

# HIGHLAND REDEVELOPMENT COMMISSION

## PLENARY BUSINESS MEETING MINUTES

MONDAY JANUARY 22, 2024

The Highland Redevelopment Commission (“Commission”, “RC”) met in person at Town Hall on Monday January 22, 2024. The regular scheduled plenary business meeting was called to order at 6:00 P.M. by Commissioner, Philip Scheeringa.

**Roll Call:** Commissioners Phil Scheeringa, Doug Turich, George Georgeff, Tom Black, and Alex Robertson were present in person at Town Hall.

**Election of Officers:** Commissioner Robertson nominated Commissioner Georgeff to serve as President, it was seconded by Commissioner Black. Roll call vote 5-0 in favor.

Commissioner Black nominated Commissioner Turich to serve as Vice-President, it was seconded by Commissioner Scheeringa. Roll call vote 5-0 in favor.

Commissioner Scheeringa nominated Commissioner Robertson to serve as Secretary, it was seconded by Commissioner Turich. Roll call vote 5-0 in favor.

**Additional Officials Present:** Maria Becerra, Redevelopment Director John Reed, Attorney; Pat Krull, Non-Voting Member/School Board Representative

**Also Present:** Dan Botich and several others were present from the public.

**Minutes of the Previous Meetings:** Commissioner Robertson motion to approved, Commissioner Turich seconded, December 12, 2023 minutes were approved 5-0 in favor.

**Public Comment:** None

**Communications:** Director Becerra, handed out READI Grant that is available through the Northwest Indiana Forum, information to the Commissioners. She stated, basically that there is money available, that might fold in with what is being proposed for the new development here in Town, that involves housing. It is something that we may want to pursue. It might be something that we would be eligible for and could submit to see if we are eligible for.

### **New Business:**

Resolution #2024-01 Motion to approve made by Commissioner Scheeringa, seconded by Commissioner Black. Approved 5-0 in favor.

Resolution #2024-02 Motion to approve made by Commissioner Robertson, seconded by Commissioner Scheeringa. Approved 5-0 in favor

Resolution #2024-03 Motion to approve made by Commissioner Turich, seconded by Commissioner Robertson. Approved 5-0 in favor

**Old Business:** Placemaker Grant – Mural for the wall on Growlers that faces the Town owned municipal parking lot. Last year a grant was submitted, but it did not work out. This is already in the budget, there is \$25,000. The artist is estimating \$20 per square feet, that wall’s square feet is

1,344. So we would be matching about \$14,000 matching from the budget. The artist that I did reach out to, has done about 3 of these IN INDIANA murals. Basically, we just have to make sure we include the IN INDIANA within the mural, it is through the State. This artist has done one in Whiting and one at Calumet College. He was in Indianapolis last week, he returns tomorrow and will give me an estimate. The theme would be Home Town Heroes, honoring the services, the Marines, the Army, The Navy and all the armed forces. Following like what we do with the banners. Commissioner Georgeff, asked if permission is needed to move forward with the application. Director Becerra, said yes, it is due February 2<sup>nd</sup>, Main Street supported, it was brought up at the last meeting. She wanted the Commission along with the Council to be aware. Attorney Reed, stated so this is to pursue the Grant not necessarily to approve that particular Artist or the rendering, just to get the money. Director Becerra, restated that the money is already in the budget, we were projecting applying this year. Commissioner Scheeringa, asked if there would be any additional money needed. Director Becerra, stated no. Commissioner Scheeringa made a motion to pursue the Placemaking Grant in 2024. Commissioner Turich supported. President called for all in favor signify by Ay, all were in favor, non opposed, motion carried.

**Action to Pay Accounts Payable Vouchers:** The Motion to Pay Claims made by Commissioner Black, seconded by Commissioner Robertson. Motion was approved 5-0.

**Business from the Commissioners:** Non-voting Commissioner Pat Krull he was not sure if the Town received a formal message from the School Town, but with their election of new officials for 2024. So, President Garcia reappointed me, with the formal approval of the Town Council. So, at the Town Council meeting it will be noted. Commissioner Turich, stated he had a couple of questions. So, Maria, what projects do you have that are carrying over from 2023 into 2024? What else are you pursuing for the 2024. Director Becerra, asked for clarification, when you say projects, do you mean developments? Commissioner Turich, said yes. Director Becerra, stated we are following up with the medical campus. I have had some conversations with him. The other one is the Kennedy Development, we are meeting with the developer today. Mark Herak and myself did meet with the other developer for the Ultra property and they want to meet the Council on the 29<sup>th</sup> in a executive session, to present what they are proposing. Commissioner Turich, asked Director Becerra, what she would consider to be her biggest success in 2023? Director Becerra stated, the commercial grants, you can see what the commercial grants have done. Continuing to support the business through Main Street, the Crawl that we had in August was well attended, everyone wants to see that more often. That went well without a hitch, Main Street is looking at having more of these throughout the year. Commissioner Turich asked what are you striving for in 2024? Director Becerra, stated definitely to get some shovels in the ground. There is money that can be pursued, not only by the Town but also by developers. Especially downtown that we have been talking about for years. I think definitely redoing our plans, they are very old. Relooking at them, what viable, what's usable. We have the comprehensive plan that was passed in 2007. There are so plans that we have paid for, that maybe the Council & the Commission can look at a say, is this something that we want to put into action or is it something that we need to revise. Take a comprehensive look at what we do have to see what we can use or what we need to revise. That set the tone where the Council and Commission would like to go. Revitalizing Downtown is still what needs to done, and the Corridors, Kennedy & Indianapolis, there was a Riverfront plan. Relocating Public works, that is prime property, but where to relocate them. If you cross the little Calumet north, there is a lot development there. So I think just having guidance as to what plans the Commission should

follow and the Town should follow. Then working with developers and helping them pursue any funding that is out there. Commissioner Turich, asked if there is a way to summarize that for us as points for the next meeting. Just so we can understand those and what the objectives are. Director Becerra stated that definitely need to decide what plan we will use and reach out to developers and see what incentives we have to offer. Commissioner Turich discussed the River Front conversation has come up, but I feel like there is a lot of discussion if we want to go in that direction. But if we do, then I feel like there is some opportunity for the parks dept. like they hold back, there is this give and take of what we are going to do. It would be nice at some point in our term, at lease within the first couple of months, make a decision for maybe the next 4 years. Do we have an appetite for this or do we want to allow the park dept. to do something. I have heard from the park dept, that there is an opportunity to enhance and improve on the softball area. Really, utilize that and advertise to some of these softball programs and draw large tournaments into the area. But they don't know if they want to invest, if we are going to sell it right away, so something to think about.

President Georgeff asked Director Becerra along with the bullet points to provide a copy of the goals and objectives that the Commission had given last year. Also, we need to mention the Wayfinding signs that were completed last year. The Commission can develop their Goals and Objectives for the next year or so. Commissioner Scheeringa said, it looks like we all want to upgrade the plans and move forward that way as well. Commissioner Black, asked if we would need a separate consultant or is this something Mr. Botich can do. Director Becerra stated that yes Mr. Botich is very familiar with Highland's plans, so yes that would be a good idea.

President Georgeff adjourned the meeting at 6:19 p.m.

**Adjournment:** Meeting was adjourned by President Georgeff at 6:20 PM.

**DULY PASSED AND RESOLVED** by the Highland Redevelopment Commission, Highland, Lake County, Indiana, this 26th day of February 2024, having passed by a vote 3 in favor and 0 opposed.

ATTEST

Secretary

Highland Redevelopment Commission

President