

Pittsfield Economic Development Authority
January 6, 2012

Meeting Minutes

In attendance were the following Board Members: Chairman Gary Grunin, Mick Callahan, Peter Fruet, Michael Matthews, Beth Mitchell, and George Whaling.

Also in attendance was Kevin Morandi, City Councilor, Beth Goodman, Legal Counsel, Mike Ward, former City Councilor, Dan Bianchi, Mayor, Tony Dobrowolski, Berkshire Eagle Reporter, Terry Kinnas, PCTV, Cory Thurston, Executive Director and Colleen Hunter-Mullett, Clerk.

I. Administration

a. Call to Order

Chairman Grunin called the meeting to order at 8:00 AM reminding all in attendance that the meeting was being both audio and video taped.

b. Approval of December 8, 2012 Meeting Minutes

There was a motion to approve the minutes of the December 8, 2012 meeting as presented, seconded and carried.

Chairman Grunin noted the number of guests in attendance, informing them that he would be staying after the meeting and was willing to answer any questions from the public at that time.

II. Executive Director's Report

Project Matrix - Mr. Thurston submitted and reviewed an updated project matrix, highlighting the status of the ERE's for the 20's and 30's complexes, stating that the closing for the teens should be finalized next week.

Woodlawn Ave. and the Bridge – Mr. Thurston informed the Board that he was waiting for a response from CSX to PEDAs markup of the license agreement.

Chairman Grunin asked if there was anything that the Board or the new Mayor could do to move it along. Mr. Thurston stated that he didn't believe so. Mayor Bianchi offered to contact the Secretary of Transportation if needed. Mr. Thurston stated that he plans to engage the City's Department of Public Works to be a part of the project when it reaches that point.

Mr. Whaling asked if PEDAs could include in the agreement that the existing bridge would not be removed until the new bridge design is completed. Mr. Thurston informed him that there will be language in the agreement to this affect, but informed him that CSX will contract for the demolition and MassDOT will construct the new bridge. He stated that it's a

delicate balance so there will be two agreements that will be tied together, but that the money is in place and the design is on the fast track. Mr. Whaling stated that he thought PEDAs needs to put pressure on them to ensure that the bridge is constructed before Silver Lake Boulevard is closed.

Regarding Silver Lake, Mr. Thurston informed the Board that he had done some research and discovered that the lake is actually owned by the State and that the shoreline is owned by multiple original land owners. He stated that in order to complete the proposed walking path, the shoreline property would need to be transferred to PEDAs then an easement would be granted to the City for its maintenance. Mr. Thurston further stated that before the transfer of the shoreline owned by GE, a City Council Amendment to the DEDA agreement, similar to the one done recently prior to the transfer of Woodlawn Avenue, would be required. Mr. Thurston informed the Board that Ms. Goodman has been working with WMECO on the transfer of their shoreline land to PEDAs and that private transaction is nearing completion.

Mr. Callahan stated that he would like to add paving and drainage improvements by the City to Silver Lake Boulevard, as well as vegetation improvements. Mr. Thurston informed him that paving, new guardrails, and vegetation will be included in the GE project.

Mr. Matthews asked if changes could be made to PEDAs insurance policy in regards to indemnification. Mr. Thurston informed him that all insurance is up for review and he'll report back once he knows more. Mr. Whaling asked how insurance is brokered. Mr. Thurston stated that he will look for three companies to compare prices.

Mr. Thurston informed the Board that stormwater monitoring is ongoing and that he is working on getting an updated discharge permit. He stated that the north fore-bay of the water quality basin needs to be dredged and that he'll work with the City to share maintenance costs because 90 acres of the Morningside neighborhood drain into the basin.

Mountain One Financial Center Progress – Mr. Thurston informed the Board that the project is moving along and that the siding should be installed some time next week.

Life Science/Workforce Training Facility – Mr. Thurston informed the Board that he is pressing on with obtaining funding. He stated that he is getting new inquiries from interested tenants that could assist PEDAs in obtaining the funding. In answer to questions from Board members Mr. Thurston stated that the new interest is non local, but that both Nuclea and BCC have pledged to locate to the facility when funding is secured for building construction. PEDAs will offer space with no rent to entice incubator businesses to locate, but the business will have to share operating costs with PEDAs.

