EST. 1836

MICHIGAN CITY

INDIANA

MINUTES OF A REGULAR MEETING OF THE MICHIGAN CITY REDEVELOPMENT COMMISSION JUNE 8, 2026

The Michigan City Redevelopment Commission held their regular monthly meeting in the Common Council Chambers, City Hall, 100 East Michigan Boulevard, Michigan City, Indiana, on Monday, June 8, 2026, at 5:00 p.m. local time; the date, hour, and place duly established for the holding of said meeting. The meeting was available via Zoom and streaming live on the Access LaPorte County Facebook page.

CALL TO ORDER

President Sheila Brillson Matias called the meeting to order at approximately 5:05 p.m.

ROLL CALL

Commissioners present: Clarence Hulse, Philip Latchford, Sheila Brillson Matias, Tracie Tillman, and Sheree Wilson (all in person)

Commissioners absent: Thomas Dombkowski

Staff in attendance: Executive Director Skyler York (in person), Attorney Tramel Raggs (in person), Redevelopment Business Manager Debbie Wilson (via Zoom)

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

The chair entertained a motion to amend the agenda, moving item #10 up to #8.

Motion by Commissioner Wilson and seconded by Commissioner Tillman approving the 6/8/2026 agenda as amended. The chair called for voice vote: (Ayes) Commissioners Hulse, Latchford, Matias, Tillman, Wilson – 5; (Nays) None – 0. With 5 in favor and 0 opposed, the MOTION CARRIED.

MINUTES

The chair entertained a motion for approval of the minutes of the executive session and regular hybrid meetings of May 11, 2026.

Motion by Commissioner Tillman and seconded by Commissioner Hulse approving the minutes of the executive session and regular hybrid meetings of May 11, 2026

as submitted. The chair called for voice vote: (Ayes) Commissioners Hulse, Latchford, Matias, Tillman, Wilson – 5; (Nays) None – 0. With 5 in favor and 0 opposed, the MOTION CARRIED.

CLAIMS

The chair entertained a motion to approve the claims list for June 8, 2026.

Motion by Commissioner Latchford and seconded by Commissioner Tillman approving the claims list for June 8, 2026 as submitted. The chair called for voice vote: (Ayes) Commissioners Hulse, Latchford, Matias, Tillman, Wilson – 5; (Nays) None – 0. With 5 in favor and 0 opposed, the MOTION CARRIED.

FINANCIAL REPORT

Mr. York summarized the financial report for the month ending 04/30/2026, with account balances as follows: (Operating) $254,058.24; (South Side TIF) $8,276,814.24; (South Side TIF Debt Reserve) $336,308.50; (South Side TIF Capital) $16,199.79; (North End TIF) $1,518,347.23; (East Side TIF) $947,575.50; (Northeast TIF) $1,571,955.70; (Transit Development District) $456,780.60, for total cash in the amount of $13,378,039.80. Loans Receivable include the Forgivable Loan in the amount of $450,000 and the County Business Loan Fund in the amount of $94,829.59, for total assets in the amount of $13,922,869.39.

The chair entertained a motion for approval of the financial report ending 4/30/2026.

Motion by Commissioner Latchford and seconded by Commissioner Wilson approving the financial report ending April 30, 2026. The chair called for voice vote: (Ayes) Commissioners Hulse, Latchford, Matias, Tillman, Wilson – 5; (Nays) None – 0. With 5 in favor and 0 opposed, the MOTION CARRIED.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Tommy Kulavik (in person), 1316 Ohio Street, Michigan City, Indiana, stated he hopes the Council moves their meeting from Tuesday to Monday to accommodate National Night Out on 8/4/26; commented that the fence needs to be taken down on the You Are Beautiful site to accommodate parking for the Lubeznik Art Festival in August this year.

