

CITY OF ELKO
JOINT REDEVELOPMENT AGENCY AND
REDEVELOPMENT AGENCY ADVISORY COUNCIL
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
5:30 P.M., P.D.S.T., TUESDAY, MARCH 17, 2009
WESTERN FOLKLIFE CENTER THEATER,
501 RAILROAD STREET, ELKO, NEVADA

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order by RDAAC Chairperson, Jacques Errecart at 5:40 p.m. A quorum was not present for the RDA.

ROLL CALL

Redevelopment Agency Present: Jim Conner, John Patrick Rice (arrived at 6 p.m.)

Redevelopment Agency Absent: Mayor Michael J. Franzoia,
Chris Johnson, Jay Elquist

Redevelopment Agency
Advisory Council Present: Jacques Errecart, Lori Lynch,
Lina Blohm, Kelly Sutherland,
Duane Jones, Morris Gallagher,
Stacey Sawyer (ex-officio member)
Steve Bowers (ex-officio member)

Redevelopment Agency
Advisory Council Absent: Randy Brown (ex-officio member)

City Staff Present: Delmo Andreozzi, Assistant City Manager
Ed Wynes, City Planner
Curtis Calder, City Manager
Kelly Watson, Planning Technician

Planning Commissioners Present: Jeff Thompson, Rich Perry

Arts and Culture Advisory Board
Present: Catherine Wines, Joan Anderson

I. PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD

This agenda item is to provide time for the general public to address the City of Elko Redevelopment Agency and the City of Elko Redevelopment Agency Advisory Council regarding items of concern not specifically listed on the agenda. Action cannot be taken at this time, but a matter can be set on the agenda for a future meeting, as appropriate.

All public comments were made during the workshop discussions.

II. NEW BUSINESS

A. MISCELLANEOUS ITEMS, PETITIONS AND COMMUNICATIONS

1. Presentation by Linda Ritter to provide information on the technical aspects related to redevelopment per NRS 279 and to discuss steps to implement the City of Elko Redevelopment Plan.

Linda Ritter, former City Manager for Elko and Carson City made a power point presentation on Redevelopment based on her experience over the last six years. She started with highlighting Redevelopment law, blight, and tax increment as a financing tool.

Tony Buettner asked Ms. Ritter to identify specific early RDA development tasks that could be performed to accelerate that investment.

Ms. Ritter continued by explaining the means of deciding what projects will provide tax increment which will help develop priorities. Basic infrastructure needs should be assessed during the process of developing priorities. She gave examples of development in Carson City's RDA. She mentioned Redevelopment is not a silver bullet and it is not going to take care of everything and partnerships need to be formed with private industry. The current incentive program that is offered in Carson City is being reviewed. Redevelopment is used for special events designed to bring people downtown. When the vision was being developed for downtown we asked the whole community for input to form the end result so we could plan what needs to come first such as infrastructure. There was a mistake on our part we have been doing incentives and we really didn't have a good public process to make sure our requirements and objectives are being met. We are just right now writing a policy and a process for doing that. It should have been done before because that can cause you problems. You have to be very cautious with your Redevelopment budget because the money gets used up fast. In her mind the best use of Redevelopment money is investing in Capital.

Mr. Sutherland asked if that's what happened in Reno when they lost five people from their Redevelopment Staff.

Ms. Ritter said Redevelopment is funded through property taxes so usually it's rock solid but Reno did some incentives like STAR bonds for the shopping center right before retail had problems especially in that part of the state. That could have affected that. Some redevelopment Staff is not necessarily always paid by a Redevelopment type budget and if they have to cut, that can be an area they cut. If you don't have new development coming in you don't need as much Staff.

Mr. Buettner asked if the conceptual design was produced by the skills of somebody inside the RDA or was a third-party used to put this conceptual design together to present and agree on.

Ms. Ritter said for the pretty pictures we hired someone. Knowing that money is tight you may be able to get a group of citizens together to talk about what is needed for the basics such as infrastructure.

Mr. Buettner asked if the real reason for that was because if a project wanted to come in we need to have some design criteria in place.

