

RENAISSANCE ZONE AUTHORITY MINUTES

Regular Meeting:

Thursday:

April 23, 2015:

The Regular Meeting of the Renaissance Zone Committee of the City of Fargo, North Dakota, was held in the City Commission Room at City Hall at 10:00 o'clock a.m., April 23, 2015.

The Committee members present or absent were as follows:

Present: Chairperson Dr. Roger Gilbertson, Commissioner Dave Piepkorn, Bruce Furness, Commissioner Melissa Sobolik, Deb Mathern

Absent: Cari Luchau, Steve Swiontek

Chair Dr. Gilbertson called the meeting to order.

Item 1: Approve Order of Agenda

No action was taken by the Board.

Item 2: Minutes: Regular Meeting of November 24, 2014

Member Mathern motioned to approve the minutes of the November 24, 2014 Renaissance Zone Authority meeting. The motion was seconded by Member Piepkorn. The motion was unanimously approved.

Item 3: Recognition of Kris Sheridan for 9 Years of Dedicated Service on the Renaissance Zone Authority

Chair Dr. Gilbertson recognized Kris Sheridan's service as a Member on the Renaissance Zone Authority. Dr. Gilbertson presented Ms. Sheridan with a plaque from the City in appreciation for her nine (9) years of service.

Item 4: Review application from Bruce & Nancy Taralson (New Construction) at 1020 1st Avenue North: APPROVED

Chair Dr. Gilbertson introduced the agenda item. Planner Joe Nigg reviewed the staff report and highlighted the criteria used by staff to analyze this proposal. He noted that the project received a very low score and also stated that the project does not meet the minimum investment threshold criteria as established in the RZ Plan. Mr. Nigg stated that although the investment thresholds are not met there is a provision in the RZ Plan that allows the Renaissance Zone Authority and the City Commission the ability to waive the requirement in certain situations. Mr. Nigg stated staff believes this project overall will benefit the downtown community and stated that the Planning Department is recommending approval.

Further discussion explored the critical elements and criteria this project does meet; clarified the condition of the previous house was beyond repair and has been demolished; and noted three houses still reside on property adjacent to this vacant lot.

Member Furness moved to approve the application submitted by Bruce and Nancy Taralson; to waive the minimum investment threshold criteria; and to grant the property tax exemption and the State income tax exemptions contingent upon completion of the project and verification of costs. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Piepkorn. The motion was unanimously approved.

Item 5: Discuss Implementation of Expanded Renaissance Zone (RZ) Boundary Pursuant to Senate Bill No. 2329

Planning Director Jim Gilmour stated Senate Bill No. 2329 has been approved by the Legislature and will go into effect on August 1, 2015. He noted this bill amends the sections of the North Dakota Century Code addressing the number of blocks Fargo can include in the RZ, increasing the base block number from 23 to 34 blocks which results in a maximum cap from 38 to 49 blocks. He added the language also increases the tax credits that are available for dollars invested in RZ funds from 8.5 million to 10.5 million dollars. Mr. Gilmour expressed his appreciation and thanks to the Legislators on their diligent work and support of the bill.

Joe Nigg provided an overview of the recently adopted 2015 RZ Plan and the implications of these cap changes. He referred to the maps in the packet that outline the existing RZ boundaries and stated that the RZ Plan is set up to accommodate this change. Mr. Nigg stated a final revised boundary could vary slightly depending on how many blocks the RZA would like to keep in reserve – similar to the strategy applied within the most recent boundary update. Mr. Nigg stated that the Planning Department would like to return with a formal recommendation for a new RZ boundary at the next RZA meeting.

Discussion ensued regarding the importance of continuing to retain three (3) blocks as inventory. In addition, the RZA discussed possible expansion areas inclusive of areas adjacent to the Main Avenue corridor.

The RZA directed staff to refine their proposal including suggestions from today's discussion, and present their formal recommendation at the next meeting.

Item 6: Other Business

a) Jim Gilmour presented the 2015 Quarterly Multi-Family Vacancy and Construction Report for the Fargo-Moorhead Area that was recently completed. Mr. Gilmour briefly highlighted the data, noting this is the first time the report has included a downtown apartment vacancy rate. He added this data will fluctuate each quarter, depending on the number of apartment buildings under construction versus the buildings completed with units rented, during the time frame this data is gathered.

The time at adjournment was 10:39 a.m.