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## Minutes

The Redevelopment Commission met in Regular Session on Monday, October 21, 2024 at 4:00 p.m.

### 1. Call to Order:

The meeting was called to order at 4:00 p.m. by the President. Roll call was taken. Commissioners in attendance were present in person.

### **Attendees:**

Commissioners:

Al Roszczyk, Pres.     Kyle Hendricks, V.P.     Trena Carter, Sec.  
 Shannon McDonald     Cynthia Boll

Other attendees: Heather Pope, Redevelopment Director; Mikala Brown, Redevelopment Project Coordinator; Jason Major, BCSC School Board Liaison; Grace Kestler, City Council Liaison; Tom Dell, City Council Representative and Mary Stroh, legal counsel.

### Discussion Item:

#### 1. **Downtown Entrance Plaza Update – Chris Merritt of Merritt Chase**

Chris Merritt introduced his presentation of the three design ideas, which was presented. Chris reviewed the overall goals of the project. He gave a brief overview of current sites and future development. During the process, Merritt Chase (MC) has garnered a lot of public feedback regarding the site. They also studied the existing materials and plantings that are used on the site and have reviewed the existing memorials in the area and also other memorials throughout the city. From the studies, MC has identified key themes to keep in mind with the proposals. Chris gave examples of the feedback received and noted that there is now opportunity for feedback online and in the session this evening. MC will likely end up with a hybrid of concepts from the three proposals, focusing on the river, the field, and the hill. Chris identified consistent concepts throughout the proposals, maintaining some of the existing plants and sidewalks, and the location of the memorial plaza. Pictures of the concepts were shared in the presentation. All of these concepts will be available on the boards at the commons for review and later on the Redevelopment Website.

Al opened it up to questions and comments from the Commission and for public comment. Kyle asked about how pedestrian safety was considered in the designs. Chis noted that it is a challenge given the traffic. They did include the tree line buffers and considered some of the other Second Street improvements. They are also looking into other ways with the city to slow traffic. Jason asked if the designs replace the current monuments or reused them. Some will be redesigned into one work. Others will be relocated within the

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design. Brad from The Republic inquired about the next steps. They are collecting public feedback tonight and hope to get a draft consolidated plan by the end of the year and then be ready to move forward with next steps. Grace commented on the impressive designs and scope of the space but also commented on focus on public safety. She did note considerations of maintenance of these designs and costs associated. Heather complimented the thoroughness of the research and incorporating the history of Columbus in their three designs. Laura Garrett added that they have also been working with the C4 kids in BCSC with some of these concepts as well. Those have been included in the presentation at The Commons this evening.

Al opened it up to public comment. Having none, Al thanked the presenters.

**Action Item:**

- 2. Resolution #31 – 2024 of the Columbus Redevelopment Commission to approve funding for the Columbus Downtown 2030 Plan and execute any necessary documents for entering into a contract with the selected Urban Planning Firm leading the plan initiatives – Bonnie Boatwright, Columbus Downtown 2030 Project Manager**

Bonnie quickly reviewed the RFP process and receipt of proposals. There was a lengthy evaluation process to evaluate all 18 proposals and the Guiding Team unanimously selected Sasaski, partnered with SB Friedman and Storyboard. Bonnie then introduced the Sasaki consolidated team. They have had the opportunity to tour around Columbus and are very excited to get started. This strategic plan is focused on a lot of national themes they are seeing which are reflected in the Columbus community as well. Martin Zogran introduced the team involved. Martin reviewed the process and how this builds on many projects and studies already performed. This plan also creates a very clear implementation strategy. They believe that the public input is critical and intend to include that throughout the process while making it intentional and engaging.

Storyboard will be identifying which voices are missing and reaching out to include those people. They will be intentionally doing a variety of popup events to make sure that those who may not have easy access to the process are able to participate.

