

The La Junta Urban Renewal Authority Board of Commissioners held a regular meeting on Thursday, April 8, 2010 at 12:00 noon at Thyme Square. Chairman Lynn Horner called the meeting to order.

Board Members Present

Lynn Horner
Nancy Bennett
Mack Burtis
Rebecca Goodwin
Roger Roath
Don Rizzuto
Sandra Leonard

Absent

Karen Kelley
Gordon Racine

Also present: Rick Klein, Executive Director/City Manager
Bill Jackson, Assistant Director
Oclires Lovato, Executive Secretary
Alisa Gossman-Steeves, Tribune Democrat
Mike Steeves
Jerre Church
Keith Goodwin, County Commissioner
Lance Benninghoff, County Commissioners
Midge Cranson

MINUTES: March 11, 2010

MOTION: Mack Burtis made a motion that the minutes of the March 11, 2010 regular meeting be approved as presented. Seconded by Nancy Bennett and carried.

FINANCIALS: March 2010

MOTION: Don Rizzuto made a motion that the financial statements for March 2010 be approved as presented. Seconded by Roger Roath and carried.

OLD BUSINESS

PLAZA BUILDING STRUCTURAL ASSESSMENT

Chairman Horner: I talked to Melanie and told her to continue on with the next component which would be the cost assessment to rehab the building. She was hoping within the next month or so she could get back to us with some costs. For those of you that looked at the assessment are there any questions or issues that you want me to address to them. There is time to do that if anybody has a concern about anything.

Rebecca Goodwin: The structural engineers will do a full review of the foundation, wood condition, termite issues, electric issues and ally all those things to see what needs to be done and the cost for each of these steps. Then they will have a full plan or idea to see if this is feasible or not.

Chairman Horner: Hopefully by next month or so we can get those costs and a final overview and we can sit down and determine how we want to proceed.

Don Rizzuto: One thing before we proceed with any kind of project there should be a plan for this building. It needs to be cost effective. In my opinion you just don't save the building for the sake of saving the building. It has to pay for itself. There is some concern about spending tax dollars to do this. I am not in favor of that. I would like to see a use for the building and a cost effective plan.

Sandra Leonard: Do you know whether or not Ron is moving forward on a museum at all?

Don Rizzuto: According to Ron it was totally our project.

Rebecca Goodwin: Because Otero Museum had concerns with having another museum.

Sandra Leonard: I didn't realize that was off the table.

Chairman Horner: Ron told us that Otero Museum felt pretty uncomfortable with the idea of another museum and would rather incorporate whatever they had into their museum instead of spending funds for another museum. We will need a couple of work sessions to figure out what our options of usage could be and I would like to proceed with involvement of other groups for using that facility and then determine where we start.

Don Rizzuto: If we get other groups involved it should be done contractually. Until the economy turns around it will be more and more difficult to get projects and maintenance done. I am not in favor of taking on another lot that won't support itself. I don't want to put it on the taxpayer's back. There has to be a way to pay for it.

SIDEWALK STAMP PROJECT

Don Rizzuto: I had discussion with Lynn and Rick about our artist. There was a miscommunication on what we wanted. I not only scanned by e-mail to him, I also sent them by mail and you saw the drawings he brought back which is not what we want. When he was in La Junta and presented that color stuff to me I wondered how we were going to do the stamp. He said if there is no color he doesn't want to do it. We still have a little bit of time to go back and find somebody else to do the sketch. It doesn't have to be a professional artist. We will find a way to get it done.

Rebecca Goodwin: We have some fine artists here.

Don Rizzuto: The original idea was to use the brands, Santa Fe logo, snake, tiger paw, and dinosaur footprint. These are all good ideas if we could get simplified ideas of those. Rick came up with an idea of taking down the trees downtown which are overgrown or roots are ruining the sidewalk and put the stamps in place of the trees.