Ms. Ritter affirmed that then continued her presentation with a little more on the public process. She gave an overview of the objectives for the Elko Redevelopment area arranging them in two different groups, one is what we will achieve, the other is how are we going to do that. Define the outcomes then based on that what tools seem to fit? Once those are put together you define that strategy being the implementation plan. Create clear processes for all of your tools. Be very transparent in everything you do in the Redevelopment area. To accomplish this develop workgroups that can be formed with members of the public to address different aspects and issues, each having a Chairman. The Chairmen then get together as a Steering Committee to coordinate everything. First of all you have to look at your capacities, then your desired outcomes not exactly a specific blueprint but know what direction you are going and then action steps and what staging issues are out there. Know what you have to have before you do that project. Each group has that output. You put it together and then you form a plan.

Mr. Buettner mentioned there are a lot of people interested but we don't have a Redevelopment Agency yet or main person in charge yet and all these ideas are being thrown out without being acted upon.

Ms. Ritter said one person is not going to make this happen. What you do is actually define how you're going to do it and spread out the responsibilities. Someone from City Hall needs to help coordinate some of these things, but don't expect one person to come and fix it because it's not going to happen if you don't have the community and stakeholders support. Have the ideas been put into categories yet? Don't write a blueprint but have some conceptual things and an overall direction so you can start putting some priorities together. You can refine that as you go.

Mr. Buettner said who is "you"?

Ms. Ritter said you guys.

Mr. Rice indicated one thing that we have been going around with for the last year is what Staff person is going to be in charge. The other thing is with the working groups there are Staff people for all the areas that have never been consulted yet as RDA members. There is an opportunity for who is going to help get this done. There are probably good ideas, good organizational ideas and good visionary ideas that are available to us that we haven't looked at.

Ms. Ritter agreed that City Staff should be involved in the process especially for the technical aspects.

Dennis Crooks clarified there is a Redevelopment Agency which happens to be City Council as allowed in NRS.

Everyone present introduced themselves and gave an overview of their interest in redevelopment and/or the redevelopment area.

Vicki Andrus asked, do we pick one area and start with it?

Ms. Ritter said it takes a recruiting effort to get people involved. We allowed people to pick what they wanted to work on because you're going to do better with something you have an interest or expertise in. If you pick one thing you may be missing other areas. I endorse doing the whole picture.

Ms. Lynch asked if a person should focus on one group.

Ms. Ritter said they can go with multiple groups depending on how much time they have to commit.

Mrs. Blohm asked how we can grow our increment money most effectively and asked Ms. Ritter to discuss financing.

Ms. Ritter said most Redevelopment Agencies will go out and bond for a project but the challenge here is do you know what project needs to come first. That needs to be determined more on a holistic approach. If businesses know where you are going what your plan is, they will be more willing to invest.

Mr. Sutherland asked on the slide with debt service amounts, is that due to sunset and determinations of the RDA?

Ms. Ritter said it was but we extended the RDA to 45 yrs. Your bond council won't let you structure your debt any other way in the sense that when it's done. Structure your debt so you can pay it off earlier.

Mr. Buettner said we brought up the idea of creating a master schedule of events and then creating a task matrix and giving them timelines. We are still in the organizational stage to get a road map of actually getting something done. Even just a small game plan will spark interest for development and for people coming in.

Ms. Ritter said it depends on your task list. What are your tasks? Are they projects?

Mr. Buettner said no it's organizational stuff.

Ms. Ritter said you have to set deadlines. Keep people engaged for a little while and then go on. Don't make something like this go on forever because you'll lose everybody.

Mrs. Blohm said for those who are not familiar with the process we have been working for 22 years to get here today. We have several defined, beautiful, aesthetic plans for downtown that many people have not seen. Maybe we should bring those plans to the public for review, through media or whomever and use them as a starting point.

Ms. Ritter mentioned what pushed Carson City to where it is today is inviting the public and get them enthusiastic and involved.

Mr. Gallagher asked how do we get the City a little more excited about the program?

Mr. Sutherland said people forget who the City really is. It's you and me and not some giant money creating entity that exists to be tapped into.

Ms. Ritter said yeah you should never say they'll take care of it, don't worry about it. If you want something to happen, people have to make it happen.

Ted Blohm asked how the one-way traffic in downtown Carson City was working with only two lanes.

Ms. Ritter said it's conceptual. Before we implement that after the freeway gets done we'll do another traffic study. It has to work before we do it or we'll look at our other options. Don't draw the line in ink because things and opportunities change.