SB Friedman uses a lot of analysis in their review process and presented some that they have already performed. They will use data to identify the gaps to activation in the downtown. At the end of the process, they provide a very specific implementation process that provides a roadmap.

The team is presented to providing the study results by mid-year, 2025. Sasaki then reviewed the proposed project schedule and tasks involved.

Al opened it up to the Commission and public for questions and comments. Kyle asked Grace what City Council's take was, as she is the liaison. Grace noted that she was on the review team and outlined the process taken by City Council. The main themes were cost and reflecting a broad array of community voices. Overall, the Guiding Team was optimistic that the selected team is going to provide a robust report. They were very impressed with the use of data and how they implement that in their proposal to strategically move forward.

Al asked what the short-term, mid-term, and long-term phases are. They are identified as 1-3, 3-5, and 5-10 years for implementation. Sasaki noted that planning 10 years in advance is very complicated because of

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ever-changing circumstances. Shorter-term is the main focus. The first phase would help identify the lower cost items that then build into 3-5 year planning. Beyond 5 years, the intent is that the plan begins to take shape with the desired outcome. Kyle added that was in line with typical development cycles as well.

Al asked about the properties currently owned or available and if that provides a benefit to have City-owned properties. SB Friedman indicated that really helps reduce the timeline and helps guide the redevelopment future. Having site control really reduces the timeframe of achieving goals.

Grace noted that we are unique but experiencing many of the same issues other communities are having. Martin noted that there are very similar themes and a big focus on what the hybrid workplace means and the ripple effect of that. They will review what that means for the downtown. They will also look at the ability for employers to recruit and retain employees by highlighting the assets of our city. There is a need to take into account the different ranges of income and the housing that is available for all of those areas. Retail also looks at weekday traffic and weekends, considering the activities available. With the park spaces, how do we make this an additional draw to the quality of life downtown for employees and also visitors? We have a goal to maintain what is best, alongside the economics, to create a downtown that is very vibrant and the center. Grace commented that this is a big process and that there has been a lot of strategic planning done and this is opportunity to expand that. Shannon noted that are lots of parts and pieces and that these three partners are very poised to capture the national scene but also the economic viability and engaging with our community. We don't want this to just sit on a shelf but implement immediately.

Having no further questions or comments, Al asked for approval of the resolution. Trena motioned for approval of the resolution and Cindy seconded. A vote was taken and the motion passed unanimously.

### **Discussion Items:**

#### **3. Housing Study Findings Presentation – Charlie Cowell, RDG and Robin Hilber, Director of Community Development**

Robin noted the process and that this is the first housing study done in 12 years. This City is very pleased with the product received. RDG did a public presentation previously which is available online. Robin introduced Charlie, from RDG. Charlie provided a brief overview of market findings and needs forecasts. Their team spent 6 months going through the whole process to engage the public to focus on entire Columbus housing market. Charlie identified what the study is able to do and what it cannot do. There were three surveys performed: community wide, landlord, and workforce (employers). Additionally, there were listening sessions to garner community insights.

Charlie summarized some of the market findings, many of which were confirmed by data collected through community input. There is a steady population growth reflected. There is a strong economy and growth potential, but the housing market is not keeping up with that. Which is part of the reason more commuting in rather than living here. There is a declining vacancy rate and low inventory of available homes. This often results in high home pricing. In looking at the construction activity, single family has been slightly declining in last 10 years. There is also need for infill development but there is more here than in some other areas. The conditions of housing and needs are very area specific. There are areas that need repair and redevelopment while others need subdivision development. The older homes in the core needs more attention than some of

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the other areas. Affordability is a rising issue many locations. Renters are most affected by this than owners. There is an overarching theme and there is greater competition in the mid brackets. Many lower income renters spending more than higher income owners.