Rebecca Goodwin: Should consult with the State Forester. They have some ideas on that and some trees are designed for streetscape and they also know what kind of trees grow in this area.

Sandra Leonard: Replacing some is a good idea but I don't think we should take out every tree because I have people tell me that they like the trees. The idea of taking them out just because they were the wrong tree bothers me. We don't have to replace every single one.

Rebecca Goodwin: Instead of five maybe we could have three on a block. The State Forester can give us some guidance on some tree that is not going to have to be replaced again later.

Rick Klein: The sidewalk stamp project is totally on Urban Renewal. That gives us a chance to work with another artist.

Rebecca Goodwin: Once we get the design, how long will it take to get the stamp made?

Sandra Leonard: I can't remember what the stamp lady said. For some reason I think that it wasn't a tremendously long time but I can't recall.

Don Rizzuto: The one mentioned by Felix is in Albuquerque who thought it could be done pretty quickly but now we have lost that contact.

Sandra Leonard: The one I talked to was in Colorado

Don Rizzuto: If they are in Colorado and we can get some new art work done quickly I would be happy to use them.

Sandra Leonard: I gave you all the information

Don Rizzuto: I have the envelope in my office and will look at it.

Chairman Horner: I suggested to Rick that when we do the sidewalk project if there was a possibility to put a slab of metal or plywood where we would like to put the stamps if we can't get them done and to be able to incorporate them at a later time.

Don Rizzuto: I don't think there is anything wrong with that

ENTRANCE SIGNS

Chairman Horner: I did call Aaron. He plans to be down here the week of April 20-21 and is hoping if the weather is like what we have been having he will have a chance to do both signs and put that dye material on. Then we can move forward to completing the signs. Ron Hall has the lettering ready to go once the blue color is put on.

Don Rizzuto: Is the plan for lighting in place?

Rick Klein: Yes

OTHER

Rick Klein: I talked to Joe Herbert. He has ordered the windows and is ready to strip out frames and put them up. Within the next month it should have new windows throughout. He is also looking for somebody that does asbestos inspections. He wants to make it look like he is doing something.

NEW BUSINESS

THE BOOK STOP

Chairman Horner: We have a letter from Midge Cranson who is interested in selling The Book Stop property to Urban Renewal. Do we have any interest in buying this building?

Rick Klein: My suggestion would be let's get somebody to check out the siding to see if there might be asbestos. The only reason I say that is on the last demolition we did on 8th Street cost us \$30,000 to get rid of the stucco. That is the big item. Once we finish our current CDBG projects with the Lewis Railroad and the sidewalk project then the State can see we have completed a couple of projects. Then we can go back to request funds for a demolition project. We could review some of those houses we talked about before and include those with the Book Stop to make a bigger project to get rid of some blight.

Don Rizzuto: I think we would have a better chance of getting something like that approved if there are several structures involved rather than just one.

Rick Klein: If it is just the one they would say 'can't you guys do that' but if we did a bigger project then the \$40,000 would be our match for a CDBG project.

Sandra Leonard: Don't we already have \$30,000 with Joe Herbert in the same block.

Rick Klein: No because that is not demolition.

Rebecca Goodwin: On the 5th Street house, is the Housing Authority interested?

Rick Klein: Yes

Rebecca Goodwin: We can demolish buildings but then what do we do with the lots? Would there be a use for that lot?

Rick Klein: Tony Mascarenas would take that one over.

Rebecca Goodwin: I would like to have a plan for all that. We don't want to be cutting weeds for the next twenty years.

Don Rizzuto: If there is a demolition plan and we tear a dozen structures the lots we end up you can't just sell. There has to be a building plan.

Rick Klein: You can give it to Tri-County Housing and they can sell it.

Don Rizzuto: If there is a vacant lot do you have to build on that vacant lot within a specific time.

Rick Klein: Urban Renewal says 18 months but any income off that project would go back to the State. Back in the 70's we were allowed to sell the land and keep the money.

