

MINUTES

Joint Work Session of the Columbia Gateway Urban Renewal Agency
and Urban Renewal Advisory Committee
City Hall Council Chambers
Monday, April 4, 2016
5:30 p.m.

PRESIDING: Chair Steve Lawrence

AGENCY PRESENT: Dan Spatz, Tim McGlothlin, Linda Miller, Russ Brown,
Taner Elliott

ADVISORY COMMITTEE: John Nelson, Gary Grossman, Greg Weast, Phil Lewis,
Jennifer Dewey, John Willer, Steve Kramer

ABSENT: Atha Lincoln

STAFF PRESENT: City Manager Julie Krueger, City Clerk Izetta Grossman,
Project Coordinator Daniel Hunter

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order by Chair Lawrence at 5:30 p.m.

ROLL CALL

Roll call was conducted by City Clerk Izetta Grossman; Advisory Committee Member Lincoln absent.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

It was moved by Spatz and seconded by Kramer to approve the agenda as presented. The motion carried unanimously.

REVIEW AND DISCUSSION OF STRUCTURE AND PROJECTS

Chair Lawrence suggested the work session use three main questions to guide the discussion.

1. Who should govern Urban Renewal?

2. Should the Urban Renewal Plan be amended to include infrastructure?
3. What projects should be on the list going forward?

Chair Lawrence said the forum for public input should be addressed and asked if anyone had other questions to guide the discussion.

Weast said the plan read like infrastructure was included.

Project Coordinator Hunter said infrastructure wasn't removed from the plan, it just wasn't stated as a project focus. He said the emphasis had been changed to blight and buildings.

Brown said Public Works doesn't have the funds to support projects, streets and utilities needed to be included in the plan.

Spatz said project related infrastructure made sense, but not general infrastructure maintenance.

City Manager Krueger said Urban Renewal Funds were never meant for maintenance of infrastructure, but could be used for infrastructure improvements when connected to an Urban Renewal project such as was done on the Second Street Streetscape project.

Nelson said the Third Place Design had included some infrastructure.

It was the consensus that there was no need to amend the plan, just to be aware of opportunities to include infrastructure in projects.

Governance

Brown said it felt like the Agency Board was at the end of the information pipeline, and too much information was lost in the process. He said it was helpful to hear the presentations and understand how conclusions were made.

Miller agreed that information was disjointed. She said as someone who sits in both meetings, sometimes Advisory talks to the presenter and the Board doesn't get that interaction.

Weast said when Urban Renewal started it was made up of Council and lay people. He said perhaps a select number of Council and others.

Spatz said the taxing districts should be represented.

Dewey said business people needed to be represented.

Spatz suggested 3 Council members; 3 Chamber board members; 2 Citizens; 2 County Commissioners; and 1 each from School District, Parks and Rec, Mid Columbia Fire and Rescue, and the Library.

It was the consensus that 8 or 9 members would be best.

Willer said it would not be legitimate to have a quorum of any entity.

Chair Lawrence said returning to one committee would not leave a higher board to go appeal to.

Grossman said the taxing districts should get the full information in order to give input. He said getting the information would encourage participation. He said one board with the right communication could work.

Grossman said if there were two groups, the same presentations needed to be made to both groups. He said the process should go back to staff making recommendations. He said there is value in the process beginning with staff.

Krueger said the process of adding a member of each group to the initial review was designed to assist in information getting to both groups. She said it didn't work as well as she had hoped.

Miller said Council acting as the Agency should be allowed to attend executive sessions.

Dewey cautioned against one person appointing the new Agency Board, it could leave the impression the board was stacked.

Hunter said most appointments to committees begin with recommendations from staff, and then the Council concurs with the Mayor's appointments.

Krueger said the guidelines would be spelled out in a new ordinance if that was the decision.

She said the Taxing Districts most impacted were the ones on the Advisory Committee.

Grossman said having the districts most impacted was part of the process. He said the Fire Department needed to be aware of projects and had a unique perspective of needs for the overall good of the community.

Chair Lawrence said it was important to note that the governing body could decide to give part of the tax increment back to the taxing districts.

Grossman said the debt obligation had to be met before any funds could be returned to the taxing districts.

Chair Lawrence said there were three choices for the type of structure going forward. He said Council could act as the Agency Board, continue with two groups, or one mixed group.

Miller agreed with Brown that one board made sense. Willer said he agreed, with only one or two Councilors and under a total of 10 members, preferably an odd number.

City Manager Krueger suggested 3 Councilors (or 2 Councilors plus Mayor), 1 each from the County, Mid Columbia Fire and Rescue, Parks and Recreation, Port of The Dalles and 2 citizens, creating a nine member board.

Nelson asked what happened, the system used to work.

Grossman said with the changes in staff the information became fragmented. He said communication needed to be reset, with staff as the conduit for information.

Chair Lawrence said with the Planning Director retiring hiring an expert in Urban Renewal and Planning would be key.

Grossman said he would recommend more of a Community Development Department.

Kramer asked wasn't the Council ultimately responsible, and if the Agency dissolved the City had to pay the debt.

Chair Lawrence said the tax increment would continue until debt was paid in full. He said it was confusing if the Agency was responsible for their part of the 2009 City FFCO loan that was split with the Agency.

Elliott asked if it was necessary to change with structure of the Board if a new planning director would be hired.

Krueger said from an efficiency stand point one board would be best.

Dewey said one board would need taxing district representation and business people.

Grossman said there were districts that weren't interested in how the funds were spent.

Chief Palmer of Mid-Columbia Fire and Rescue said the advisory committee was formed as a result of a political fight. Chair Lawrence said that resulted in mediation.

Chair Lawrence asked if the group wanted to get taxing district and public input.

Grossman said the taxing districts covered the community.

Willer said a public hearing would happen with a new ordinance.

Krueger reviewed the Spatz's recommendation of 2 Council members, 3 citizens (businesses within the district), and 1 each from County, Mid-Columbia Fire and Rescue, Parks and Recreation, Port of The Dalles.

Krueger said the City would advertise for the citizen positions. Dewey said sending something the mail to the businesses in the District would be helpful.

Brown retired from the meeting at 6:44 p.m.

Elliott clarified that the citizen representation would be businesses within the district.

It was the consensus to have staff draft an ordinance creating one board.

Projects

It would be the consensus that projects should be a question for the new governing board.

Chair Lawrence said it could take staff a month to return to the Agency with an ordinance.

Spatz asked about the status of the Granada Block RFP's.

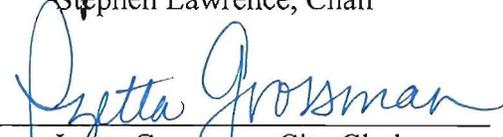
City Manager Krueger said staff was gathering additional information and will bring the Advisory recommendation to the Agency.

ADJOURNMENT

Having no further business the meeting was adjourned at 6:53 pm.

Respectfully submitted:
Izetta Grossman
City Clerk

SIGNED: 
Stephen Lawrence, Chair

ATTEST: 
Izetta Grossman, City Clerk