

The Board of Directors of the Urban Redevelopment Agency met for their Regular meeting on Wednesday, May 8, 2024, at 9:00 a.m. at Harlem City Hall with Chairman John Neal presiding.

Present: BOARD: Chairman John Neal, Director Robert Culpepper, Director Hope Hodge, and Director Steve Pokrywka; STAFF: City Manager Debra Moore, Community Development Director Robert Fields, City Clerk Leona Holley, and City Attorney Adam Nelson; ABSENT: Director Renee Dean; GUEST: Mayor Pro tem Gregg Stokes, Fire Marshal/Code Enforcement Pamela Nickles, and Mark Whitaker.

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Neal at 9:01 a.m.

The Invocation was given by City Attorney Nelson.

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Chairman Neal.

Approval of the Agenda: Director Culpepper made the motion to approve the Agenda as presented; 2nd by Director Pokrywka. The motion carried with Directors Culpepper, Hodge, Neal, and Pokrywka voting in the affirmative.

Approval of the Minutes: Director Culpepper made the motion to approve the minutes of the March 13, 2024 Regular Meeting as written; 2nd by Director Hodge. The motion carried with Directors Culpepper, Hodge, Neal, and Pokrywka voting in the affirmative.

PUBLIC COMMENTS: None.

REPORTS:

Staff Report – Robert Fields: Mr. Fields reported on Development updates:

- O'Reilly Auto Parts has submitted a Certificate of Appropriateness (COA) application for 370 W. Milledgeville Road. The COA is for the demolition of the historic building on the property and for new construction of O'Reilly Auto Parts; this will go before the Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) on May 9, 2024.
- Heritage Ridge Development located on N. Louisville Street has broken ground and they have started the water line realignment. They are working on the installation of the deceleration lane; once the lane is in, they will start working on the commercial property.
- Bowdre Street Townhome Development is on hold due to stormwater issues.
- San Saba Property – Mr. Fields reported a realtor has reached out to him on zoning information for the property and what the city would like to see for the property.
- Domino's Pizza still would like to come to Harlem.
- Harlem Mini Storage on W. Milledgeville Road are working on the new storage building.

Staff Report – Debra Moore: Ms. Moore reported on the following:

- Ms. Moore provided the Board with the financial report for the URA as of April 30, 2024.

Staff Report – Debra Moore (cont’d):

- The Harlem Civic Center property will go to Council at the May 23, 2024, meeting to approve the surplus of the property, once approved the property would be posted for sale.
- Touch of Life Massage, 220 N. Louisville Street – Ms. Moore stated she has not received any complaints or heard of any other issues with the sewer smell at the Touch of Life Massage building. Ms. Moore reported something came up recently about bees either inside or outside the building again. If there is an issue, the city will contact our resident beekeeper to address the issue.
- San Saba Property – Ms. Moore reported she has received information there is an offer on the property.
- Harlem City Park – the city is working on upgrades for the Harlem City Park. There is a meeting scheduled with JAL Design Services on Thursday, May 9th to discuss the renditions and cost of the upgrades.
- Multi-purpose Park – the completed concept and cost could be completed by the end of this month.
- Arbor Day, April 26, 2024 – A couple trees were planted at the greenspace at the Harlem Walking Trails. Ms. Moore stated she will reach out to Nelson Signs for an update on the signage for the Walking Trail.

Director Reports: Director Culpepper reported he has reached out to Trotter Realtor about the Durst property but has not heard back from them. Ms. Moore stated she will reach out to Mr. David Martinez, owner of 270 Church Street, on the sewer easement for the Durst property. Ms. Moore commented the last question she received from the property owner was whether the city would pay to have a tree taken down if something happened to it.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

New Street Redevelopment: Chairman Neal stated Mr. Mark Whitaker is in attendance today to discuss the New Street Redevelopment.

Mark Whitaker of Just A Few Properties, LLC. - Mr. Whitaker stated himself and Ray Fulcher are interested in purchasing the Public Works Property on New Street. Mr. Fulcher would like to invest in his hometown, Harlem. They purchased the property across the street from the Public Works Building, which was the old feed and seed store and the dry-cleaning building. Their vision is to make New Street into some kind of entertainment place. Mr. Whitaker went over their plans for the property. For the building use they would like to see retail/restaurant location. The site is large enough to accommodate some type of greenspace, a yard for concerts and a small amount of parking. Mr. Whitaker stated he would personally like to see the chain link fence taken down and have an open space. They would take the storage structures down; the pole barn in the back of the property could stay for a while to allow Public Works to utilize. They would like to see if Regions Bank would allow them to use the bank’s driveway as an entrance to the property and the back of the Region’s lot for excess parking. Mr. Whitaker commented he reached out to Kyle McCloud with Back Paddle Brewery about the property and to see what his plans were.

Mr. Whitaker went over the following proposed improvements:

1. Demo the interior and prep for remodel of the public works shop.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS (cont'd):

New Street Redevelopment (cont'd):

2. After a tenant is found they would work with them to upgrade the old firehouse to match their needs.
3. Demo existing storage facilities to open up property.
4. Small outbuilding would possibly be made to public restrooms for use during events, etc.
5. Work with the city to make the area blend together as one, with the structures that are there they could have a designer work with them to create a cohesive look for the whole block.

The parking lot will remain gravel at the present time. After renovations, they would be glad to discuss with the city the plans for the lot adjacent (across the street) to the property to make them match if possible. Mr. Whitaker's proposal is to purchase the land and existing structures in the amount of \$200,000.00. Mr. Whitaker thanked the Board for allowing him to come in to discuss the proposal.

NEW BUSINESS: None.

Other: None.

Executive Session: Director Culpepper made the motion to go into Executive Session for discussion on Real Estate; 2nd by Director Hodge. The motion carried with Directors Culpepper, Hodge, Neal, and Pokrywka voting in the affirmative. Executive Session opened at 9:51 a.m.

Director Culpepper made the motion to come out of Executive Session; 2nd by Director Hodge. The motion carried with Directors Culpepper, Hodge, Neal, and Pokrywka voting in the affirmative. Executive Session closed at 10:33 a.m.

City Attorney Nelson reported that there was one Real Estate matter discussed and no final action was taken.

Director Hodge made the motion to authorize the Chairman to sign the affidavit affirming this report; 2nd by Director Culpepper. The motion carried with Directors Culpepper, Hodge, Neal, and Pokrywka voting in the affirmative.

With there being no further business before the Board for discussion, Director Culpepper made the motion to adjourn the meeting; 2nd by Director Hodge. The motion carried with Directors Culpepper, Hodge, Neal, and Pokrywka voting in the affirmative. The meeting adjourned at 10:33 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Leona H. Holley
City Clerk