

**MINUTES OF A REGULAR MEETING OF THE  
MICHIGAN CITY REDEVELOPMENT COMMISSION  
JANUARY 13, 2025**

The Michigan City Redevelopment Commission held their regular monthly meeting in the Common Council Chambers, City Hall, 100 E. Michigan Boulevard, Michigan City, Indiana, on Monday, January 13, 2025, at 5:00 p.m. local time; the date, hour, and place duly established for the holding of said meeting. The meeting was also available via Zoom and streaming live on the Access LaPorte County Facebook page. Access LaPorte County Media hosted Zoom.

**CALL TO ORDER**

Being the first meeting of the year, Executive Director Skyler York assumed the position of chair and called the meeting to order at approximately 5:05 p.m.

**ROLL CALL**

Commissioners present: William Gertner, Clarence Hulse (via Zoom audio/video), Sheila Brillson Matias, Tracie Tillman, Sheree Wilson, and non-voting adviser Thomas Dombkowski (all in person unless otherwise noted)

Also in attendance: Executive Director Skyler York, Associate City Planner Kyle Anthony-Petter, Attorney Alan Sirinek, and Business Manager Debbie Wilson (all in person)

**ELECTION OF OFFICERS**

**President**

Mr. York opened the floor for nominations for president.

Sheree Wilson nominated Sheila Brillson Matias for president. Clarence Hulse seconded the nomination. There were no other nominations; nominations were closed. Ms. Matias accepted the nomination. The chair called the roll and the vote was taken: (Ayes) Commissioners Gertner, Hulse, Matias, Tillman, Wilson – 5; (Nays) None – 0. With 5 in favor and 0 opposed, the nomination was approved.

As the newly elected president, Commissioner Matias assumed the position of chair and continued with the election of officers.

**Vice-President**

President Matias opened the floor for nominations for vice-president.

Clarence Hulse nominated Sheree Wilson for vice-president. Tracie Tillman seconded the nomination. There were no other nominations; nominations were closed. Ms. Wilson accepted the nomination. The chair called the roll and the vote was taken: (Ayes) Commissioners Gertner, Hulse, Matias, Tillman, Wilson – 5; (Nays) None – 0. With 5 in favor and 0 opposed, the nomination was approved.

### **Secretary**

President Matias opened the floor for nominations for secretary.

Sheree Wilson nominated Clarence Hulse for secretary. Tracie Tillman seconded the nomination. There were no other nominations; nominations were closed. Ms. Tillman accepted the nomination. The chair called the roll and the vote was taken: (Ayes) Commissioners Gertner, Hulse, Matias, Tillman, Wilson – 5; (Nays) None – 0. With 5 in favor and 0 opposed, the nomination was approved.

Officers for 2025 are: Sheila Brillson Matias, President; Sheree Wilson, Vice-President; Clarence Hulse, Secretary.

### **MINUTES**

The chair entertained a motion to accept the minutes of the 12/09/2024 executive session, the 12/09/2024 regular hybrid meeting, and the 12/30/2024 special meeting.

***A motion was made by Commissioner Tillman and seconded by Commissioner Wilson accepting the minutes of the 12/09/2024 executive session, the 12/09/2024 regular hybrid meeting, and the 12/30/2024 special meeting as submitted. The chair called the roll and the vote was taken: (Ayes) Commissioners Gertner, Hulse, Matias, Tillman, Wilson – 5; (Nays) None – 0. With 5 in favor and 0 opposed, the MOTION CARRIED.***

### **CLAIMS**

Mr. York reviewed the claims list dated January 13, 2025, noting that payroll for December 2024 totaled \$12,443.38. Mr. York read the claims listed into the record. In summary, January claims totaled: (Operating) \$8,182.86; (North TIF) \$655,506.06; (South TIF) \$204,562.50; (2019 Refunded Lafayette/Barker Bond) \$1,350.00; (2023 Mixed Use Transit Project Bond) \$863,093.97; (2019 Double Tracking Project Bond) \$1,350.00.

The chair entertained a motion to accept the claims.

