

Redevelopment Authority of Lawrence County
Meeting Minutes
July 25, 2024

The regular monthly meeting of the Redevelopment Authority of Lawrence County was held at the Commissioner's Meeting Room located at 430 Court Street, New Castle, PA, at 12:00 p.m. on Thursday, July 25th, 2024.

Attendance:

Redevelopment Authority: Robert Donadio, Chairman
Dennis Alduk, Vice Chairman
Jim Gagliano
Jon Natale

Staff: Amy McKinney, Executive Director
Rebecca Shaffer, Deputy Director of Community Development
Mary Glass, Office Manager/CDBG Administrator
Ryan Long, Solicitor

Public: Nicholas Vercilla, New Castle News
Brian Burick, Citywide Development Corp. of New Castle
Justin Data, Shenango Township
Brandon Baker, Shenango Township
Brandon Rishel, Shenango Township
Mike Wish, Wish Development
Rick Sikora, Shepherd's Light Ministry
Gary Johnson, Metrovitalization LLC.

Call to Order

The July 25th, 2024, meeting of the Redevelopment Authority of Lawrence County was called to order at 12:01 p.m. by Robert Donadio.

Additions/Deletions to Agenda

None

Public Comments

See Shenango Commons and Metrovitalization under Old Business.

Regular Agenda

- a. **Approval of minutes** – Dennis Alduk moved, seconded by Jim Gagliano, to approve the minutes from the June 20th, 2024, meeting. Motion carried, 4-0
- b. **Secretary/Treasurer Report** – Balance of RALC accounts as of 06/30/2024 was \$1,258,520.62. We have been awarded the 2024 PHARE funds but have not received the contract or funding at this time. We are expecting it by late August or early September.
- c. **New Business** –
Side Lot Application:
 1. We would like to remove #5 under Key Considerations which states that once a property is transferred the owner must maintain ownership for a minimum of one (1) year and should they sell it, they would be required to pay a fee to the Redevelopment Authority equal to 15% of the sale price. This has not been an issue in the past and as the goal of the program is to get the properties back on the tax rolls, we don't feel this is a necessary requirement. Jon Natale moved; Jim Gagliano seconded the removal of Key Consideration #5 from the Side Yard Application. Motion carried 4-0.
- d. **Old Business** –
 1. **Countywide Blight Removal Program Update** -
 - o **First Merit** – The building is completely down and salvaging of scrap is under way. The completion date was extended to August 18, 2024, per request from DORE &

Associates. However, we did notify them that this would be the last extension granted. They did get the soil samples tested, and they have been approved by R.A.R. Engineering Group Inc.

- **Shenango Commons –**
 - Brandon Rishel, Shenango Township Supervisor, addressed the board on behalf of the Township and in public/private partnership with Wish Development to request demolition funds for Parcels 8 & 9 of the Shenango Commons. This would be a section of the plaza that would allow for the roadway to go through and access the park behind and create a separation of the plaza into two sections. Future plans would be for the roadway to continue all the way through and connect to Old Pittsburgh Road and to hopefully allow for a new housing development. He pointed out that there have been tremendous improvements to the plaza over the last year.
 - Mike Wish, Wish Development, addressed the board regarding the demolition of Parcels 8 & 9 of the Shenango Commons. Mr. Wish stated that he feels this demolition/rehabilitation of the Shenango Commons plaza is adding value to the property and revitalizing something that has been a blight on the community for decades. He presented the board with hard copies and 3D animation of plans for the site and noted that the style of the building is no longer relevant. Having a current modern property that brings mixed uses and ties the community together provides a true destination location, and this demolition is key to that.
 - Ben Bush, Forward Lawrence, stated that the Shenango Township Supervisors have done an outstanding job of putting together a master plan for their community and this demolition would ensure that the master plan gets completed and that he wholeheartedly supports this effort.
- **Ellwood City Borough –** The Borough has filed an application for demolition reimbursement of a property located at 116 Hazen Avenue, Ellwood City, PA.
- **Metrovitalization –**
 - Gary Johnson, Project Manager, addressed the board stating that they have just purchased the old Rite Aid building located at 119 E. Washington Street in the City of New Castle. Their demolition permit for the property has already been approved, the building is currently being cleared of debris and asbestos abatement is to begin next week. He presented the board with a rendering for the building to be constructed after the demolition is completed and stated they are collaborating with the City on the final plan. This will be a five-story building with commercial/retail on the first floor, and apartments on the remaining floors. The plan is to have the building up and running in 2025. He also stated that they have approached the City about a long-term lease of the Zambelli Park property for use of the parking lot. They have included in that proposal a plan to revitalize the park at their own expense. This would include repairing the concrete that has heaved due to poor compaction, and restoring the water fountain, gazebo etc.
- **Round 2 - 2024 –**
 - We will be reviewing the structures being added to the repository in August for possible demolition. A list was included in the meeting documents and further information will be presented at a later date.

Executive Session –

12:26 PM Jim Gagliano moved; Jon Natale seconded motion to move into Executive Session.

Motion carried 4-0.

12:58 PM Jim Gagliano moved; Dennis Alduk seconded motion to move out of Executive Session.

Motion carried 4-0.

Action Agenda

- a. Approval of Bills – Checks were presented for payment and signature. Jim Gagliano moved; Jon Natale seconded approval of Payment of Bills.

Motion carried 4-0.

- b. Jim Gagliano moved; Dennis Alduk seconded the approval of Resolution R-2024-20 approving the transfer of three (3) side lots from Tax Claim (repository) to RALC. RALC simultaneously transfers side lots to applicants:
 - o KOHNEN, DIANE L.
 - o QUEAR, HOWARD L.
 - o TILLIA, BRANDY L. & JON F.

Motion carried 4-0

- c. Dennis Alduk moved; Jon Natale seconded the approval of Resolution R-2024-21 entering into agreement with Shenango Township for demolition reimbursement of Parcel 8 and Parcel 9 of Shenango Commons located on Ellwood Road, New Castle, PA.

Motion carried 4-0

- d. Jim Gagliano moved; Dennis Alduk seconded the approval of Resolution R-2024-22 entering into agreement with Ellwood City Borough for demolition reimbursement of a structure located at 116 Hazen Avenue, Ellwood City, PA.

Motion carried 4-0

- e. Jon Natale moved; Jim Gagliano seconded the approval of Resolution R-2024-22 entering into agreement with Metrovitalization LLC. for demolition reimbursement of a structure located at 119 East Washington Street, New Castle, PA.

Motion carried 4-0

The next meeting will be held on Thursday, August 22nd, 2024, at 12:00 pm in the Commissioner's Conference Room, located on the 1st Floor of the Lawrence County Government Center located at 430 Court Street, New Castle, PA.

Adjournment – Jon Natale moved; Jim Gagliano seconded the meeting adjourn at 1:04 PM.