

LA JUNTA URBAN RENEWAL AUTHORITY

CALL TO ORDER: The La Junta Urban Renewal Authority Board of Commissioners held a regular meeting on Thursday, April 13, 2017 at 12:00 noon in the Power Board Room. The meeting was called to order by Chairperson Bennett.

Board Members Present

Absent

Nancy Bennett
Ed Stafford
Lynn Horner
Joe Ayala
Karen Kelley
Mack Burtis

Susie Sarlo
George Larsen
Rebecca Goodwin

Also present:

Rick Klein, Executive Director/City Manager
Bill Jackson, Assistant Director/Assistant City Manager
Ryan Stevens, Economic Development Director
Edward Vela, Council Member
Gary Cranson, ARPA Representative
Midge Cranson, La Junta
Angela Ayala, La Junta
Bette McFarren, Tribune Democrat

CITIZENS COMMENTS:

Angela Ayala, La Junta Chamber of Commerce, for the last three years, I have been trying to get the Chamber to purchase new pole banners for along the highway and in town. There are 88 in total. So I am approaching Urban Renewal to see if you would be interested in sharing the cost of one set of banners with the Chamber of Commerce. The Chamber has not yet approved it. I wanted to see if there was any interest before I proposed this project to them. The President and I spoke briefly about this and he gave me permission to come here today. I have several bids to share with you. The total cost of the project is \$4370 which would make Urban Renewal's contribution \$2185. These banners come with a three year warranty. This is something I would love to have done by the summer.

MOTION TO APPROVE URBAN RENEWAL PAYING \$2185 TOWARD THE COST OF POLE BANNERS AND MOVE FORWARD ON THE FIRST SET: Horner

SECOND: Ed Stafford

DISCUSSION: There are three sets of 88, so they will have to come back for the next go around.

VOTE: The motion carried unanimously.

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MINUTES: March 9, 2017 Regular Meeting.

A motion was made by Lynn Horner, seconded by Joe Ayala, that the minutes of the March 9, 2017 regular meeting be approved as presented. The motion carried unanimously.

FINANCIAL STATEMENTS: March 2017

A motion was made by Joe Ayala, seconded by Lynn Horner, that the financial statements for March 2017 be approved as presented. The motion carried unanimously.

OLD BUSINESS:

T.O.'s Building: Lynn Horner received a message from Ron that he does have someone who is interested in working with him on the T.O.'s building. They are hoping that in this next month to maybe get things finalized and hoping to move forward. They'll need to pay the back taxes and have the title changed over.

Plaza Building: The grant application has been submitted. We should know something by the 1st of June. (Ed Vela has noticed a lot of broken windows.) Bill Jackson said the windows have been boarded up below because the pigeons keep breaking them to get into the building.

The Book Stop: Bill Jackson said that in your packets, there is a demo bid and the asbestos bid for the Book Stop. The low bidder on the demolition was for \$31,000 and a low bidder for the asbestos abatement for \$32,000. That brings the total to \$63,000 for the project. We have done a lot of jobs with Dirt-n-Demo and Advanced Remediation. They are very reputable companies. These would be our recommendations to Urban Renewal.

Lynn Horner: Last year at a meeting, we had a guy that was saying there might be funding available for asbestos removal projects.

Rick Klein: Yes, Mark Walker. He was our liason for taking out the gas tanks at 10th and San Juan. Now Mark has retired and moved on to Kansas State. Mark and his old boss Mark Rudolph found this program and reached out to us to see if we would be part of a pilot program. So, we've been talking through DOLA, trying to get access up to \$175,000 for asbestos removal. Some issues we're working through is having to get a Phase 1 Environmental Study and then we have to turn those lots over for re-development. Every community has asbestos problems. The State is looking into programs to help.

Lynn Horner: Timeline wise, do you think this would be an option for this project?

Rick Klein: No, he was looking more into September. It will help us on some of the one's we're working on in town.

Mack Burtis: I apologize Madam Chairman for not being totally up to speed, but I do not understand what involvement the Urban Renewal Authority proposes for the Book Stop. I assumed it's proposed we are going to pay for asbestos and demolish. But where does it go from there? What's the plan? I haven't seen one.

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Rick Klein: My suggestion would be that we bring back the plan for the parking lot and try to partner up with the Chestnut Apartments to provide off-street parking for that facility. Also, look at the Credit Union to see if they would be a potential partner.

Lynn Horner: That would be my thought also, to bring back the plans we did four or five years ago on a parking lot and doing some other things there. If we ever want to get something positive happening with the Chestnut, we've got to have off-street parking. This might be the way of creating an incentive for them to get moving on doing something with that building.

Mack Burtis: This is not the only blight on the block in La Junta Colorado. So why did we pick this one? What is the total plan, at least an outline. And if you're talking about involving other private outfits; have they even been brought into the discussion? It seems to me that this is an incomplete plan to spend money on.

Ryan Stevens: I have had been in contact with the owners of the Chestnut, there is some progress happening.