Charlie reviewed the considerations made when forecasting the housing needs. These assumptions resulted in an annual construction demand of 302 units. This is an increase from the last study and goes across all price ranges. This results in a need of 600+ acres of development through 2035. The study also identified 7 key goals: preserve existing housing, support affordable housing and approaches, create ways to share risks, expand supply of development ready land, attract additional and diverse builders and developers, support relationships and quality of life outcomes for those most in need, and continue to offer a housing friendly regulatory environment. The city has done a good job of keep zoning codes relevant, with only some minor recommendations. Charlie concluded with opening it up to questions.

Grace asked to interpret Figure 1.4 of the presentation and asked if this addressed inflation. Charlie did note that building at low end of the price points is nearly impossible but addresses that by building will hopefully open up rental units. Grace asked about average income. Citywide owner and renter average household income is about \$75,000 per year. Grace also reviewed Figure S.38 of the presentation that reflects income versus attainable units. Charlie noted that assistance with transportation and daycare costs also assists with housing affordability.

Shannon asked what they heard from landlords and developers on key challenges. Shovel ready sites was the big one. Also the backend of making projects work within ranges the city wants to see. Achieving different variety levels. They spoke well of the process but difficulty in finding opportunity. Al noted the increase in home cost but imagines that the cost of building has increased more. That is correct. Some costs have come down in supply chain but still many higher, even counting normal inflation. Al noted that with higher costs, this creates challenges on the ability of developers to build affordable units. Jason noted that the weather devastation also impacts that. He also commented on the needed space amount versus income. Charlie noted that there is a reality component on what one can actually afford within an income range. Tom Dell asked if there is a need for many forms of incentives for development. Yes, and there are many options. Being able to focus on highest priorities and having incentives there first.

Question on stock of public housing in Columbus. He believes there are 200 or so units risking leaving the Federal housing programs. Al asked how our stock of public housing compared. It is hard to tell exactly but there are these threats in a lot of places. Heather asked Charlie to explain what it means that there is a threat to lose that housing. When the projects are built under these stipulations, there is a certain time frame that they have to remain "affordable". Usually this is 30 years, and then after that the development has a choice to continue or go to market rate. Kyle asked question for Charle and Office of Community Development, now that we have the study, how does she see this changing approach to housing. As a result of the study, and lack of developable lots, we will have to build with more density. Potential of smaller lot sizes as well, which is being tried now. They are "single family attached" homes, similar to duplexes, which are platted on their own lots. We have had luxury of large lot sizes, but this isn't something we will continue to have.

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Kerri (neighbor) asked about gaps in aging housing. Again, there is a demand for this and a shortage. The specific number, outside of nursing homes, is several hundred units. Mike Mullet mentioned that we don't want to overlook the elephant in the room. 35% of the population doesn't have the income to support sustainable homes. 40 years ago, this was 10-15%. The underlying problem of inequality of wealth needs to be addressed. Not all options are within local control but the reality is here. For policy, comparing Columbus, Indiana to Columbus, Ohio. They have a huge residential remodel/reuse policy versus tearing down and starting over. Tearing down and starting over is wasteful. Kerri asked about the homeless housing study. That hasn't been completed yet. Karen commented on how does the housing study tie into the 2030 Downtown Strategic issue and how are we addressing creating the community enclaves of housing. She mentioned that Detroit and Toledo have both had strong policy implementations to have renaissance of the existing hubs. Shannon spoke to the tie to 2030 Strategic plan and they intend to incorporate that into their findings as well. Charlie noted that they deeply care about implementation as well and are happy to be involved in their planning as well, if helpful.

Kerri asked how many landlords participated and if individual or property managers. It was both. Study represented 300-500 units across the city and included a wide range of properties. Charlie and team held listening sessions specifically with landlord association as well as landlords and tenants.

There was a public question regarding the novel methods for construction and how to identify them. Some of this is done with city involvement to decrease costs. If going after attracting builders/developers, go after them while also going after traditional builders as well. There are programs that have vouchers from the City that offers incentives for city support to reduce risk.

Al noted the need to make many approaches, as it is not one size fits all. Robin did note that we are working several projects to get public housing on the market in the next few years.