***A motion was made by Commissioner Gertner and seconded by Commissioner Tillman accepting the claims list for January 13, 2025, as presented. The chair called the roll and the vote was taken: (Ayes) Commissioners Gertner, Hulse,***

***Matias, Tillman, Wilson – 5; (Nays) None – 0. With 5 in favor and 0 opposed, the MOTION CARRIED.***

### **FINANCIAL REPORT**

Mr. York reviewed the financial report dated 11/30/2024, summarizing cash balances as follows: Operating Account \$33,110.77; South Side TIF Account \$7,409,458.72; South Side TIF Debt Reserve Account \$336,308.50; South Side TIF Capital Account \$16,199.79; North End TIF Account \$2,098,791.17; East TIF Account \$533,157.45; Northeast TIF Account \$902,965.32; for total cash of \$11,329,991.72. Loans Receivable include the County Business Loan Fund in the amount of \$94,829.59, bringing total assets to \$11,424,821.31.

The chair entertained a motion to accept the financial report.

***A motion was made by Commissioner Wilson and seconded by Commissioner Hulse accepting the financial report ended 11/30/2024 as presented. The chair called the roll and the vote was taken: (Ayes) Commissioners Gertner, Hulse, Matias, Tillman, Wilson – 5; (Nays) None – 0. With 5 in favor and 0 opposed, the MOTION CARRIED.***

### **PUBLIC COMMENTS**

Tommy Kulavik (in person) stated his address as being 1316 Ohio Street, Michigan City, Indiana. He congratulated Mr. York on his new position as Redevelopment Director. He expressed his support of façade grant funding for 2302 E. Michigan Boulevard, commenting that his sister is the owner of the Hearts and Hands Childcare and Preschool and praised her for getting it up and running. He commented on the Quiet Zone matter, voicing his reservations about it because of safety, citing train versus vehicle accidents, and stating that he feels they should keep blowing their horns.

Scott Meland (in person) stated his address as being 200 Kenwood Place, Michigan City, Indiana. He spoke about his support of Quiet Zones. He also mentioned the special meeting of December 30<sup>th</sup> and the approval of TIF creations for Tryon Meadows, noting his disappointment that something of this nature was decided during a special meeting of which he was not aware. He stated that he is pro development but felt that as much as new housing is needed in Michigan City, we do not need to “give away the store” – developers need to develop. He said development is a market, and the city should not need to subsidize. He called attention to the subdivision near the high school off Pahs Road which is being built with no subsidy. Mr. Meland questioned why three new TIFs are needed for the Tryon Meadows housing development, noting that it is being built for profit. He said TIFs do not benefit the general fund for 20 years and it creates an obligation for the City because they must maintain the road, sewer, and water that they built. He stated he understands this is workforce development and the price point must

meet a federal metric of 80-120% but suggested if the City is going to give them TIFs and subsidize their infrastructure, that they ask for more and get affordable housing that meets 60% of that metric instead of 80%. He guessed they are asking for \$5 million in infrastructure, so he suggested getting a percentage of low income housing in that development. Mr. Meland commented that if all the new development in town are in TIF Districts, it will create other financial burdens for the City over time. He said the City needs to balance their need for development with "giving away the store."

### **FAÇADE GRANTS**

#### **113 W. 8<sup>th</sup> Street – Elle Salon:**

Mr. Anthony-Petter reported that work has been completed on this project. The applicant was initially approved for \$13,000 on 9/9/24 and then approved for a second reimbursement on 11/11/24 for \$17,000, for a total maximum reimbursement of \$30,000. The total project cost was \$65,457. The applicant submitted all required documentation and received a Certificate of Appropriateness from the Historic Preservation Commission. Staff recommended approval of the \$30,000 reimbursement.

The applicant, Sam Hook (in person), thanked the Commission, stating that the City has been great to work with on this project.

Mr. York thanked Mr. Hook for keeping and staying invested in Downtown Michigan City.

Commissioner Matias commented that this is an example of a small business that is thriving and the Redevelopment Commission wants to support them.

The chair entertained a motion.

***A motion was made by Commissioner Wilson and seconded by Commissioner Gertner approving the request for release of funds in the amount of \$30,000 for the Façade Grant work completed at 113 W. 8<sup>th</sup> Street – Elle Salon. The chair called the roll and the vote was taken: (Ayes) Commissioners Gertner, Hulse, Matias, Tillman, Wilson – 5; (Nays) None – 0. With 5 in favor and 0 opposed, the MOTION CARRIED.***

#### **320 E. 2<sup>nd</sup> Street – Wake Robin**

Mr. Anthony-Petter reported that work has been completed on this project. The applicant was approved for \$30,000 on 3/11/24. The total project cost was \$75,000. The applicant has submitted all required documentation. Staff recommended approval of the \$30,000 reimbursement.

