VALPARAISO REDEVELOPMENT COMMISSION
Regular Meeting Minutes
February 13, 2025

The regular meeting of the Valparaiso Redevelopment Commission was called to order at 4:17p.m. on Thursday, February 13, 2025, President Rob Thorgren presided.

Members present were: Rob Thorgren, Barbara Domer, Bill Durnell, Trish Sarkisian, Frank Dessuit. Diana Reed attended via Zoom. Also present were Director of Development George Douglas, City Attorney Patrick Lyp, Community Engagement Director Maggie Clifton, Planning Director Bob Thompson, Associate Planner Jessica Gage, and members of the public.

ITEM #1 -ELECTION OF OFFICERS (0:53):
Ms. Reed made motion for this calendar year that Barbara Domer serve as Vice President. Ms. Sarkisian seconded. A voice vote was unanimously carried.

ITEM #2- MINUTES (1:23):
Mr. Durnell stated Commission members met for the Executive session.

Motion: Mr. Durnell moved to approve the February 13, 2025, executive meeting minutes. Ms. Sarkisian seconded. A voice vote was unanimously carried.

Mr. Durnell reported copies of January 9, 2025, 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 January 9, 2025, 2024, meeting minutes. Ms. Sarkisian seconded. A voice vote was unanimously carried.

ITEM #3 CLAIMS REGISTER AND FINANCIAL REPORT (2:18):
Mr. Douglas reported that the Commission was sent the February 2025 Claims Registers and January Financial Report prior to the meeting. Mr. Douglas highlighted a few key claims and noteworthy items in the Claims Register and Financial Report.

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

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

- Whether the $500,000 transfer was for police equipment
- If the Challenge Grants are paid as reimbursement
- Is the bulk of annual interest from Trust Indiana

City staff answered and addressed questions and discussion items.

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

ITEM #4 VALPARAISO ART WALK AGREEMENT: (9:57)
Ms. Clifton reported that the Redevelopment Commission has been part of the Art Walk for at least 12 years. The public art initiatives are guided by a volunteer advisory committee. Over the last several years the projects included the Art Walk, birds of paradise scavenger hunt and the utility box wrap expansion. The committee has recommended working with Greg & Alex Mendez again for this year to swap out 17 current steel sculptures with 17 new pieces. The installation of the sculptures will begin in March and end in May.

Ms. Clifton reported in 2024 the Redevelopment Commission approved the purchase of two sculptures that are currently on display and will be featured at two of the middle schools in town.

Motion: Ms. Sarkisian motioned to approve the Valparaiso Art Walk Agreement. Mr. Durnell seconded the motion. A voice vote was unanimously carried.

ITEM #5 BARNES & THORNBURG CONSULTING AGREEMENT: (13:40)
Mr. Douglas reported we did not receive this agreement in time for our January meeting. The annual consulting agreement with Barnes and Thornburg is for services rendered, usually on the financial and/or legal side. The hourly rates went up, as they did on other professional service agreements. Last year, we spent just over $19,000. A bulk of the costs were related to legal services on the Linc project and the parking garage. This agreement has a not to exceed amount of $35,000.

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

- What the budget amount was for 2024

City staff answered and addressed the question and discussion item

Motion: Mr. Durnell motioned to approve the Barnes & Thornburg Consulting Agreement. Ms. Sarkisian seconded the motion. A voice vote was unanimously carried.

ITEM #6 AUTHORIZATION OF FARM LEASE RFP: (16:10)
Mr. Douglas reported at the previous meeting the Commission received three RFP responses. The three responses were from the Johnson Brothers Farm at $190 per tillable acre, which comes out to just over $31,400 per year, Thomas Murphy at $185 per tillable acre which comes out to $29,005.43 a year, and lastly, from Matt Goetz at $245 per tillable acres which comes out to $39,200 a year. This property is 249 acres total with roughly a net of159 tillable acres. After reviewing all three responses, Mr. Douglas recommends the proposal from Matt Goetz as it is the highest price per tillable acre.

Motion: Ms. Sarkisian motioned to approve Farm Lease RFP. Mr. Durnell seconded the motion. A voice vote was unanimously carried.

<u>ITEM #7 UPDATE ON RFI FOR VALPONET</u>: (21:31)
Mr. Douglas reported the Redevelopment Commission received two proposals for the ValpoNet RFI (request for information). The first was from Choice Light out of South Bend, Indiana and the second was from Nitco. A response was received from Surf Air, but they did not meet the deadline, and the remaining two companies chose not to submit a response. A committee consisting of George Douglas, Patrick Lyp, Bryan Baker and Paul Pryor reviewed the two proposals. Nitco is a user and currently a customer and Choice Light is not, so the two proposals are very different. The committee recommended meeting with Nitco and Choice Light individually to better understand their proposals.

Discussion from Commission members ensued:

- Will the same committee meet with Choice Light and Nitco to go over their responses?

City staff answered and addressed questions and discussion items.

<u>ITEM #8 UPDATE ON REGAL BELOIT</u>: (23:47)
Mr. Douglas reported the Redevelopment Commission closed on the Regal building last week. The property will be assessed in how best we might use it. We are working closely with public facilities to make sure the building is secure and to transfer utility services to the Redevelopment Commission. The building is insured, with an indemnity clause. Currently, WSP, which is the environmental consultant for Emerson, is doing remediation work inside. We will continue to communicate directly with them to understand onsite activies. In addition, the Valparaiso Parks is working with a company called Sports Facilities Companies. They are working through assessments of the property in terms of how it might be used in the future, as a community center and possible other uses. Mr. Douglas stated there is no word yet on the Lilly Endowment Foundation $6 million grant request application. We are hoping to hear something by the end of the month or early in March.

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

- What is the Lilly Endowment request for $6 million?
- Is there still bond money available to help finance this project?

City staff answered and addressed the question and discussion item.

<u>ITEM #9 OTHER BUSINESS</u>: (28:11)
Mr. Douglas reported MKSK is currently working on the West St. Corridor study. MKSK is currently in the first phase of gathering and going through GIS data and other information relating to the study area. Once their review of the area and information is completed they will present a high level assessment of their findings and alternative programming for the campus. Mr. Douglas expects to have public input with the stakeholders by approximately mid-summer. We will work with MKSK towards completion of the study and options in August to be able to come back to the Commission with a formal recommendation.

Discussion from Commission members included:

- What does the first phase encompass?
- Where is the funding for the project coming from?

City staff answered and addressed the question and discussion item.

ITEM #10 PUBLIC COMMENT: (36:42)
None.

ITEM #11 ADJOURNMENT: (36:50)
Staff said they had no further items for the Commission's consideration. Mr. Durnell motioned to adjourn the meeting with Ms. Sarkisian seconding. A voice vote was unanimously carried. The meeting was adjourned at 4:53 p.m.

Bill Durnell

Bill Durnell, Secretary