

The Regular Redevelopment Commission Meeting of the Town of Schererville, IN was called to order by President Kevin Connelly at 7:12 p.m., in the Schererville Town Hall, 10 E. Joliet Street Schererville, IN.

Attendance was taken with the following Board Members present: Caleb S. Johnson, Robin Arvanitis, Rob Guetzloff, Thomas Schmitt and Kevin Connelly. Staff members present: Attorney David Austgen, Fire Chief Robert Patterson, Deputy Fire Chief David Meyer, Police Chief Pete Sormaz, Deputy Police Chief Steve McNamara, Park Superintendent John Novacich, Public Works Director Andy Hansen, Director of Operations James Gorman, Town Manager Robert Volkmann, Clerk-Treasurer Michael Troxell and Recording Secretary Robin Thiel.

THEREUPON, Approval of the minutes. Mr. Johnson made a motion to approve the minutes of the July 14, 2021 Public Meeting, seconded by Mr. Schmitt. All in favor (5-0).

THEREUPON, Claims

- A. APV #97629 - APV #97740 on the Redevelopment Commission Docket, Totaling \$10,452,402.73
- B. Various Funds, Austgen Kuiper Jasaitis, July legal, \$14,511.59
- C. TIF Fund, Gariup Construction, Pay Application #2 - Burr Street Fire Station, \$227,729.25
- D. TIF Fund, DLZ LLC, Invoice #408502, \$8,915.00
- E. TIF Fund, DLZ LLC, Invoice #408495, \$28,680.00

Mr. Schmitt made a motion to accept the claims as presented, seconded by Mr. Johnson. All in favor (5-0).

THEREUPON, Correspondence NONE

THEREUPON, Reports NONE

THEREUPON, Old Business NONE

THEREUPON, New Business NONE

THEREUPON, Business from the floor

Mr. Greg Mitchell stated he actually lives in Crown Point, IN. He stated that he has a petition here pertaining to the development of the Illiana Motor Speedway. He stated that he has 82 pages of signatures, over 3800 signatures, the petition is to take that property and instead of developing it, turn it into a public fairgrounds that would be owned by the Town of Schererville. He stated that if we did that, we would have a space for multiple venues, concerts, festivals and fairs instead of having a corporate entity come in. He stated that we could draw to the area with an attraction. Mr. Mitchell stated that the track is also eligible for historical status, that opens up tax increase, opens up grants from the Federal Government that would provide money to not only maintain that land but to also renovate it. Mr. Mitchell stated that we could copy the plan of what Hammond does with the Festival of the Lakes, we could have traveling music acts come in, and we could have town fairs. He named some famous racers that raced on this track. He stated that he has four pages of comments, several dozen comments, which he will give to the Board members. Mr. Mitchell stated that this property is not zoned for a Business Park, he keeps hearing that it is going to be zoned for a Business Park. He stated that if you go to Chapter 6A, Future Land Use of the Schererville Comprehensive Plan, it actually shows that the portion of the track that would be required to be destroyed is under the Commercial Office/Professional zoning, instead of Business Park. Mr. Mitchell stated that it has been said in recent interviews that the Council does not have anything sure fire on what would go in there.

Mr. Connelly asked Mr. Mitchell if he said he lives in Crown Point. Mr. Mitchell stated, yes he does and the reason he is

here tonight is because this is not just a Town matter, this is a regional matter, and it's a state matter. He stated that we have a great racing history in this state and he would hate to see something destroyed that pertains to that. Mr. Mitchell stated that if we did preserve this, it would provide a space for other types of revenue to come in and we could draw people to the area. He stated he frequents this area almost daily and he sees that we have hotels, restaurants and business spaces. He stated that a lot of business spaces are empty right now, whether they are office spaces or they are for retail.

Mr. Connelly asked Mr. Mitchell what his understanding is that the Council wants to do with that property. Mr. Mitchell stated that his understanding is that part of it will be rezoned, a business park will be built there and the business park, looking at the zoning map would facilitate the destruction of the actual race track. Mr. Mitchell gave the petitions to Mr. Connelly.