REQUEST TO UTILIZE 7TH/FRANKLIN LOTS

Mr. York stated that the Michigan City Police Department is requesting the use of the lots at 7th/Franklin for MCPD National Night Out on 8/4/26. Chief Forker provided Commissioners with a site plan showing the proposed layout for the lots during the event.

They will also go to the Board of Works for approval to close 7th Street in that block. Mr. York said this is something they do every year and it is a big success.

The chair entertained a motion.

A motion was made by Commissioner Wilson and seconded by Commissioner Tillman approving the request by the Michigan City Police Department to utilize the lots at 7th/Franklin on 8/4/26 for MCPD National Night Out, pending approval by the Board of Public Works & Safety for the street closure. The chair called for voice vote: (Ayes) Commissioners Hulse, Latchford, Matias, Tillman, Wilson – 5; (Nays) None – 0. With 5 in favor and 0 opposed, the MOTION CARRIED.

Mr. York requested that the agenda be amended to include a request from the Michigan City Park Department to utilize the northwest lot at 7th/Franklin for MC Park Movie Night on July 24, 2026.

The chair entertained a motion to amend the agenda.

A motion was made by Commissioner Wilson and seconded by Commissioner Latchford to amend the agenda to include the request by the Park Department. The chair called for voice vote: (Ayes) Commissioners Hulse, Latchford, Matias, Tillman, Wilson – 5; (Nays) None – 0. With 5 in favor and 0 opposed, the MOTION CARRIED.

A motion was made by Commissioner Wilson and seconded by Commissioner Tillman approving the request by the Michigan City Park Department to utilize the lot at the northwest corner of 7th/Franklin for MC Park Movie Night on 7/24/26, pending approval by the Board of Public Works & Safety for the street closure. The chair called for voice vote: (Ayes) Commissioners Hulse, Latchford, Matias, Tillman, Wilson – 5; (Nays) None – 0. With 5 in favor and 0 opposed, the MOTION CARRIED.

FAÇADE GRANT

444 Wabash Street: AZM Leasing, Inc. (Lakeshore Cafe)
Mr. York acknowledged Annie being present from Lakeshore Cafe. He said she has submitted all the necessary documents, although she had a bit of a hold up with historic review pushing the project out a month so now she has contractors waiting to do the work.

Annie Gustin (in person) introduced herself as the owner of Lakeshore Café. She talked about the project stating that the deck is old and needs to be rebuilt, so they would like to also expand it out so they can have seating in front of the restaurant again. Ms. Gustin said they acquired a wine license a few years ago, so in order for people to partake, there must be a fence or a blocked area. In the back where the seating currently is, Ms. Gustin said they want to build a pergola over that area to make it more inviting. There will be built-in planters to go around it to make it look a bit cleaner.

Mr. York referred to the before photos and the after photos of what is being proposed. He said they will abide by the rules of the Historic Preservation Commission. He said the total project cost is $36,393.78, pointing out that the façade grant covers up to 60%, with a maximum of $30,000. The request for reimbursement from the façade grant would be $21,836.25. Mr. York said this building has been there for a long time and this is a much-needed improvement.

Ms. Gustin stated that she has worked at Lakeshore Café for over 20 years and bought the building and the business three years ago. She talked about her excitement at making all the changes she has visualized over the last 20 years. Next year will be 30 years since they have opened.

The chair entertained a motion.

A motion was made by Commissioner Wilson and seconded by Commissioner Hulse approving a façade grant in the amount of $21,836.25 for exterior work as described in the application for Lakeshore Café, 444 Wabash Street. The chair called for voice vote: (Ayes) Commissioners Hulse, Latchford, Matias, Tillman, Wilson – 5; (Nays) None – 0. With 5 in favor and 0 opposed, the MOTION CARRIED.