Mr. Thurston informed the Board that soil sampling still needs to be done and that soil borings will be done before the next board meeting.

Mayor Bianchi and Mr. Thurston discussed the different categories of industries that PEDAs is looking to entice into locating to a life science building, including venture capital firms

that specialize in life science firms. Mr. Whaling asked Mr. Thurston where PEDDA stands in seeking these types of firms. Mr. Thurston informed him that he is developing a list of venture capital firms to send a mailing to.

Mr. Whaling suggested hiring a firm to assist Mr. Thurston in locating potential firms. Mr. Matthews would like to be on a marketing sub-committee due to his experience in working with venture capital firms. Chairman Grunin agreed with both Board Members being on a marketing sub-committee.

Mr. Whaling asked Mr. Thurston what the deliverables were at this point. Mr. Thurston stated that the new web site is due to be complete at the end of February.

Action Ambulance – Mr. Thurston informed the Board that the building design is underway and that he should have a site plan to view within the next couple of weeks. He further stated that borings needed to be done and geotechnical drilling to determine the compaction levels that are required for this site.

Waterstone Development – Mr. Thurston informed the Board that lease negotiations have begun and that they are working on the permitting process.

Marketing Plans – Mr. Thurston informed the Board that Diana Brook's summary of the December meeting had been submitted.

III. Meeting Calendar

Chairman Grunin informed the Board that the next meeting of the Board is scheduled for February 8, 2012 and the remainder of the year's meetings will be held on the second Wednesday of the month.

Mayor Bianchi asked why the Board had changed the direction they were going in seeking industrial companies to retail companies. He expressed his concern, as well as the residents concerns with this change because he feels the public has a stake in it and he also feels that a greater public discussion needs to take place before any decisions are made.

Chairman Grunin informed the Mayor that the park will be mixed use, with research and development, life science building, commercial and retail. He stated that no one has seen a plan yet because there is no plan as of yet. Chairman Grunin reviewed the permitting process that any potential tenant has to go through, including approval of the Community Development Board and the City Council. Mayor Bianchi asked if there would be a binding agreement between PEDDA and Waterstone before it goes to the Community Development Board. Chairman Grunin informed him that there would not be.

Mayor Bianchi asked if the letter of intent that PEDDA signed with Waterstone was a binding agreement. Mr. Thurston informed him that it is not. Mr. Thurston further stated that permits needs to be in place before any binding agreement can be entered into. He stated that he believes any developer with a plan to invest and create jobs in Pittsfield should be heard.

Chairman Grunin stated that this developer is not just a retail developer. They do commercial development as well and they have offered to assist PEDA in this area. Mayor Bianchi asked what percentage of the park this development represents. Chairman Grunin told him that it amounts to 16 of 52 acres.

Mr. Whaling suggested taking out an ad in the Berkshire Eagle informing the public of what we know and what we don't know in an effort to relieve some public misconceptions. There was a brief discussion on publicity.

Mr. Thurston stated that although the Waterstone project is at a very preliminary stage, he believes the the park should include mixed use facilities for better integration with the adjacent neighborhood. He further stated that urban revitalization programs are now including retail, but he believes that there is value in having the public discussions, which should be PEDA's next step. Mayor Bianchi encouraged this because he believes that people are interested in the topic.

Ms. Mitchell stated that the new generation wants to be able to do everything in the same area, within walking distance. They are not interested in mowing lawns, which is why downtown housing is becoming so popular. PEDA is looking towards the future for ways to bring our children back to the City after college.

Mr. Matthews stated that manufacturing has been in decline since 1974. He also warned that confidentiality is going to play a part in the development because company names can not be made public during negotiations.

Mayor Bianchi stated that the Board may need to do a better job of public discussion.

Mr. Thurston stated that the former Fort Devens, , now being redeveloped by MassDevelopment, is a similar site and a good example of a mixed use community .

Mr. Matthews stated that it may take some time to get the PEDA Board in sync because there are a lot of new members. Mayor Bianchi stated that he was encouraged by the make up of the new Board and that he believes getting good public involvement is always a good idea.

There was a motion to adjourn at 9:15 AM, seconded and carried.

Respectfully submitted,



Colleen Hunter-Mullett
Clerk