

MINUTES
URBAN RENEWAL AGENCY
August 23, 2007

Commissioner McCabe called the Moscow Urban Renewal Agency meeting to order at 7:00 a.m. Thursday, 23rd August 2007 in the Moscow City Council Chambers.

Attendance:

Commission Members	City Staff Present	Others Present
John McCabe, Chair	Gary J. Riedner, City Supervisor	BJ Swanson
John Weber	Don Palmer, Finance Director	Margaret Howlett
Steve Drown	Anne Clapperton, Planner I	
Jack Nelson	Tanya Shull, Finance	
Aaron Ament	Stephanie Kalasz, City Clerk	
Robin Woods		

Absent: Mike Thomason

1. Approval of Minutes - July 12, 2007

Weber moved and Nelson seconded approval of the minutes. Motion carried unanimously.

2. Review Appropriations - Don Palmer

Palmer said when the bonds were refinanced, the payment stream was not the same. He distributed a paper with two scenarios calculated by B.J. Swanson. He said it is the will of the Board, the URA could pay more on the bonds from now until 2013 so savings would result. There would be some flexibility with the schedule. It would require a change in the debt service line item in the budget being considered. Swanson said the Board may want to pay the Thompson loan first because the interest rate is higher on that loan.

Riedner confirmed that if the loan is simple interest, the Board could pay any larger amount if they budget enough flexibility and that a rigid schedule would not be necessary. Palmer said although a schedule isn't necessary, the money must be appropriated in the budget if the Board would like to pay more on the loan. McCabe said it might make sense to pay more on the Thompson loan first. Riedner said his recommendation is to proceed with the budget as proposed. Swanson said it might be best to wait until the payment comes due to decide what to pay. Palmer expressed concern that if the URA owns the property, the lots remain empty and the debt is paid, it could be a problem. Riedner said if the URA has a lot of cash, then it can be appropriated accordingly. He said he would like to do things conservatively at this point and save the flexibility for next year since a new project is being considered in FY08. There was further discussion about bond payments. Riedner said the Board can meet next year and determine whether there is a lot of extra money, the budget can be reopened if necessary.

Swanson said ideally, the lots should be sold soon and in order to do that, they really need to be marketed so there should be a plan for that. There was discussion about how the URA decides on a price for the lots. Riedner said the lots have been selling for the same price that the URA paid for them which is \$2.26/sq. ft.

3. Public Hearing: Urban Renewal Agency Budget - Don Palmer

McCabe opened the public hearing at 7:38 a.m. There being no comment, the public hearing closed at 7:39 a.m.

Weber moved to accept the FY08 Budget with the corrections noted and to have staff draft a resolution for such. Drown seconded the motion. Nelson asked about what is being done to sell the lots. Riedner explained what is being done and the associated costs. Riedner said there is no other marketing plan. Nelson asked about the money being set aside for a lobbyist. Riedner explained.

Motion carried unanimously.

Other Business

Howlett said the LEDC is working with the U of I on sending out information to encourage alumni to come home to Moscow. She explained the marketing campaign. She said for \$1500, the URA could get an ad in Here We Have Idaho Magazine going out to 70,000 targeted alumni saying "come home to Alturas." She needs authorization so she can schedule this with the University. They will probably do this within the next 60 days. Riedner said it makes sense and the money is there. It is a good way to get exposure. Howlett said there should be some potential with the Knowledge Corridor to market Alturas as well.

Woods said some of the smaller populated states are doing coming home campaigns rather than going out and recruiting and it seems to be working. Howlett said advertising hasn't been allowed in this magazine previously, this will be the first and the University is being very supportive. Weber moved to spend \$1500 for the ad and Ament seconded the motion. Palmer asked about any other tech journals that might be available. Woods said the URA needs to get a splash page for Alturas. She asked if the URA has a logo and was told no. Riedner discussed marketing it as an entire project. Howlett said in targeting the ads, people on the Knowledge Corridor Committee are going to bring their list of trade magazines. She said Horizon Magazine costs \$3500 for a half page ad and there hasn't been much in the way of business response.

Motion carried unanimously.

Ament said the Board should look at the possibility at changing zoning in the potential project area. Problems have been identified in the Central Business District. He said we need to be able to generate the tax increment and if non-profits go in, then there will be a problem. The URA is supposed to influence economic development. He said zoning changes fit with that goal. He said it would have to go through the Planning and Zoning Commission and the Council. He said one property has supposedly been purchased to build a church. Riedner said if a non-profit use goes in, the business may need to pay a fee in lieu of tax increment until the bonds are paid or perhaps otherwise give up non-profit status for the pendency of the bonds. The URA can be an advocate for a zoning change even though they do not have the authority to make the change. We are in a unique position to be working with the six property owners. The owners may be willing to change the zone as well. Swanson said Gritman pays taxes on the property it owns in that area. She said for the URA to drive the zone change, parking is a huge issue and should be addressed. Woods said if we are going to put forth the effort to install improvements, there should be a return. She suggested an economic development zone where businesses that go in need to provide jobs. Ament said his recommendation would be something like CBD but change some of the uses to conditional. He said the prime uses would be left in. He said churches and apartments could be removed and some professional businesses. It would give the ability to mitigate impacts. He said housing is a big one.

Swanson said there is an opportunity to create another district but after the next meeting of the legislature the ability may not be there. The prime purpose is to get this done as soon as possible.

Riedner said the biggest issue is public participation. The Association of Idaho Cities is putting together a group to tell the Urban Renewal Agency side of the story.

McCabe asked if the zoning question should be on the next agenda. Riedner said it should be discussed if the URA decides to move forward with a plan. Riedner explained the process. Ament asked if the URA could request that the Council ask the Planning and Zoning Commission to look at rezoning the area. He would like to get this to Planning and Zoning as soon as possible so the rezoning could be done when the plan is approved.

Ament said he has envisioned improvements to Paradise Creek in the area. He said there is a 50/50 grant match by the government for recreation. So there is potential for the government to cover part of the facility. He is said the temperature of the water in the creek will probably go up with the daylighting of creek so there will be plantings and the Army Corps of Engineers may cover some of those costs.

Riedner said they are looking into the Department of Environmental Quality programs for brown field redevelopment.

4. Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 8:19 a.m.