ANNUAL TIF PASS-THROUGH LETTERS

Andy Mouser (via Zoom) introduced himself with Baker Tilly, stating that this is a requirement that has been in place for a number of years, although there is a new piece of that requirement this year. Each year, all redevelopment commissions in Indiana must notify all overlapping taxing units, as well as the county auditor, of the intent to either capture all assessed value or to pass through assessed value within the TIF areas. The new piece of that requirement this year is if a redevelopment commission does not notify the county auditor, the county auditor is directed to automatically pass through 5% of the assessed value from each TIF area. This is done by June 15th each year, This is a determination being made now for taxes payable next year in 2027. There are three separate letters to cover all the outstanding TIF allocation areas – North, South, East, Northeast, and includes the various allocation areas that make up each of the larger economic development areas (i.e., mixed-use transit allocation area within the North TIF and the recently created Tryon Meadows allocation areas). These letters notify the overlapping taxing units of the Redevelopment Commission's intent to capture all assessed value in 2027 and would also notify the county auditor so the intent can be reflected in the tax software next year.

The chair entertained a motion.

A motion was made by Commissioner Latchford and seconded by Commissioner Wilson approving the annual TIF pass-through letters indicating the Commission's intent to capture all assessed value in 2027. The chair called for voice vote: (Ayes) Commissioners Hulse, Latchford, Matias, Tillman, Wilson – 5; (Nays) None – 0. With 5 in favor and 0 opposed, the MOTION CARRIED.

REQUEST TO UTILIZE YOU ARE BEAUTIFUL SITE

Mr. York explained that this is something the Commission does annually for the Lubeznik Center for parking during their art festival. They also go through the Board of Works to close the street.

The chair entertained a motion.

A motion was made by Commissioner Tillman and seconded by Commissioner Hulse approving the request by the Lubeznik Art Center to utilize the You Are Beautiful site for parking during the Lubeznik Art Festival on 8/15/26-8/16/26, pending approval by the Board of Public Works & Safety for the street closure. The chair called for voice vote: (Ayes) Commissioners Hulse, Latchford, Matias, Tillman, Wilson – 5; (Nays) None – 0. With 5 in favor and 0 opposed, the MOTION CARRIED.

APPROVAL OF FUNDING: AMERIPLEX DRIVE EXTENSION CONSTRUCTION

Mr. York acknowledged Ryan Laughlin from Haas & Associates being present via Zoom. Mr. York recalled that the Commission previously approved the issuance of bidding for Ameriplex Drive. He explained that Ameriplex Drive was fully designed and partially built in 2016. It was built in conjunction with the Haskell-Barker building on Cleveland Avenue. At that time, the Redevelopment Commission agreed to finish Ameriplex Drive when the building to the rear was ready to be built, which is where it is at now.

Ryan Laughlin added comments stating that the project was put out to bid through the Board of Works. Bids were received and opened at their May 18, 2026 meeting. He said they initially issued a contract award recommendation letter based on the lowest apparent bidder, which was Milestone Contractors. However, the City determined that the contractor violated the terms of the responsible bidder ordinance, and their bid could not be accepted. Out of the other two bidders, Rieth-Riley was the low bid. At the June 1, 2026 Board of Works meeting, the City Engineer made his recommendation to accept Rieth-Riley's bid. The contract was awarded in the amount of $510,837.72. Mr. Laughlin stated that they reviewed the bid and found no reason to reject it, so they concur with the City Engineer's recommendation. Mr. Laughlin stated that it is now just a matter of the Redevelopment Commission approving it as they are funding the construction of the road.

Mr. York agreed with Mr. Laughlin, adding that the City Engineer reviewed the design and is in support of everything that is in the right-of-way.

The chair entertained a motion.

A motion was made by Commissioner Latchford and seconded by Commissioner Wilson approving funding for the construction of the Ameriplex Drive extension in the amount of $510,837.72. The chair called for voice vote: (Ayes) Commissioners Hulse, Latchford, Matias, Tillman, Wilson – 5; (Nays) None – 0. With 5 in favor and 0 opposed, the MOTION CARRIED.

