
Syracuse Urban Renewal Agency
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Minutes

Board of Directors Meeting
Wednesday, January 27, 2021
3:30 pm
WebEx

Due to the declaration of a public health emergency and the social distancing requirements imposed at the Federal, State and local level, this meeting was held in accordance with Executive Order 202.1 by video/telephone conference that was made available to the public.

Board Members Present: Mayor Ben Walsh, Vice-Chair Helen Hudson, Treasurer Brad O'Connor, all via tele/videoconference (in accordance with the Governor's Executive Order 202.1)

Staff Present: Michael Collins, Meghan Ryan, Esq., all via tele/videoconference (in accordance with the Governor's Executive Order 202.1)

Others Present: Kate Auwaerter, Michelle Sczpanski, Jennifer Tiffit, all via tele/videoconference (in accordance with the Governor's Executive Order 202.1)

I. Call Meeting to Order

Mayor Walsh called the meeting to order at 3:37 P.M.

II. Roll Call

Mayor Walsh noted all Board members were present with the exception of Vice-Chair Hudson*.

*Vice-Chair Hudson joined the meeting at 3:40 P.M. during the discussion of Resolution No. 3432.

III. Proof of Notice

Mayor Walsh acknowledged notice of the meeting had been timely and properly provided.

IV. Minutes

Mayor Walsh asked for a motion to approve the minutes from the November 10, 2020 Board of Directors meeting. Mr. O'Connor made a motion to approve the minutes. Mayor Walsh seconded the motion. **THE MINUTES FROM THE NOVEMBER 10, 2020 BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING WERE UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED BY ALL BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT.**

V. New Business

1) Resolution No. 3432

Resolution No. 3432 was introduced by Ms. Ryan. Ms. Ryan advised that SURA owns a parking lot, commonly referred to as the Old Farmer's Market Lot. The address is 109 West Washington Street. It is next to Perseverance Park and One Lincoln Center. The property manager approached SURA about securing short-term parking on behalf of one of their tenants. It would go from February 1st through the end of April. The current arrangement is that the parking lot is owned by SURA and operated by the City. It is a public parking lot with parking meters. The City receives all the revenue. This agreement was already brought to the Common Council and approved. The City and SURA would both be parties. The City will receive the revenue under this agreement. The agreement is for 18 parking spaces at \$50 per space per month. Ms. Ryan advised that Jen Tifft from Business Development ran the numbers. The number of people in Downtown has decreased due to the Pandemic. Revenue from the lot has decreased significantly. There will still be enough spaces for the public and this will attend to the needs of one of One Lincoln Center's tenants.

The Mayor asked for the total number of spaces in the lot. Ms. Tifft indicated that there are sixty-two (62). The Mayor also asked if these spaces would be reserved with a sign. Ms. Tifft advised that she is still figuring that out with DPW. She also flagged the importance of DPW plowing the lot. The Mayor inquired about the \$50 rate. Ms. Tifft advised that it was requested by the lessee. She looked at the revenue the lot is bringing in now. Under normal circumstances this rate would not be reasonable but this agreement for three months would bring in \$2,700, which would be a 20% increase in revenue. Based on this she felt it was a fair rate. The Mayor asked if they would be paying a flat fee, not just paying for used spaces. Ms. Tifft stated that that they would pay for the 18 spaces at \$50 a month for those three months regardless of use.

Mr. O'Connor inquired about usage of the parking lot at its peak and whether this agreement would limit spaces at certain times of the day. Ms. Tifft believes that this would not be a risk as long as the current restrictions in Downtown remain. Most of the major office buildings are still in a remote work situation. She also stated that the City can only track revenue, not meter usage. It is hard to check utilization but based on revenue numbers the utilization is very low. The Mayor said it is something to monitor over the next three months. Ms. Ryan advised that the agreement is already drafted so it will ready to start on February 1st.

Mayor Walsh asked for a motion to approve the resolution. Ms. Hudson made the motion. Mr. O'Connor seconded the motion. **ALL BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED RESOLUTION NO. 3432 AUTHORIZING A PARKING AGREEMENT WITH THE CITY AND ZAMIR EQUITIES, LLC FOR EIGHTEEN (18) PARKING SPACES IN**

THE PARKING LOT AT 109 WEST WASHINGTON STREET, LOCATED AT THE CORNER OF SOUTH CLINTON STREET AND WEST WASHINGTON STREET.

