

- I. **Call to Order:** The RDA meeting was called to order at 6:05 p.m. with **John Clark** convening.
- II. **Roll Call:** Present: Howard Cohen, Carmen Fernandez, Bill Joiner, John Clark, Gus Olympidis, and Lou Martinez. Harley Snyder was present via conference call. Six members were present constituting a quorum.
- III. **Approval of Minutes:** **John Clark** requested approval of minutes from the February 20, 2007 meeting. **B. Joiner** moved to accept the minutes with a second by **H. Cohen**. All were in favor and the February 20, 2007 meeting minutes were approved.
- IV. **Treasurer's Report:** The RDA currently has \$40,999,415 deposited among three financial institutions in interest-bearing accounts. The report reflected activity through February 28, 2007. All contributors have deposited their quarterly amount to the RDA. Direct project expenses for February 2007 were \$2,511,927 with \$2,426,727 paid to the Gary/Chicago International Airport. Professional services were \$500 and office expenses totaled \$15,847. Interest income totaled \$145,161. On a motion by B. Joiner and a second by L. Martinez, all were in favor and the Treasurer's Report was approved.
- V. **Report of Chair:**
 - a. **Comprehensive Strategic Development Plan Update**

The formal hearing at the statehouse to present the RDA's Comprehensive Strategic Plan was very successful. Bill Sheldrake from Policy Analytics LLC, Tim Sanders, and John Clark presented the plan to the State Budget Committee. The Director of Office Management and Budget (OMB) was present during the RDA's presentation. The State Budget Committee unanimously adopted the RDA's plan after an hour or so of very rigorous questioning. J. Clark expects that the Governor will confirm during his visit to Merrillville tomorrow that the Director of OMB has approved the plan.

There is a funding gap in the implementation of the West Lake Corridor extension. The West Lake Corridor extension remains a primary goal of the RDA. The Board will continue to discuss how to get the South Shore rail line extended, not whether or not to do it.
- VI. **Investment Proposals:**

A reissue of the RFQ for an investment consultant to examine certain liable investment options for the RDA will go out tomorrow with a deadline of April 27, 2007 for responses.

In the previous issue of the RFQ, there were a couple bids one of which did not relate to what was requested of the RDA. Subsequently, on the recommendation of several Board members, the Investment Working Group met with Tim Scannell of the Scannell Wealth Management Group on two occasions. Scannell had not submitted a letter outlining his qualifications after the first request. The Working Group will reissue the RFQ and allow Scannell and any other respondents to submit their qualifications. Following the receipt of letters from qualified consultants, the Working Group will meet to screen respondents and select a consultant to assist the RDA in their investment policy.
- VII. **Project Planning Report:**
 - a. **Regional Bus Authority:**

The RBA Working Group met with members of the Regional Bus Authority at 5:00 p.m. today. Dennis Rittenmeyer made a presentation with three major points. D. Rittenmeyer believes there is growing support for regional buses. The regional operator option as opposed to the universal operator option is the fastest, least expensive and provides the most comparable level of services to what they currently have. The RBA approved the regional operator option 16-2. The RBA will be meeting tomorrow to vote on funding options. While not able to know exactly how the vote will turn out, D. Rittenmeyer believes a food and beverage tax is a likely source. D. Rittenmeyer asked the RDA if they would support the Regional Operator plan with a food and beverage tax. The RDA had a very preliminary discussion about this because of the lack of time allotted and not all RDA Board members were present at the working group meeting for discussion. While the RBA chose the regional service option, their intention is to eventually go to the universal operator option over time which would be more costly. H. Snyder would like an identifiable timeframe for the RBA to move to the universal operator as a single authority.