Mr. Thompson asked how the workgroups were set up.

Ms. Ritter said it was actually our Economic Development department that got it organized and our Planning Department. We are both City and County. What they really did was make sure people who were signed up for workgroups knew when meetings were and made sure information was shared for the Steering Committee. The Advisory Committee members served on several committees but they didn't drive it. This was truly a public process.

Mr. Thompson asked so the chair was from the public?

Ms. Ritter said everybody in that workgroup chose who would be the chair based on interest or expertise.

Mr. Thompson asked so then you did draw from City Staff?

Ms. Ritter said yes you have to do that because you need that expertise.

Mr. Conner asked if it was worth looking at a small pilot project in the downtown area that is a public area, perhaps a congregational type project to get more interest.

Ms. Ritter explained after the visioning process they did do a small demonstration project, but she warned not to do something too extensive in case you change your mind later.

Mr. Conner mentioned there has been planning and ideas in prior years that might be brought together.

Ms. Ritter said the workgroups should have access to all previous work because there has been so much done. It's up to the Redevelopment Agency on how they want to implement everything but it has to be something the community wants.

Mr. Buettner asked about the length in time from the date of the inception of the Carson City Redevelopment district to the date of the first project.

Ms. Ritter said I don't think there was a project until 5 years later. The increment takes a few years to build up but while you're waiting for that you can make a plan and a vision.

Mrs. Blohm said also start developing private and commerce partnerships with things like incentives.

Ms. Ritter said if you do something like incentives you need to have a transparent process and application to make sure what somebody is proposing fits within your objectives and it's obvious to everyone why you are doing it.

Mrs. Blohm mentioned Carson City is working on those objectives now and asked if Carson City is patterning their objectives with what another Redevelopment area did.

Ms. Ritter explained where their objectives came from and said they're very similar everywhere.

Ms. Lynch asked about the application process and guidelines for new businesses.

Ms. Ritter explained we want them to show us the economic impact such as creating jobs or sales tax.

Ms. Lynch said they have a guideline before they even apply.

Mr. Rice asked if local banks were involved and if they could help establish guidelines.

Ms. Ritter explained there wasn't a direct connection as a lending institution but RDA does require a business plan. We also have payback provisions. The property has a lien on it there are a lot of requirements that come with incentives. She also clarified the application process itself was unclear in the past and that's what we are correcting now.

Ms. Lynch asked how you work with City Public Works Department within the area to make sure that new projects as they come up before the criteria is defined will conform to that criteria.

Ms. Ritter explained that needs to be defined or there may be inconsistencies.

Ms. Lynch asked if the City does a project in the RDA area once that design has been realized then the City is pretty much obligated to follow the criteria.

Ms. Ritter said yes but sometimes State will not work with you if it happens to be a State Highway. She also restated everyone needs to work together because it's not just about when it gets put in, it involves upkeep and maintenance.

Mr. Buettner said RDA would just be another step a new project would have to go through like the Planning and Building Departments.

Mr. Rice asked if RDA tax increment funds can be endowed to do the upkeep over the years.

The answer was no.

Mr. Crooks said we also talked about forming an Assessment District within the RDA for the parking corridor area upkeep and the cost would be negligible for the property owners.

Mr. Buettner asked if Redevelopment money can be used for consequential improvements outside of the district that are caused by a project within the district.

Ms. Ritter said I'm not an attorney but from my reading of it the answer is yes.

Patrick Dolan asked about ideas for getting the community more involved and getting the word out.

Ms. Ritter said we used the local press and did a big unveiling of the future vision. We explained they were going to be involved in the process.

Mr. Crooks said a monthly newsletter from the Redevelopment Agency would be very helpful.

Ms. Ritter said we use the internet and websites. Don't just look at individual projects, look at the whole and be patient. The plan needs to be put together and then you start chipping away at it.

Mr. Calder stated we do have more advisory boards now and went over some of the big projects that went on over the last 25 yrs including improvement districts and some of the projects currently happening. There are things that need to be integrated but we need to have a good plan for the future and integrate what has happened in the past so we're not wasting money and time.

III. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

**Jacques Errecart, Chairman
Redevelopment Agency Advisory Council**