

MINUTES  
Warrenton Urban Renewal Agency  
August 22, 2023  
Warrenton City Hall - Commission Chambers  
225 S. Main  
Warrenton, Or 97146

Chair Balensifer convened the Urban Renewal Agency meeting at 7:19 p.m.

Commissioners Present: Chair Henry Balensifer, Mark Baldwin, Tom Dyer, Gerald Poe, and Paul Mitchell

Staff Present: Executive Director Esther Moberg, Police Chief Mathew Workman, Public Works Director Greg Shafer, Finance Director April Clark, and Secretary Dawne Shaw

CONSENT CALENDAR

A. Urban Renewal Agency Meeting Minutes – 6.27.23

**Commissioner Baldwin made the motion to approve the consent calendar as presented. Motion was seconded and passed unanimously.**

**Dyer – aye; Baldwin – aye; Poe – aye; Mitchell – aye; Balensifer - aye**

PUBLIC HEARINGS - None

BUSINESS ITEMS

Chair Balensifer reviewed the Warrenton Urban Renewal Advisory Committee recommendation for using \$650,000 of Urban Renewal funds to transform the Fenton Building, with \$400,000 going towards the purchase and \$250,000 going towards the renovation. There was a general consensus to consider the recommendation after the business proposal. Commissioner Baldwin noted his concerns about the proposer's not having enough skin in the game.

Executive Director Moberg discussed a business proposal for the Fenton Building and introduced Jessica and Dan Sollaccio. The Sollaccio's presented their business proposal. They discussed their background and past experience in renovating properties. Mr. Sollaccio discussed the current state of the building; the top floor has six apartments, and the bottom floor is a commercial space. Mr. Sollaccio stated the building will need structural and electrical work. Ms. Sollaccio noted that the state of the building has made it difficult for them to go through private financing. They discussed their plans for the building. They would have two anchor businesses as well as 4 micro-enterprises in the commercial space.

Commissioner Dyer stated the idea is innovative for this area; he noted the original windows that he would like to see reinstalled. Mayor Balensifer thanked them for the proposal and noted his thoughts; it fits well with the direction of Urban Renewal Agency; great potential.

The presentation and discussion continued on the financial plan. They are hoping to open in 2025. Commissioner Baldwin noted his concerns with the structural damage that has been done to the building. Chair Balensifer asked if they see people looking into doing micro-enterprises; Mr. and Ms. Sollaccio discussed that they have been working with Astoria Micro Collective.

Chair Balensifer asked Ms. Moberg if they invest in the building do they get first lien holder rights; Ms. Moberg stated they would make an agreement with the grant money and if they went bankrupt or didn't execute a full business plan, they would be able to put a lien on the property ensuring that it went to the City since the Urban Renewal District will be sunsetting in four years. She stated she would have regular meetings with the Sollaccio's and can make suggestions throughout the process. Discussion continued. Commissioner Mitchell discussed his concerns with the state of units and projected rent. Chair Balensifer noted he would be willing to consider additional money for renovations if needed to keep the rental costs low. Discussion continued.

Commissioner Mitchell noted his concerns that other businesses have not had the same opportunity. Chair Balensifer and Ms. Moberg responded. Commissioner Mitchell clarified that he wants other businesses to know that Urban Renewal funds are available. Chair Balensifer suggested an empty storefront tax. Discussion continued on grants. Commissioner Baldwin discussed his concerns about the renovation costs and noted he is not ready to move forward without more information on the condition. Chair Balensifer suggested authorizing the grants as presented but not until after the engineering report; Commissioner Baldwin made a counter suggestion. Commissioner Mitchell discussed the disclosures that the broker must provide. Discussion continued.

There was consensus that before any money is offered, they would like to see some movement from the seller to show he is a real seller.

Chair Balensifer asked if there was a consensus to recommend to the commission to create an empty storefront tax to get long-term vacant properties moving. Commissioner Baldwin asked if they could be deemed nuisance properties; Ms. Moberg stated the buildings would not meet the city code definition of nuisance. Ms. Moberg clarified that if they wanted to look at an empty storefront tax they would need to pursue it in a City Commission meeting. There was unanimous consent to recommend to the City Commission items to incentivize commercial property redevelopment citywide.

There was consensus to accept the recommendation; Chair Balensifer will submit a response. If there is movement from the seller, they will call a special meeting to move forward with the

grants.

There being no further business Chair Balensifer adjourned the URA meeting at 8:34 p.m.

Respectfully prepared and submitted by Hanna Bentley, Deputy City Recorder.

APPROVED:



Henry A. Balensifer III, Chair

ATTEST:



Dawne Shaw, Secretary