Mack Burtis: What bothers me, is we tend to go off on these little excursions and if you look at the literature on Urban Renewal Authorities, it talks about a plan for a project. This would be something in writing so everyone can see what's going on. You can amend plans, but we don't seem to ever get to that stage. All we do is spend money.

Ryan Stevens: My recommendation, if you want to see investment in the Chestnut Apartments, it going to be cleaning up some of the blight, especially next door.

Lynn Horner: Let's work on a plan and put something together.

Mack Burtis: It sounds like Ryan has the start of one, but collectively. If someone stopped me on the street and asked me what are our plans for the 300 block of Santa Fe? I would have to say I don't know. I think before Urban Renewal spends taxpayer's money, it ought to have a more solid plan to show people.

Bill Jackson: One of the reasons we are here discussing this is because Mrs. Cranson was served with a letter to abate that property. She had a timeline. So she came and asked Urban Renewal if they would take possession of the building and the property. So Urban Renewal wanted to know what it would cost to demo and abate the property. She will have to be given a letter of extension.

Mack Burtis: I assume the letter you're talking about came from the City. So we have the City telling people to do something that they don't have the money for, the City won't provide the money for, but look who has money in the bank. I'm sorry but that's the way it looks to me.

Chairperson Bennett: But we have to do something. We can't just let things continue to deteriorate.

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Mack Burtis: I'm not arguing that point. I just want some sort of a plan that I can see the end product that we're going for.

Lynn Horner: Then let's work on a plan.

Rick Klein: Do you want me to pull back that previous plan so we have something to start with?

Lynn Horner: Yes, we can use that as a starting point. I appreciate your input Mack. It would be best if we had some idea of how we want to move forward.

Mack Burtis: I'll add, that as far as I'm concerned, that's the problem with the Plaza Building. Again, there's no overall plan for that building. We're talking about piece mill type of things. That's how we got into the Plaza Building. Somebody came in with this wonderful idea of a Highway 50 museum and with nothing more than that, we forked out \$22,000. I'll just remind you all, for the record, that we're coming up on the 10th anniversary of purchasing that building. In that almost ten years, there has not been anything approaching a solid plan for what to do with it.

Ed Stafford: This seems to be old history and plans are in the works. I'd like to find out if the Cranson's gift to the City of their building is contingent on our spending the money to help them out of this situation.

Lynn Horner: If we demo it and remove the asbestos.

Ed Stafford: Do we want it? Are we willing to pay for it?

Mack Burtis: The question is, Is that Urban Renewal's business to take possession of property that nobody wants?

Rick Klein: Removal of blight.

Chairperson Bennett: There is a plan to make it so that the apartment house can be rehabbed and there would be parking for it.

Mack Burtis: Show me the plan.

Chairperson Bennett: We've discussed this many, many times.

Mack Burtis: I'm sorry, when I say plan, I'm talking about something that anybody in the community can look at and see what we're doing. So, I go back to the Urban Renewal literature, there's a very specific section on what's contained in an Urban Renewal plan.

Chairperson Bennett: I felt like our discussion constituted a plan. But, I do realize it isn't drawn out.

Mack Burtis: I disagree with you.

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Chairperson Bennett: Plans are made before work is started. You still discuss; you have a plan. But it's still subject to change at that point.

Rick Klein: Why don't we have a discussion about whether the re-development into a parking lot is the best use of the property for the 3rd to 4th on Santa Fe and would it benefit the public and the businesses around there? Does that have virtue?

Mack Burtis: A lot of people, to answer that question, would want to know what it's going to cost. One could argue that when they get to asking that question, there ought to be some kind of public hearing on that. Is this group of nine unelected people to make that kind of decision?

Rick Klein: We're talking this stuff to death. It's time for that building to go. We could even make a dirt parking lot until we have the funds.

Ed Stafford: That would satisfy the business owners across the street to get some of those cars out from in front of their businesses.

Chairperson Bennett: You can actually see the need for a parking lot right there.

Mack Burtis: We need to involve the three private owners on that block. Are they willing to participate? To get the total cost of these things you've got to involve them.

Chairperson Bennett: It looks to me that it enhances both businesses.

After continued discussion, Lynn Horner recommended coming back to the next meeting with more concrete information to make a decision, or perhaps call a Special Meeting.

Sign Shop Progress Report: Taylor did a great job detailing items in her report. She is asking to make the rest of the funds available. Bill and Rick feel that Taylor has done what she said she would do and she's done a great job.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT:

Hampton Inn: We have been going back and forth with Paul Benedette our attorney and Mike Anderson from Anderson Analytics. Mike Anderson did get with the Otero County Assessor, they have reviewed what and how the assessor comes up with valuations. Because of the change of laws, Urban Renewal may owe additional monies.

Rick Klein informed Urban Renewal that Ryan Stevens has accepted another job. I wish him all the best in the world. His last day will be May 26. We will be working on a transition for me to take over some of his projects, like the Nursing Home. He also has some manufacture grants out there. Bill and I will step up to see what we can do.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 1:05 p.m.