It is the intention that all Board members be present at the next RBA working group meeting to discuss H. Snyder's issue and other issues as well. J. Clark acknowledged the very extensive discussion at the State Budget Committee hearing about the busing issue particularly led by Sen. Frank Mrvan. H. Snyder believes there should be a reduction in the duplication of services to try to centralize things.

b. South Shore:

NICTD signed a contract in February for 14 new Gallery Type Electric Multi-Unit commuter rail cars. They will be looking for funds from the RDA very quickly. The committed funding of the new rail cars is contingent upon the RDA's plan approval. NICTD is on their way to Indianapolis for a meeting on other funding mechanisms to further the West Lake Corridor opportunities.

c. Gary/Chicago Airport:

T. Sanders delivered the project report for the Airport. J. Clark and T. Sanders were on a conference call with C. Curry earlier today. They talked about railroad realignment surrounding the Airport that the RDA Board needs to hear about. Chris Curry will then speak at the RDA's next Board meeting after an Airport working group meeting that is yet to be scheduled. It makes more sense to have a working group meeting between now and the RDA's next Board meeting. C. Curry was advised by J. Clark to consult with the Airport working group before meeting with the entire RDA Board. J. Clark values the judgment of the Airport working group. The RDA's latest payment to the Airport was for \$2,558,004.58 and was given to C. Curry earlier tonight.

d. Marquette Plan:

▪ **South Shore Lakefront Redevelopment Plan – Gary/East Chicago Joint Application**

The RDA had a variety of meetings with the shoreline working group with approximately 5-6 RDA Board members attending. The meetings have gone very well and the RDA working group has been pleased with the kind of support that both cities and consultants have brought to the task. The stakeholders in the surrounding areas such as the casinos and steel companies have shown support. The consultants from Gary and East Chicago have met with Congressman Visclosky's staff. There has been very good cooperation to date. The working group felt it necessary to move the progress forward on this occasion. The amount of money that the RDA will make a motion for after some comments from the consultants will be for \$1.75 million for the first phase which is determining the feasibility through a study. This study will be centered around some of the major barriers/critical path issues such as the power line, environmental issues, and railroad relocation. At the completion of the first phase of work, it is possible that not all of these issues will be resolved. Environmental issues will not be resolved after Phase I is completed but the consultants will do all they can to gather the required information. This study will look at the lakefront use, scale of opportunity for certain mixed use and how best to integrate the proposed development with the existing Buffington Harbor. Another critical issue is how to configure the marina with the waterfront park assets to attract additional development. The working group asked the consultants to look at examining the financial resources and possibilities from public/private equity, federal, state and RDA tax incremental financing and is believed to be forthcoming. The RDA will deal with a new entity yet to be created during Phase I and all funding during Phase I will be made payable to that new entity. Prior to T. Sanders writing any checks, the 2 cities will have signed off on work performed. If any disagreements arise, the cities can have 5 days or so to settle the disagreement with the possibility of the RDA intervening. As the phases progress, the RDA will probably be looking at a different entity to disperse funds to. B. Joiner gave the various representatives present at tonight's meeting the opportunity to offer comments.

Jeff Heisler, project manager, has been working with the project since the application was submitted to the RDA. J. Heisler commended B. Joiner on his marvelous summary. J. Heisler reiterated the principles followed will be that of the Marquette Plan. Their goal is to see how the plan connects with the Gary Airport and other communities through rail and other transportations. In order to create the harbor, barriers have to be alleviated like utility and rail lines. A study has been created to see how much can actually be accomplished based on the regional economics.

Jim LeFrense, Vice President of Development for Majestic Star Casino and Barden Companies in Detroit, has been working on the mixed-use development in Gary for a couple of years now. As a large stakeholder in the area with 350 acres of waterfront property, it's always been a goal of theirs to meet the goals of the city and to align them with their own goals. They embrace the Marquette Greenway Plan and are fully committed to this project by being a full partner.

Christopher Meyer, Director of Planning for the city of Gary, thanks the Board for their consideration of this request. This is a long-range plan showing the viable resources on the lakefront. This can bring northwest Indiana into a different frame of mind.

John Artis added that what is being proposed fits the vision of George Pabey, Mayor of East Chicago.

