

MONROE COUNTY REDEVELOPMENT COMMISSION
Minutes of March 7, 2008

In accord with posted notice, President Barry Lessow convened a session of the Monroe County Redevelopment Commission (the "RDC") on March 7, 2008 at 4:00 p.m. in the Meeting Room of the Monroe County Courthouse in Monroe County, Indiana. Commission Members Barry Lessow, John Whikehart, and James Tolen were present. Others staff members present included Aaron Platt, David Schilling, and Jeff Cockerill.

Items on the agenda included

1. Discussion of invoices

Mr. Platt explained that BSA had an invoice for design and for approximately \$6,800 that could not have been paid at the previous meeting.

Mr. Lessow noted that the invoices were for administrative fees, and they keep going up.

Mr. Tolen explained that Jim Hill the architect said in a side meeting with him that their costs would not go up any more.

Mr. Whikehart moved that Aaron Platt verify that these fees were accurate and have them paid. Mr. Tolen seconded that.

Mr. Lessow asked about any further unpaid bills, to which Mr. Platt replied that there was one for engineering services for the Karst Farm Greenway for \$27,734.90 that Mr. Tolen had just signed. Mr. Lessow noted that it was good that there was progress being made on that.

2. Discussion of TIF Restructuring

Mr. Platt pulled out the plat documents to show the properties they were looking at, and described them, 3 properties highlighted on the North side of Vernal Pike. 17100-4 is the industrial park spoken about at the February meeting. He said that they had copies of the deeds and a plat map.

Mr. Lessow asked about where the existing TIF was in relation to these properties. Mr. Platt went to get the map to explain, and Mr. Schilling began to explain that these properties were across the street from the existing TIF, showing them on the plat map. He pointed to Bobby Skank's property, and the commissioners looked at the plat map.

Mr. Lessow asked what Bob planned to do with the property, whether that was one they were looking at. Mr. Schilling said that Mr. Skank had talked about rezoning and putting an indoor shooting range on the property. Mr. Lessow asked what the next steps were.

Mr. Schilling replied that they needed to figure out whether they wanted to have a hearing or not.

Mr. Tolen asked who the owner of ridgeline was, if that was Jeff Wilkie's property. Mr. Schilling said that Mr. Wilkie had property there, but he was not sure where.

Mr. Lessow asked whether there were reasons not to go through with an expansion.

Mr. Schilling said that he had gotten a call from Councilwoman Marty Hawk who was concerned about Richland-Bean Blossom Schools (losing out on tax revenues), to which he replied that there will be a public hearing about this, and that people will be notified about this. If they think that this will impact the Council's ability to finance the schools, and if those concerns outweigh the income that would go back into the TIF, then the RDC could make the call.

The only way the TIF affects schools any more is the capital fund that they have, if the capital fund is maxed out. This may be a concern in R-BB schools, since they are planning to do an expansion of the middle school.

Mr. Whikehart noted that GE must affect their tax base, and Mr. Schilling agreed that it might.

Mr. Lessow asked if at this point there were specific development plans for these parcels.

Mr. Schilling replied that the land was already parceled out, and so the only infrastructure improvements that could be done were restructuring of roads.

Mr. Lessow asked if this would take more tax revenue from any of the taxing districts.

Mr. Schilling replied that it might be more of a public relations question than a financial one.

Mr. Tolen asked about how much acres they were looking at. Mr. Platt thought there was a total of 78 acres.

Mr. Lessow summarized the situation, saying that at this point there was a timing issue about the expansion, but there was minimal financial impact on the RDC and a similarly minimal financial impact on other taxing units. However, he said that there is a public relations element to this because TIFs are being very carefully studied and there is some pending County Council legislation about abatements. Would that impact TIFs at all?

Mr. Cockerill indicated that the abatement proposal does not really impact TIFs. That proposal would impact TIFs if there were a provision about abatements within a TIF. As currently written, the Council requests that the neighboring property and the RDC need to approve an abatement before it can be considered. That being said, the resolution is in a draft state.

Mr. Platt said that the meeting on tax abatements is on Thursday March 20th at 5:30, if they were interested in attending.

Mr. Lessow again noted that there were some public relations elements to adding to the district, which is already receiving some scrutiny and probably will continue to receive that. He said that may outweigh the financial benefits.

Mr. Tolen said that the two issues were the window of opportunity to act before the new state legislation takes place to make it more difficult for TIF districts to expand and the public opinion about the R-BB school district.

Mr. Lessow said “let’s go back to the comment that Dave Schilling made: if we hold a public meeting and there are concerns, and those concerns are raised, and we detect that those concerns outweigh any benefit that we might see, then we have the ability (and it’s important that people recognize that ability), not to add to the district. This is not automatic. We are evaluating this. These have been carefully selected, and it makes sense to get to the next stage. In that sense, having the process work might be a stronger thing for us to go through. We can make the right decision at the time.” Others at the table agreed.

Mr. Lessow asked what needed to do to make a motion. Mr. Schilling said that there were two things that needed to be done before you could expand the district. If your next meeting is soon, it may be better to have Bill (Williams) back to explain projects that are going on in the district. Otherwise it’s just a land grab.

Mr. Lessow noted that a land grab does not seem as salubrious a transaction. After some discussion, Commissioner Whikehart moved that the RDC schedule a public hearing for 2:00 on Friday, April 4th for the purpose of receiving public input on the amendment of the Westside Economic Development Area, the Westside TIF. (TIF restructuring) Commissioner Tolen seconded. The motion passed unanimously, 3-0.

A motion was made for adjournment, and passed unanimously, 3-0.

MONROE COUNTY REDEVELOPMENT COMMISSION

AYES

NAYS

BARRY LESSOW, President

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JAMES TOLEN, Vice President

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KEVIN FARRIS, Secretary

KEVIN FARRIS, Secretary

JOHN WHIKEHART, Member

JOHN WHIKEHART, Member

DON MERK, Member

DON MERK, Member

These minutes were prepared by Aaron Platt