Rebecca Goodwin: If somebody else was interested in buying these properties and then maybe we take care of demolition then we don't have that issue and we don't have to spend \$30,000 to \$40,000 for the acquisition. That money could be used for other projects. If we could get somebody else that wants that property and work with them on an agreement where we would take care of the demolition that would be good.

Don Rizzuto: Somebody else would have the maintenance and it would be back on the private market paying taxes. On current Urban Renewal property you are not collecting property taxes plus we have to cut the weeds. If there was a way to do some that are outside the city limits in the County that need to be taken down, would that make it more or less attractive to the State for approval? If the City and County work together with Urban Renewal on a project, would that help? We could have a bigger project if there were 4 or 5 properties in the County we could add to get one big demolition project. As long as we don't end up with the property.

Chairman Horner: Over the years in the time I have been involved with Urban Renewal when somebody like Midge comes and ask about Urban Renewal I don't recall how much of a concern whether it might be beneficial for the owner and we would have to spend a little money to get an appraisal on what a true value of the property is.

Rebecca Goodwin: Personally I think we should

Don Rizzuto: We should get a market value on the property.

Sandra Leonard: That is a good idea bringing a party in that is objective and then we can go by their recommendation and can do that with everybody. That would be more consistent. That should be policy.

Chairman Horner: Yes that would be more consistent on how we handle those.

Sandra Leonard: Would an appraiser look at the asbestos?

Rick Klein: No. We would have to get an asbestos person if we decide to continue. Let's make a motion for the appraisal and asbestos report so we know that part.

Rebecca Goodwin: Appraiser won't look at asbestos if they are doing a proper appraisal. An appraisal will show the condition of the buiding not what are its problems. You are looking at the property not the building.

Rick Klein: When you get the value it could be more than \$40,000 or less than \$40,000. If it comes out more are we willing to pay her more and if it is less would you (Midge Cranson) be willing to take less?

Midge Cranson: I don't mind doing a joint appraisal if there isn't any commitment at this point.

Chairman Horner: We would have to negotiate to reach an agreement.

Midge Cranson: I am open to having an appraisal done. I do have another party interested but he is only interested in the property, not the building and not the demolition costs.

Mack Burtis: I would like Rick to put together some sort of plan of the kinds of things we have talked about for the 300 block of Santa Fe. I have had people asking me what is going on and I could not answer them. What is Urban Renewal tentatively planning to do for the 300 block of Santa Fe? Is that a target area for Urban Renewal to do something with? I don't know the answer. We have talked about parking. Do we have any kind of plan that makes any sense? What might be done with Midge's property? What is the plan for the whole block? Are we talking about a community wide demolition project or is the 300 block of Santa Fe Avenue the number one Urban Renewal zone in La Junta?

Rick Klein: The Board has to answer that. My recommendation is yes.

Mack Burtis: Let's get something on paper to vote on that aspect of it. To me we need a plan rather than a piece meal.

Don Rizzuto: It's hard to come up with a plan if all the property isn't available.

Rick Klein: We have the plans to bring to the Board

Don Rizzuto: The Book Stop and the Teacher Credit Union are not available so then you can't put together a plan because you don't want to do a piece meal and leave something out there in the middle.

Rebecca Goodwin: Joe came in with a plan around the Credit Union and we now own the Veirs property.

Sandra Leonard: In that drawing that came to us before I thought Midge's property was taken care of at that time. I didn't realize that we would have to come along later to pay \$40,000 for that building. We need to look at the whole picture before we make a decision with Joe or Midge.

Rebecca Goodwin: At least an idea of what that cost would be so we can decide what we want to do. Are we looking at a two million dollar project or five hundred thousand dollar project?

Rick Klein: Let's get the appraisal and asbestos report and maybe we can go back and talk to the Credit Union.

Don Rizzuto: You could do two plans. One if the Credit Union were available and one if it is not.

Mack Burtis: We need options so we are at least talking about the same thing.

