

TOWN OF CEDAR LAKE, LAKE COUNTY, INDIANA

MINUTES OF THE REDEVELOPMENT COMMISSION



January 25, 2021

Called to order 6:00 PM at the Cedar Lake Town Hall

Pledge of Allegiance

Roll Call:

Present	Nathan Vis RDC President	Absent	Brian Smith RDC Liaison – Crown Point School
Present	Eric Burnham RDC Vice President	Present	Tracy Haskell RDC Liaison – Hanover School
Present	Doug Spencer RDC Secretary	Present	Robert Carnahan Town Council Liaison
Present	Jolie Covaciu RDC Member	Present	David Austgen Town Attorney
Absent*	Randy Niemeyer RDC Member	Present	Sarah Moore Recording Secretary

Guests: Clerk-Treasurer Jennifer Sandberg, Town Manager Rick Eberly (electronically) and Planning Director Jill Murr

**Late arrival: 6:02 pm*

Vis noted for the record and welcomed the Hanover School Corporation Board of School Trustees appointee Tracy Haskell as the School Board Liaison. Haskell noted she grew up in Cedar Lake and graduated from Hanover School, moved back to Cedar Lake in 2006 from Blue Island and worked at Hanover for 10 years.

OATHS OF OFFICE: Clerk Treasurer Jennifer Sandberg collectively swore in all five present members for their one-year term.

NOMINATION OF OFFICES:

President: A motion was made by Eric Burnham and seconded by Jolie Covaciu to retain Nathan Vis as Redevelopment Commission President. Randy Niemeyer called for the close and cast the unanimous ballot; seconded by Jolie Covaciu.

Jolie Covaciu	Doug Spencer	Randy Niemeyer	Eric Burnham	Nathan Vis	Vote
Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Abstain	4-0

Vice-President: A motion was made by Jolie Covaciu and seconded by Doug Spencer to retain Eric Burnham as Redevelopment Commission Vice-President. Doug Spencer called for the close and cast the unanimous ballot; seconded by Randy Niemeyer.

Jolie Covaciu	Doug Spencer	Randy Niemeyer	Eric Burnham	Nathan Vis	Vote
Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	5-0

Secretary: A motion was made by Jolie Covaciu and seconded by Eric Burnham to retain Doug Spencer as Redevelopment Commission Secretary. Jolie Covaciu called for the close and cast the unanimous ballot; seconded by Eric Burnham.

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Jolie Covaciu	Doug Spencer	Randy Niemeyer	Eric Burnham	Nathan Vis	Vote
Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	5-0

PRESENTATION OF “EXPLORE EVERYDAY” COMMUNITY RECOGNITION – Harry O’s (Tomas Jaimes): In light of the bad weather, Mr. Jaimes asked to be deferred until February’s meeting. Eric Burnham made a motion to table this item to February, supported by Doug Spencer.

CONSENT AGENDA

1. Approval of Meeting Minutes: December 21, 2020

2. Claims – Fund #404 - \$25.00 and Fund #804 - \$64,107.25

Vis stated items appear to be in good order. He noted the two substantial items were to Barnes and Thornburg for legal services related to bond charges and Luxury Living for façade grant improvements.

A motion was made by Eric Burnham, seconded by Doug Spencer, to approve the minutes and accept the Consent Agenda as listed.

Jolie Covaciu	Doug Spencer	Randy Niemeyer	Eric Burnham	Nathan Vis	Vote
Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	5-0

NEW BUSINESS

1. **“Explore Everyday” Community Recognition:** Vis explained the history of the program to new member Haskell. Spencer stated Carnahan had recommended nominating The Dock a couple times and since the last meeting had checked it out. He stated he felt it had significant improvement, substantial investment in the community and was able to speak with the owner, who provided him with a tour.

A motion was made by Doug Spencer, seconded by Eric Burnham, to approve The Dock for the January Explore Everyday Community Recognition.

Jolie Covaciu	Doug Spencer	Randy Niemeyer	Eric Burnham	Nathan Vis	Vote
Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	5-0

2. Façade Grant 2021 New Applicants

- a. **Applicant #21-1: Leo’s (Justin Govert):** Moore confirmed for Niemeyer that \$6,743.50 was granted in October of 2020 for Leo’s for the door portion of the request only. Niemeyer confirmed to Vis that 20% was traditionally the awarded amount on previous grants and stressed granting more money to those individuals who were prepared like Govert who not only did the homework, had a scope of work and ready to start. Govert stated he had attended the BZA meeting to attain his variance approval and has presented his plan to the Building Department to obtain the permit for this portion regarding the signage. He stated his project could start in 2-3 weeks and was requesting \$18,300.00. Members had multiple discussions including the history of the façade grant applicants, how they awarded some individuals and explained how last year was new and a learning experience for all members. Niemeyer recommended and made the motion for 30%,

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supported by Spencer. Austgen asked that Niemeyer distinguish the motion for the difference so that the record is clearly reflective of the preparation and dialogue the Commission had regarding readiness. Niemeyer stated the reason for the increase from what was traditionally selected last year was based on a person who was prepared and ready to execute the project, noting the project would provide a net increased assessed value and bettering the surrounding community and TIF district. Covaciu clarified the Commission bases each application on a case-by-case basis.

