

**MINUTES OF A REGULAR MEETING OF THE
MICHIGAN CITY REDEVELOPMENT COMMISSION
MARCH 10, 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, March 10, 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

President Sheila Brillson Matias called the meeting to order at approximately 5:10 p.m.

ROLL CALL

Commissioners present: Clarence Hulse, Sheila Brillson Matias, Tracie Tillman, Sheree Wilson, and non-voting adviser Thomas Dombkowski (all in person)

Commissioners absent: Philip Latchford

Also in attendance: Executive Director Skyler York, Attorney Alan Sirinek, Business Manager Debbie Wilson, and Public Works Director Wendy Vachet (all in person)

MINUTES

The chair entertained a motion to accept the minutes of the 02/06/2025 executive session, and the 02/06/2025 regular hybrid meeting.

A motion was made by Commissioner Wilson and seconded by Commissioner Tillman accepting the minutes of the 02/06/2025 executive session and the 02/06/2025 regular hybrid meeting as submitted. The chair called for the vote: (Ayes) Commissioners Hulse, Matias, Tillman, Wilson – 4; (Nays) None – 0. With 4 in favor and 0 opposed, the MOTION CARRIED.

CLAIMS

Mr. York reviewed the corrected claims list dated February 6, 2025, noting the correction for January 2025 payroll totaling \$21,701.74.

The chair entertained a motion to accept the corrected claims list.

A motion was made by Commissioner Wilson and seconded by Commissioner Hulse accepting the corrected claims list dated February 6, 2025. The chair called for the vote: (Ayes) Commissioners Hulse, Matias, Tillman, Wilson – 4; (Nays) None – 0. With 4 in favor and 0 opposed, the MOTION CARRIED.

Mr. York read the claims listed into the record for March 10, 2025, noting that payroll for February, 2025 totaled \$32,055.59. In summary, March claims totaled: (Operating) \$533.70; (North TIF) \$472,346.84; (South TIF) \$12,970.00; (2023 Mixed Use Transit Project Bond) \$1,019,860.04.

The chair entertained a motion to accept the claims.

A motion was made by Commissioner Tillman and seconded by Commissioner Wilson accepting the claims list for March 10, 2025, as presented. The chair called for the vote: (Ayes) Commissioners Hulse, Matias, Tillman, Wilson – 4; (Nays) None – 0. With 4 in favor and 0 opposed, the MOTION CARRIED.

FINANCIAL REPORT

Mr. York reviewed the financial report dated 01/31/2025, summarizing cash balances as follows: Operating Account \$419,270.09; South Side TIF Account \$8,453,746.52; South Side TIF Debt Reserve Account \$336,308.50; South Side TIF Capital Account \$16,199.79; North End TIF Account \$3,322,986.60; East TIF Account \$679,416.61; Northeast TIF Account \$1,229,200.68; for total cash of \$14,457,128.79. Loans Receivable include the County Business Loan Fund in the amount of \$94,829.59, bringing total assets to \$14,551,958.38.

The chair entertained a motion to accept the financial report.

A motion was made by Commissioner Tillman and seconded by Commissioner Wilson accepting the financial report ended 01/31/2025 as presented. The chair called for the vote: (Ayes) Commissioners Hulse, Matias, Tillman, Wilson – 4; (Nays) None – 0. With 4 in favor and 0 opposed, the MOTION CARRIED.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Chris Plunk and Stephanie Sullivan (in person) with The Nightingale, 1108 Franklin Street, spoke about the Riverfront Liquor Licenses. Mr. Plunk explained that they have been doing events since October, 2024, and are hoping to get their own liquor license, but in the meantime they have been fortunate enough to partner with other local businesses to serve the alcohol during events. He said there currently are no licenses available through the state, so they are hoping and would support Michigan City's Riverfront District being expanded to include their location. He explained that they are

trying to bring more blues and jazz to the area; with people having gone there saying it is like a spot in downtown Chicago.