2) Resolution No. 3433

Resolution No. 3433 was introduced by Ms. Ryan. She advised that she received a request from an attorney. The property at 910 Erie Boulevard East is being sold. The property was formerly owned by SURA in the 80s and was part of a development project. SURA sold the property to Steven Jacobs Interior d/b/a Bernards Business Interiors. When SURA sells property there are typically a lot of terms and conditions attached to the sale. The title company requested an estoppel certificate, which is a due diligence item, from SURA saying the deed is valid, SURA has no knowledge of any breach of the terms and conditions in the deed and confirmation that a deed restriction expired on June 23, 1989. The deed mentions a Land Disposition Agreement and Certificate of Completion. The title company asked SURA to locate copies of those documents. Ms. Ryan advised that she has SURA documents from many years ago that she looked through and was not able to locate them. This does not mean that they do not exist, but they were not recorded in the County Clerk's Office so that and the passage of time makes it difficult. Ms. Ryan included a statement in the Resolution that the Agency could not locate copies of the documents. The estoppel certificate will reiterate everything that is in the Resolution. The Mayor indicated that this is a straightforward request.

Mayor Walsh asked for a motion to approve the resolution. Mr. O'Connor made the motion. Ms. Hudson seconded the motion. **ALL BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED RESOLUTION NO. 3433 AUTHORIZING THE EXECUTION OF AN ESTOPPEL CERTIFICATE RELATED TO THE STEVEN JACOBS INTERIOR, INC. D/B/A BERNARDS INTERIORS PROJECT (FORMER) ENCUMBERING A PORTION OF THE PROPERTY LOCATED AT 910 ERIE BOULEVARD EAST.**

3) Resolution No. 3434

Resolution No. 3434 was introduced by Ms. Ryan. She advised that it affects a portion of the property from the previous resolution. Ms. Ryan looked through the Assessment property file and determined that the property was formerly known as 915-19 East Water Street. Several properties were combined over the years to form what is now known as 910 Erie Boulevard East. This former project pertains to 915-19 East Water Street. In 1997 SURA transferred the property to PG Erie Properties, LLC. PG Erie Properties, LLC is still the owner and is selling the property. Ms. Ryan advised that for this project the Land Disposition Agreement and Certificate of Completion were recorded in the County Clerk's Office. They are included in the agenda packet. For this request, SURA is just reiterating that those documents are valid and enforceable, SURA is not aware of any breach of any terms and conditions and that the Certificate of Completion was filed in 2002.

Mayor Walsh asked for a motion to approve the resolution. Mr. O'Connor made the motion. Ms. Hudson seconded the motion. **ALL BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED RESOLUTION NO. 3434 AUTHORIZING THE EXECUTION OF AN ESTOPPEL CERTIFICATE RELATED TO THE PG ERIE PROPERTIES, LLC PROJECT ENCUMBERING A PORTION OF THE PROPERTY LOCATED AT 910 ERIE BOULEVARD EAST (FORMERLY KNOWN AS 915-19 EAST WATER STREET AND SOUTH CROUSE AVENUE AND ERIE BOULEVARD EAST).**

VI. Items for Discussion

1. Potential Sale of Parking Lot at 109 West Washington Street

Ms. Tifft introduced this discussion item to the Board. She advised that SURA received an official offer to acquire the property from SURA. Zamir Equities, owner/manager of One Lincoln Center, is the party interested. It is the same party SURA is entering into the short-term parking agreement with. Zamir wants to purchase the parking lot and eventually plans to develop it. Right now, they would use it as parking for tenants before any redevelopment. Ms. Tifft stated that a lot of their tenants have voiced concerns that they do not have onsite parking. This would help retain long-term tenants in the City. Also, the property sits outside of the urban renewal area so proceeds from the sale would enable SURA to assist with redevelopment in the urban renewal area.

Mr. O'Connor expressed his concerns. There are a lot of questions to answer. The Mayor agreed and wanted to have a historical sense of annual revenue from the parking lot and the usage, to the extent it is available. He was also interested to know what affect selling this public parking lot would have on Downtown in terms of availability of other options for public parking. There are not a lot of public parking lots in Downtown. He stated we would have to do a cost/benefit analysis. A sale could provide a short-term infusion of revenue that could be invested in the community. This is a large Downtown office building that does not have its own parking so from a tenant retention standpoint it would be helpful. The Mayor indicated that he is open to selling but needs to identify and answer questions and make sure to follow the proper property disposition guidelines if and when it gets to that.