Having no further comments, Al thanked the presenters.

#### **4. 11<sup>th</sup> & Washington Street Mixed Use Development – Matt Nolley and Michael Eaton with Rubicon**

Michael Eaton introduced the proposed project. Five story structure, 2600 sq. feet of commercial space, with ingress and egress off of Jackson Street. There are 143 garage spaces in the location that are fully encapsulated. Providing improvements for sewer system and adding rain gardens. The plans identify 28,000 sq. feet of residential space. Michael reviewed the plans, including studio, one, two and three bedroom units with 120 units overall. Idea is to bring more people downtown with commercial space and amenities available. Michael presented the renderings of the project. They intend to be selective in who is in the retail space to provide attractions to the area. The project will use sustainable products, similar to prior project they did at St. Barts.

Al asked about rental costs and cost of the development build. Michael gave the overall costs of each size units. Ten percent of the building will be workforce units, with a 20% discount applied. Kyle asked about information regarding the types of residents attracted to this type of development. It is young professionals, those getting ready to "right size", those fresh out of school, and people that want to have apartment because

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live between two locations. Al asked about total cost of the project and ask. Approximately \$30,989,000 project cost. Rubicon did receive \$3.2 million in redevelopment tax credits. Their ask of TIF contribution is 6.4M. Heather noted that Rubicon has already presented the information to Andrew Lanam. Andrew will have a report at next month's meeting and will be happy to answer any questions. Andrew described the process of assessing the gap. This is currently in a TIF area, with proposal to create separate TIF area. Andrew reviewed the projected costs and other like-projects. There is one big differentiation with this project and other multi-family projects – the structured parking component. Structured parking is significantly more expensive. In review of all the financial information requested and provided by Rubicon, the ask is reasonable based upon the type of project. Al asked about the current assessment, what is the projected tax revenue? Andrew reviewed the current versus projected assessed amounts. There are TIF revenues and also BCSC referendum impacts. It takes a few years to receive any new taxes, the schedule shows recouping the investment in 18 years. All of the revenue generated in years past that through life of TIF is revenue generated to Redevelopment. Michael asked about the rate of return for the city. He reviewed two ways to calculate that. This is a pledge of about 64% of the TIF life revenue, not discounted for net present value. It is very common that there be a pledge of 80%, with structured parking up to 100%. Al asked about similar projects. Michael noted projects on Fort Wayne Ave. and 16<sup>th</sup> and New Jersey. Heather asked about St. Barts project. It is 60 units and is 70% rented because of timing. This is an introduction to the project with opportunity to ask questions. Next month, it will be a request for approval.

Brad Davis asked when the city was made aware of when the ask was made. Heather noted that we were aware of the project for about a year and knew there would be some sort of ask but the true cost estimates have to be prepared before the ask.

Kerri asked for reference what the Taylor project was awarded? Al gave estimates because he doesn't have specific numbers tonight - the total was \$11.8M, gifted the land worth \$1.2 M, and it is 200 units. That repayment timeframe was around 22 year range. Andrew clarified that he is only talking about tax revenue, not increase of the taxable income.

Mike Mullett shared articles – here on behalf of the historical neighborhood alliance. He has lots of problems with this project but the idea the city is subsidizing this project is the biggest issue. When we have a market rate, developer driven project, it is not done “the Columbus way.” He and others feel the project is too big for the lot. They are excavating in an area with potential groundwater contamination. TIF was originally designed for manufacturing projects. We don't have large employment gains when looking at taxpayer subsidy. He came to Columbus because of the values and doesn't see the values anymore. With this just being driven by rate of return considerations in high risk environment. Referenced the history of the Crump project. This is another entrance to Columbus, Indiana and very significant. Al thanked Mike for his comments.

