

VALPARAISO REDEVELOPMENT COMMISSION
Regular Meeting Minutes
January 9, 2025

The regular meeting of the Valparaiso Redevelopment Commission was called to order at 4:55 p.m. on Thursday, January 9, 2025, President Rob Thorgren presided.

Members present were: Rob Thorgren, Barbara Domer, Bill Durnell, Trish Sarkisian, Robert Cotton and Frank Dessuit. Also present were Director of Development George Douglas, City Attorney Patrick Lyp, Planning Director Bob Thompson, Associate Planner Jessica Gage, Assistant Police Chief Mark Lamotte, Clerk Treasurer Holly Taylor, Tim Brust, Todd Leeth of Leeth Law and members of the public.

ITEM #1-SWEARING IN OF COMMISSIONERS (2:21):

Mr. Thorgren reported that members may change and the swearing in will be addressed at the February meeting.

ITEM #2 -ELECTION OF OFFICERS (2:27):

Ms. Sarkisian made motion for this calendar year that Rob Thorgren serve as President, Barbara Domer to serve as Vice President and Bill Durnell to serve as Secretary. Ms. Domer nominated Mr. Cotton for Vice President. The motion was amended to reflect the change at Vice President to Mr. Cotton. Mr. Durnell seconded. A voice vote was unanimously carried.

ITEM #3- MINUTES (4:08):

Mr. Durnell stated Commission members met for the Executive session.

Motion: Mr. Durnell moved to approve the January 9, 2025, Executive meeting Minutes. Mr. Cotton seconded. A voice vote was unanimously carried.

Mr. Durnell reported copies of the December 12, 2024, regular meeting minutes were distributed to members for their review prior to the meeting. After reviewing the minutes, all seemed in order.

Motion: Mr. Durnell moved to approve the December 12, 2024, meeting minutes. Mr. Cotton seconded. A voice vote was unanimously carried.

ITEM #4 CLAIMS REGISTER AND FINANCIAL REPORT (6:25):

Mr. Douglas reported that the Commission was sent the January 2025 Claims Registers and December Financial Report prior to the meeting. Mr. Douglas highlighted a few key claims and noteworthy items in the Claims Register and Financial Report.

Motion: Mr. Cotton motioned to approve the January Register. Ms. Sarkisian seconded the motion. A voice vote was unanimously carried.

Mr. Douglas reported the tax draw in December was \$4.356 million for all allocation areas.

Discussion from Commission members ensued. Questions and items of discussion included:

- Whether the tax revenue has been increasing yearly and what the margin is for that growth

City staff answered and addressed questions and discussion items

Motion: Ms. Sarkisian motioned to approve the December Financial report. Mr. Durnell seconded the motion. A voice vote was unanimously carried.

ITEM #5 TRANSFERRING \$500,000 TO CITY EQUIPMENT FUND: (12:11)

Assistant Police Chief Lamotte thanked the Redevelopment Commission for the continued support of the Valparaiso Police Department. For the majority of the officers, their patrol car is their office and is a critical tool in keeping the officers and public safe. Replacing the patrol cars on a routine basis is an incredible recruitment and retention tool for the Police Department. The increase from \$450,000 to \$500,000 is due to the increase in police officers to 65 and the cost to purchase the equipment to outfit a vehicle has increased.

Discussion from Commission members ensued throughout budget presentation. Questions and items of discussion included:

- What is the average age of the current fleet?

City staff answered and addressed questions and discussion items.

Motion: Ms. Sarkisian motioned to approve the Transferring of \$500,000 to City Equipment Fund. Mr. Durnell seconded the motion. A voice vote was unanimously carried.

ITEM #6 ANNUAL APPROVAL OF CONSULTING AGREEMENTS: (15:22)

Mr. Douglas reported there are four consulting agreements for approval. Thomas & Associates administers grants. The proposed agreement has an increase from \$80 in 2024 to \$85 per hour. The Redevelopment Commission spent a total of \$680 in 2024.

Cender Dalton has been a longtime financial consultant for the Redevelopment Commission. In 2024 the Redevelopment Commission spent approximately \$26,000. There is an increase to the contract in 2025 of \$10 per hour for services of Municipal Advisor, Senior Associate and Associate.

Baker Tilly is utilized on various bond documents and project financing. In 2024 the Redevelopment Commission spent approximately \$6,000.

Com Control handles ValpoNet and works directly with any ISP (internet service providers) providers that want to tap into ValpoNet. In 2024 the Redevelopment Commission spent \$3,562.50.

Mr. Douglas recommended approval of the four consultant agreements on an annual as needed basis.