In response, Mr. York stated that they have talked about it and are considering expanding the district. He has provided Attorney Sirinek with revised language to simplify the rules and process. Mr. York pointed out that a few years ago, their location was not in a TIF District, but now they are located inside a TIF District after the expansion joining the North and South TIF Districts. Mr. York said they would meet the rules, but the Redevelopment Commission would have to adjust the rules to reflect that district.

Attorney Sirinek advised that the boundaries of the Riverfront District are set by statute, noting that he and Mr. York have talked about this location.

Mr. York acknowledged that they are right inside of the boundary but only about 3,000 feet, although they are now in a redevelopment district.

Attorney Sirinek stated he would get something to the Commission for consideration at their April meeting. The expansion would include their building and they would be eligible at that time.

Commissioner Tillman questioned if it would fall under consideration for a 2-way liquor license.

Mr. York replied that it would if any were available, but explained the issue by taking the 2-way license is that the rules for the municipal liquor license has a clause in it where they cannot have a liquor license for a certain period of time prior to getting it, and it would therefore disqualify them, hindering their opportunity to get a municipal liquor license for a period of time.

Mr. Plunk acknowledged that was correct, indicating that they would like to wait for the 3-way license when it becomes available to them.

Mr. York mentioned that also being discussed is a Downtown Dining District Fund as part of the revamp of this Liquor License application. If it is elected to change these rules it would go before the Common Council first.

With no other comments, President Matias closed the public comment portion of the meeting.

LETTER OF ENGAGEMENT – BARNES & THORNBURG

Mr. York acknowledged Randy Rompola being present via Zoom. Mr. York explained that this letter of engagement is for Mr. Rompola to take the Redevelopment Commission through the process of establishing a Housing TIF with Tryon Meadow. The

Redevelopment Commission entered into an Economic Development Agreement with them, and to date the developer has closed on the land. The next piece of this is for the Redevelopment Commission to start the process of establishing the Housing TIF, which will go through a similar process as a regular TIF which requires action by the Redevelopment Commission, then the Common Council, then back to the Redevelopment Commission. This letter of engagement is for Mr. Rompola to create those documents and start the process.

Mr. Rompola confirmed that it was correct.

Attorney Sirinek commented that the reason for another letter of engagement is because all the other letters of engagement with Mr. Rompola have been as bond counsel but this one is because the developer is the one who will be paying off the bond based on the TIF proceeds. The developer has requested to use their own bond counsel, but because of the Commission's and City's familiarity with Mr. Rompola, he will be involved in this process as special counsel to the Redevelopment Commission in an advisory role on this entire project.

Mr. York summarized that Mr. Rompola will be making sure that whatever is being created on the opposite side is statutorily correct and is good for the City.

The chair entertained a motion.

A motion was made by Commissioner Tillman and seconded by Commissioner Wilson approving the Letter of Engagement with Barnes & Thornburg, LLP as advisor to the Redevelopment Commission and City for the Tryon Meadow project. The chair called for the vote: (Ayes) Commissioners Hulse, Matias, Tillman, Wilson – 4; (Nays) None – 0. With 4 in favor and 0 opposed, the MOTION CARRIED.

Speaking on behalf of public awareness, Commissioner Tillman commented that there is no conflict of interest with Mr. Rompola serving as special counsel for this project.

Attorney Sirinek confirmed that was correct and that there will be no conflict of interest.

MOU – 2025 LANDSCAPE MAINTENANCE

Mr. York recalled this being discussed at the Commission's last meeting. This will be the second year using The City's Vector Control Department for landscape maintenance of Redevelopment-owned parcels. He said last year it worked out well. It saved the Commission money and it allowed for putting people to work as well as expand City services throughout the City. Mr. York stated that their services would be in the amount of \$95,000. He noted that he also added in properties that the Redevelopment Commission will be receiving. He, along with Attorney Sirinek and City Attorney LaPaich, are working to transfer those properties to the Redevelopment Commission.

Commissioner Matias mentioned that it is not only mowing, but it also is picking up the refuse from blowing debris and keeping tree limbs trimmed up to the height of 10'.

Mr. York commented that they do an excellent job and pick up the trash rather than mowing over it and scattering it around, and they keep Meijer Drive as clean as they can.