Kerri also spoke about being a neighbor. She is very happy with the outlay of the Downtown strategic plan, the housing study, and Downtown 2030. The two homes to be demolished could be redeveloped. She wants to see the downtown commercial spaces revitalized. She expressed concerns about the project, even if financially feasible and feels that we do need housing stock but location is important.

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Robin Hilber asked about the TIF dollars for the affordable housing project on Midway? Andrew noted it was \$4.65 M. Al noted that they are also applying for tax credits to make that project work. Readi funds was \$3.325M and \$13.05M in Federal Tax Credits. This was for 64 units. There is no recoupment of TIF back on this project because it is a non-profit organization. That project is serving the lowest income populations.

Mike noted that the tenants should be paying rents in amount to sustain this project. Andrew noted the process to sustain the subsidized housing. Kerri noted that project had childcare included.

Grace asked if there were any road improvements planned for the surrounding areas? Can we get numbers about how this project fills the gap and fits the needs identified in the housing study? Want to be able to identify the proposed projects that fit the needs. Grace commented on the reduced housing and who might then qualify. Then overall, what do we want our downtown to look like? No need to answer now but needs to be answered.

Robin asked about the opportunity to move the homes. We don't know.

Tom asked how many development projects are done without some sort of gap funding? Now, very few.

Al thanked everyone for their comments.

Having no further comments, Al thanked the presenters.

**Action Items:**

**5. Resolution #32 – 2024 of the Columbus Redevelopment Commission to approve the purchase agreement for property located at 2452 State Street – Mary Stroh, Legal Counsel**

Mary reviewed the proposal. The property is currently owned by the Bartholomew County Commissioners. It is the former county highway garage that is no longer in use following the new build. The Commission expressed interest in the property because of the location on the State Street Corridor and the opportunity it presented for further development in that area. Two appraisals were performed and the average of those appraisals came back at \$1,075,000.00. The commission is now asking for approval to enter into a purchase agreement for a price not to exceed \$1,075,000.00 plus closing costs, to be capped at \$25,000. Mary offered to answer questions regarding the purchase proposal.

Al commented about the need to develop this property and get it cleaned up. Get it ready for something that is a better use. Karen Walker asked about long term development. Noted that this part of the community might benefit from some additional amenities. There isn't a current plan for the property. Heather noted that there is a State Street Plan and this property was identified as ripe for redevelopment. There has also been investment made into this area with improvements to walkability. Heather did indicate that they have been

contacted by potential developers with interest in how to best use this. If there is any contamination, we can apply for remediation funds. Tom Dell spoke that this is a very strategic property for further development.

Kyle confirmed need for future Council approval and asked what potential questions there may be. Grace confirmed it is now in the TIF district. It is the same argument for some other properties to have shovel ready properties. Kyle noted the need to address concerns with strategic property development and acquisition.

Having no additional questions or comments from Commissions. Al opened it up for public comments.

There being no further question or comment, Al asked for approval of the resolution for the purchase agreement in an amount not to exceed \$1,075,000.00 and closing costs not to exceed \$25,000. Cindy motioned for approval of the resolution and Kyle seconded. A vote was taken and the motion passed unanimously.

**6. Resolution #33 – 2024 of the Columbus Redevelopment Commission to accept the conveyance of property located at 327 Water Street, Columbus, Indiana, formally known as the Waste Water Treatment Plant – Mary Stroh, Legal Counsel**

Mary introduced the resolution and proposed conveyance. This would allow for Columbus City Utilities to transfer a property they own that was the former Waste Water Treatment Plant. This property is located along Water street and is adjacent to other properties owned by the Commission that would provide additional desirable area for future development connected with current proposed projects. Mary offered to answer questions regarding the conveyance.

Al opened it up to the Commission for discussion.

Having no additional questions or comments from Commissions. Al opened it up for public comments.

There being no further question or comment, Al asked for approval of the resolution to accept conveyance of the property located at 327 Water Street. Shannon motioned for approval of the resolution and Cindy seconded. A vote was taken and the motion passed unanimously.