A motion was made by Randy Niemeyer, seconded by Doug Spencer, to award Leo's with 30%, in the amount of \$12, 101.82, further clarifying (as noted above) the difference in the traditional 20% award to 30% due to the applicant being prepared, having attained the permit through the Building Department and variance through the BZA and ready to execute the project.

Jolie Covaciu	Doug Spencer	Randy Niemeyer	Eric Burnham	Nathan Vis	Vote
Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	5-0

- b. **Applicant #21-2: Lawrence Property Group (Sean Perfetti):** Perfetti, attending electronically, presented his proposal for the signage for Great Oaks Plaza. The cost to retrofit a sign would have been 50% the cost of a new one, therefore he is planning to install a new sign. He provided a rendering of where the sign would be placed, lighting and provided quotes for the sign and lighting. The total request is just under \$16,000.00 for the sign and electrical work combined. Perfetti confirmed for Vis the sign group needed 2 months for the sign and installation could be complete within 10-12 weeks. Perfetti confirmed to Niemeyer that the sign vendor has spoke with the Building Department of the requirements, permits and zoning for the size of the sign. He confirmed the sign did not need a variance as it was right at 60 square feet. Perfetti clarified for Niemeyer that the building permit has not been applied for, but he could do that as soon as tomorrow. Niemeyer felt it was a good request and much needed improvement.

Niemeyer felt it was important to move forward with projects that were ready. Austgen felt it brought up a good point of agendas and staff level preparation for readiness assessment. Multiple discussions ensued regarding application readiness, applicants concern for project costs dependent upon funding assistance and concerns for projects being ready to execute moving forward.

A motion was made by Randy Niemeyer, seconded by Eric Burnham, to defer the applicant has his application done and building department approval.

Jolie Covaciu	Doug Spencer	Randy Niemeyer	Eric Burnham	Nathan Vis	Vote
Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	4-1

Vis noted to Perfetti that he coordinates with the Building Department and once a permit is attained to notify Moore and it would be put back on the agenda. Perfetti asked for clarification moving forward if a permit would need to be attained prior to application submission. Niemeyer felt some sort of parameter that shows commitment and stated it was not a policy at this time, but felt it should be up for discussion. Covaciu expressed concerns about fees for permits and spoke of other alternatives for the checklist. She

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felt it was important to help support long-standing businesses. Vis felt this program was drafted from other successful programs that exist and felt that if the Commission moves towards the direction, it may seem as they are difficult to work with and would prefer adding a time limit on items rather than setting parameters in a policy. Niemeyer expressed the Commission being a fiscal body that is in charge of stewardship of tax dollars generated by commercial property in the Town and felt the commitment for the project is more important than determining if they receive funding that they could do the project.

- c. **Applicant #21-3: Gard Building (Henn & Sons – Richard & John Henn):** Dick and John Henn, present tonight, stated they purchased the Gard Building about 6 months ago. Dick noted a civil engineer was working on the site plan, they were awaiting plan release and had applied for the building permit. Dick indicated he paid \$250,000 for the site and had \$387,000 in proposed improvements, of which 60% is exterior work, including roof, siding, stone and \$56,000 in glass. He stated products have been ordered and they are ready to go. Dick Henn confirmed for Burnham the front of the building would be facing Harry O's. Dick Henn confirmed for Niemeyer it would contain 3 commercial units. Dick Henn clarified for Covaciu regarding dirt that was removed, IDEM notification stated no further action. Members all agreed the improvements were much needed and will look very nice. Dick Henn indicated Town Engineer requested camera check on the sewers draining to the highway and noted that was completed today.

A motion was made by Eric Burnham, seconded by Doug Spencer, to award \$25,000.

Jolie Covaciu	Doug Spencer	Randy Niemeyer	Eric Burnham	Nathan Vis	Vote
Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	5-0

Facade Grant Updates: Vis spoke about policy discussion questions clarification on profit vs not-for-profit regarding applicant eligibility. Niemeyer stated commercial properties within the corridor paid taxes into the TIF district and investments that help better the community and the net assessed value of the properties. Spencer agreed that those who contribute to the tax base funding should be the ones who receive funding opposed to those who do not contribute to the commercial TIF district. Covaciu used the Gard building as an example and Spencer mentioned Leo's. Niemeyer felt the item needed to be vetted and look at what authority the Commission has to differentiate and the policy could be reviewed. Austgen stated the statue is silent regarding differentiation. Vis confirmed for Austgen the inquiry had been made by the Fire Department including \$100,000 worth of building improvements. Eberly clarified that the program was self-sustaining and suggested language be updated to better clarify that tax-exempt entities were not supported. Vis and Austgen will work together in the next 30 days redline and prepare clarifications within the application. Vis also noted scriveners' errors regarding the exhibits A, B and C including the TIF Map and updating the other exhibits. Members were in agreement with the updates and Vis thanked Eberly and Moore for the update.