Mr. York explained that this is part of the Pioneer Pier development. It is an old building and they rehabbed the exterior. It has some long-term rooms in it and is used as rental. Mr. York said this is a much needed improvement and that Mr. Radtke has been working diligently over the years to make the older buildings look more attractive.

The chair entertained a motion.

***A motion was made by Commissioner Tillman and seconded by Commissioner Hulse approving the request for release of funds in the amount of \$30,000 for the Façade Grant work completed at 320 E. 2nd Street – Wake Robin, Inc. The chair called the roll and the vote was taken: (Ayes) Commissioners Gertner, Hulse, Matias, Tillman, Wilson – 5; (Nays) None – 0. With 5 in favor and 0 opposed, the MOTION CARRIED.***

**1901 Franklin Street – The Cellar Door**

This is a request for partial reimbursement. The applicant was approved for \$30,000 on 10/7/24. The applicant has submitted all the required documentation. Staff recommended approval of the \$15,000 partial reimbursement.

The applicant (Kyle Hutcheson – in person) introduced himself and his partner, Spencer Herms (in person) who is the chef at The Cellar Door, 1901 Franklin Street (former Harmony Bar). He said they are preparing to launch shortly. The website is up and running cellardoorbar.com and @thecellardoorbar on Instagram. They will be releasing their menu and opening dates soon. He recognized Skyler, Kyle, Clarence, and their teams, thanking them for their assistance in getting them from the idea phase to where they are today, ready to roll out. He mentioned that their assistance throughout this process was helpful since they are a family-owned operation and do not have corporate backing.

Mr. Herms thanked Clarence and Skyler for their help, mentioning that the façade funding has enabled them to improve everything on the exterior of the building to make that look good as well.

***A motion was made by Commissioner Wilson and seconded by Commissioner Gertner approving the request for partial release of funds in the amount of \$15,000 for the Façade Grant work completed at 1901 Franklin Street – The Cellar Door. The chair called the roll and the vote was taken: (Ayes) Commissioners Gertner, Hulse, Matias, Tillman, Wilson – 5; (Nays) None – 0. With 5 in favor and 0 opposed, the MOTION CARRIED.***

**2302 E. Michigan Boulevard – Hearts & Hands Preschool Academy**

Mr. Anthony-Petter explained that this request is different in that the applicant already did the work prior to coming before the Commission with their request for funding. Mr. Anthony-Petter indicated that the decision would be up to the Commission in terms of how they want to handle it.

Mr. Anthony-Petter explained that they are requesting funding in the amount of \$30,000 for work completed on the front façade which included a new exterior front door, doors on the North Calumet Avenue side, window replacement, lighting, siding, and new exterior

signage. The total improvement cost was \$105,000. The applicant has submitted all required documentation. Staff recommended approval of the request for funding in the amount of \$30,000.

Mr. York clarified that this tool was not in place on Michigan Boulevard until the expansion of the TIF District. He said it is a unique situation in that this person was investing without any tools there; they could not come before the Commission at that time because the tool did not exist. Mr. York noted the importance of having this tool along Michigan Boulevard.

Commissioner Gertner commented that he is not opposed to doing this but noted his concern about the look back period from the expansion to someone coming 20 years later.

Mr. York responded that the time would be something for the Redevelopment Commission to determine. He said all this was going on simultaneously and if the Façade Grant were in place he is certain the applicant would have taken advantage of it. He added that the service they provide has some weight to it being a commercial daycare and the need for it. This is one of the first commercial daycares permitted; most are in homes.

Commissioner Hulse asked how long it has been since they did the work.

Mr. York replied that it has been about a year.

Commissioner Hulse stated he would be open for two years look back. He said the biggest thing for him to want to go back and approve this is the public benefit. It benefits the TIF in terms of what it provides with the lack of daycare. He said if it were a regular business he would have more of an issue with it. This does provide a public benefit to other businesses within the TIF.

Mr. York pointed out that they did get all their permits. Regardless of whether they got the Façade Grant, they did follow all the rules.

Commissioner Tillman added that it is within her Fifth Ward. She said to see where Infonics was then to where it is now and what it has become, it is a great need for the community in that area, and it has also brightened up that corner with the artwork. She hopes this is something that the Commission can approve and change the language to go back two years for this one and others.