Discussion from Commission members ensued throughout budget presentation. Questions and items of discussion included:

- What was spent in 2024 for Baker Tilly and if it was related to the bonds?
- Will the invoices be paid from Professional Services in the budget?
- If a contract was received from Barnes & Thornburg for 2025

City staff answered and addressed questions and discussion items.

Motion: Ms. Sarkisian motioned to approve the Annual Consulting Agreements. Mr. Durnell seconded the motion. A voice vote was unanimously carried.

ITEM #7 OPENING OF FARM LEASE RFP: (21:31)

Mr. Douglas reported the Redevelopment Commission currently has an agreement with the Johnson family to farm the land and thought it was time to do an RFP (Request for Proposal) for the property to see what response(s) would be received. A RFP for leasing some of the property between 400 and 500 North owned by the Redevelopment Commission was done in 2024 with bids to be opened at the January RDC meeting.

A proposal was received from Murphy Family Farms with an amount of \$185 per tillable acre. A proposal was received from Johnson Brothers with an amount of \$190 per tillable acre. A proposal was received from Matt Goetz with an amount of \$245 per tillable acre.

Mr. Douglas reported that all three responses will be reviewed and taken under advisement. A formal recommendation will be given at the next Redevelopment Commission meeting.

Discussion from Commission members ensued:

- If the tillable amounts are per year or for the two-year term?
- Who defines what a tillable acre is?
- Could the tillable acreage change year to year?

ITEM #8 OPENING OF RFI FOR VALPONET: (25:37)

Mr. Douglas reported the RFI (request for information) for ValpoNet is a request for information and will not have a dollar amount attached per se. RFI's were received from NITCO and Choice Light. Mr. Douglas will review the RFI's along with our ValpoNet consultant Bryan Baker and discuss what the next steps might be at the next Redevelopment Commission meeting.

ITEM #9 UPDATE AND RECOMMENDATION ON RFO FOR 500 N PROPERTY: (28:11)

Mr. Douglas stated at the last meeting the commission authorized a request for offering (RFO) of the 250 acres of property between 400 and 500 North which is owned by the Commission. One response was received from Agincourt Investments, for an exclusive option to purchase 180 of the 249 acres at a price of \$50,000 per acre. The developer is proposing to construct 4 two-story buildings of non-residential use. Each building floor plan is roughly 150,000 square feet. At this time, Agincourt will determine the level of investment, number of jobs and what the tax impact will be as they go through the due diligence for the project they are proposing. The option agreement is for 180 days of due diligence with up to four 30-day extensions. A \$50,000 deposit is due at the signing of the option agreement, \$10,000 is non-refundable and each extension is an additional \$25,000 for a maximum of \$100,000.

Mr. Douglas reported that there are several conditions that will have to be met before closing. First and foremost, there must be an acceptable real estate purchase agreement which would require approval by the Redevelopment Commission. The project will also need an acceptable economic development agreement which would solidify what the project is, and what, if any, incentives, level of investment, number of jobs and salaries in much greater detail. The agreement will require the approval of the Redevelopment Commission and depending on what incentives, if any, will be approved by the Economic Development Commission and the City Council. In addition, the proposal includes acceptable placement of public walking paths and

public space within the 180-acre parcel, which will require acceptance by the Park Department/Board. Lastly, the option agreement requires consideration of future water production wells on the site. Currently, three test wells were drilled on the property by the utilities department, but it has not been decided if/when they will become actual production wells in production. Therefore, these will need to be protected by the development.

Discussion from Commission members included:

- Whether this is the same land as the farm lease property?
- What was the original cost of the property?
- Where are the 67 remaining acres located?
- What will the return on investment be?
- What the commitment entails if the agreement is approved?

Motion: Ms. Sarkisian motioned to approve RFO for 500 N Property. Mr. Durnell seconded the motion. A voice vote was unanimously carried.

ITEM #10 OTHER BUSINESS: (43:23)

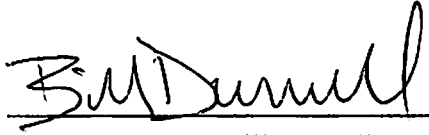
Mr. Douglas reported that the RDA Grant for the TOD has been closed out. At the last meeting the members asked for a public project breakout and Mr. Douglas handed the spreadsheet out to the members.

ITEM #11 PUBLIC COMMENT: (44:08)

None.

ITEM #12 ADJOURNMENT: (44:27)

Staff said they had no further items for the Commission's consideration. Mr. Cotton motioned to adjourn the meeting with Mr. Durnell seconding. A voice vote was unanimously carried. The meeting was adjourned at 5:37 p.m.


Bill Durnell, Secretary