

Renaissance Zone Board Meeting
Meeting Minutes for January 21, 2021 @ 8:30am.
Council Chambers
City Hall,
515 2nd Avenue SW

Members Present: Pat Bailey (Vice-Chair), Kerry Candrian, Justin Anderson, Josh Wolsky, Jen Cook (by phone)

Members Absent: Pete Hugret, Jason Bentley, Betty Fedorchak, Michael King

Others Present: Jonathan Rosenthal (Economic Development Administrator), Brian Billingsley (Community & Economic Development Director), Harold Stewart (City Manager), Stephan Podrygula (Alderman), Ryan Kamrowski (City Assessor), Paul Pitner (City Council Liaison), Kevin Black (MACEDC), Glenda Sorensen (Administrative Clerk)

Guests: No guests present

Call to Order: Brian Billingsley called the meeting to order at 8:30 am.

Agenda: Elect Vice-Chair of Review Board
Discussion of policy changes by City Council
Discussion of policy changes by Renaissance Zone Review Board
Discussion of policy changes by public
Discussion of policy changes by staff
Discussion of Next Steps

Approval of Minutes

Motion by Wolsky to approve the December 17, 2020 meeting minutes, second by Bailey. ayes: all, nays: none.

Motion passes

Election of Vice-Chair

Billingsley asked the committee if any members would like to volunteer to accept the role of Vice-Chair. Pat Bailey came forward and offered to fill the position.

Motion by Candrian to accept Bailey's nomination, second by Wolsky. ayes: all, nays: none

Motion passes

Discussion of policy changes by City Council

Alderman Podrygula mentioned that he had eighteen thoughts prepared; however, he only presented a few, which follow. He did agree to formalize his document and send it to the committee.

- Podrygula first commented that he views the Renaissance Zone as a wonderful thing for the city.
- The Renaissance Plan, which is from 2016, needs to be re-evaluated. Wolsky informed Alderman Podrygula that he had previously prepared a revamped Renaissance Zone Plan, which he will be sharing with the committee.
- Clarification needed regarding the roles of the committee verses the staff.
- Clarification needed regarding the authority of the City Council to move things along. He was surprised to learn that the City Council has less authority that he expected.
- Inquired about walkability, bus route access, adult entertainment and historic significance among other topics (to be included in his document for the committee).
- Billingsley informed the committee that Wolsky's rewrite has been sent to the state and there are a few changes needed.
- Wolsky committed to sending the rewrite to Podrygula and the committee.
- Pitner stated that the City Council has final say; however, Wolsky noted that the state determines City Council overall authority.
- Bailey brought up the homeowner labor stipulation from a previous case. He has very strong feelings about homeowner work being acceptable, although he acknowledged that it might not have the same value of work performed by a licensed contractor.

- Rosenthal informed the committee that he has sent out letters to every property owner in the Renaissance Zone. Bailey inquired how many letters and Sorensen noted 142 non-certified letters were mailed the week of January 11. Rosenthal will include a copy of the letter in the handouts at the next meeting.
- Rosenthal concluded that he welcomes requests from the committee, but cautioned that decisions cannot be made “on the fly.”
- Black stated that the applicants need to be educated on what they can do. He expanded his comment, stating that the process can take time and emphasized how this relates to beginning construction on projects.
- Wolsky noted that the Commerce Board inquired how we market the Renaissance Zone and added that he feels funding should be available.
- Podrygula talked about recognizing good behavior and referenced Bismarck, where a plaque is placed on the building façade. Stickers were brought up (although not favored) as was the material that could be used for plaques.

Discussion of policy changes by Renaissance Zone Review Board

- Kevin Black offered any assistance he can provide on behalf of MACEDC.
- There was discussion regarding the individual roles of city staff, the Renaissance Review Board and the City Council.
- Also discussed was the deadline for applicant **after** preliminary approval.
- Billingsley used Black’s elevator project as an example for deadlines and approvals.
- City Assessor Kamrowski provided information regarding the 5-year tax exemption benefit, which begins when the application is approved by the state. Kamrowski also noted that the Assessor does a walk-through of the building.
- Wolsky gave the following example:

State approval comes back January 31
City Council approves January 31
Next tax bill applicant would see benefit would be 20 months into the future
State approval comes back February 1, applicant would see benefit on 2022 tax bill.
Project needs to be completed before the tax exemption is in effect

- Applicant needs to include the COO (Certificate of Occupancy)

Discussion of policy changes by General Public

- No attendance or comments by general public.

Discussion of policy changes by Staff

- Billingsley went over the C2 (General Commercial District) zone permitted uses.
- Wolsky inquired if the committee should require CBD (Central Business District) along Broadway. Rosenthal stated that the committee would not impose a zone, but that a specific use could be allowed.
- Billingsley gave a comparison of permitted uses in C2 verses CBD. It was also noted that under CBD zoning allowances, the car wash (example) would not be allowed.
- Billingsley suggested that developers put in more design elements. Currently they choose two. In the future maybe 3 or 4 could be an option.
- Bailey and Black suggested the committee meet more often. Black suggested an open house. Rosenthal suggested meeting in Black’s building on the first floor.
- No decision or vote on this topic.

Next Meeting

Thursday, February 18, 2021 @ City Hall Council Chambers, 8:30am – 10:00am.

Vice-Chairman Bailey adjourned the meeting at 9:57 am.