

Allegheny County Council

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Meeting Minutes - Approved

Tuesday, September 2, 2014

4:00 PM

Conference Room 1

Committee on Economic Development & Housing

Amanda Green Hawkins, Chair

Members:

Tom Baker

Barbara Daly Danko

Michael Finnerty

Nick Futules

Ed Kress

Bob Macey

John Palmiere

Jan Rea

I. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 4:01 PM.

Invited Guests: William McKain, CPA-County Manager, or Designee Dennis Davin-Director, Economic Development, or Designee

Charles H. Starrett- Starrett and Associates

Ronald J. Brown of Grogan and Graffam for the Duquesne TIF

Tim White-VP of RIDC

*Shawn Fox-Director of Business Development-Oxford Company for Three Rivers
Development*

Bill Siddig, Representative for Village Green

Maurice Strul-Economic Development

Sue Means was present as a non-committee member.

Walt Szymanski, Jared Barker and Lori Sicard were present from the staff of Council

II. Roll Call

Members Present: 5 - Green Hawkins, Barbara Danko, Michael Finnerty, Bob Macey and Jan Rea

Members Absent: 4 - Tom Baker, Nick Futules, Ed Kress and John Palmiere

Members 1 - Sue Means

Non-Members:

III. Approval of Minutes

[8460-14](#)

Motion to approve the minutes of the Economic Development and Housing Committee meeting of Allegheny County Council held on August 12, 2014.

Ms. Green Hawkins abstained because she was not present at the meeting.

Passed

IV. Agenda Items

Resolutions

[8426-14](#)

A Resolution of the Council of Allegheny County, Pennsylvania, made pursuant to the Local Economic Revitalization Tax Assistance Act ("LERTA"), Pa. Stat. Ann. tit. 72, § 4722 et seq. (1995), as amended, providing for: a program of temporary exemption from increases in Allegheny County Real Property Taxes, for specified time periods, resulting from improvements made by an owner of property located within a specific geographic area within the City Of Pittsburgh, County Of Allegheny, Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, previously determined to be a deteriorated area; establishing a schedule for exempting increases in Allegheny County property taxes resulting from such improvements; and prescribing the requirements and procedures by which an owner of property located within the deteriorated area can secure the temporary exemption resulting from such improvements.

Sponsors: Chief Executive

The clerk read the title into the record. Mr. Strul introduced the proposal and invited Shawn Fox of Oxford Development to the table to assist in the description. Mr. Fox presented two visual aids reflecting the proposed development. Mr. Fox additionally passed out a packet with floor plans, and pictorial representations of the proposed development.

Mr. Fox highlighted the need for additional parking in the Strip District. Oxford has been working with the City of Pittsburgh for two years on trail enhancement and with clean-up on a former industrial site. 800 new parking spaces will be added as a result of the development as well as a bike trail between Lawrenceville and the Strip to streamline bike traffic. The residential site will have a ground breaking in October. Mr. Fox predicted that this site would be attractive to new tech companies which are already inhabiting the Strip District.

Mr. Fox reviewed the Act 2 process which the site had to go through for soil and remediation which has added to the length and complexity of the development. Mr. Fox referenced a chart showing increased taxes to the County as well as job creation due to the project.

Mr. Macey inquired about whether the streets would have dedicated bus or bike lanes. Mr. Fox stated that there would be dedicated lanes for all uses.

Mr. Finnerty asked if the river walk would be open to the public. Mr. Fox responded affirmatively that all of that 90 feet would extend a current trail and be available as public green space.

Ms. Means inquired about flood plain concerns. Mr. Strul stated that FEMA recently changed flood plain maps and as a result the municipalities must create new resolutions to allow for the flood plain insurance to continue. Ms. Means asked for a list of municipalities that have not yet passed the legislation. Mr. Strul stated he would give the information that he had to full Council. Remedial action must be taken in order to qualify for national flood plain insurance. Mr. Fox stated that the property was not included in a flood plain zone previously but now it is. So now the building must be compliant with the Federal remediation plan for flood insurance inclusion.

Residential parking leases run average \$125 a month and this development would offer market rate at about that amount.

Ms Danko asked for clarification on the boundaries of the LERTA. Ms. Danko inquired about the decision to make rental units instead of condos. Mr. Fox stated that younger generations are trending toward rentals. Mr. Fox stated that they have yet to set a rental rate but probably about 1200 a month for about a 600 foot apartment. Mr. Fox stated that they are currently going through school board approval and that the City's approval was not needed.

