THE URBAN RENEWAL AGENCY
OF THE CITY OF TWIN FALLS

URBAN RENEWAL AGENCY
MEETING MINUTES
April 11, 2011

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The Urban Renewal Agency held its regular monthly meeting at noon this date in the Twin Falls City Council Chambers located at 305 3rd Avenue East, Twin Falls. Those present were:

Present:

Gary Garnand	URA Chair
Tom Frank	URA Vice Chair
Cindy Bond	URA Secretary
Larry Hall	URA Member
Bob Richards	URA Member
Bill Koch	URA Member
Leon Smith	URA Member

Also present:

Melinda Anderson	Urban Renewal Executive Director
Brent Hyatt	Twin Falls Assistant Finance Director
Mitch Humble	Twin Falls Community Development Director
Renee Carraway	Twin Falls City Zoning and Development Manager
Trip Craig	Twin Falls City Council Liaison
Leon Mills	Twin Falls County Commissioner Liaison
Mike Tracy	Tracy Communications
Mark Rivers	Brix & Company
Trudi Nutile	City of Twin Falls Economic Development, Admin Asst

Chair Gary Garnand called the meeting to order at 12:02 p.m.

Chair Garnand welcomed Representative Leon Smith's return from Boise and extended his thanks to the URA staff and subcommittees for their work on the many projects for the agency over the last month.

Agenda Item – Consent Agenda

Tom Frank made a motion to approve the consent agenda as submitted. Bob Richards seconded the motion and a roll call vote showed all members present voted in favor of the motion.

Agenda Item – Presentation and request for approval of 5 BID match fund projects for $35,732.24.

Melinda Anderson reported the board approved the BID match fund criteria in February for the remaining BID funds. The project is to aid property owners with façade improvements by providing a 50% match up to $10,000.00. The program is designed to reimburse the property owner once paid invoices, etc. are presented to the URA for completed work. Melinda suggested the board set a time frame of possibly six months for the approved applicants to complete their project. The property owner will be responsible for any amount over the approved project amount. Melinda asked each of the applicants to present their proposals to the board and to keep their presentations at five minutes.

Susan Hall owns Susan's Antiques and Collectibles located at 227 Main Avenue East. Susan's project is to repair structural issues with the building which include replacing brick work and mortar, new double paned windows, and new awnings. The total project cost is approximately $15,544.00. The committee recommends approving the entire project.

Melinda reported the next applicant, Scott Andrus who owns Escape Salon located at the corner of Main Avenue East and Jerome Street, is not attending today's meeting via an email she received. In lieu of Mr. Andrus' absence, Melinda presented the request to the board using the overhead to explain in detail the proposed work on the building. Escape Salon is located at the corner of Main Avenue East and Jerome Street. The proposal includes plans to power wash and reseal brick. In addition, Mr. Andrus plans to cover up brick on the top façade, add a "Welcome to Historic Downtown" sign and lighting and add neon from the front of the building to the back along the alley. The sub-committee recommends aiding with the cleaning and sealing of the brick.

Susan Nichols with Twin Falls Times News located at 132 Fairfield Street West. Susan's proposal includes paintwork on the front, removal of the Juniper bushes and adds lighted signs on both corners of the building that can be seen on both 2nd Avenue and Fairfield. Additionally, plans include building an 8' metal frame that will hold a canvas picture on the 2nd Avenue side of the building near the mail boxes that can change quarterly. The board recommends funding the full request.

Curtis Eaton owns the "O'Dunken's Building" located on the corner of Main Avenue North and Shoshone Street North. The project consists of replacing window frames, windows and doors to improve energy efficiency and painting the façade. All work will be completed on the ground level. The sub-committee recommends funding the full request.

Tim Obenchain owns Obenchain Insurance located on Main Avenue South. Tim's request involves getting more into the office/ retail look by installing new thermal windows with bronze dividers. The large windows will be replaced with 3x3 windows and make the building more energy efficient. The sub-committee recommends funding the full project.

Tom Frank moved to approve the five BID match funds project for a total of $35,732.24 as presented and documented by the sub-committee and Larry Hall seconded the motion.

Tom and Bob encouraged anyone wanting to complete façade work to submit applications as soon as possible as the funds will not last too long. On behalf of the board, Gary Garnand commended the five applicants for taking the lead in this project and their role in leadership to the community and downtown.

Tom Frank amended the motion to add "projects will be completed within six months of the board approval date" and Cindy Bond seconded the motion. A roll call vote showed all members present voted in favor of the amendment to the original motion.

A roll call vote showed all members present voted in favor of the amended motion.

Agenda Item – Consideration of a request to approve a proposal to improve 6 downtown kiosks.

Melinda Anderson amended the agenda item to downtown kiosks as there are more than six kiosks downtown. The agency can help make improvements to publicly owned infrastructure, which include the kiosks. Other projects for downtown development include improving kiosks, a new downtown website, and starting a new merchant group that Mark Rivers has been involved in putting together.

