 </u>	LOT: <u> 18 0204 </u>

(Resolution Number 1487)

Ms. Grigsby seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved. As a result, Resolution Number 1487 was unanimously adopted by the RDA Board.

APPROVAL OF INVOICES – APRIL 2021

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

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

- 1) \$61,205.97 represents costs associated with On-Going and Maintenance Costs and payment of such costs to be made from the Authority Fund.
- 2) \$1,747.00 represents reimbursement to the RDA from the Authority Fund account for various costs related to the Bethlehem Works / TIF District.

RESOLUTION NUMBER 1488

Mr. Heckman noted the RDA Board has been asked to review and consider for approval Resolution Number 1488 which amends the agreement between the City of Bethlehem and RDA to provide additional 2020 CDBG funds.

Mr. Hanna explained that the City of Bethlehem identified some surplus CDBG funds from their 2020 allocation and approached the RDA about being able to provide additional reimbursement to the RDA for some blight remediation costs incurred.

Following this presentation, Ms. Oscavich presented the following resolution to the Board and moved for its adoption by the Board.

WHEREAS, the City of Bethlehem is undertaking and carrying out a Community Development Program utilizing funds made available by the Federal Government under the provisions of Title I of the Housing and Community Development Act of 1974, as amended;

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WHEREAS, the City has designated the Department of Community and Economic Development to undertake planning, execution, and administration of eligible activities in conjunction with the Community Development Program; and

WHEREAS, the City, acting through the Director of Department of Community and Economic Development, has previously authorized the Redevelopment Authority of the City of Bethlehem to act as its agent within certain redevelopment; housing and Community Development Block Grant eligible programs as requested by the Department of Community and Economic Development; and

WHEREAS, the City and Authority entered into an Agreement dated February 23, 2021 to reimburse the Authority for various costs generally described as Redevelopment Authority Administration and Delivery costs, acquisition and demolition costs, and property maintenance costs.

WHEREAS, the City and Authority agree to amend the Scope of Service and provide an additional Five Thousand and 00/100 Dollars (\$5,000.00) grant award to the Agreement.

NOW, THEREFORE, in consideration of the mutual covenants herein contained, and of the benefits that will accrue to the City as a result of the CDBG Program, the parties do mutually agree as follows:

1. An additional grant amount of PY2020 CDBG award of Five Thousand and 00/100 Dollars (\$5,000.00) shall be used for third party soft costs related to the blight remediation program; and
2. That all other terms and conditions of the Agreement executed on February 23, 2021 remain in full force and effect.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Redevelopment Authority of the City of Bethlehem hereby approves Amendment No. 1 to Agreement by and between the City of Bethlehem and Redevelopment Authority of the City of Bethlehem and that the Chairman or Vice-Chairman shall be authorized to sign said agreement, same to be attested to by the Secretary.

(Resolution Number 1488)

Mr. Spadoni seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously adopted. As a result, Resolution Number 1488 was unanimously adopted by the RDA Board.

GENERAL DISCUSSION

RDA Transition – Mr. Hanna reported that the RDA and City of Bethlehem will be meeting on Friday, April 23, 2021 for another meeting involving the RDA transition. He noted that he shared with the Board some financial projections being looked at for the future of the RDA. Mr. Hanna stated that the meeting scheduled for tomorrow will work through some issues involving this transition and he will continue to update the RDA Board on these matters.

Mr. Hanna indicated that at these meetings the consensus appears to be the RDA and the RDA Board continue to maintain and control the RDA unencumbered funds and that the RDA would contribute approximately 30% for staff time. He noted that the remaining 70% of staff time would be paid by the City and/or other funding sources based upon time estimates of monthly working hours.

Mr. Hanna noted the RDA financial projections were done with the assumption that there would be no new sources of revenue for the RDA; however, he added that such a scenario is unlikely. He added that the RDA can continue to do conduit financing as well as explore other alternative revenue sources. Mr. Hanna provided an example of obtaining sponsorships for the Hoover-Mason Trestle as a way to offset some of the costs associated with its maintenance.

Mr. Heckman asked if Mr. Riskin has been involved with RDA transition discussions. Mr. Hanna stated that Mr. Riskin will become involved when agreements are drafted such as those involving personnel changes and cost sharing arrangements between the RDA and City.

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Ms. Grigsby inquired as to who the point of contact will be for the RDA as of January 1, 2022. Mr. Hanna stated that this is one of the issues that need to be discussed and addressed during the on-going RDA transition meetings between the RDA and City. Mr. Hanna noted the importance of leadership for the RDA and described some of the forms a director can take for the future of the RDA. He added that consideration needs to many issues as part of this transition, including a change in administration occurring in January 2022.

ADJOURNMENT

As there was no further business, Ms. Grigsby made a motion to adjourn this April 22, 2021 RDA Board meeting. Mr. Spadoni seconded the motion and the motion was unanimously carried. As a result, the meeting adjourned at 5:49 P.M.

Submitted by,

Heather M. Bambu-Weiss
Board Secretary