

- I. **Call to Order:** The RDA meeting was called to order at 8:34 a.m. with Chairman Leigh Morris presiding.
- II. **Roll Call:** Present: Bill Joiner, Leigh Morris, Gus Olympidis, Lou Martinez, and Harley Snyder. Five members were present constituting a quorum. Howard Cohen arrived at 8:45.
- III. **Consent Agenda:**
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| a. <u>Minutes of the Meeting of 2/12/2008:</u> | Approved |
| b. <u>Minutes of the Meeting of 2/28/2008:</u> | Approved |
| c. <u>Minutes of the Meeting of 3/6/2008:</u>  | Approved |
| d. <u>Treasurer's Report:</u>                  | Approved |
| e. <u>Executive Directors Report:</u>          | Approved |
| f. <u>Chairman's Report:</u>                   | Approved |
| g. <u>Board Meeting Schedule:</u>              | Approved |
- IV. **Funding of Public Information and Communication Efforts:** Tim Sanders referenced a document from the last Working Group meeting. It dealt with the funding of public education for projects outlined in the RDA's strategic plan. This document required approval by the Board, and it suggested that the RDA limit funding for public education projects to the interest earned on the funds dispensed to the RDA by the State of Indiana. Chairman Morris states that this policy is recommended to the Board by the Working Group. B. Joiner moved to accept the recommendation with a second by L. Martinez. All were in favor of the motion and the motion was approved.
- V. **Project Status Review:**
- a. **Regional Bus Authority:** L. Martinez asked Ken Dallmeyer to give the RDA Board an update on their current ventures. K. Dallmeyer stated that the RBA has determined through marketing research, to use a branding named "Easy-go" to provide a customer service center through the Northwest Indiana Community Action Agency. The center will also act as a coordinated dispatch center to provide information on the location of busses, how they are being used, and improved customer information. G. Olympidis asked if the RBA was looking for a permanent funding source. K. Dallmeyer stated that the RBA has not been successful thus far, in part because the legislature has not considered funding their program. L. Martinez asked, will the "Easy-go" service be added to the Valparaiso Express Bus Service route. K. Dallmeyer stated not yet. Chairman Morris affirmed that the RDA will take on some responsibility to develop a consensus for the Northwest Indiana delegation in order to convince the General Assembly that mass transit is an important priority.
- b. **Lake Shore Redevelopment:**
- i. **Whiting Lakefront Project:** B. Joiner stated that the City of Whiting has requested \$2,568,225 in order to obtain a \$4.9 million federal match. These funds would comply with the Marquette Plan. Brian Lowry attended the Board meeting on behalf of the City of Whiting. H. Snyder asked if the funds listed in the letter are secured funds. B. Lowry stated that the money listed in the letter is firmly in place. Chairman Morris asks if the City of Whiting has established a timeline for the completion of the Lakefront project. B. Lowry stated that it can be referenced in the packet that has been distributed. B. Joiner stated that perhaps the consultant for the RDA can include the coordination between consultants for the projects we fund. B. Sheldrake affirmed that they have been in discussion with the communities to bring consultants together in order to ensure uniformity by community. Gus Olympidis asked what the entire project timeline looks like. B. Lowry stated that it would be difficult to place a completion date on the entire project, but phase 1 should be complete within the next 9 months. Chairman Morris affirmed the importance of coordination between communities for redevelopment opposed to disjointed pieces. H. Snyder stated that the Board may want to require future requests for projects such as these to ensure cooperation between community participants so that there is fluidity to the overall project. B. Joiner motioned to approve the City of Whiting's request for \$2,563,225 contingent upon our consultant submitting to the Board his assessment of the consulting groups working together with a second by L. Martinez. All were in favor of the motion and the motion was approved.
  - ii. **East Chicago Shoreline Park and Community Gateway:** B. Joiner stated that last time the Board met with the City of East Chicago, they requested a consolidation of resources regarding the \$1.2 million the RDA invested in the consulting work that is currently underway. One other

piece that B. Joiner asked the City of East Chicago to address was the demolition of the water filtration plant. Will Woodley, consultant for the City of East Chicago stated that the initial \$1.2 million was for the due diligence phase. The second application is a continuum of the first that allows for preliminary redevelopment of the Lakeshore. G. Olympidis asked where the numbers for the water filtration demolition are coming from. W. Woodley said that the first phase of the demolition could be bid on in April or May, and demolition could occur in June. The second part would include asbestos removal. B. Joiner stated that their concern is from the perspective of cash flow management, and he would suggest that the City of East Chicago submit an application as soon as possible for this project so that the Board knows whether the RDA can or should fund it. Chairman Morris affirmed that the collaboration between East Chicago and Gary are critical in this application. H. Snyder asked how regularly the consultants are meeting and is there a published meeting schedule. W. Woodley stated that right now they are creating the GIS database, and there have been meetings with consultants on these issues. B. Joiner stated that the Board has before them a request from the City of East Chicago for an additional \$2.7 million, but before we would look toward moving to an appropriation like this, regular coordination among communities as well as regular communication between our consultants is required. B. Joiner moved to approve the request from the City of East Chicago with the above stipulations with a second by L. Martinez. All were in favor of the motion and the motion was approved.

