

VALPARAISO REDEVELOPMENT COMMISSION

Regular Meeting Minutes

July 17, 2025

The regular meeting of the Valparaiso Redevelopment Commission was called to order at 9:07 a.m. on Thursday, July 17, 2025, President Rob Thorngren presided.

Members present were: Rob Thorngren, Barbara Domer, Bill Durnell and Trish Sarkisian. Also present were Director of Development George Douglas, City Administrator Bill Oeding, Engineering Director Max Rehlander, Planning Director Bob Thompson, and members of the public. Diana Reed and Frank Dessuit were not in attendance.

ITEM #1- MINUTES: (7:08)

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

Motion: Mr. Durnell moved to approve the July 17, 2025 executive meeting minutes. Ms. Sarkisian seconded. A voice vote was unanimously carried.

Mr. Durnell reported copies of June 12, 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 June 12, 2025, meeting minutes. Ms. Sarkisian seconded. A voice vote was unanimously carried.

ITEM #2 CLAIMS REGISTER AND FINANCIAL REPORT: (10:25)

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

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

- What amount was budgeted for reimbursement for city staff?
- Whether the paving invoice from Milestone is for 2024 or 2025 paving.
- A request was made for a breakdown of the 2025 budgeted amounts and the current actual spending and receipts to date to be provided at the next meeting.

City staff answered and addressed questions and discussion items.

Motion: Ms. Sarkisian motioned to approve the June Claims Register and the May Financial report. Mr. Durnell seconded the motion. A voice vote was unanimously carried.

ITEM #3 RFP BROWNING DAY: (22:28)

Mr. Douglas presented a revised scope of services with Browning Day for approval. The firm was initially engaged through the city Planning Department in 2022–2023 to develop the Eastside Masterplan, focusing on the area surrounding Memorial Parkway. While initial work on the west side of Memorial Parkway (near PATCO and St. Mary's/Powers Health) began, it was not completed due to the pause of the sports and recreation campus project on the east side. The proposed contract re-engages Browning Day to complete the original work and incorporate the former community sports and recreation complex property now owned by the Redevelopment Commission. The revised scope totals approximately \$82,000, with \$29,000 from the original

contract and an additional \$53,000 for the expanded area. The project will include stakeholder engagement and public meetings. Approval was recommended.

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

- A clarification was requested regarding the number of public meetings included in the revised scope of work with Browning Day.
- What is the anticipated timeline for kickoff of the revised scope of work with Browning Day?
- Who will be selecting the stakeholder group and what areas or sectors they will represent. Will it include residents in the surrounding area?

City staff answered and addressed questions and discussion items.

Motion: Ms. Domer motioned to approve the professional services agreement with Browning Day with understanding that an additional public meeting be added. Mr. Durnell seconded. A voice vote was unanimously carried.

ITEM #4 PUBLIC ART KIRCHHOFF PARK: (28:55)

Ms. Clifton presented the recommendations from the Art Advisory Committee for allocating public art funds for the installation of two functional art benches at Kirchhoff Park, in coordination with the City's replay initiative. The benches, selected from vendor Noble Winds based in Ohio, are made from recycled wind turbine materials and promote sustainability while providing shade and colorful, functional seating. The proposed models are the Acadia and Everglade.

The remaining funds would support artist stipends, signage, and other project elements. If approved, the benches would be delivered within 3–4 months. The Parks Department and Creative Council are coordinating a call for artists, with a press release anticipated next week. The Creative Council will manage the call and selection process, and the Art Advisory Committee will review final designs before installation. Installation timing will align with weather conditions and park construction progress, with flexibility depending on artist input and site readiness.

Additionally, Ms. Clifton updated the commission that the two sculptures funded in 2024 have been installed at the middle schools, and the Art Walk display on Cumberland has been fully updated with new signage.

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

- Whether one of the round turbine element benches would include the chain swing as shown in the vendor photos or if it would be a stationary bench.

City staff answered the question and discussion the item.

Motion: Mr. Durnell motioned to approve the request for funds for Public Art at Kirchhoff Park. Ms. Sarkisian seconded the motion. A voice vote was unanimously carried.

ITEM #5 DOWNTOWN STREETScape REQUEST FOR FUNDS: (33:44)

Change Orders #2 and #4 – Downtown Streetscape Project:

Mr. Rehlander presented two change orders for the Downtown Streetscape Project with Gariup Construction.

Change Order #2 reflects an increase of \$41,267.47 for sidewalk concrete work, due to extended project timelines and rising labor costs tied to coordination with The Linc apartments schedule. Staff worked closely with the contractor to confirm the revised costs and recommended approval.

