

**HIGHLAND REDEVELOPMENT COMMISSION
STUDY SESSION MINUTES
TUESDAY, OCTOBER 12, 2021**

The Highland Redevelopment Commission (“RC”, “Commission”) met in person at Town Hall on Tuesday, October 12, 2021. The Study Session was called to order at 6:30 p.m. by Commission President Cy Huerter. The study session was adjourned at 8:24 p.m. to allow for the plenary business meeting to be convened.

Minutes were prepared by Kathy DeGuilio-Fox, Redevelopment Director and Recording Secretary.

Roll Call: Commissioners Robyn Radford, Bill Leep, George Georgeff, Sean Conley and Cyril Huerter were present in person at Town Hall. A quorum was established.

Additional Officials Present: Patrick Krull, School Town of Highland Liaison and non-voting member; Roger Sheeman, Council Liaison to the Redevelopment Commission; and Kathy DeGuilio-Fox, Redevelopment Director were present in person.

Also Present: John Jurisa, Weichert Realtors and Karen Lauerman, Lake County Economic Alliance President & CEO were present in person. Ed Wabick, Principal at Payne Wetzels Associates, Inc. and Jack Rosencrans, Director of Redevelopment at DLC Management Corporation attended via zoom.

General Substance of the Discussion

- 1. Highland Plaza Development – Presentation and Marketing Update:** Karen Lauerman coordinated a presentation with Ed Wabick and Jack Rosencrans to update the Redevelopment Commission about the recent marketing efforts to find an end-user for the Highland Plaza property owned and managed by DLC Management. Discussion ensued and the Commissioners were given the opportunity to ask questions regarding the marketing of the Highland Plaza property. Karen expressed her availability should there be any further questions or concerns in the future. As the meeting resumed the commissioners further discussed potential development at the site.
- 2. Disposition of 2815 Jewett – Report:** Director DeGuilio-Fox reported she’d received both appraisals on the 2815 Jewett property and advised she would prepare a resolution for the commissioners to consider at their October 26th meeting so the public offering process could move forward. She advised that if the commissioners adopted the resolution she would twice advertise the Request for Proposals notice that proposals for the redevelopment of the 2815 Jewett property. She further advised that the notices would be published on or about November 2nd and November 9th, 2021 with a due date of November 23, 2021. And, that any proposals received on or before the due date would be considered by the commissioners at their meeting on the same day. Discussion ensued.
- 3. Disposition of 2821 Jewett – Report:** John Jurisa provided a quick recap as to activity since the Commission accepted the offer made by Rick Kroll. Director DeGuilio-Fox advised that she’s been in touch with the buyer and suggested they touch base once they’ve completed their walk-thru of the property to discuss next steps. The Commission determined that until approvals have been received from the Plan Commission and BZA there is nothing more for the Commission to

do. Ms. DeGuilio-Fox will stay in touch with all parties as approvals are sought and development proceeds.