B. Joiner moved to approve \$1.75 million for Phase I of the shoreline development with a second by G. Olympidis. All were in favor and the motion was approved. Bill Joiner was commended on his outstanding job chairing the working group meetings. Howard Cohen added that the big issues have already been address very clearly.

▪ **Portage Northshore Park Plan**

Mayor Doug Olson thanked the RDA Board for their support not only for the City of Portage but for all of northwest Indiana.

A.J. Monroe, Director of Community Planning and Development, City of Portage, has spent the last day and a half conducting a value analysis workshop with the National Park Service. This workshop confirmed and validated the numbers that the consultant team has put together. On March 8, an amended application for a Year Two increase was submitted to the RDA. The original request was for \$4.15 million. The new request is for \$6.375 million.

Greg Calpino with JJR presented some of the site work and additions to the Portage Park Plan.

Speros Valavanis, from Design Organization, explained the building stages of the Portage Park Pavilion. This building was changed to some degree since the RDA Board heard about the plan last year. The building incorporates meeting and classroom space, gallery space, warming kitchen and restrooms. The building itself is a strong architectural statement but a sustainable one. The twisted roof form is a metaphor for the waves crashing on the beach at the Dunes. The underside is made a cedar which is a metaphor for the hull of a boat. There is a fireplace which is hearth and home. This will serve as a centerpiece in the building to always know where hearth and home is. The cedar columns have been changed to recycled brick masonry. Indiana lime stone will also be used in this building. The roof will slow down the water transfer therefore keeping the attic cool which will reduce energy consumption. This building is at the silver level of LEED certification. To get to platinum, there would be a huge financial jump.

The new request for \$6.375 million from the RDA will not change and there are no hidden costs. The initial request of \$4.15 million was based on a conceptual design. Some costs actually came down and some things became more expensive. The size of the building increased about 25 percent. Areas have been enlarged that were previously enclosed so there is a larger gallery, classroom, canopy to name a few. A cover letter describing the increased request was provided to the Board and public at tonight's meeting.

Gus Olympidis moved to approve the funding request increase on the basis that this cost will not go up with a second by Lou Martinez.

H. Cohen asked how much of this increase was in the expansion, size and scope of the building. The building itself has increased about \$500,000. Base park construction which is everything except the building and river walk was \$2.1 million and is now \$3.1 million. Everything else went up by about a million. The new increase includes the LEED certification. It's very important that the RDA knows where the costs are going.

All were in favor of adopting the motion as presented and the motion was approved.

IX. Executive Director's Report:

Tim Sanders verified with Mayor Doug Olson that the Portage Pavilion would not be for Portage residents exclusively. It was agreed that this building is regional and open to all.

The RDA is in the middle of their annual audit. Joe Krnich from Joe Krnich and Associates, P.C., is conducting the audit and was present at tonight's meeting. Joe Krnich explained to the Board that the field work is complete. Mr. Krnich is in the process of finishing their report. He is requesting time with the Board to review the audit either in an executive session or with a working group sometime next week but before the next Board meeting. The office of the RDA will arrange the meeting.

There is a hearing in the Indiana House tomorrow on public transportation that a number of people from northwest Indiana will attend. T. Sanders has been asked to attend the hearing by Rep. Terri Austin. She is interested in bus transportation and new transportation options. Rep. Austin is excited about what the RDA is doing and is interested in ways in which the Indiana General Assembly might be helpful to the RDA.

There is a conference on public/private partnerships in Chicago on March 23, 2007. T. Sanders will attend this conference. Although the RDA does not have a direct way in which this organization is likely to contract with a public/private partnership, there might be some opportunities that would be of value to the RDA.

The Field Transportation Hearing board is meeting around the country. The RDA has been asked to participate but the final decision on the RDA's participation will be made in Washington. The hearing will be held next month in Chicago.

X. Public Comment: The public offered no comments for the RDA Board.

XI. Adjournment: Without further business, the meeting was adjourned.

The next RDA Board meeting is scheduled for April 24, 2007. Location and time TBD.

Respectfully submitted by Sherri Shabaz.
March 23, 2007.