Two improvements include putting up artwork on three of the kiosks and painting all the kiosks as they are beginning to show the wear from weather. Mark Rivers presented ideas for the artwork. The posters can play into the beautification improvements for downtown. Mark believes it is paramount that downtown show a liveliness and keep things up-to-date to attract new business. The artwork images are reflective of life in Twin Falls and Mark's company spoke to local artists and photographers as well as several members from Downtown Alive to gather feedback. Two sides of the kiosks will have artwork and the third side will create a framed bulletin board for people to post items or events.

Melinda presented on the overhead a sample of the kiosks with the artwork. Signs Now quoted $3,331.32 for the artwork, bulletin boards, frames, graffiti covers and installation for three kiosks.

The second improvement involves painting all the kiosks and benches to update and maintain the appearance. There are a total of twelve kiosks in various configurations along Main Avenue. The kiosks are comprised of a rooftop, pillar and cement foundation.

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Staff is working with three contractors to obtain estimates and is requesting the board approve staff to award the contract up to $3,250.00 in order to keep the project moving forward.

Mark Rivers commented a number of the merchants are investing in landscape improvements and he also has been working with a couple of landscape companies to add to the hard scape downtown. The idea is to complete as many of these projects as close together to create high impact and productivity.

Discussion followed with members commenting that this is a great time to show that the URA truly cares about the downtown revitalization. The improvements happening now are very visible and will attract business downtown, even helping to shift attitudes that something is happening downtown. Inquiries regarding changing the artwork periodically and maintenance of the kiosks were answered by Mark Rivers who commented that downtown merchants/group expressed an interest that they may be able to take this project over in one-two years. Additionally, the new downtown alive group has set up subcommittees; one specifically is focused on beautification activities geared specifically towards maintenance of landscaping and maintenance of items like the kiosks. Members commented this is a great project to brighten up downtown. Many individuals downtown have already invested funds or are willing to invest funds for downtown projects.

Cindy Bond moved to approve the proposal to improve the downtown kiosks and seating areas as presented and Tom Frank seconded the motion.

Tom Frank commented he feels this is geared more toward marketing rather than infrastructure. However, other private parties are stepping up to the plate and this is a hand-up, not a hand-out.

A roll call vote showed all members present voted in favor of the motion.

Agenda Item – Review of HB95 – Urban Renewal Legislation

Leon Smith reported that six bills came to the house floor and two passed. The senate passed one bill (HB 95) and the chairman of the senate committee included Mr. Smith and others who had knowledge of Urban Renewal Agencies to mitigate damage to the bill. Leon summarized the changes to House Bill No. 95.

- Any agency created after July 1, 2011 cannot conduct business without an election, either citywide or county wide dependent on the municipality in which such agency was created.
- A board member can now be removed by the council or a majority vote of the URA board. Board positions becoming vacant prior to the scheduled term can be filled by a majority vote of the URA board.
- There are several changes pertaining to public meetings and submitting information for public viewing/comments.
- The time for the planning commission to submit written recommendations to the local governing body regarding new plans is extended from 30 to 60 days.
- The new bill does not allow forest or ag land to be included in an Urban Renewal plan without the landowner's consent.
- The Prohibited Amendment allows for consolidating revenue allocation areas (RAA) but cannot be amended to extend boundaries with the exception that the RAA may be extended one time so long as the total area to be added is not greater than ten percent of the existing RAA the and must be contiguous to the existing RAA and cannot be established solely by a shoestring or strip of land.
- The bonds have been reduced from 30 to 20 years and the revenue allocation areas have been diminished from 24 to 20 years. The amendment grandfathers everything in existence and provides tools to continue and work to pay off the bonds and distribute the balance to the taxing districts that are part of the RAA. The amendment is retroactive to January 2011.

Chair Gary Garnand inquired how the Twin Falls URA will be impacted by these changes. Melinda stated we should not see any impact by the changes with our current operations and do not foresee any negative results. Melinda extended her thanks to Leon for his advocacy and support with educating other legislators how URAs work.

Tom Frank inquired about updating the bylaws to reflect changes to the election of board members. Melinda will check into any necessary changes.

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Agenda Item – Downtown redevelopment activity update – Mark Rivers

Mark Rivers reported he has spent a lot of time with small business and property owners to find existing opportunities downtown. This has allowed him to understand where we might place tenants and make the best impact. The Downtown Alive group has launched a website, meets monthly and is working together to tackle projects. The beautification piece will help to look and play the part as we attract new business and investment. The payoff is the new investment and redevelopment of properties downtown. Mark is wrapping up an information packet to use over the next 30 days as an outreach program. Old Towne properties are available, ready to go and as a community we should present the message that we are open for business and there are opportunities in the downtown core.

Agenda Item – Communications update – Mike Tracy

Mike Tracy expressed his gratitude to Leon for the opportunity to work with him in his office. In addition to the March 2011 update, Mike reported using the C3 campaign to launch the communication plan set the stage and coverage from September to date is positive from both print and media broadcast. The steps have been positive and we have received good coverage from painting the side of a structure to the approval of a waterline.

Agenda Item – Public input and/or items from the Urban Renewal Agency Board

There being no further business, Gary Garnand adjourned the meeting at 1:10 p.m.

Next regular scheduled Urban Renewal meeting is Monday, May 9, 2011.

Respectfully submitted,

Trudi Nutile
Administrative Assistant

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