

CITY OF EAST CHICAGO
ECONOMIC BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION
Thursday, February 25, 2021

BOARD MEMBERS:	STAFF:
Jesse Avitia	Douglas Powers
Leon Valdez	Richard Morrisroe
Ezell Foster	Esperanza Ceja-Ramirez

Reported by: Peggy S. LaLonde, CSR, RPR
Fissinger & Associates

Call to Order: 4:30 p.m.

Pledge of Allegiance

Roll Call: Present: Jesse Avitia
Leon Valdez

Staff Present: Esperanza Ceja-Ramirez
Douglas Powers
Richard Morrisroe

MR. AVITIA: Meeting is called to order.
The first item on the agenda, a motion to approve the
minutes of Thursday, January 28, 2021.

MR. VALDEZ: Second.

MR. AVITIA: Roll Call.

Roll Call: "All in Favor": Jesse Avitia
Abstain: Leon Valdez Opposed: None

MR. AVITIA: Old Business: None
New Business is next on the agenda.
Who's present to discuss this?

MR. POWERS: Doug Powers, I'm the City
Planner. The first item on the agenda we'd actually
like to table that until the next meeting. So if that's
all right with you -- we can move on to the next item.

The next item on the agenda would be
the Facade Status List that you received for the years
of 2021, 2020, 2019 and 2018. So, 2021 obviously just
started, but this way you have these to review, and as
the year goes on, you can be apprised as to how much is
being spent, in which areas, from which budget too.

1 MR. AVITIA: This resolution, we are
2 suppose to wait for next time?

3 MR. POWERS: The resolution that you
4 signed, I'm sure you are aware that was the actual
5 resolution that Corporate Counsel had revised that and
6 added the corrections prior to it being signed.
7 However, it looks like there may be a few changes that
8 are required prior to ratifying and presenting with all
9 that should be on there before it could go in front of
10 Common Council. So at this time the resolution isn't
11 able to be fully ratified by you and presented to the
12 Common Council.

13 MR. MORRISROE: The Corporation Counsel
14 and Doug discussed it, and she asked that it be tabled
15 for today's meeting. She will bring it back next
16 meeting.

17 MR. AVITIA: We table it then?

18 MR. MORRISROE: Yes. I don't think you
19 need a motion.

20 MR. POWERS: No, we don't.

21 MR. AVITIA: We'll move on to next item
22 under New Business, which is the Facade Applicants for
23 years '21, '20, '19 and '18. Would you expand on this
24 list and give us an idea what the presentation is about?
25

MR. POWERS: So, let me -- so basically
what this list is doing is showing you as to which
projects have been approved from the various grants. As
you are aware, we have two different grants that we are
dealing with; one being the city-wide, which is the
50/50, versus the North Harbor, which is the 80/20.
Currently under 2021 we have one listed that is, for
example, eligible for the city-wide. And on the year
2020, they have one listed on here.

21 However -- you know -- we are
22 working with the controller's office to figure out
23 where -- you know -- which account they utilized for the
24 other ones that were approved in that year. As of this
25 time this is what we have listed on there that was
approved in the previous year.

26 Now, if you go back to the 2019
27 budget, you can see there, that the amounts that were
28 approved on the first page is for the 50/50, as to where

1 the 80/20 is listed on the second page. So I'm not sure
2 what you would like me to -- you know -- go in detail
3 which ones these are. But how these are listed is, it
4 will say, first, broken into first facade project it's
5 eligible for, and have listed what the location of the
6 property is, and then it will have listed -- you know --
7 who the owner was, the contract, the amount that was
8 granted for this, along with what the contract proposal
9 was, and the remaining balance, if there is one.

10 MR. MORRISROE: If you notice -- if I may
11 briefly -- on the 2021 Facade, where it has the G & J
12 Auto Parts, and then at the end it has comments. It has
13 at the far right, pending resolution agreement, approval
14 for payments. This is -- many items are caught in the
15 switches between the Mayor and Council over whether or
16 not they have the prior approval for the project. This
17 one would have been paid and done with by this time and
18 there would be a check number, like there are for the
19 previous year. But for that project, which I think the
20 contractor is occasionally calling for this wondering
21 where his half -- the other half of the money is. Mr.
22 Powers is in the position of trying to explain what
23 can't be explained.

24 MR. POWERS: That's correct. This one is
25 still pending. At this time they had submitted all the
26 necessary documents. This person was in front of the
27 EDC I believe last November, if I'm not mistaken.
28 However, it's taken up to the end of January, prior to
29 them getting all the documents that were needed, in
30 order for it to be processed. And so after that time,
31 before this could go in front of yourself or the Common
32 Council, there's been some changes due to the
33 appropriation requests. So this will have to be
34 ratified by the EDC, and then we'll have to get the
35 funding from the Common Council as well. So that's
36 where part of that time delay is happening with that
37 one.

38 MR. AVITIA: Well, you know, I was
39 looking back at the four years, and I added up all the
40 amounts that were spent, actually spent in those four
41 years, and I got \$1,124,575 all four years. And I see
42 the activity level is a lot higher in '18 and '19.
43 Definitely '20 is self explanatory.

44 Then I looked at the funding in the
45 Interlocal Agreement, that we have \$150,000 and \$100,000
46 for the 50/50. Now is that going to be enough to

1 maintain the program at the level that we would like to
2 have it?

