

**MEETING MINUTES**  
**Porter County Redevelopment Commission**  
**Tuesday August 22, 2023**

Location: County Administrative Center,  
155 Indiana Avenue, Valparaiso IN Room 205

Members Present were: Jim Biggs, Jeremy Rivas, Don Ensign, Andy Maletta, and Bill Herring. Jason Gilliana was absent. Also present were Scott McClure and Stu Summers. Jim Biggs called the meeting to order. The Pledge of Allegiance was said.

**Consent Agenda**

Minutes from the June 27, 2023 meeting were presented  
The Financial Report was presented  
Approval of Claims.

**MOTION:** Don Ensign moved to approve the Consent Agenda as presented. Bill Herring seconded the motion and so approved with a 4-0 vote.

**Reconsideration of the SEH Agreement for TIF Services**

At the March 23, 2023 meeting, the Commission approved an agreement with SEH for the services of Dan Botich for TIF resolutions and filings as may be needed. That Agreement authorized the President of the RDC to sign the Agreement.

Jim Biggs has taken a job with SEH and feels it would not be appropriate for him to sign a contract with his new employer. Stu Summers requested the RDC to authorize the Commission's Vice President or Secretary to sign the agreement. No additional financial implications are noted.

**MOTION:** Bill Herring moved to authorize the RDC Secretary to sign the Agreement with SEH. The motion was seconded by Jeremy Rivas and so approved with a 3-0 vote. Jim Biggs abstained.

**Additional Services for MJ Thomas and Associates**

Currently the RDC has an Agreement with MJ Thomas & Associates for grant services at a cost not to exceed \$10,000. Mary Jane will use up her \$10,000 allotment soon primarily because of her work on the \$300,000 grant application for South Haven trees. Stu Summers requested the Commission authorize another \$20,000 for MJ Thomas & Associates. There are sufficient funds in the budget for this expense.

**MOTION:** Don Ensign moved to authorize an additional \$20,000 for MJ Thomas & Associates. The motion was seconded by Jeremy Rivas and so approved with a 4-0 vote.

## **Funding for Broadband Outreach**

More than \$800 Million in Federal funding will be coming to Indiana to promote broadband connectivity. OCRA has sent a list of addresses they say are underserved. To help identify underserved addresses in Porter County, Stu Summers requested that the Commission authorize up to \$25,000 to mail a postcard to every address in Porter County asking residents and businesses to identify whether or not their locations are properly served. Additional outreach will be handled by the Library System. They will use resources of the trustees, school systems, charitable organizations and the County Commissioners. Funds are available in the Redevelopment Fund.

**MOTION:** Jeremy Rivas moved to authorize up to \$25,000 to mail a postcard to every address in Porter County asking residents and businesses to identify if they are properly served by broadband. The motion was seconded by Don Ensign and so approved with a 4-0 vote.

## **Memorandum of Understanding with the County Commissioners regarding Sheriff home loan**

Attorney McClure addressed the Commission. He explained they have already voted on this. This is the MOU covering the \$120,000 loan. This loan is to be paid back over a five year period of time.

**MOTION:** Bill Herring moved to approve the MOU between the Commissioners and the RDC for a loan of \$120,000. The motion was seconded by Don Ensign and so approved with a 3-1 vote. Jeremy Rivas voted No.

## **South Haven Code Enforcement**

Stu Summers gave an update on Code Enforcement. The auto dealer at the corner of McCool and Highway 6 received a letter from Attorney McClure. Stu met with the owner and his lawyer this morning. They understand code enforcement and will work on developing a proposal to settle this matter. The UDO has a provision that if a business is out of business for 30 days or more, it cannot have a non-conforming sign. In the past if a business was sold a new owner still used the old sign. That is not the intent of the UDO. He would like to send a letter to the Rock and Roll car wash and ask them to remove the sign.

Attorney McClure – He gave an update on letters that have been sent and have not received any response. The next step will be taking them to Unsafe Building or Court. The people who have responded seem to feel they want to comply as long as they are not being singled out. If all are doing the same, they are ok.

Jim Biggs – He discussed the property in front of Burger King on Highway 6. The grass has been mowed but it still does not look good.

Stu Summers – He gave an update on the property. There was discussion of what could be done to have them comply and be able to afford it.

They will ask Storm Water to look at this and determine if it is a ditch or a detention pond.

**Other Items**

Project Ribeye was pulled from tonight’s Agenda because the Developer does not have all the information the RDC needs.

Mary Jane Thomas has been working on a grant for USDA housing projects. The area east of Chesterton and south of 94 has been added. There are about 400-600 people who live there. He will have a report on this at the next meeting.

Next Meeting: September 26, 2023 4:00 p.m.

There being no further business to come before the Commission the meeting was adjourned.

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Don Ensign, Secretary  
Redevelopment Commission