The chair entertained a motion.

A motion was made by Commissioner Wilson and seconded by Commissioner Hulse approving the MOU between the City of Michigan City and the Michigan City Redevelopment Commission for landscaping services to be rendered by the City Vector Control Department in the amount of \$95,000 for the 2025 season. The chair called for the vote: (Ayes) Commissioners Hulse, Matias, Tillman, Wilson – 4; (Nays) None – 0. With 4 in favor and 0 opposed, the MOTION CARRIED.

AUGUST MACK PROPOSAL

Attorney Sirinek introduced Paula Warren (via Zoom - audio/video) with August Mack who is the Project Manager for the Trail Creek cleanup project. Attorney Sirinek recalled that the trench interceptor was installed last year which was hopefully going to be the final step towards getting IDEM closure on this property so the Commission could move towards development. The goal after installation last spring was two rounds of testing; one in the summer season which occurred and the winter season (February). There was one disappointment from the results which necessitates another round of testing.

Ms. Warren added comments stating that there was a small result they were not expecting to see, so they want to delineate that through the new section of the pipe where other waters combine into it to see if it is going to be an issue or not. She said there is a possibility if the levels are low and the rest of the samples are below, it would be a great pass forward and they could continue their path of doing intermediation completion reports and requesting closure from the state.

Attorney Sirinek asked the location of the sample that did not come back okay.

Ms. Warren replied that there were two located on the south side of East 8th Street near Michigan Boulevard (along the laterals from where the mostly abandoned houses came into it). Those laterals were reinstated as requested. They think that is where those levels are coming from. It is not a lot of water trickling in through there, so she is hopeful as it combines with other water it will not continue to be a risk.

Overall, with the other testing that has been done, Attorney Sirinek commented that if it were not for this particular area, they would be ready for closure and getting ready for IDEM to sign off.

Ms. Warren confirmed that was correct. She said they conducted samples all through the neighborhood in all the sewers in other areas and they came back well below screen levels.

Attorney Sirinek asked when the second round of testing is scheduled for.

Ms. Warren replied that it is scheduled within the next week or two if they get approval.

If they get good results, Attorney Sirinek asked when they expect to get a response back from IDEM after they submit the report to them.

Ms. Warren replied that unfortunately the project manager at IDEM tends to be a little slow and has been out sick, although she said she would stay on top of it. She said 60-180 days for this type of report is standard.

Attorney Sirinek advised that the request tonight is for August Mack to do additional testing since a positive test result was not anticipated. The change order is to carry out that testing which is necessary to close this out and is in the amount of \$44,800.00.

Mr. York added that this is necessary if the Commission moves forward with the piece of land at the intersection of 8th/Michigan Boulevard. He said even though the result was not on that specific piece of land, it is important to receive a No Further Action (NFA) letter from IDEM to move forward with development there.

Ms. Warren clarified that the additional testing would include samples from that development parcel.

The chair entertained a motion.

A motion was made by Commissioner Tillman and seconded by Commissioner Wilson approving a proposal from August Mack for environmental services as outlined related to the former Begley/Concord Cleaners site in the amount of \$44,800.00. The chair called for the vote: (Ayes) Commissioners Hulse, Matias, Tillman, Wilson – 4; (Nays) None – 0. With 4 in favor and 0 opposed, the MOTION CARRIED.

I-94/421 OVERPASS ANNUAL MAINTENANCE PLAN

Mr. York explained that this is an annual maintenance plan as part of the betterments for the I-94/421 Overpass. Every year this must be submitted to INDOT. In the past this has been prepared and submitted by Global Engineering for a cost of about \$3,000.00. They will work with the City Engineer on any corrections or changes. Mr. York noted that some of the lights are out so they have instructed Global to turn the lights off while they look for alternative lighting to create the halo effect around the letters.

The chair entertained a motion.

A motion was made by Commissioner Wilson and seconded by Commissioner Hulse authorizing Global Engineering to prepare and submit the annual maintenance plan for the I-94/421 Overpass. The chair called for the vote: (Ayes) Commissioners Hulse, Matias, Tillman, Wilson – 4; (Nays) None – 0. With 4 in favor and 0 opposed, the MOTION CARRIED.