Rick Klein: We will have a plan for next month.

Sandra Leonard: Midge says she has a private party interested and what she was saying about the demolition, if she could sell it and we help with the demolition. That is a type of partnership we could do. I also think the appraisal is a good idea.

Midge Cranson: I do want to dispose of the property.

Rick Klein: Would you refer that person to me so we can see what his plan is?

Rebecca Goodwin: I can help to get an appraiser for that kind of property.

MOTION: Sandra Leonard made a motion that Urban Renewal obtain an appraisal and an asbestos report for The Book Stop. Rebecca Goodwin seconded and motion carried.

MOTION: Sandra Leonard made a motion that a plan be developed of the 300 block of Santa Fe Avenue with options on what we will do in our future endeavors in that area. Nancy Bennett seconded the motion and motion carried.

Rebecca Goodwin; Nancy and I talked about the storefront program. We are looking at revisiting the storefront format and the options that are there. One of the things is we would be willing to get down in the area and talk to the various land owners to see what are their concerns, what they would like to see for the storefront program. We would like to do a survey to try to get a better idea of what the business owners want and what would help them.

Rick Klein: The City could do the trees but we should contact the owners first.

Rebecca Goodwin: We are using taxpayer money so we need to help everybody. Taking out false fronts and the planters are also something to see what they would like to do if we need to reconstruct those.

Rick Klein: I will check with the State on the Town Square Mall to see if we could do a façade renovation as part of a demolition project.

Chairman Horner: We have had discussion on possibly doing that.

Sandra Leonard: On the storefronts why I hadn't noticed it before. But when you have a business come to us for help I have no problem with that. If they move two or three times I do have a problem with that. I am not sure we should do them again and again. From a City standpoint that looks bad. We need to look at the grant part that they can have a maximum amount over the course of time. Need to look at it to let them know that if you move six times you are not going to get six grants.

Sandra Leonard: Where is their responsibility of moving what they put up when they move? They will eventually get one grant to do the awning. Since they have one grant now they have to get a loan. With businesses that stay a long time we need to refurbish the guidelines for some kind of way to help them.

Rebecca Goodwin: Especially with vinyl awnings that have to be replaced every few years.

Sandra Leonard: I have talked to Ron Hall and he said he might move to canvas which has a longer life span.

Rebecca Goodwin: If we are going to do this type of survey, if you have any questions you think we should ask, please let us know.

Rick Klein: Midge we will need to set up a time when we can get into the building.

Midge Cranson: Just let me know when you want to do that.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Rick Klein: 1) Census: Talking to certain groups they were not going to return their survey. If you know of any of those groups refer them to me. Let's make a last surge to people to return their forms; 2) Weeds: We are trying to get on top of weeds. If you see any please call; 3) Look at different communities how many there are with the type of projects like we have. We have about \$500,000 on Belmont and the City is working on getting rid of the enclaves out there; (b) Lewis Railroad about \$500,000 through the Office of Economic Development; (4) City park wall two grants both about \$200,000; (5) Contract with the City to start Urban Renewal \$500,000 sidewalk grant with a \$120,000 match; and (d) whatever we decide on this stamp project; (6) water tank project should be ready for service within a month. That is a 1.58 million dollar project. (7) We

are working on the southwest quadrant at 10th Street by Casa del Sol. That is a 4.5 million dollar project. I am proud of where we are at in a bad economy.

Keith Goodwin: We also have the Highway 50- drainage project.

Rick Klein: There is also the Tiger Stadium.

Sandra Leonard: When you look at places like Colorado Springs where they are taking out trash cans and not watering their parks we need to be really proud as a rural community.

Don Rizzuto: OJC is adding two new buildings – another dorm and one for the Forest Service.

GOVERNING BODY COMMENTS

None

OTHER

Rick Klein: Thanks to Lance for his work at the County Commissioners office. Lance will be leaving soon.

ADJOURN