iii. **Portage Northside Park Development:** B. Joiner stated that the request is for an appropriation of funds for cost overruns exceeding 2% over the initial \$6.5 million appropriation. The Board has had a chance to see the request; however the City of Portage was not prepared to address this situation, but would be able to address this issue at the next Board meeting. All were in favor of the motion and the motion was approved.

c. **Expansion of the Gary/Chicago Airport:** G. Olympidis turned the discussion over to Chris Curry and asked him to give the Board an update on the Airport. Chris Curry stated that since his last appearance there have been a few additional highlights. In terms of the runway expansion, the Airport has purchased about 92% of the runway land, moved power lines, removed a storage tank at the end of the runway, and the Airport is currently working with the City of Gary and NIPSCO to create underground ducts beneath Chicago Avenue which is currently on schedule. As far as the railroad negotiations, the Airport has the full Washington delegation involved voicing their opposition to the railroad transfer until they can get the joint use agreement solved. The Airport is working with the city to mitigate disturbances that will be caused by the runway extension. Additionally, Skybus has decided to reduce the number of flights to and from Gary as of April 15, 2008 due to increase of oil prices. Viva Airbus has filed an application to the department of transportation to use Gary as their Chicago Hub. Gary/Chicago Airport is in competition with Rockford, but C. Curry believes that if they can get a customs facility into Gary they can get the airline to invest. Lastly, the Airport has recently hired a marketing director to help advertise the Airport. Harley Snyder asked if the Airport has identified a location for a temporary customs arrangement while they look into building a permanent facility. Chris Curry stated that this is one of the issues he identified in his letter to customs, but they said that they would like their own facility to operate out of. Gus Olympidis moved to accept the Airport's application for the initial 40% for their current project so that they can receive the additional 60% federal match and submit it for further consideration to the Airport Working Group with a second by Howard Cohen. All were in favor of the motion and the motion was approved.

d. **Extension of South Shore Commuter Service:** T. Sanders stated that Representative Dobis led the charge to obtain a funding mechanism for the South Shore extension to Valparaiso and Lowell. Senator Kenley decided to refer the matter to a summer study committee to discuss the details of this appropriation, and the RDA will be asked to be a part of this ongoing issue. H. Snyder states that it seems the reason why this did not go forward is because of a lack of unanimity of the Northwest Indiana delegation. T. Sanders believes that was part of the issue, but additionally there has to be a local funding component in addition to the money contributed by the RDA.

B. Joiner asked to go back to amend the motion for the City of East Chicago. He amended the dollar figure to \$3.9 million for this particular request with the same conditions placed on the previous motion. He stated that this second \$1.2 million has nothing to do with the initial \$1.2 million with a second by G. Olympidis. All were in favor of the amended motion and the motion was approved.

**VI. Other Business:**

- a. **Compliance Consultant Update:** Tammi Davis spoke on behalf on the Compliance Consultant team and stated that back in July of 2007, the Board put out an RFP for a compliance consultant. Her team responded to the RFP, and then was selected to become the RDA's compliance consultants. The enabling statute for the RDA requires a 15 and 5 provision. She has not yet heard any questions from the Board regarding this provision. In her line of work she ensures that these types of provisions are followed to the letter of the law. The Board will be held accountable by the General Assembly or the sponsored communities, so it is their job to ensure compliance. Chairman Morris states that action has already been taken by this Board; this is really a matter of formality to introduce you to the Board.
- b. **Little Calumet River Basin Project:** T. Sanders stated that the RDA will deposit funds into an escrow account to be used solely for construction and land acquisition purposes. The money cannot be used for administration fees or any other fees. Chairman Morris asks if there will be another request from that group. T. Sanders affirmed that yes but they have not set a number for that yet. B. Joiner requested the projected time for completion of the project. T. Sanders stated that the original time was 350 days from the beginning of construction, but the construction company has a long history of being able to complete projects before that. However, that does not mean that they will complete the project during this construction season.
- c. **Retreat Planning:** Chairman Morris stated that the Board retreat will take place on April 29<sup>th</sup> with a theme of coordination and effectiveness. The Board will have a meeting facilitator from the University of Wisconsin, Esther Letven.
- d. **Other:** T. Sanders stated that in the Board packet there is an article called "The Long Way Home," which describes an interesting scenario of individuals commuting from the city to jobs in the suburbs. Also, on March 26, 2008 there will be a reception for Nate Feltman, the Indiana Secretary of Commerce at the visitor's bureau if any Board members are interested. On March 31, 2008 there will be a shovel ready program at the forum and on June 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> there is a seminar in Chicago on Public/Private partnerships. Also, on April 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> there will be a conference in Indianapolis held by Purdue University on economic development.

**VII. Public Comment:** There was no public comment.

**VIII. Adjournment:** Without further business the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted by Mark Schocke on 4/3/08