4. **Bult Oil Property – Update:** John Jurisa provided an update of the activities up to the point the Redevelopment Commission submitted their counter-offer. Director DeGuilio-Fox reported that she'd been in touch with Dan Eriks and he'd advised they had accepted the counter-offer and just recently sent it back to their attorney. It's assumed that attorney Vis will communicate with Redevelopment very soon in this regard. Ms. DeGuilio-Fox went on to report that Dan Eriks had inquired as to any tax incentives the town offers that they might take advantage of. Ms. DeGuilio-Fox advised Mr. Eriks that the best option for them would be to apply for a tax abatement. She advised that step would follow approvals from the Plan Commission and Board of Zoning Appeals and that she would walk him through the process when it is appropriate to do so. Ms. DeGuilio-Fox mentioned that interestingly enough the Bult property sale, including specifics about the counteroffer made by the Commission, was brought up by a councilman at their Monday evening meeting. She reported that when it came up she advised that the potential sale transaction was still in a negotiation phase and not final, that it should not be discussed during a public meeting. Discussion ensued.
5. **Downtown Highland Marketing Brochure – Report:** Director DeGuilio-Fox reminded the commissioners that at a particular request from Main Street to create a brochure to market downtown Highland. To that end she has been working with the Idea Factory. In order to get the commissioners input she presented a prototype of the draft brochure for them to review and comment on. The prototypes were examined and several comments and suggestions were offered by the group. She walked everyone through the current design and each section of the draft brochure. Discussion ensued.
6. **Commercial Property Improvement Grants – Update:**
 - a. **Les Café Façade Grant** – Director DeGuilio-Fox reported that project receipts had been received and that the amount spent on the project far exceeded the 2019 application amount. Ms. DeGuilio-Fox advised she had given the Les Café the option a year ago to reapply when they learned that the project would cost more than had been applied for. They did not respond nor did they submit a new application. Ms. DeGuilio-Fox asked if the commissioners wanted to reconsider the award amount, \$23,700, or move forward with reimbursing that amount. All agreed that the reimbursement amount should be what was originally awarded in 2019. As an aside, Ms. DeGuilio-Fox advised she'd received an email from Mr. Les asking when their parking lot will be repaved and restriped. She commented that the area of the parking lot used by Les Café customers but owned by NIPSCO has been repaved. And, although the parking stalls had not been restriped most of the lines remain even after the construction. She advised that she'd spoken to John Reed about this and asked him to contact Mr. Les in this regard and advise him that the Redevelopment Commission cannot repave and/or restripe NIPSCO property without the express permission from NISPCO. She has not heard from John Reed as to a resolution in this regard.
 - b. **Highland Office Center** – Director DeGuilio-Fox advised that she had not received an application from the group purchasing the Highland Office Center and understands that there are some negotiations that are ongoing in the purchase of

the property. She reported that her source explained the potential buyer has found that it will cost more to renovate the building than initially thought. Commissioners agreed that if the potential buyer wants to apply this year for an interior project they should do so. There are funds that have not been awarded and the Commissioners would prefer to use it on property improvements rather than not spend the budgeted amount. Ms. DeGuilio-Fox commented that she will contact the potential buyer and advise them of that.

- c. 45th Street Partners LLC – Director DeGuilio-Fox reported she'd received an email from John Lyons (principal with 45th Street Partners LLC) advising that it is necessary for them to postpone their project until spring 2022. She reported she had responded to Mr Lyons and advised that they have until August 2022 to complete the project and if they determine they need more time they should send a written request to that effect. Ms. DeGuilio-Fox advised she will encumber the \$20,000.00 awarded to 45th Street Partners LLC to be paid in 2022.

7. Redevelopment Commission Comments:

- a. Commissioner Conley asked if there was an update report from the Belmonte family in regard to the renovation of 2907 Jewett. Ms. DeGuilio-Fox reported she has not heard anything new from them. Discussion ensued.
- b. Councilman Sheeman asked if there was any news about the EXXON property (previously Speedway) on Kennedy Avenue north of the post office. Commissioner Leep reported there is a sign on the property that advertises it will be sold at auction. Ms. DeGuilio-Fox suggested she contact John Reed and ask him to check into the details of the auction and whether the covenants will remain on the property.
- c. School Town of Highland rep Pat Krull asked who had purchased the former pool supply shop on 45th. He reported that it appeared it may be used as an automotive supply shop. Ms. DeGuilio-Fox suggested she could ask Ken Mika to ask if he knows who purchased the property.
- d. Ms. DeGuilio-Fox showed the commissioners the TIMES article by Joseph Pete that reported the best places to retire in NWI. Highland is listed in the article as one of the communities that ranked among the best places in Indiana to retire as shown in a new study.

There being no further discussion the Redevelopment Commission study session was adjourned at 8:24 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by Kathy DeGuilio-Fox, Recording Secretary.