

- I. **Call to Order:** The RDA meeting was called to order at 1:30 p.m. CST/ 2:30 p.m. EST with Chairman Leigh Morris presiding.
- II. **Roll Call:** Present: Carmen Fernandez, Howard Cohen, Lou Martinez, Leigh Morris, Gus Olympidis and Bill Joiner. Six members were present constituting a quorum.
- III. **Recognition and Honoring of John Clark:** G. Olympidis presented John Clark with an award for his remarkable services as Chairman of the RDA Board.
- IV. **Consent Agenda:**
- a. **Minutes of the Meeting of 11/27/2007:** Approved
 - b. **Minutes of the Meeting of 1/10/2008:** Approved
 - c. **Treasurer's Report:** Approved; H. Cohen reports that Hammond and East Chicago have not paid their installment due January 31, 2008. The RDA is in continued contact with the two cities and is working on receiving prompt payment.
 - d. **Executive Directors Report:** There was no report from the Executive Director.
- V. **Election of Officers:** L. Martinez Chairman of the Nominating Committee moved to accept the following slate of officers: Leigh Morris as Chairman, G. Olympidis as Vice Chairman and H. Cohen as Treasurer. C. Fernandez seconded the motion, all were in favor and the motion was approved.
- VI. **Chairman's Report/Review of Work Plan:** Chairman Leigh Morris reported on the upcoming activities of the RDA.
- VII. **Project Status Review:**
- a. **Regional Bus Authority:** L. Martinez moved to accept the RBA federal designation endorsement letter from the RDA to the Governor. B. Joiner seconded the motion, all were in favor and the endorsement letter was approved.
 - b. **Lake Shore Redevelopment:** B. Joiner indicated that the \$600,000 request from East Chicago has not been approved and will have to come back to the RDA Board for approval as a separate item.
 - c. **Expansion of the Gary/Chicago Airport:** G. Olympidis reports that the Airport Working Group has not met for some time; as a result there is no report. G. Olympidis requested that Patrick Lyp, attorney for the Gary/Chicago Airport, speak on the behalf of the Airport. P. Lyp updated the RDA Board on their plans for rail relocation. A letter from Chris Curry to S.T.B. was distributed to the Board.
 - d. **Extension of South Shore Commuter Service:** L. Morris indicated that there was an important hearing on House Bill 1020 before the Senate Tax and Fiscal Policy Committee. L. Morris said that the Committee provided an opportunity for people both pro and con to speak on this bill. This House Bill would provide \$350 million in funding from State sales tax. The other \$150 million was assumed to come from the RDA. This has not been formally acted upon by the Board but it is in the RDA's planning document. The other \$500 million would come from Federal funding.
- VIII. **Other Business:**
- a. **Little Calumet River Basin Project:** According to T. Sanders, last fall the RDA received a letter from Governor Daniels and Congressman Visclosky asking the RDA to grant a loan for the purpose of completing the Little Calumet River Basin project. It would remove a large number of homes and businesses from the flood plan. T. Sanders asked Bill Sheldrake and the Policy Analytics team to review this project. T. Sanders believes that \$6 million will not cover the cost of the construction. It may require additional funding, perhaps as much as a million additional dollars. This proposal has been reviewed by the Working Group, and in addition Senator Mrvan has attended several RDA Board meetings in support of this project. Senator Mrvan has indicated that he would be of assistance in crafting the legislation that would pay back the RDA. T. Sanders urged the Board to

approve the request pending the request for further funding in the future. D. Gardner affirms that \$6 million will not complete the project due to cost increases. It is their intention to come back for the additional funding in a separate application. H. Cohen moves to accept the request for \$6 million as a loan with a second by L. Martinez. B. Joiner moved to amend the motion to extend that dollar amount up to, but not to exceed \$7 million. In addition, he asked for a revised letter of support of this request from Governor Daniels and Congressman Visclosky, with a second by G. Olympidis. After discussion B. Joiner asked to withdraw his amendment. All were in favor of the original motion and the motion was approved. It was decided that any cost over the approved \$6 million will be handled in a separate application at a later date.