Mr. Connelly stated that he is grateful that Mr. Mitchell spoke up, because it gives the Board an opportunity about what we want to do with that property. Mr. Connelly stated that this is in its conceptual stages, and the beauty of this is that they have full control into the design of what goes there. Mr. Connelly stated that we will see how the bids come in and what is proposed. He stated they envision a very green space campus type setting, it is going to be corporate campus, with a lot of green space, surrounded by green space that will compliment Rohrman Park. Mr. Connelly stated that there will be public hearings once we get the bids, so there will be public allowed to them to kind of form the plan on what they want to do there. Mr. Connelly stated that we talk about park recreational amenities, a band shell, Rohrman Park would be a great location for something like that, to have concerts. It could be a future area for our Town. He stated we talk about splash pads, we talk about different park amenities. He stated that we have a wonderful downtown right here, Redar Park his heavily used, the Community Center. There are so many opportunities for us. Mr. Connelly told Mr. Mitchell he is glad he spoke up and as we get the RFP's we will get the chance to communicate what the ideas are before we come to a final conclusion. Mr. Connelly stated that for everyone's knowledge, that when a municipality buys a piece of property we can't just sell it to anyone, it has to be an RFP process. It has to be a very transparent process.

Mr. Connelly stated that he was on the Council back in 2016 when the owner of the speedway wanted to retire and he wanted to sell it. He stated the couple of offers he received was more for a contract, they wanted him to continue the speedway, but he wanted to retire. Mr. Connelly stated that the Council looked at it as an opportunity for potential green space and the like, and they made that investment.

Mr. Alexander Mitchell, 1111 Eastwood Avenue Crown Point, IN stated that you (Mr. Connelly) mentioned that you wanted the space a Community Campus and asked Mr. Connelly to elaborate on what he means by that.

Mr. Connelly stated a Campus Corporate setting. He stated it would be like full-time corporate type jobs on a campus setting. He stated that if you go into some of the Chicago suburbs, they have these corporate buildings on a campus with a lot of green space, fountains, very professional. Mr. Connelly stated that they are just starting the process, nothing has been decided.

Mr. Johnson stated that we have 51 acres of land and they don't know that 51 acres are going to be developed into a business park, we don't know if 25 acres is going to be a business park and 25 acres will be recreational. He stated that they don't know what the exact plan is going to be, the plan is to develop a business park there in some fashion. He stated that they are in the process of maybe including additional property into this plan to add different amenities and different options to this development.

Mr. Marlin Mitchell, Crown Point, IN stated there are grants that are probably appropriate now and they take time, so if we could get started on that, they would like to help the Board do that.

Mr. Schmitt stated the process has to be started for us to get any ideas. He stated the only way we are going to know who is interested and what the interest is, we have to start the process like Mr. Connelly explained.

Mr. Robbie Hansen, who is recording the meeting, stated that a question just popped up from a Douglas Montgomery, he asked if there are any plans in place to revitalize the Downtown area. He stated that he looks at places at Griffith with their Broad Street Strip, or the square in Crown Point and how it is a popular destination.

Mr. Volkmann stated the Pennsy trail in the downtown has been a great anchor to bring people into our downtown area. He stated that Town has for many years worked to acquire properties in the downtown for redevelopment. He stated we are almost to the point where he has acquired, with the efforts of the Town Council, all of the property that is just to the west of the Town Hall here on Joliet Street. Mr. Volkmann stated that we have been clearing that in the hopes of bringing in a developer that will redevelop that entire block. He stated that in addition to that, they are looking to build a new Fire Station in the downtown area, he is also working on property acquisitions for that. Mr. Volkmann stated that if you remember what the downtown looked like twenty years ago, the roads have all been completely redone, we have added the Community Center and purchased part of the Scherwood Club, have done a lot of improvements to Redar Park. Mr. Volkmann stated that he has one property to acquire here and that they envision a mixed use type development that would be commercial and residential. He stated there are a lot of things going on in downtown Schererville.

Mr. Kevin Bane, 1001 71st Avenue, Schererville, IN stated that his family has lived in their home for fifty years. He stated that as a young boy he went to Illiana racetrack and that is what caused his love for cars and motorcycles. He stated that he doesn't want to see a piece of history destroyed and turn into some type of Business Park.

Mr. Robbie Hansen, stated he has one more question from Douglas Montgomery, he says thank you. Also, is it official that we have lost Olive Garden and Portillo's or is there still an opportunity?

Mr. Connelly stated that the owner of the property submitted an application to build a Portillo's, the application has since been pulled. The same owner of that property advised the Council that the Olive Garden pulled out of that development as well. Mr. Connelly stated that the foundation for Longhorn Steakhouse is going in right now.

Meeting adjourned.

KEVIN CONNELLY
REDEVELOPMENT COMMISSION PRESIDENT

MICHAEL A TROXELL, CMO
TOWN CLERK-TREASURER

A TRUE COPY