

TOWN OF PORTER
Redevelopment Commission
303 Franklin Street
September 24, 2024

Meeting was called to order at 6:00 p.m.

Pledge of Allegiance

Present: Vice President William Lopez, Laura Madigan, Russ Erwin, and Jamie Hogan, arriving at 6:06 p.m.

Absent: Allison Hultman and Beth Mehling

Also Present: Attorney Laura Frost, Director of Development Michael Barry, Clerk Treasurer Corinne Peffers, and Secretary Karen Spanier

Approval of Minutes

Laura Madigan made the motion to approve the May 28, 2024 meeting minutes, with Russ Erwin making the second.

Motion carried 3-0.

Consideration of Claims

Motion to approve the claims of May, June, July, August, and September was made by Laura Madigan, Russ Erwin made the second.

Motion carried 3-0.

Audience Participation

None

Reports

Building Commissioner/Director of Development

Michael Barry states Mnoke Prairie Trail Wetland study is completed. The Trail was revised to skirt around the Wetland on Beam Street to save money. He states Plant study is completed and Environmental study is almost done. He has a meeting with the new National Park Superintendent on October 28th. The most important thing is to keep the trail projects moving.

Michael Barry announced the Porter County bridge/trail project is on track and completion dated should be October 25, 2024.

Michael Barry INDOT I94 bridge work moved to 2025-26 includes our trail over 94 bridge. They copied the same design as Porter County Bridge in project. We would have to pay for the construction cost somewhere around a million dollars. This would take trail up to Orchard, then north on Waverly get to the 4 way stop cross street to east side of road, so trail does not go through the liquor store parking lot. Then we are on east to a vacant lot, that we should look into purchasing. We could use as a trail head with something nice there. Now to the south side of water park property to Cloverleaf in front of the houses, north to South Bailey Dr. INDOT did review our crossing and said an at-grade crossing would be fine, millions of dollars saved.

Need to discuss what to do with South Bailey Rd., possibly a one way road or cut out road all together and use for trail. We have some RDA money still left to use, and still have a lot of missing pieces to fill. Bill Lopez has concerned with people stopping in crosswalk, as INDOT wants a perpendicular crossing. Michael Barry will send a sketch to all members.

Attorney Report
None

Old Business

None

New Business

Town Signage Project

Michael Barry mentions the council put together a branding committee (Jim Burge, Brian Bugajski, Kelly Karriman, Rob Mallinger, and Michael Barry) to come up with a signage project for the town to encourage more tourism. Brian Bugajski compiled signage quotes and locations. Now they are looking at a way to finance it. They have changed the sign size at US 12 & Oakhill Rd.

Phase 1 signage is to show tourist where the Town of Porter is. Put bigger signs up and attract people here. He has talked to Trailer Transit and Anderson Trucking and we can put a sign on their property. The rest are INDOT and he is going to talk to them. It seems like a good fit for the RDC to pay for Phase 1. We could do some of the small signs in house but he would prefer to have the professionals do them. Phase 1 consists of 10 signs all together- 4 large high density eruothan and 6 medium signs. Laura Madigan like the branding sign project overall and thinks phase 1 was well prioritized for the big roads coming and going out of town. She thinks this is an appropriate item for the RDC to take on, thanks everyone for the hard work.

Russ Erwin made a motion to approve the Phase 1 signage project, not to exceed \$36,000.00.

Jamie Hogan made the second.

Motion carried 4-0.

Budget Discussion

William Lopez read an email from Allison Hultman on the 2025 Budget projects that the RDC could possibly cover.

1. Trail improvements-Marquette Trail and Dunes Kankakee Trail.
2. RDC general improvements \$50,000 - \$40,000 signage that won't be paid until 2025 and \$10,000 place holder for things that may arise.
3. Fire Department support of \$40,000 to pay a portion of salaries.
4. Exterior improvement grant \$25,000. The Duneland Chamber Façade grant has changed to improvement Grants.

She also has a list of other options.

Laura Madigan mentions it's a 10 million dollar list with a 10 dollar budget. Michael Barry comments that Corinne sent out a budget template of things to pay that should be of help.

William Lopez states he thinks that a ped-way over railroad tracks connecting Porter and Chesterton is a good idea.

Michael Barry mentions there is a new grant he is looking into for railroad safety possible use for crossing. He also mentions we have \$520,000 for the Mnoke Prairie Trail and DK trail extension we have committed \$1,000,000 for INDOT not sure how much the rest will be. He doesn't know what it will be yet. It would not affect south side of water park property. Beyond those things he was just throwing ideas out there for RDC.

He mentions the Marquardt Sewer project, and that he is pretty sure he is getting that funded by another source. And he has one million coming from the Ready Grant.

He also mentions that he is trying to recoup the money from Johnson Inn we have spent, said they are

past the emotional point now they are losing money not selling.

Barry noted we should be able to get more funding for sewer at Porter Beach, and suggests looking at more Economic Ideas.

Laura Madigan agrees with William Lopez on a safe crossing to YMCA.

Laura Madigan is considering budget options, and she thinks minimal spending in 2025, with priority safety crossings in 2026.

Laura Madigan asks Michael Barry about Downtown Master Plan and if there is a lot to consider. He replied, sidewalk and parking.

Commission Comments

William Lopez comments on how nice the new Downtown Street Lights look and a big improvement.

Adjournment

Laura Madigan made the motion to adjourn.

Meeting Adjourned at 6:45 p.m.

Approved this 22nd day of October, 2024

TOWN OF PORTER REDEVELOPMENT COMMISSION

William Lopez, Vice President

Russ Erwin, Secretary

Laura Madigan, Member

Jamie Hogan, Member

ATTEST: Karen Spanier, Recording Secretary