

Porter County Redevelopment Commission

March 28 2023 minutes

Members in Attendance: Don Ensign, Jim Biggs, Bill Herring, Jeremy Rivas and Andy Maletta were present. Jason Gilliana was absent.

1. Jim Biggs called the meeting to order at 4:30 p.m. and started with the Pledge of Allegiance.
2. County Attorney Scott McClure administered the Oath of Office to the members present. Each member signed the Oath and submitted it to the County Auditor's office for official record keeping.
3. Election of Officers:
 - a. Jeremy Rivas moved that Jim Biggs be elected President. Don Ensign seconded. Motion carried unanimously.
 - b. Don Ensign moved that Jeremy Rivas be elected Vice President. Bill Herring seconded. Motion carried unanimously.
 - c. Jeremy Rivas moved that Don Ensign be elected Secretary. Bill Herring seconded. Motion carried unanimously.
4. Jeremy Rivas moved approval of the **minutes** of the April 25, 2022 meeting. Don Ensign seconded. Motion carried unanimously.
5. Jeremy Rivas moved approval of the **claims register** totaling \$42,275. Don Ensign seconded. Motion carried unanimously.
6. Stu Summers presented a **proposed budget** for 2023. After discussion, Jeremy Rivas moved to approve the budget. Don Ensign seconded. Motion carried unanimously.
7. Stu Summers presented a proposal for **South Haven Commercial Corridor Code Compliance**. He asked the Commission to fund an initiative for targeted and fair, but firm, compliance with Porter County ordinances for zoning, signage, property maintenance, and safe buildings. Scott McClure outlined the legal processes associated with such an effort, and said the first step would be to encourage property owners to voluntarily correct any violations. Jim Biggs said that the message is that we care about improving South Haven and look forward to working in partnership to promote private investment and customer traffic in the commercial area. After discussion, Jeremy Rivas moved to authorize moving forward and allocating funds for the code enforcement initiative. Don Ensign seconded. Motion carried unanimously.
8. Jeremy Rivas moved that the Commission authorize the President to enter into consultant contracts with the following firms, subject to budget authority and Commission attorney approval:
 - a. MJ Thomas & Associates (Grants)
 - b. Rhame & Elwood (Legal)
 - c. Baker Tilley (Financial)
 - d. SEH (Dan Botich) (TIF resolutions and filings as may be needed)
 - e. Town & City Energy, Inc. (Stu Summers) for project managementDon Ensign seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

9. Grants consultant Mary Jane Thomas presented a report on **expanding eligible areas for housing assistance grants and loans offered by the US Department of Agriculture**. She said the USDA is considering making census tracts east of Chesterton eligible. The areas in Porter County that would change from ineligible to eligible would make an estimated additional 459 households that qualify as low or very low income would become eligible and 157 households that qualify as moderate income would become eligible within Porter County, representing a total of 2,465 community members. She recommended that the Commission authorize a letter of support for expanding USDA eligible areas, and she presented a draft letter for approval. Jeremy Rivas moved approval and Don Ensign seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

10. Mr. Biggs asked if the members of the Commission had any comments for the good of the order.

- **Mr. Ensign** mentioned development in Hebron and the possibility of 800 new homes. He also said that the Great America Rail Trail is proposed to be built and would traverse the southern portion of Porter County. He said that the Redevelopment Commission would be asked to help procure grants and matching funds for trail development. Mr. Biggs said that the Redevelopment Commission cares for all areas of the county and congratulated Hebron for getting one of the first trail grants to be awarded in Indiana.
- **Mr. Rivas** asked about the status of the newly created TIF district. After hearing Mr. Summers' report, Jeremy Rivas and Jim Biggs asked Stu Summers to provide the County Council and County Commissioners with semi-annual status reports on the activities of the Redevelopment Commission.

11. Mr. Biggs asked if there were any members of the public who wished to comment. The two reporters had a couple of questions answered.

12. There being no further business, the meeting was recessed.

Don Ensign, Secretary of the Redevelopment Commission