Ms. Ryan advised that under SURA's Property Disposition Guidelines there are three ways to dispose of properties. She would have to analyze which method of disposition would be best. In the past SURA has utilized the auction method but she is not sure if that would be appropriate here. Any method used would require an appraisal of the property prior to sale. Ms. Ryan advised that to be proactive SURA has already started soliciting bids and received some responses already. No matter what, based on amount, Board approval would be required before engaging an appraiser. Even if SURA does not sell an appraisal would be beneficial to have. Ms. Ryan also stated that the property has restrictions that run with the land. Any potential buyer would have to be aware of

those. These restrictions limit what could be done with the property in the future. Any time SURA sells property it is required to place a reverter clause in the deed. These are all things that should be considered.

Mr. O'Connor mentioned that when looking at sales price the revenue from the lot should also be considered. The lot is owned by SURA but operated by the City. The City is currently benefitting from it. It is not a one to one trade off. Ms. Ryan advised that the proceeds of the sale would go to SURA not the City. The City would lose the revenue from the use. Ms. Hudson stated that she wants to see the details.

Ms. Tiffitt stated that she will go ahead and pull together more revenue information and distribute to the Board. She will work with the Board to figure out the best disposition options. She advised that we do have a few quotes for appraisals. Three quotes are needed. At a minimum, the Board could decide at the next meeting regarding the appraisal. The appraisal could take anywhere between 1-2 months to get the report done. The Mayor asked if there is any reason to wait. He also asked about the price range. Ms. Tiffitt stated that they range from \$2,500 to \$3,275. The Mayor then asked Ms. Hudson and Mr. O'Connor if they wanted to wait to vote on an appraiser to authorize now. Ms. Ryan advised that they should wait as they could receive more quotes. She wants an opportunity to analyze as the lowest is not always the best. There is also a possibility of receiving more quotes. .

2. Art Loan Program

Ms. Auwaerter presented to the Board. She advised that this is for public art at Salina Plaza (Perseverance Park). Public art was a piece of the original plan to redevelop this site. For many reasons, SURA did not commission public art and went forth with the design that is now complete. Ms. Auwaerter has been trying to think of other ways to get public art in the plaza. Stone Hill Quarry Art Park has an art loan program. She proposed that SURA consider entering into an agreement with the Art Park to receive a piece of public art for at least 2 years. The piece of art in mind is called "Wale's Tale." It is 9 feet tall and the base would be 10 x 15. It is a bright, accessible, simple artwork that would be pleasing at the location. It would go on a concrete base. The cost of the program would include transportation and installation. Transportation would cost be \$600-\$800 but Ms. Auwaerter is going to try to secure funding for that from the Downtown Committee. SURA would also need to construct a concrete pad for the sculptural installation. She sought a quote from Ballard Construction for this to get an idea and it was for \$6,500-\$7,500. It would be a 10 x 15 pad, 6 inches deep. She advised that it could be something to use for other artwork in the future.

Ms. Ryan asked about insurance requirements. Ms. Auwaerter said that the Quarry's insurance would cover most issues unless there is negligence on behalf of the loanee. Ms. Auwaerter said that SURA would have the art for 2 years, maybe longer if wanted. This is an opportunity for SURA to create a relationship with Stone Quarry for other artwork. Mr. O'Connor asked about location. Ms. Hudson was supportive of the idea.

The Mayor expressed some concerns regarding the cost of the concrete pad. He suggested asking skilled trades if it is something they could do. Also, he does not want to ruin the recent improvements to the plaza by securing something to the new concrete. Ms. Auwaerter stated that Stone Quarry would like to see this artwork raised up. Owen Kerney (SOCPA) also expressed that he did not want the new concrete drilled into.

The Mayor asked about having a local artist fabricate something for a similar cost that SURA would own. Ms. Auwaerter said that is a possibility. The loan program would allow art to move in and out. SURA could be a little more daring with revolving pieces. She also cautioned that commissioned work is hard because it is yours and your responsibility. She would also think of other places this particular piece could go. The Mayor suggested Lipe Art Park. He asked Ms. Tiff to see what SIDA is doing with that park. The Mayor said he is open to the idea of the loan program as it would be nice to put something there. He also wants to consider how this would limit the use of this space. Ms. Auwaerter will look into more details and provide the Board with an update at a future meeting.

VII. Adjournment

There being no further business to discuss, Mayor Walsh asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting. Mr. O'Connor made the motion. Ms. Hudson seconded the motion. **ALL BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED THE MOTION TO ADJOURN THE MEETING AT 4:14 P.M.**