



Redevelopment Authority of Lehigh County
November 26, 2024 Meeting

A special meeting of the Redevelopment Authority of Lehigh County was held at 9:00 a.m. by Zoom video conference. A recording of this meeting is available at: <https://www.lehighcounty.org/Departments/Community-Economic-Development/Lehigh-County-Redevelopment-Authority>.

ATTENDING

Board Members: Ricky Gower (RG), Jill Seitz (JS), David Weinstein (DW), Michael Yeager (MY). Quorum obtained.

Also in attendance representing the Authority, Chris Gulotta (CG)

County Staff: Virginia Haas (VH), Cyndi King (CK)

ABSENT

Oscar Ghasab (OG), Kent Herman (KH), Frank Kane (FK)

Public Guests: Deb Mellish

AGENDA ITEMS

CALL TO ORDER at 9:00 a.m. by MY

NEW BUSINESS – STATE FUNDING APPLICATIONS

CG will ask the Board to approve the following two state funding applications:

1. Local Share Account (LSA) is a program available to communities for community projects through the Commonwealth and which is funded with a percentage of the state gaming revenues pursuant to a 2003 law. CG proposes that the RALC submit an application for one million dollars that would be used to construct a retaining wall in conjunction with the widening of Front Street in Catasauqua. Currently, Front Street is a relatively narrow, one-way street. The plan is to widen Front Street

between Bridge and Wood Streets, include sidewalks on both sides and also include an amenity strip which would contain street trees and street lighting. In order to accomplish the aforementioned plans, a retaining wall adjoining the Iron Works site needs to be constructed. The Borough engineer provided a price of approximately \$1.4 million dollars to build the retaining wall and approximately \$56,000 for engineering costs. The Borough has about \$550,000 in streetscape improvement funding for Front Street. However, that is not sufficient to cover the cost of this retaining wall. Therefore, the Borough has asked the RALC to be the applicant for these LSA funds. CG provided the Board with a resolution to approve this request along with a cost estimate, which he asked the Board to consider the ready-rock (precast concrete) wall rather than the cast-in-place retaining wall. This application is in conjunction with RALC's efforts to redevelop the former Iron Works site working closely with VM Development. VM has requested that this section of the street become a two-way section thereby allowing them to accommodate more on-street parking for residents who will reside in the apartments and townhomes along Front Street as well as the businesses that may be there. CG stated that the RALC is doing everything within its power to make certain that the developer has the infrastructure they are requesting in order to accomplish this project. No questions or comments from the Board. DW made a motion to accept the resolution to apply for the state funding; RG seconded that motion. CG clarified that, as indicated within the application and at the Borough's permission, the difference between the \$1,000,000.00 funding being applied for and the \$1,456,000.00 cost of the project would be Redevelopment Assistance Capital Program (RACP) committed \$1.750 million dollars and \$456,000.00 of that amount would match the LSA grant. MY added this is one more indication of the RALC and Catasauqua group doing anything and everything possible for the developer moving forward with this project. Unanimous voice vote in favor of the resolution.

2. CG will ask the Board to approve the motion to allow RALC to submit a Keystone Communities Initiative grant application for \$50,000.00 to cover predevelopment costs provided to VM Development, the preferred developer of the Iron Works site project. PA DCED suggested RALC apply for this grant to cover engineering expenses associated with land development planning and getting those plans approved along with (perhaps) preliminary architectural studies. All of this funding would be used for professional services. CG proposes the RALC enter into an agreement with the developer to provide these funds to them which

money they would have to spend consistent with a grant agreement. Senator Nick Miller indicated to PA DCED how important this project this is and as a result, CG was made aware of the grant funding opportunity. Hearing no questions or comments, MY asked for a motion to submit the aforesaid application. JS made the motion which was seconded by DW. Unanimous voice approval for the motion.

PUBLIC COMMENT ON AGENDA ITEMS – None

EXECUTIVE SESSION – Real Estate Matter

MY asked for a motion to go into Executive Session. RG made the motion which was seconded by DW. With unanimous voice approval, only members of the RALC, and Executive Director went into Executive Session.

DW made a motion to leave Executive Session which was seconded by RG.

CG indicated that the Executive Session was held for the potential purchase of real estate and during the Executive Session the Board did act favorably on a non-binding letter of intent with VM Development Group related to redevelopment of the Iron Works site.

COMMENTS OR ANNOUNCEMENTS

MY called for questions or comments from the board; there were none.

PUBLIC COMMENT ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS – None

The next meeting of the RALC is Thursday, December 5, 2024, at 9:00 a.m. via Zoom. MY entertained a motion for adjournment. RG made that motion which was seconded by DW. Unanimous voice approval; meeting adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,
Cynthia L. King