3. **Sustainability Plan:** Eberly stated the Plan is something the Council is working on with OW Krohn in regards to how they will be able to provide funding for projects including the Ecosystem, TIF Projects, etc. He indicated he had concluded meetings with Krohn and would be meeting with the Department heads in coming weeks. Niemeyer spoke of the proposed Sustainability Plan regarding treating the Town as a business and looking at revenues, funding and projects, including planning and fiscal needs assessment.

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PROJECT UPDATES

- 1. Clerk-Treasurer's Funds Report:** Sandberg reviewed the two reports presented including a year in review report, including the fall settlement of TIF receiving \$570,000, which allowed for a cash balance of \$1.1 million. She stated the second report included the primary known projects, small remaining projects, the façade grant program for 2021 and remaining 2020, the bond obligation and monthly debt transfers. Moore provided update and clarification for Covaciu on the remaining 2020 Façade Grant applicants. Niemeyer felt staff meeting would be beneficial in planning for the TIF district and investment in the community over the next 10 years. Vis requested Eberly to meet within the next 30 days with Department Heads to determine a list of capital needs within the RDC TIF District additionally a list of 1–10-year schedule for implementation. Eberly indicated a meeting had occurred and Krohn will be assisting with the revenue sources and how to implement the improvements into a timeline and felt a report could be provided in 20-45 days.
- 2. Hood–LUST Damages Update:** Austgen reported information had been attained from Hood's lawyer and more information would be available on or before February 1 regarding the reimbursement. He indicated they are still in dialogue.
- 3. Industrial Park Property Roadway:** Austgen reported to Vis there is no update at this time. Vis requested an Executive Session for February to discuss this item.
- 4. Façade Grants:** Vis noted Moore's update on the three remaining individuals.
- 5. Marketing of Explore Everyday Recipients:** Niemeyer indicated he had no update at this time.
- 6. Light Pole/Banners:** Eberly noted he did not have an update at this time.
- 7. Future Items - Lincoln Plaza Signage, High School Crosswalk, JMA-Gateway and Hill Stability:** Niemeyer stated that where a Commission normally would not put up a sign for a plaza, when one of the RDC's projects took the sign down, a proper replacement was not constructed. Vis suggested a development meeting after receiving Eberly's list, possibly in late March as a Work Session item, to move forward with the future items onto that list.

Vis extended a special thank you to Moore, noting she was leaving her role to take on a new position with the Police Department, for the last two years of her invaluable service to the Redevelopment Commission and others in the Town. Niemeyer recalled Moore's first meeting and how much she has grown in the last few years and looks forward to seeing what her contributions will be in her new role. Moore thanked the group and noted her enjoyment working with the group and it truly was one of her favorite meetings to attend.

Austgen thanked the commission for carrying the ball for the last 20 years for the community, willingness to serve, humble beginnings to now and his sincere thanks for their caring about the community. Austgen felt stewardship would fall into place with the right approach.

WRITTEN COMMUNICATION: Hanover School Corporation letter had been received noting Tracey Haskell as the liaison. Haskell noted she had just started two weeks ago, but big things were coming with the school projects and she looked forward to working with the RDC.

PUBLIC COMMENT: None noted.

ADJOURNMENT: 7:23 pm (Motion to adjourn by Eric Burnham/Seconded by Doug Spencer)

Next meeting: January 25, 2021 at 6:00 pm.

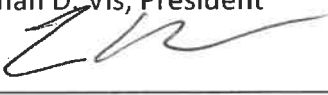
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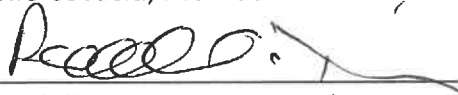
Nathan D. Vis, President



Eric Burnham, Vice-President



Doug Spencer, Secretary

Jolie Covaciu, Member


Randell C. Niemeyer, Member

ATTEST:


Sarah Moore, Recording Secretary

The Minutes of the Cedar Lake Redevelopment Public Meeting are transcribed pursuant to IC 5-14-1 5-4(b), which states:

- (b) As the meeting progresses, the following memoranda shall be kept:*
- (1) The date, time, and place of the meeting.*
 - (2) The members of the governing body recorded as either present or absent.*
 - (3) The general substance of all matters proposed, discussed, or decided.*
 - (4) A record of all votes taken, by individual members if there is a roll call.*
 - (5) Any additional information required under IC 5-1.5-2-2.5.*