- b. ***Cost Overrun Policy/Portage Lakeshore Park:*** B. Joiner offered a motion to set a policy not to exceed 2% of the original funding when addressing cost overruns. H. Cohen seconded the motion. H. Cohen questioned why this is a practical approach. T. Sanders explained that anything insignificant shouldn't require a second application. H. Cohen reaffirms the differences: the 2% cap would be treated as a memorandum, whereas anything over the 2% would require a separate application. All were in favor of the motion and the motion was approved.

Following that discussion, Mayor Olga Velasquez of Portage and former Mayor Doug Olson of Portage asked the RDA to consider future funding of the Portage Northshore Park. Several important amenities were eliminated from the plans due to lack of funds. They are requesting an additional \$600,000 for the purpose of completing the Riverwalk Path and Boardwalk, South Parking Lot, South Viewing Node and the Fishing Pier. G. Olympidis offered a motion to the City of Portage requesting that they submit an application that includes all of the amenities requested in the original application. This would include the South Riverwalk Access Stair and the Water-Based Riverwalk. The new request will total 2.175 million dollars. All were in favor of the motion and the motion carries.

- c. ***Strategic Plan Update:*** T. Sanders will be asking for an update of the RDA's strategic plan due to changes in funding. This is with regards to the South Shore and the Gary Airport. At some point the State Budget Agency will be expecting updates to reflect new realities. L. Morris suggests that the Board may expect that from Policy Analytics mid year.

- d. ***Compliance Consultant Update:*** The RDA sent out an RFQ some time ago. T. Sanders asked the team of PALLC consultants to review the responses, and they interviewed two candidates. T. Sanders recommendation is to hire Compliance Consultants of Gary Indiana, headed by Tami Davis at \$20,000 a year. G. Olympidis asked if the retaining of a compliance consultant is necessary to keep compliance. T. Sanders believes that it is necessary and the RDA has money allocated for this purpose. L. Martinez believes the RDA has to take this extra step, and make sure that the RDA is in full compliance. H. Cohen believes that the Board agreed on keeping a lean staff and hiring consultants for those things that the Board/staff can not do themselves. L. Martinez offered a motion to accept Compliance Consultants at \$20,000 a year with a second from H. Cohen. G. Olympidis offers an amendment to the motion that in future proposals to the RDA Board for funding, the recipient takes financial responsibility in reimbursing the RDA for a portion of our outlay for providing this service. This should also be in addition to the grant. C. Fernandez seconded the motion. After discussion the vote on the amended motion was as follows:

Those in favor: G. Olympidis.

Those opposed: C. Fernandez, H. Cohen, L. Martinez, L. Morris, and B. Joiner.

The amendment to the original motion failed.

After discussion the vote on the original motion was as follows:

Those in favor: H. Cohen, L. Martinez, L. Morris, and B. Joiner

Those opposed: C. Fernandez and G. Olympidis

The original motion failed. The Board requested additional information on this issue and it will be discussed at a future RDA meeting.

- e. ***Media Consultant Discussion and Marketing Planning:*** T. Sanders believes that the RDA should forgo this in the short term and work with the Chairman's recommendations in attachment M of the meeting packet.
 - f. ***Working Group Scheduling:*** L. Morris requests that the Board hold on to the Working Group schedule. It will be discussed at the next Board meeting.
 - g. ***Meeting Schedule for the Board of Directors:*** T. Sanders offers for Board acceptance a schedule of RDA Board meetings and Working Group meetings. L. Martinez was concerned for every other month Board meetings. He feels more comfortable, with the RDA's busy agenda, to schedule month to month Board meetings. L. Morris will revise the schedule and the Board meetings will occur on a month-to-month basis. G. Olympidis believes that the Working Group meetings should be scheduled by the Working Group Chair. The staff should facilitate staff support whenever and however. Working Groups can not be ritualized bringing some projects to a halt. L. Morris agrees to pursue with the remainder of the February schedule, but it will be revised at the Thursday, February 28, 2008 Working Group meeting.
 - h. ***Other:*** John Swanson speaks on behalf of the Marquette plan.
- IX. **Public Comment:** No public comment.
- X. **Adjournment:** Without further business, the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted by Jillian Huber on February 19, 2008