**7. Discussion item: new Department of City of Columbus Public Works Salt Barn located at 1350 Arcadia Drive – Bryan Burton, Director of Department of Public Works, and Karen Walker, Force Design, Inc.**

Heather gave brief background of the project for new Department of Public Works space and past approvals. When project presented at City Council, they suggested to consider the full scope of the project to include a new salt barn. This proposal would meet current requirements, work within the campus and relocate to same space, while still maintaining the appearance of the overall project.

Bryan gave overview of the current barn and capacity issues. This would increase that capacity and allow for the future growth as well as salt demand continues to increase. There is a current brine system that is not connected to the salt barn and makes the process more difficult and time consuming. This design is more



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standard as well and increases ability to response to public safety. Al spoke to the efficiencies and asked about the size increase. It is at least two times the capacity.

Karen Walker described the options to build the barns. This design is completely within the flood plan and near the truck wash station. It is cohesive with the remainder of the campus as well, while still leaving some developable land. Grace commented on the return on investment to increase efficiencies.

Al opened it up to the Commission for discussion. Having no additional questions or comments from Commissions. Al opened it up for public comments. There was no action on this item. Al thanked the presenters.

#### **8. Approval of Minutes: September 24, 2024 – Special Meeting Minutes**

Review of the September 24<sup>th</sup>, 2024, Special Meeting Minutes was had, no corrections or changes were noted. Kyle moved and Trena seconded a motion to adopt the same. There being no discussion, a vote was taken and the motion passed unanimously.

#### **9. Review and Approval of Claims**

Docket of claims was provided. No further questions or discussion regarding the claims. Kyle moved and Shannon seconded a motion to adopt the same. There being no further discussion, a vote was taken and the motion passed unanimously, and all claims approved.

#### **10. Project Update – Heather Pope –**

- **Our River...Our Riverfront** – The riverfront project is currently out to bid. The design team and Redevelopment have hosted two in-person pre-bid meetings at City Hall. Bids will be accepted through October 29<sup>th</sup> at 11AM. Receipt of bids in October will allow for construction contracts to be issued in 2024. On this schedule, site preparation would begin in Q1 2025 with construction continuing throughout the remainder of 2025 and ultimately concluding near July 2026. This timeline considers optimal river conditions occurring in the summer months.
- **Arcadia Drive** – On October 15<sup>th</sup>, the first reading of the rezoning from I3 (Heavy Industrial) to I2 (General Industrial) was passed at City Council, with the second reading anticipated to take place on November 6<sup>th</sup>. This rezoning allows for governmental (non-office) use on the property. Additionally, requests for proposals and qualifications were issued on October 16<sup>th</sup> and will be accepting submissions through November 18<sup>th</sup> at 4PM for the redevelopment site improvements identified. The salt barn funding request will go before City Council on November 6<sup>th</sup> if approved at Monday's CRC meeting. Under this timeline for funding and RFPQ submissions, we anticipate a BOT contract to be executed Q4 of this year with construction beginning spring 2025. We are aiming tentatively for DPW to occupy the space beginning spring 2026.

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- **Downtown Entrance Plaza** – Please plan on attending the public engagement session following the CRC meeting from 5-7PM at the Commons to share your feedback on the initial concepts proposed by Merritt Chase!

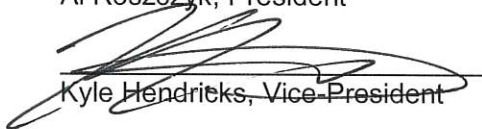
**Adjournment**

Al asked for further questions or comments. There being no further business, Al asked for a motion to adjourn. Al moved and Trena seconded a motion to adjourn. A vote was held, and the motion passed unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 7:10 p.m.

Approval of the minutes this 16<sup>th</sup> day of December 2024.




Al Roszczyk, President



Kyle Hendricks, Vice-President

Trena Carter, Secretary



Shannon McDonald, Member



Cynthia Boll, Member