

PORTER COUNTY REDEVELOPMENT COMMISSION
June 21, 2021 – MEETING MINUTES

LOCATION: County Administrative Center, Ste 205
155 Indiana Avenue, Valparaiso IN

TIME 4:00 p.m.

MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE: Don Ensign, Jason Gilliana, Jeff Good, Jeremy Rivas and Steve Sularski. Also present were Kristy Marasco, Scott McClure and Vicki Urbanik.

Jeff Good called the meeting to order and lead the Pledge.

Approval of the Minutes Jeremy Rivas moved to approve minutes from the February 23, March 30, and April 27, 2021 meetings. Steve Sularski seconded the motion and so approved with a 5-0 vote.

Approval of Invoices

Baker Tilly	\$11,051.50
Town & City Energy Inc.	\$4,200.00
Town & City Energy, Inc.	\$8,400.00

Motion: Don Ensign moved to approve the invoices as presented for the total amount of \$23,651.50. Jeremy Rivas seconded the motion and so approved with a 5-0 vote.

Financial Report

Vicki Urbanik presented a Financial Report for January 1, 2021 through June 1, 2021. The Board has received all the revenue they are going to for the rest of the year. This leaves them with an ending cash balance of \$835,247.00.

2021 Budget Approval

Stu Summers presented a 2021 Budget.

Motion: Jeremy Rivas moved to approve the 2021 Budget as presented. Steve Sularski seconded the motion and so approved with a 5-0 vote.

Tax Allocation Area and Terms

The Redevelopment Commission can start the process of creating two tax allocation areas to stimulate commercial and industrial development in Porter County:

1. South Haven Industrial Park
2. Cherokee Trail

Both properties would initially have a C-store to generate TIF. In both cases, the landowner/developer would pay up front for certain public improvements to make the land safe and suitable for development. 75% of the TIF would be used to reimburse the developer for those public improvements. The other 25% would be available to the Redevelopment Commission for other public purposes and improvements connected to the properties.

The Cherokee Trail plot would be a Family Express plot at 49 and County Road 150 South. The South Haven Industrial Park is 55 acres owned by Attorney Jeff Katz and partners. Matt Reardon and Jeff Katz both addressed the Board and expressed their support of this project.

Stu Summers recommends that the Commission 1. Authorize the attorney to write development agreements with the property owners for Board approval. 2. Authorize Baker and Tilley to initiate the process for creating the TIF districts (properly known as “tax allocation areas”).

Process: At the next meeting, Stu will present a formal declaratory resolution for the Board’s consideration. Then, the Planning Commission will consider the resolution to determine conformance with the County plan. The County Commissioners will next vote on the plan. And, if approved, return it to the Redevelopment Commission for a Confirmatory Resolution. This process will take approximately six months.

Zoning: The property owners will apply for appropriate zoning changes.

Motion: Jeff Good moved to approve Attorney Scott McClure and Stu Summers to move forward with putting the Development Agreements together for South Haven Industrial Park and Cherokee Trail entities. Don Ensign seconded, and so approved with a 5-0 vote.

Brownfield Inventory on US 6 Corridor

Kathy Luther addressed the Board. NIRPC has a Brownfield Grant from the US Environmental Protection Agency. Kathy recommends the Porter County Redevelopment Commission enter into an agreement with NIRPC to use some of the grant funds for a preliminary inventory of the US 6 corridor. There would be no cost to the County. A NIRPC contractor would study old Sanborn maps, aerial photography and IDEM files to inventory properties along the corridor, and determine if there might be brownfields. This will help in determining TIF boundaries. The Grant could also be used to do phase I and phase II environmental reports for developers interested in developing parcels. This is paid for by the Grant at no cost to the County. Also Grant funds could be available to do asbestos assessments in existing structures. If found, the Grant can pay for the development of an asbestos abatement plan as well as preparing bid specs for abatement.

It was suggested this study be the entire length of the corridor and a ¼ mile on the north and south sides of US 6.

Motion: Jeremy Rivas moved to authorize Stu Summers to work with Kathy Luther of NIRPC on a Brownfield Preliminary Inventory from Portage City Limits on the west to Calumet Avenue on the East. Steve Sularski seconded, and so approved with a 5-0 vote.

**Baker Tilly proposal to provide tax increment and economic development services.
Barnes & Thornburg legal services for solar farm**

Baker Tilly usually charges \$8,000 for preparing documents for Tax Allocation Areas. They will be working on two areas with this project. Stu Summers negotiated with them to do the work for \$13,500 for both areas. There also is an Agreement to help negotiate an Agreement with a proposed solar farm. This fee is reimbursable to the solar developer. This Agreement is \$20,000.00.

Scott McClure discussed the project. The solar developer approached the County. The Planning Staff worked through and adopted a solar ordinance for development. The developer has agreed the cost the County incurs in exploring and negotiating this new project could be extensive. They have allowed the County to negotiate a contract with a law firm that has dealt with this type of project and they will reimburse the expense. The Barnes and Thornburg contract is going to be in the area of \$30-\$50,000. This is reimbursable by NextEra Energy Resources.

There is legislation being considered in the summer session. If this legislation does not get passed or if the project does not go through, the expenses to date are reimbursable by the developer to the County. There is a concern regarding the storm water fee. Right now, the property is zoned agricultural which is the lowest rate for the fee. A project just like this is located in Jasper County. That project is expected to start in two months. NIPSCO has been making statements they will be carbon neutral in the next ten years. This is all part of a bigger plan for the major supplier of energy for our area.

Motion: Jeremy Rivas moved to approve Barnes and Thornburg legal agreement for the solar farm. Steve Sularski seconded, and so approved with a 5-0 vote.

Motion: Jeremy Rivas moved to approve the Baker Tilly Contract for them to help with the TIF work and solar farm services, seconded by Steve Sularski and so approved with a 5-0 vote.

South Haven Bus Route Options

Stu Summers presented four options:

- a. South Haven, north through Portage, and to the train station. Then, the bus would take the same route back and operate continuously for about 12 hours every weekday.
- b. The bus would provide direct links between South Haven and the Ogden Dunes train station throughout the day, but in the morning and early afternoon, the bus could go east on US 6 and bring residents to jobs or medical appointments at Northwest Hospital-Porter. Three such runs could occur before the peak trains begin arriving in the afternoon. If Valparaiso's V Line were to stop at the hospital, there is a chance that riders could get to Valparaiso.
- c. No Hospital connection, but add a loop serving Burns Harbor employers. This does not serve the hospital campus and businesses east of South Haven on US 6, it does maintain the connection to the South Shore, while possibly bringing South Haven residents to more employers to the North.
- d. Figure 8 through residential. This is much like the previous option, but the bus would run through Midway Drive as a route to attract residents who might find it challenging to get up to US 6 to catch the bus. It would then run up to US 6 and proceed along 6 through the commercial district before going north again to the South Shore station.

The majority of the Board members seemed to like option D the best. Stu Summers stated he will work on this project. Jeff Good stated he would like to see a five-year plan. The first three years will have Federal Funding. Matt Keiser stated the hospital run intrigues him. He realizes getting people to jobs is the most important. Health care is important also.

Next Meeting: July 20, 2021 at 4:30

There being no further business, the meeting recessed.

Jeff Good, President

Bob Thompson, Director