Mr. York noted that there are other stop gap mechanisms if the two years are what they choose, such as permits.

Commissioner Matias agreed with the public benefit of daycare for working parents. In addition, they invested over \$100,000 which shows they have invested in the city, the neighborhood, and the Fifth Ward. She said she is in support of this.

The chair entertained a motion.

***A motion was made by Commissioner Wilson and seconded by Commissioner Tillman approving the request for funding in the amount of \$30,000 for the Façade Grant work already completed at 2302 E. Michigan Boulevard – Hearts & Hands Preschool Academy. The chair called the roll and the vote was taken: (Ayes) Commissioners Gertner, Hulse, Matias, Tillman, Wilson – 5; (Nays) None – 0. With 5 in favor and 0 opposed, the MOTION CARRIED.***

#### **LOCAL MATCH & ENGINEERING – 2025-1 CCMG**

Mr. York began discussion explaining that every year the City does the Community Crossing Matching Grant (CCMG). It is state funding that is available. As of recently, they increased it from \$1 million to \$1.5 million. Historically, the City has received about \$1 million in Motor Vehicle Highway (MVH) funds every year. This match is the way to make up the \$1.5 million. \$500,000 would be used for the match and \$100,000 would be used for engineering costs, for a total \$600,000 request. The City Engineer is working on this project now and he can provide a list of streets. The Council has already approved the funding mechanism. This would be the Redevelopment Commission's mechanism to provide the extra support to take advantage of the \$1.5 million to make sure the City gets the full benefit of the CCMG program.

Attorney Sirinek pointed out that the Redevelopment Commission has provided the match for the last three to four years. The benefit to the city relates to redevelopment given the fact there is the need to have solid infrastructure (roads) to continue with the overall development and enhancement of the city. Most of the streets are going to be in a TIF within the city. Those not within the TIF will have direct access and direct bearing on TIF, which is something the Commission has done in prior years. It correlates directly with redevelopment within the city and is a necessary tool for Michigan City going forward and falls within the obligation of the Redevelopment Commission.

Mr. York agreed, adding that a lot of these roads either touch or pass through a TIF.

Commissioner Matias clarified for the public benefit that CCMG is used for paving streets. Those streets are monitored by the Street Department but the scoring of them is done by a team which includes the City Engineer who oversees making the final call on the streets that need to be repaired. Random streets are not chosen.

Commissioner Tillman stated that the scoring is called the Pavement Surface Evaluation and Rating (PASER).

Mr. York added that it is a 1-10 rating system with below 6 needing to be replaced.

The chair entertained a motion.

***A motion was made by Commissioner Tillman and seconded by Commissioner Wilson approving the funding for the local match (\$500,000) and engineering costs (\$100,000) for a total of \$600,000 for the 2025-1 Community Crossings Matching Grant (CCMG). The chair called the roll and the vote was taken: (Ayes) Commissioners Gertner, Hulse, Matias, Tillman, Wilson – 5; (Nays) None – 0. With 5 in favor and 0 opposed, the MOTION CARRIED.***

### **QUIET ZONE APPROVAL**

Attorney Sirinek initiated discussion, stating that in his research of these Quiet Zones and how it relates to redevelopment, one of the requirements for approval of a Quiet Zone that the federal government, state government, and the railroads themselves have, are the enhancements to the overall area than you would have if you were not in a Quiet Zone. Specifically, better lighting, more durable crossings, etc. He said going back 10-15 years on the idea of Quiet Zones when railroads were opposed to it, we now see an evolving of Quiet Zones being used as development tools for (1) the quiet enjoyment of property, and (2) encouraging development in closer proximity to train tracks, and it is done so confidently knowing that there have been enhanced safety measures put in place, which otherwise would not have been safe for a train crossing that was not in a Quiet Zone.

Attorney Sirinek talked about the benefits of putting in a Quiet Zone as it relates to economic development in that it does reduce noise pollution, it improves the quality of life, there is a correlation with both businesses and residents moving to the areas in close proximity to rail lines resulting in increased economic activity, and public safety by requiring additional safety features at each crossing (upgraded gates and signals).

Mr. York added that the full Quiet Zone is shared into Carroll Avenue; this specific request tonight will cover the section from Michigan Boulevard/Vail Street to Carroll Avenue.