SoLa UPDATE

For public information, Attorney Sirinek explained that this is a \$300 million project that is being undertaken by the SoLa group out of Chicago. It is going to be a public/private garage, condominiums, hotel, and some townhouses.

Mr. York added that there will not be any apartments. Everything will be market rate. It is about a \$311 million project located at the former News Dispatch/Police Station site which is directly adjacent to City Hall.

Attorney Sirinek reported that everything being done with SoLa between now and the end of June will be a piecemeal process because there are piecemeal processes for funding sources. He said that part of the funding on this requires the Commission to create an Economic Improvement District (EID). He explained that this is something new for the City and is a new redevelopment tool that has been created by the state. One of the requirements of an EID to float EID bonds (paid for by the occupants of the development) is that you must have at least 60% of the ownership and 60% of the assessed valuation be by a private owner. With the City owning those parcels, they do not qualify as a private entity. To comport with the law, the Redevelopment Commission, in conjunction with the Economic Development Corporation (because they have done this before), will create two private entities. The City will then convey these two parcels to the two private entities for a period estimated to be between 120-180 days. During that period, the Redevelopment Commission will allow the developer to continue to work on getting their funding in order. At the same time, if in the event they do get their funding in order, the way the agreement is being drawn up with the entities, the Redevelopment Commission will direct those entities to convey those properties to the SoLa group. In the event they are not able to get the funding necessary for this project, then the Redevelopment Commission will direct the entities to convey that property back to ownership with the Redevelopment Commission.

Attorney Sirinek explained the reason for doing it this way is the simplicity of it. He, along with Mr. York, met with some of the EDC board last week. There are other ways to do it, but this is the most economically efficient way to do it and the easiest in terms of where to direct those properties once there is a determination of SoLa's funding level.

To put it in layman's terms, Commissioner Matias stated that it is a holding corporation to keep the property safe.

Mr. York indicated that it was correct, adding that it is also a reversion back to the Redevelopment Commission if it does not work out. He stated that this allows the Commission to move the EID forward as well. Once they make their first determination on establishing the EID, there is a 120-day period to establish it.

Commissioner Matias wanted it to be clear that the Redevelopment Commission is not giving City property to anyone; they are creating a holding space for that to keep the taxpayers' property safe. Once the outcome is determined in 180 days, the Commission will be able to make the appropriate move on behalf of the taxpayers.

The chair entertained a motion to approve Resolution 2025-1.

A motion was made by Commissioner Wilson and seconded by Commissioner Tillman approving Resolution 2025-1 A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY OF MICHIGAN CITY REDEVELOPMENT COMMISSION REGARDING THE SOLA SITE DEVELOPMENT PROJECT AGREEMENT. The chair called for the vote: (Ayes) Commissioners Hulse, Matias, Tillman, Wilson – 4; (Nays) None – 0. With 4 in favor and 0 opposed, the MOTION CARRIED.

Mr. York reported that they are still moving forward with everything; an RDA was executed in December. Both parties are moving forward with their obligations to achieve that RDA.

11TH STREET STATION GARAGE AND RESIDENTIAL TOWER

Mr. York reported that the project is moving along and that they anticipate opening the garage in April. They are installing the historic façade on the front of the building at the entrance to the train station.

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 stated that he has strictly taken over the Redevelopment Commission. He talked about the number of projects coming down the pipeline that have a lot of moving parts. As an example, he said one project he is working on has four different parts and many people are involved in it. To start managing those projects more dynamically, he requested funding for consulting services to help with project management and

investigate software for project management. Mr. York asked Wendy Vachet (Public Works Director) to address the Commission to introduce herself and explain what they are looking at.

Wendy Vachet (in person) introduced herself as the City's new Public Works Director. She explained that the request Mr. York was talking about is something that she brought to the table. She stated that these are sophisticated and complicated projects and require the ability to do more detailed scheduling, making sure that all the pieces and parts are understood, especially on the public side, with the processes. Ms. Vachet felt that this will be money well spent; the Commission and the public will better understand how these complex projects move, what schedule risks there are, and how much time and energy the project development process takes. It also helps the developer show that the Commission is sophisticated and able to do this and is looking forward to doing even more complex projects.