APPROVAL OF CONTRACT: WHEATLEY GROUP

Mr. York acknowledged Paul Wheatley being present via Zoom. He explained that Mr. Wheatley has been working with the Commission as a consultant. With all the projects going on, Mr. York said that he needs another set of hands to help him with agreements and things of that nature. He said they are from the southern part of the state, but they are familiar with Michigan City.

Paul Wheatley introduced himself, stating he is the principal of the Wheatley Group. They have an office in New Albany, Indiana and recently opened an office in Fishers. Their firm specializes in analysis and project management work. He was a former redevelopment director and before starting the Wheatley Group 12 years ago, he was the director of marketing and finance at the River Ridge Development Authority in southern Indiana. Mr. Wheatley explained that this is an on-call type of agreement with specific work orders as needed. The contract has a general scope, but the work order would be more clearly defined and has a not to exceed amount of $50,000.

Mr. York added that instead of loading one contractor with everything, this would give him another outlet to give things to someone else. Mr. York said that Mr. Wheatley is familiar with redevelopment work and projects and has experience in similar projects that we are doing in Michigan City.

The chair entertained a motion.

A motion was made by Commissioner Wilson and seconded by Commissioner Latchford approving an Engagement Letter with the Wheatley Group for Economic Development and Redevelopment Consulting Services in an amount not to exceed $50,000. The chair called for voice vote: (Ayes) Commissioners Hulse, Latchford, Matias, Tillman, Wilson – 5; (Nays) None – 0. With 5 in favor and 0 opposed, the MOTION CARRIED.

APPROVAL OF CONTRACT: TOOLE DESIGN

Mr. York recalled that the Commission previously approved a scoping contract with Toole Design for $5,000. He said the two most important things that are critical to Michigan City from a redevelopment and downtown standpoint is creating a zoning district in our TDD and getting that implemented for clarity from a planners standpoint but also to provide clarity from a zoning standpoint for developments, which could include expanding our form-based code downtown, specifically around the train station, both north and south of 11th Street. Toole will lead us through the planning process to update everything that is considered the TDD.

Mr. York explained the other piece of it, recalling that when the train station was built, we expanded our North TIF into a new area, which is Michigan Boulevard. We have tools like the façade grant and upper story grant, but Mr. York explained that currently our zoning outlaws upper story residential, so a mixed-use building is non-conforming, and it is hard to sell those buildings. Toole will take a comprehensive look at how to put people back into the corridor to encourage redevelopment in that corridor, and what tools can be put in place from a redevelopment standpoint by updating our zoning code on Michigan Boulevard.

Mr. York said those are the two immediate things, and sometime in the future he would like them to look at our infill housing standards we currently have and see if there are ways to make it more encouraging to infill our traditional neighborhoods, and help update our zoning code and get us to the end. Mr. York said he has asked them to not just produce a document for us, but to take us all the way to implementation, including through the Plan Commission, public meetings, workshops, and City Council, getting us to a product at the end that can be implemented. The plan would be kick-off in July and get started.

Speaking for the public, Commissioner Matias commented that we, like all communities, are great at getting plans written and then they go on a shelf; you mean to get them implemented but just do not get to it. When talking about a product at the end, Commissioner Matias asked how we can make sure that the product is user-friendly, it is useful to all of the departments that it will touch upon, and useful to the property owners.

Mr. York responded, stating that this will be zoning heavy from a standpoint of updating our zoning code. Our zoning code was created in 2010 and implemented in 2011. Mr. York said it is good enough to get us through what we need to do but now it is really changing quickly so we are seeing a lot more variance requests coming through the Board of Zoning Appeals which is an indicator from a planning standpoint that there is a lot of obsoleteness in our zoning code. He said we really need to encourage this update and make sure we go all the way through to the end with implementation. That process includes going before the Plan Commission with a new zoning amendment, who then makes a recommendation to the Council. The Council hears it on first reading, then has workshops, then it goes to second and third reading for implementation. That becomes an amendment to our zoning code and redacts the existing zoning code so it then can be used going forward. It is literally changing our zoning code to implementation.