Attorney Sirinek said this is not so much an application for a Quiet Zone because all that work has already been done; this is more from the viewpoint of paying for those services in getting that done. Attorney Sirinek explained that the City has already made an application for this and has already been approved for the Quiet Zone for the areas that Mr. York mentioned. He said the issue before the Commission tonight is paying for the services to get this Quiet Zone approved. An invoice has been received from NICTD in the amount of \$64,912 for that extra stretch of area for work that has already been performed.

Mr. York noted that there will not be any other payment after this.



The chair entertained a motion.

***A motion was made by Commissioner Tillman and seconded by Commissioner Wilson approving an expenditure in the amount of \$64,912 as the final Quiet Zone payment for Vail Street to Carroll Avenue. The chair called the roll and the vote was taken: (Ayes) Commissioners Gertner, Hulse, Matias, Tillman, Wilson – 5; (Nays) None – 0. With 5 in favor and 0 opposed, the MOTION CARRIED.***

### **REVISED 2025 SALARY ORDER**

Attorney Sirinek explained that this is the third attempt to incorporate what the Commission approved the first and second time. As the Commission has approved each one something different has happened. He said the salary order setting salaries for employees of the Department of Redevelopment is still being used in accordance with the resolution that was approved on 12/9/24 as it relates to utilization of non-TIF money for operating expenses for the Redevelopment Commission since TIF money itself cannot be used for operating expenditures by statute, although there is no such prohibition for income that has been derived from TIF income (interest). Attorney Sirinek advised that the 2025 salary order continues to include the executive director and the business manager to be paid for by non-TIF revenue. It also includes the assistant planner and façade grant administrator (partial salary). However, because of the requirements of CDBG the Commission must approve that as well. The total salary order includes those positions, the five commissioners, as well as CDBG director and housing rehab specialist for a total amount of \$344,768.79 to be paid for by non-TIF revenue and paid by other sources of revenue not related to TIF revenue.

Commissioner Gertner asked if the proposed salaries include benefits as well.

Attorney Sirinek replied affirmatively.

The chair entertained a motion.

***A motion was made by Commissioner Gertner and seconded by Commissioner Hulse approving the revised 2025 Salary Order. The chair called the roll and the vote was taken: (Ayes) Commissioners Gertner, Hulse, Matias, Tillman, Wilson – 5; (Nays) None – 0. With 5 in favor and 0 opposed, the MOTION CARRIED.***

### **SoLa UPDATE**

Mr. York recalled that the Redevelopment Commission approved a Redevelopment Agreement before the first of the year which stipulates they have until June 30<sup>th</sup> to get everything started and break ground. He said he has been in contact with them once or twice a week for updates. They are working through some things to get their finances in place. They are working with AT&T and their fiber and will be putting up a fence soon.

They have started conversations with respective utilities on movement of sanitary and water lines.

**11<sup>TH</sup> STREET STATION GARAGE AND RESIDENTIAL TOWER**

Mr. York reported that the historic façade is starting to be installed. There will be black granite at the bottom. The station is framed out and the floor is in place. There is a little bit of a setback with opening time because it has been too cold to pour concrete. They are picking out pedestrian lights. They are pushing to get the station and parking garage done and then immediately will focus work on the tower.

Commissioner Matias suggested to Mr. York that a news release be made by the radio stations and/or newspaper to update the citizens because people are interested in what it looks like and what the timeframe is.

**REPORT BY LEGAL COUNSEL**

Attorney Sirinek noted that an executive session was held prior to this meeting. No decisions were made, and nothing was discussed other than what is permitted by Open Door Law.

**REPORT BY DIRECTOR**

Mr. York reported that soon there will be a new line on the balance sheet for the Transit Development District (TDD) which is a special TIF that was created for the station. Michigan City is one of eight communities that has it right now. The first payout will begin annually in March.

**COMMISSIONER COMMENTS**

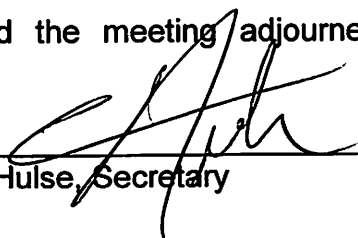
(None)

**NEXT MEETING DATE**

President Matias announced that the next meeting date has been changed from Monday, February 10, 2025 to Thursday, February 6, 2025, at 5:00 p.m. in the Council Chambers.

**ADJOURNMENT**

With all agenda items addressed, the chair declared the meeting adjourned at approximately 6:00 p.m.

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Clarence Hulse, Secretary