Mr. Strul asked that an amendment be offered to make the approval of this Resolution contingent upon the school district and municipal participation and consent. The Chair moved to amend, and Mr. Macey seconded. The proposed amendment also makes changes to the parcels included. The proposed amendment passed unanimously by voice vote.

Amended and Affirmatively Recommended as Amended

Enactment No: 24-14-RE

[8445-14](#)

A Resolution of the Council of Allegheny County, Pennsylvania, made pursuant to the Local Economic Revitalization Tax Assistance Act ("LERTA"), Pa. Stat. Ann. tit. 72, § 4722 et seq. (1995), as amended, providing for: a program of temporary exemption from increases in Allegheny County Real Property Taxes, for specified time periods, resulting from improvements made by an owner of property located within a specific geographic area within the Bloomfield area of the City Of Pittsburgh, County Of Allegheny, Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, previously determined to be a deteriorated area; establishing a schedule for exempting increases in Allegheny County property taxes resulting from such improvements; and prescribing the requirements and procedures by which an owner of property located within the deteriorated area can secure the temporary exemption resulting from such improvements.

Sponsors: Chief Executive

At the request of the Chair, the clerk read the title of the bill, and Mr. Struhl provided a brief description of its provisions.

Mr. Siddig gave additional details regarding project siting and the specifics of the proposed development, including cost and features, as well as some of the challenges that have arisen in bringing the proposed development to fruition.

Ms. Danko asked about the parking ratio, and Mr. Siddig noted that the ratio is just under 1:1, with parking spaces for about 86% of the occupancy capacity.

Ms. Danko and Mr. Siddig discussed the character of the housing that would be included in the project, and the anticipated resident demographics.

In response to a question from the Chair, Mr. Siddig discussed the importance of the LERTA exemption for the project's feasibility.

In response to a question from Ms. Means, Mr. Siddig outlined the ownership structure of Village Green.

Mr. Finnerty asked about the mechanics of managing the water table under the project, and Mr. Siddig described the construction of the parking garage in relation to the water table.

Affirmatively Recommended

Enactment No: 27-14-RE

[8446-14](#)

A Resolution of County of Allegheny approving amendments to the Riverplace-City Center of Duquesne Tax Increment Financing Plan and Riverplace-City Center of Duquesne Tax Increment Financing District and authorizing a new Tax Increment Financing project within the Tax Increment Financing District and related actions.

Sponsors: Chief Executive

The clerk read the title into the record and the Chair invited Mr. Strul to the table to give an overview of the TIF. Mr. Strul invited Ron Brown, Chuck Starrett, and Tim White to

the table to answer questions.

Mr. Stul gave a brief history of the TIF and the request to extend the life of the TIF as it had only fostered one project in its first term.

Representatives of the RIDC explained the necessity of extending the term of the TIF District so that this project may be facilitated. The expansion of the TIF boundaries are also needed to increase potential industrial development. The Redevelopment Authority has approved financing which is sought to be supplemented with the TIF. The City of Duquesne has pledged its support as well as the School District.

Tim White, handed out slides to highlight the proposed project for flex building development. The project seeks to revitalize the Duquesne area which currently is only 50% developed. The TIF will lend support for utility infrastructure. The project estimates the ceation of 45-75 new jobs. The overall site development will cost about 5 million.

The Chair inquired about a designated tenant for the property. Mr. White stated that at this time there is no prospective tenant.

Ms. Danko inquired about the procedural differences between amending the TIF or creating a new TIF District. Mr. Strul stated that the outcome would be the same no matter what procedure you employ.

Mr. Starrett gave further explanation with assistance of a map on where the expanded project would be created. Built out for light industrial manufacturing. RIDC, Mr. White, stated that there is no available new space for light industrial manufacturing at this time. There should be a need for this kind of facility.

Ms. Means inquired about the ramification to the County for allowing for the exemption. Mr. Starett made a clarification that the original TIF district merely created one building but the infrastructure it provided allowed for an expansion of business in the area. There are 740 employees in the business park currently. Regional Industrial Development Corporation of Southwester PA is a nonprofit corporation to drive development.

Mr. Macey commended the development currently in place in Duquesne and highlighted the importance of assisting it further. Mr. Macey made a motion for affirmative recommendation, Mr. Finnerty seconded.

Ms. Rea asked if the other RIDC buildings in the development were occupied. Mr. White stated that all but one is occupied. Mr. White stated that if the building could not find a tenant, the costs would be carried by RIDC until leased.

Mr. White clarified that this is a Brownfield project.

Affirmatively Recommended

Enactment No: 28-14-RE

V. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 5:19.