

MEDFORD URBAN RENEWAL AGENCY ADVISORY COMMITTEE MINUTES



MEDFORD
URBAN RENEWAL

February 17, 2021

5:00 – 6:00 P.M.

Virtual Meeting

10. Roll Call

Present: Advisory Committee Members Robert Shand, Cailin Notch, Caprice Moran, Daniel O'Connor, Robert Bierman. City Council Member Eric Stark. Medford Urban Renewal Agency Executive Director Harry Weiss, Medford Urban Renewal Agency Administrative Assistant Shannon Thorpe.

Absent: City Council Member Michael Zarosinski

Absent: Advisory Committee Members Bill Boehning, Marie Cabler, Barbara Laskin, Christian Nelson.

Present: Carsyn Currier, Reporter, with Channel 10 News.

20. Approval or Correction of the Minutes of January 20, 2021

Approved with an addendum from Robert Shand.

30. Oral Requests and Communications from the Audience

None.

40. Project Updates

40.1 Reclassification of Jackson & 4th Streets

- Harry Weiss stated the recommendation from the consultant was that there is no reason why we would not re-classify Jackson and 4th Streets to minor arterials and use the three lane configuration that is the standard for a minor arterial.

40.2 Project Turnkey

Harry Weiss gave an update:

- Project Turnkey is being funded by the State. There is a 30 million dollar pool of money that was allocated by the emergency board for fire affected counties, of which there are eight affected counties in the State. Specifically for acquisition of hotel and motel properties for conversion to emergency housing or permanent transitional housing for the victims of fire.

- Rogue Retreat is the local applicant, with the City of Medford as the co-applicant. Rogue Retreat was approved in the first phase as a qualified non-profit agency to proceed to the second stage of grant application.
- The property that has been placed under contract, located at 722 N. Riverside Avenue, is the Redwood Inn Motel. It is a forty-seven room hotel that dates from the late 1950's to 1960's. It has been a continuously operating hotel and had recently come on the market. Rogue Retreat intends to convert this to independent living units so that each room will have its own kitchenette and be a fully functioning independent unit. There are currently sixteen of the forty-seven rooms with kitchenettes.
- The primary purpose of the Project Turnkey funding from the State, is for acquisition of the site and minimal cost of renovating to meet immediate needs for life safety and ADA compliance. The fund does not necessarily anticipate significant funding available for long term, rehabilitation and conversion to housing. That is an ongoing conversation that is being explored in terms of potential additional funding beyond acquisition to help with the renovation to produce the units.
- In Liberty Park, in the Riverside corridor is America's Best Value Inn, which is also under contract by a private developer to convert it from a motel to permanent housing.
- There is a possibility of a community market and a new bridge to connect Bear Creek over the Greenway.

Committee Member Barbara Laskin inquired about the location of the proposed Downtown Marriott Hotel, in relation to Project Turnkey. Harry Weiss stated it will be located at the North end of Pear Blossom Park.

Committee Member Robert Shand inquired about potential ADA specifications and potential uses of a collaborative use with Providence. He suggested a possible discharge housing unit, for patients discharged from the hospital that need light or minimal care.

Harry Weiss posed the questions to the Advisory Committee: is this an appropriate project for MURA to participate in, and if it aligns with the general purposes with which we have identified our scope of work in Liberty Park? Particularly that around housing and around the transformation of Riverside Avenue into more of an urban street, changing the development pattern and land uses along that street? Does this alignment make sense with our goals and objectives for the neighborhood?

- Committee Members Cailin Notch and Robert Bierma both stated it is something that would be a good fit for MURA funds.
- Committee Member Barbara Laskin agrees but would still like to see a cost on the project.

- City Council Member Eric Stark inquired about the timeline for the project to be funded. Harry Weiss stated it is on a fast track timeframe. Contract performance envisions closing by the end of March. Pushing hard to pin down the costs. Requirement that the State money has to be spent by June 15th, 2021.
- Committee Member Robert Shand stated that he viewed Rogue Retreats financials online and felt that they had a healthy track record for a 5013c. Harry Weiss agreed.
- Committee Member Christian Nelson inquired about the alignment with Market of Choice at this property. Harry Weiss stated they were about 1 mile apart. Safeway in the Medford Center is the closest. Christian Nelson would like to suggest having a market closer for convenience. Harry Weiss stated that the owner of La Fiesta is looking at expanding at his property. This would have a market about half a mile away.

Harry Weiss stated he felt that the Committee agrees that the Board take a hard look at this project.

50. New Business

50.1 Sprinkler Grant for Hafer House Rehabilitation

- Harry Weiss discussed the sprinkler work done at the Hafer House by new owners Irvin and Janice Houston and their grant application. The total cost of the sprinkler system is \$65,000. The Houston's are eligible for 50% of the cost. Harry Weiss will bring it to the Board at the next meeting.

50.2 Area-wide Brownfields Planning: Riverside Avenue

- Harry Weiss discussed a vision of a different type of street. This would take Riverside Avenue down to two lanes, slowing it down and making it more of an urban street. Seeing what is a different kind of development form and land uses. Sighting of potential new access to Bear Creek Bridge. There would be many public benefits. It might bring a market to the neighborhood, which is greatly needed. Rogue Valley Council of Governments had received some funding for doing Brownfields related work. Those funds have not been fully expended. MURA used some of the funds for phase 1 and phase 2 environmental assessments. Rogue Valley Council of Governments have stated that MURA could use some of this money if there is an area we could do an urban design conceptual plan where there is an area of potential Brownfields conditions. Harry Weiss will be meeting with a group of property owners to discuss potential businesses in the area and will update the Committee at a later date.

50.3 Career Technical Education Center Concept

- Harry Weiss presented a potential project idea in regards to the property at 727 Central Avenue. To develop housing, there are two issues: railroad location and buffer needed. Several options have been discussed. An earlier conversation with RCC and Medford School District brought up the topic of a huge demand for workforce training in construction. Discussion about the project and how this would be a great redevelopment to the site. Medford School District is taking the lead on the conversation and will reach out to the other school districts in the Valley that have similar needs and interests. Harry Weiss will convene with the Medford School District the beginning of March for further discussion.

Committee members and Harry Weiss discussed the importance of having a project like this in the Valley.

The participation of MURA was discussed in how it would play out in this type of project and what role MURA would have.

60. Board Chair Comments

Committee Member Cailin Notch inquired about the process in which people can request funding from MURA. Harry Weiss stated that Project Turnkey has taken up a lot of extra time recently but will get an update out soon.

70. Committee Comments

Mention that this meeting was very informative.

80. Adjournment at 6:17 p.m.

Shannon Thorpe
Administrative Assistant
Medford Urban Renewal Agency