

MINUTES
SOUTH WHITLEY REDEVELOPMENT COMMISSION
SOUTH WHITLEY PLAN COMMISSION
DECEMBER 21, 2020

SOUTH WHITLEY TOWN HALL
COUNCIL MEETING ROOM

| REDEVELOPMENT | | | PLAN COMM. | | |
|----------------------|----------------------|---------------|-------------------|----------------|---------------|
| MEMBERS | PRESENT | ABSENT | MEMBERS | PRESENT | ABSENT |
| Teresa Carrano | Electronic | | Sherri Ayres | | X |
| Les Hoffman | X | | Wendy Bills | Electronic | |
| Karen Jordan | | X | Dawn Boggs | Electronic | |
| Austin Pequignot | | X | Randy Cokl | X | |
| Bryan Rose | Electronic | | Timothy Gable | | X |
| Brandon Penrod | Electronic | | Les Hoffman | X | |
| | | | Taylor Kessie | Electronic | |
| STAFF | LEGAL COUNSEL | | Anna Simmons | | X |
| Nathan Bilger | Greg Hockemeyer (E) | | Brock Waterson | Electronic | |
| Dale Buuck (E) | | | | | |

CALL TO ORDER:

Mr. Bilger called the joint workshop to order at 6:30 p.m. and read the roll call, with those present and absent noted above.

MINUTES:

Meeting minutes of both the Plan Commission and Redevelopment Commission were deferred to the next regular meetings.

DISCUSSION OF RESIDENTIAL GROWTH:

Mr. Cokl discussed the purpose of the joint Plan Commission-Redevelopment Commission workshop and gave background on the need for residential growth in South Whitley.

Mr. Bilger presented information about the roles of the Commissions in encouraging residential growth, noting that the Redevelopment Commission could be more proactive in recruiting and incentivizing, while the Plan Commission would need to be flexible once development were proposed. He then explained some of the actions and plans already undertaken, including the TIF established and possible housing TIF locations.

Ms. Carrano stated that she had discussed the potential for acquiring interest in possible development land with the Whitley County Community Foundation. They were interested in the concept, and they suggested that there may be grants available from the Lily Foundation that would fit the need.

Mr. Penrod stated that Whitko would like to be more involved in the residential growth, as the school corporation would stand to benefit from the population growth. He suggested that building trades classes could build homes for their skills, which could help in attracting some residents. He gave the example that teachers recently being recruited for the Whitko Career Academy were having difficulty finding adequate housing within the district. Mr. Cokl added that the Career Academy was a good effort, and he hoped that it would help to encourage young residents to stay within the community after graduation.

The discussion moved to the topic of specific development properties. Ms. Carrano presented information about the 150-acre Bauman property located on the east side of town on SR 14, and there was discussion of particulars of the property. She suggested that it would be good to contact the trustee of the property, a Ms. Schultz, to find out their interest. Mr. Hockemeyer stated that he could draft a letter to her requesting information on the trust and proper points of contact. After additional discussion, there was a consensus that Mr. Hockemeyer and Ms. Carrano would prepare such an inquiry to gauge the interest in selling or development of the property.

Mr. Cokl brought up the Michel property, which had been discussed as a possible continuation of Whispering Hills. Mr. Bilger discussed some of the background of that property and anticipated infrastructure that might be needed for development. Mr. Waterson stated that he would resume trying to make contact with the Michel family, which had not been successful earlier in the year. He asked what the benefit would be to the Michels in working with the Town. Mr. Hockemeyer suggested that, if the Michels were interested in selling, the Town could at least propose incentives that could pique the interest of land buyers, builders, or developers that would not otherwise be interested.

A question was brought up about the marketing of the remaining four lots in Whispering Hills still owned by the developer. While not a major project, seeking interested builders and buyers for those lots might be a “low-hanging fruit” effort with minimal investment. There was no specific course of action established.

Brief discussion occurred about the “gravel pit” property, currently owned by Michael Bellante. The expansion of the manufactured home park on the property was at one time proposed but had not been completed. Mr. Hockemeyer reminded the attendees that encouraging the owner to pursue further development of the property might be possible, but a housing TIF could not be used for such housing types. Discussion of soil quality and infrastructure suggested that development of new housing would be easier starting from a “green field” property.

Ms. Carrano brought up the Community Foundation again and stated that cooperation with them could be leveraged for easing income tax burdens through various means. Depending on the buyer and seller’s financial situation, such tax incentives may be attractive.

Mr. Cokl asked how to proceed. Mr. Bilger and Mr. Hockemeyer suggested that the Redevelopment Commission take the lead since it had more authority for incentives and negotiations, while the Plan Commission be kept apprised of potential developments. Another joint meeting could be scheduled for the spring. Mr. Penrod requested that it be scheduled on the Redevelopment Commission meeting date due to conflict with the School Board meeting.

ADJOURNMENT:

Being no further discussion, Mr. Cokl thanked everyone for the excellent discussion, and the meeting adjourned at 7:27 p.m.

SOUTH WHITLEY REDEVELOPMENT COMMISSION

_____, President

Attest:

_____, Secretary