Commissioner Tillman asked if the research and studies could be done in-house.

Mr. York replied that staff would not have the time to do this research. He said zoning codes are very complicated. There are a lot of parcels that are going to be involved in this, probably 200-300 in each location to make sure we are not unduly hurting any of those parcels or those owners. Mr. York said we really need to have someone come in and do it. Toole has transportation planners, engineers, and a lot of different people from all over. They can take a comprehensive look, and they can bring us ideas we have not thought about like things that are working in a similar city to ours that we could implement here. It will take organization and public meetings. Mr. York said it helps us to have an outsider perspective to look at it because we sometimes have preconceived notions.

Commissioner Latchford referred to Mr. York's comments about the public meetings and the outsider perspective versus doing it in-house. He asked if we can be assured that we can guard against an outsider perspective that really does not understand the nuances of what we might want to accomplish, and we have an ability to collaborate with this project and not necessarily accept their zoning.

Mr. York responded, stating that they will come here and probably do a charrette over a series of days to collect information, synergize it, and repeat that back to us to tell us what they heard. Mr. York said they will guide us, but we still hold the cards on what the outcome is. If we do not like what is presented, we can kick it back to them and tell them to redo it. Mr. York also pointed out that they have done a couple of other projects for us, and they are already familiar with Michigan City and our zoning code, so it made sense to have them do this. Mr. York said this contract is a not-to-exceed amount of $160,000 and would come out of the TDD funds. He said he is also looking for a grant to supplement this as well.

The chair entertained a motion.

A motion was made by Commissioner Latchford and seconded by Commissioner Hulse approving a consulting agreement with Toole Design Group for Strategic Corridors: Urban Design and Zoning in an amount not-to-exceed $160,000.00. The chair called for voice vote: (Ayes) Commissioners Hulse, Latchford, Matias, Tillman, Wilson – 5; (Nays) None – 0. With 5 in favor and 0 opposed, the MOTION CARRIED.

11TH STREET STATION GARAGE AND RESIDENTIAL TOWER

Mr. York gave an update stating that they are still on track with the project. July is their pull-out date, but he said he thinks it will be more like August. There have been some setbacks with the high winds and not being able to get up on the building. Mr. York said staff have been working with them on 10th Street improvements, the paving, concrete, curbs, and lights. Marquiss Electric is working on the issues with the lights, some of those issues more than likely stemming from the construction.

Commissioner Hulse added that their goal is to try and get it done this summer and go through a phased approach to get people in the building over the next six months, hopefully filling up the building by the end of the year. There will be a ribbon cutting once there are people living in the building, probably in October or November. The appliances are being installed. They have been looking at different types of commercial businesses for the first floor.

REPORT BY DIRECTOR

Mr. York reported on the Fifth and Pine development, noting that a developer has been selected. He wanted to assure everyone that it is still moving forward. The developer has hit all their deadlines to date that they have been given. They have submitted a master development plan to us. They are creative with the way they are trying to finance this. This is a big project, so they are trying to make sure it fits on the block and make sure the financing is good for them and us.

COMMISSIONER COMMENTS

Commissioner Matias talked about the westside neighborhoods around the prison and how something needs to be done about it. She said the sidewalks along Highway 12 are almost non-existent or overgrown, the lighting is not good, and some streets need repair. She asked everyone to think about programming to help the westside with residential façade assistance, porch rebuilding, lighting, and road repair. She said this is a gateway to the community and questioned what we can do to address the safety and aesthetics of the westside.

NEXT MEETING DATE

President Matias announced that the next regular meeting date is July 13, 2026.

ADJOURNMENT

With all matters of business addressed, the chair declared the meeting adjourned at approximately 5:55 p.m.

Sheree Wilson

~~Phil Latchford, Secretary~~
Sheree Wilson, Vice-President