

URBAN RENEWAL TASK FORCE
Meeting Minutes – March 19, 2015 at 10:30 am
Courtyard Conference Room

Attendance:

Tim Cummings
Ron Goss
Colene Martin
Robert Schaller - absent
Jon Bowen
Jim Williams - absent
Ward Warren - absent

City/Staff/Council Liaisons:

Aaron Cubic (City Manager)
David Reeves (Asst. City Manager)
Lora Glover (PCD Director)
Jay Meredith (Finance Director)
Don Abbot (GP Business Advocate)

Guests:

I. Business – New

A. Urban Renewal – What is it? Aaron Cubic shared PowerPoint presentation (distributed copies to committee members) and topics included:

1. Definitions

- Definition of authorized urban renewal program
- Definition of “blighted” conditions
- Urban renewal agency powers (what an agency can do) vs. typical City powers
- Impact on taxing districts including schools & benefits (improvements increasing assessed values)

2. Steps for Creating an Urban Renewal Area

- Prepare a feasibility study to determine if criteria for formation is met
- Prepare an urban renewal plan (boundary, debt limit, guiding principles, etc.)
- Prepare a formal report (associated with plan, addresses criteria to satisfy ORS)
- Adopt formal plan (Council ordinance)

3. Role of Urban Renewal Task Force

- **1st phase – the feasibility study** (about 4 month long process)
 - Look at all existing plans/studies
 - Public process for gathering information
 - Asses the conditions of blight
 - Determine tentative boundary
 - Establish potential revenue capacity for area
 - Evaluate the options for proceeding
 - Report to Council for consideration in moving forward
- **2nd phase – the plan and report are created** (about 9 month long process)
 - Refines the boundary and list of projects from feasibility study

- Specific plan/report requirements and content to adhere to: findings go through Planning Commission, notify all taxing districts in area, presentation to County, public hearings, and ultimately Council approval

4. Role of Urban Renewal Agency (once established)

- Provide direction for the implementation of the plan
- Plan administration delegated to staff
- Agency CAN be City Council

5. Typical Projects for Redevelopment Agency

- Infrastructure
- Streetscapes
- Anything to catalyst development
- Storefront loans
- Parks
- Plazas
- Place making

6. Previous Redevelopment Agency

- David Reeves reviewed the previous redevelopment agency in Grants Pass - very successful, \$160 million assessed value increment created with Grants Pass Parkway, huge impact, property values more than tripled, turned back money to taxing districts

7. Funding

- Phase 1 - City has budgeted to hire a consultant to help the Committee with the analysis portion
- Phase 2 - costs would be borne by agency once it is established.

B. Urban Renewal Process Next Steps

- Staff will draft an RFP for consulting services to help with the feasibility study, they will publish that, assign selection criteria, Committee will rank responses, and then make recommendation for consultant choice

C. Q & A - Further Discussion

- Boundary can include several areas but it needs to be contiguous
- Conflicts of interests will be dealt with in the same way as in Council or other committee/commissions
- Funding? – City has \$50,000 for feasibility study and then plan/report items are charged back to agency once it is developed
- Discussion related to funding – include Fairgrounds, send it to Merlin because doesn't belong in current location any more, would give County funding source for public safety, all growth on south side anyway, 4th Bridge corridor plan not even adopted, would change city dynamics
- Are there stated, specific goals for projects (i.e. convention center?) - yes
- Redevelopment agency can do a project that is eventually owned by governmental agency, but that is very politically sensitive.
- Is the Committee going to identify goals and blighted areas or will the consultants come in, take Committee's suggestions, but do their own

assessment? – Consultants will help facilitate process, Committee will determine where the areas of blight are and then through the feasibility study process will get public input on where other areas of blight may be.

- Blight can also mean “undeveloped” or “under developed” property (example: Spalding Industrial Park)
- Can property in areas like that be “given away”? – yes, redevelopment agencies can do that if jobs are being created and things like that.
- Can blight also mean “underserved” or “underutilized” (ex. vacant medical buildings)? – yes, blight is relatively broad and there is some flexibility in determining areas of blight.
- Committee’s role is to help Council determine areas of blight. In this meeting alone have determined areas in the NE, NW (Spalding), SE, SW, tower up on hill, J Street down to the river and cross river into south Y area, the intersection of Highland/Vine and come down 6th Street corridor, G Street to the bridge, and J out to Mill.
- Area can’t exceed 25% for a city with population 50,000 and under.
- Can you have multiple districts started every few years over time? – yes, as long as community is willing to support it. Salem has 7, Portland has several. With the resources we’re spending and the size of our city, one district could encompass several projects, especially since don’t know what the future will hold.
- Is Urban Renewal a federal or state program? – state
- Will it be controversial? – yes, it does impact taxing districts, it does put a freeze on them, including education. Delayed impact to all districts, but in the end they get back everything they had plus everything else that was incremental because of the districts. Chance to make a positive impact in the city.
- Committee comes up with a plan and then Council can adopt it, modify it, and/or defer it to the voters or the voters could send it to referendum.
- As the plan develops perhaps more should be done to explain the history/benefits of the previous agency to help with any resistance that comes with this one? – one role of Committee is community outreach, there was further discussion about community outreach.

MOTION/VOTE

Tim Cummings moved and Colene Martin seconded to elect Jon Bowen as chair. The vote resulted as follows: “AYES”: Tim Cummings, Ron Goss, Colene Martin, and Jon Bowen. “NAYS”: None. Abstain: None. Absent: Robert Schaller, Jim Williams, and Ward Warren.

The motion passed.

MOTION/VOTE

Jon Bowen moved and Tim Cummings seconded to elect Colene Martin as vice chair. The vote resulted as follows: “AYES”: Tim Cummings, Ron Goss, Colene Martin, and Jon Bowen. “NAYS”: None. Abstain: None. Absent: Robert Schaller, Jim Williams, and Ward Warren.

The motion passed.

II. Next Meeting: TBA

- RFP to go out in the next couple weeks and will give 3-4 weeks for proposals to be submitted
- Meet again for scoring after proposals come in (end of April/early May)
- Thursdays at 10:30am is a good day/time for Committee to meet

III. Misc.

- Is there a need for discussion about “where Committee wants to go” (ex. commercial development vs. residential development) before vendor evaluations take place? – Aaron and David responded there are just a few qualified firms in Oregon and they have experience doing all types. Should probably go with one of those.
- Jay shared about conference he recently went to on this topic, City of Albany had a wonderful presentation, could possibly invite the presenter down to Grants Pass to give a presentation to the Committee, would help give a better sense of what can be accomplished with urban renewal.
- Background info staff provided to Committee – recent study on urban renewal in Oregon, completed in 2012, talks about different projects cities have done and how it all worked for them.

IV. Adjourn - Chair Bowen adjourned the meeting

These minutes were prepared by contract minute taker, Becca Quimby.