Change Order #4, in the amount of \$2,193.98, covers a material cost increase for a planter that was intended to be included in the original design. The Parks Department worked on the design early on, but the correct planter was not included in the final bid documents. This change order is for materials only, with no labor adjustment. Approval was also recommended.

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

- Whether the delay was caused by the City or the developer of The Linc Apartments. A follow-up question asked why the City is responsible for paying the additional labor costs due to that delay.

City staff answered and addressed the questions and discussion items.

Motion: Ms. Sarkisian motioned to approve the request for funds Change Orders #2 and #4. Mr. Durnell seconded the motion. A voice vote was unanimously carried.

Paving Update and Funding Request – Downtown Streetscape Project:

Mr. Rehlander reported that paving within project limits was originally included in Gariup Construction's contract. While some paving work, specifically from Morgan Street east along Lincolnway in front of the parking garage, was completed on schedule, concerns arose regarding the performance and coordination of Gariup's paving subcontractor. Given the importance of the Lincolnway and Morgan intersection as a high-traffic arterial, staff determined it was in the City's best interest to discontinue use of the original paving team.

In response, bids were solicited from other reputable contractors in the area. Bid tabulations from Reith-Riley and Milestone Contractors were included in the meeting packet. Staff recommended awarding the work to Milestone Contractors, with a total cost just under \$180,000. Approval was requested for this funding to complete the improvements.

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

- Whether the paving costs for this section of road were included in the original project budget and scope.
- Whether the decision to hire a different contractor was based solely on concerns about the performance of the original subcontractor, despite some paving work already being completed.
- How was the paving originally budgeted within the overall project; specifically, what amount was allocated for this paving in the initial budget.
- Whether the additional cost compares favorably with other existing projects.

- Confirmation was requested on whether the City is paying an additional \$80,000 and, in return, will be paving two additional roads not originally included in the project scope, due to their current poor condition justifying their inclusion.

City staff answered and addressed the questions and discussion items.

Motion: Mr. Durnell motioned to approve the request paving funds. Ms. Sarkisian seconded the motion. A voice vote was unanimously carried.

ITEM #6 BARREL DISTRICT TRAIL REQUEST FOR FUNDS FOR SUPPLEMENTAL AGREEMENT: (43:30)

Mr. Durnell noted, for the record, that his employer is GATX Corporation, which counts CSX as a customer. To avoid any potential conflict of interest, he recused himself from discussion and any official action to be taken.

Mr. Rehlander requested additional funding for the Barrel District Trail project, which connects to the City's TOD District. Over the past year, the City has been in discussions with CSX Railroad regarding a parcel of land CSX claims to own. Although the City has provided documentation indicating the parcel is City-owned, the matter remains unresolved. To avoid delays, the trail alignment will be shifted slightly south to bypass the disputed area. As a result, the City's consultant, DLZ, prepared a supplemental proposal for additional preliminary engineering and right-of-way services. The total request is \$80,885, and approval of the additional funds was recommended.

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

- Whether the \$300,000 paid to the railroad was specifically for the railroad crossing improvements on Napoleon St.
- Clarification was requested on whether CSX submitted invoices directly to the City and whether this was an anticipated expense included in the original project scope.
- Confirmation was requested regarding the total cost of the TOD Trail project and construction schedule.

City staff answered and addressed the questions and discussion items.

Motion: Ms. Sarkisian motioned to approve Funds for Supplemental Agreement. Ms. Domer seconded the motion. A voice vote was unanimously carried.

ITEM #7 OTHER BUSINESS : (49:41)

None.

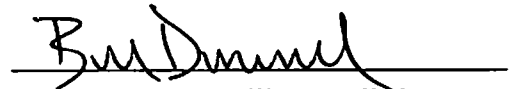
ITEM #8 PUBLIC COMMENT: (49:59)

Councilman Cotton requested clarification regarding the Browning Day contract and whether the work wasn't completed due to the stoppage of the original project.

Councilman Cotton noted that the land is often misunderstood as park space, when it's an economic development initiative meant to attract tourism and travel sports—not for local recreational use like neighborhood biking. Since the property is owned by the Redevelopment Commission, the messaging should reflect that clearly to avoid confusion. Also emphasized the need to consider housing as part of the overall development strategy, given its role in economic development and the size of the parcel (240+ acres).

ITEM #9 ADJOURNMENT: (54:20)

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 9:53 a.m.


Bill Durnell, Secretary