Mr. York agreed that articulating it to the public is sometimes overly complicated and complex.

Commissioner Matias agreed that it has gotten complicated as we are a complex growing community, and she feels there is a need to use technology to assist us.

Ms. Vachet stated that she is here to help Mr. York and others at the City. She said she looks forward to working with the Redevelopment Commission and seeing some of these projects become successful into fruition just like with the garage, the apartments, the investments in TOD, and other economic development projects.

Commissioner Hulse echoed what Ms. Vachet said as a lot of these projects have multiple layers. As new ones start, you still need to track all the other ones. He agreed that proper scheduling and software that can do multiple layer scheduling will be helpful.

Mr. York suggested a not to exceed amount be set at \$60,000 at this time.

The chair entertained a motion.

A motion was made by Commissioner Wilson and seconded by Commissioner Tillman authorizing a not to exceed amount of \$60,000.00 to provide project management and technical support for the Redevelopment Commission and the planning processes. The chair called for the vote: (Ayes) Commissioners Hulse, Matias, Tillman, Wilson – 4; (Nays) None – 0. With 4 in favor and 0 opposed, the MOTION CARRIED.

In another matter, Mr. York talked about a funding request from the City Engineer in the amount of \$3,500.00 for an extension of the trail. He recalled that the Singing Sands Trail has been built and traverses Highway 12. It was supposed to go under Highway 12 and

go through Taylor Street. The right of way is there to put the trail through to go under the Highway 12 Bridge, tapping into Taylor Street to start bringing people under that bridge and connecting in a different manner. He pointed out that currently, there is a lot of dumping and encampments going on under the bridge. The City Engineer believes that putting the trail under the bridge to create a space where people can walk to connect would dynamically change that scenario. He has already spoken to the state because there is an abutment there. He needs approval to stake the property at its points to find out how much space truly exists there to connect by going through there. Thate GLE would be the consulting engineer. Mr. York explained that this would not pay for the trail but they are trying to piggy back this onto the paving contracts being let right now to get an economic of scale.

For the record, Attorney Sirinek stated that this is for the continuation/extension of the Singing Sands Trail. He said the foundation that it was for redevelopment purposes was already established a long time ago when they first started investing money into Singing Sands.

Mr. York confirmed that it is correct, adding that the Redevelopment Commission has done all the engineering and has been integral in playing the role in getting that shovel ready for completeness. He said he believes this will continue economic development, bring people to our community, and will make it easier to get around the North End. He said even though the trail does go over the Highway 12 Bridge, it is seen as a perceived barrier and unnerving to come across on a bicycle.

The chair entertained a motion.

A motion was made by Commissioner Wilson and seconded by Commissioner Hulse authorizing funding in the amount of \$3,500.00 to Thate GLE for surveying right-of-way boundary points underneath the Highway 12 Bridge for purposes of determining the continuation/extension of Singing Sands Trail to Taylor Street. The chair called for the vote: (Ayes) Commissioners Hulse, Matias, Tillman, Wilson – 4; (Nays) None – 0. With 4 in favor and 0 opposed, the MOTION CARRIED.

COMMISSIONER COMMENTS

Commissioner Wilson commented about the fencing on Meijer Drive making a recommendation for the next time it needs to be repaired. She said they make reflective strips that can be laced through the fence or they could use those same reflective strips and bolt them to the supports. She said it should help because at nighttime you cannot see the black chain link fence.

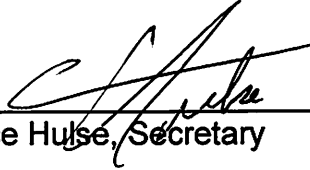
Mr. York said he would do some research and ask the City Engineer about it.

NEXT MEETING DATE

President Matias announced that the next meeting date is Monday, April 14, 2025.

ADJOURNMENT

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



Clarence Hulse, Secretary