3 MR. POWERS: So, currently -- you are
4 correct, that is -- you know -- 150 for the one and 100
5 for the other, totaling \$250,000. Last year we did not
6 have that much. In previous years we had more. So --
7 you know -- with what I think will be the best use in
8 this case moving forward with this year, because we do
9 have a handful of people that have expressed interest in
10 our -- you know -- currently they haven't submitted
11 applications, but they intend to within the next month
12 or so. So, that what will probably be best to try to go
13 with the amount that we have requested. If we have
14 issues later on in this year, we can amend the
15 resolution allowing for additional funding because then
16 I would have documents to support it. Because
17 according -- looking back at these years, there is one
18 year that would suggest that we could have utilized
19 more. However, the other three don't necessarily
20 sustain that argument. So this resolution could be
21 amended if it was needed. We could do the request for
22 additional funding depending on what it was that we were
23 utilizing versus what it is that we are requesting.

24 MR. AVITIA: I'm being optimistic about
25 the economy picking up. Basically the trends we are
looking at, the economy is going to pick up. And I see
the number of applications that you have or people
interested in it.

MR. POWERS: That's correct.

MR. AVITIA: I think my concern is that,
are we going to have enough to maintain that same level
that we have now?

MR. POWERS: Well, it's very challenging
to make argument either way because we do have four
applicants. I know one of them most likely is a larger
project. Beyond that, we haven't received the
application beyond what the scope or scale is. Are they asking
the maximum or something less? I can't attest to either
because we have received no application, just inquiries.

MR. AVITIA: Okay. Leon, any questions?

MR. VALDEZ: No, I do not.

1 MR. AVITIA: I think that's basically all
2 I have on that. I do appreciate the fact that you
3 provided a list, very defined specific list of what
4 activity we have been having. It's kind of a good
5 record how good the program is and what has made a
6 change -- at least a difference -- in the downtown areas
7 of East Chicago. It's a good program.

8 MR. POWERS: I think that we are moving
9 forward this year. It will be a lot easier if we had
10 spent a quarter million dollars on this program to go in
11 front of the Common Council and request additional
12 funding if needed, that would be a lot easier to support
13 that argument than with items we currently have.

14 MS. CEJA-RAMIREZ: If I may add
15 something. In this 2018 and '19, you didn't realize it,
16 but we actually had a third account. The third account
17 was suggested trying to have a beautification on Main
18 Street, between Main Street and Broadway. So some of
19 the properties and projects that are on here were City
20 projects with City buildings. So they were renovated
21 and just encouragement only to the ownership of those
22 properties. That's why you see a larger figure. Now,
23 it can still be the case now the development of some of
24 the City properties that are no longer available because
25 what needed to be repaired on those other building have
now been done.

MR. POWERS: The City owned properties is
a completely different subject. This is discussing the
city-wide for you, the people who live here, along with
the ones in the North Harbor. The properties that are
currently owned by the City, a lot of times that's going
through Redevelopment because Redevelopment owns those.
Or if they do not, there is additional funding that
could be used, whether it's just the outside or
whatever, typically falls under their umbrella at this
time. The Planning and Economic Development Commission
aren't making any appropriation requests for City owned
properties for the beautification of facades.

MR. AVITIA: Mr. Morrisroe, any comments
on this?

MR. MORRISROE: No. I think the City is
really trying to get some of this in order, that some of
the spending that went through the Planning Department
-- at times Mr. Solorio, he'd be working in different

1 ways and they ended up using the Planning Department,
2 its budget, to do items; that now they are doing those
3 through Redevelopment or through the Engineering
4 Department as I understand it.

5 MR. POWERS: That is correct. So if the
6 Redevelopment Department owns the property, typically
7 they are the only ones that are utilizing funds and
8 that's going through the Redevelopment Commission. If
9 the property is owned by the City then. Now there may
10 be options to do this.

11 However, any property that would be
12 eligible for beautification that we own and will be
13 trying to actively market, would be listed through the
14 Redevelopment Department. So once they went through
15 their due diligence, it would be them that would be
16 requesting the funding. At this time there should not
17 be any requests coming from the Planning Department.
18 However, if things do change in the future, I'll keep
19 you apprised to that.

20 MR. AVITIA: Okay. No more questions.
21 At this point we can have a vote to admit the Facade
22 Status List of Applicants for years 2018 to the present,
23 2021.

24 MR. VALDEZ: So moved.

25 MR. AVITIA: Second. Roll call.

Roll Call: "All in Favor": All Abstain: None
Opposed: None

MR. AVITIA: Motion carries.
Any comments about Redevelopment
minutes? (None)

Next, Public Comments. Since we do
not have anyone from the public here to make any
comments, I would like to close that part of the agenda.

Next on the agenda is Commissioner
comments.

MR. VALDEZ: Since Ezell is not here, we
have to postpone the election for the Board. Hopefully
next month we'll be able to do it with everybody here.

MR. AVITIA: Leon, I'm in complete
agreement. We should have our third member here in
order for us to be able to do a proper nomination and

1 election. That will be postpone till next meeting.
2 Our next meeting is scheduled for
Thursday, March 25, 2021. Motion to adjourn.

3 MR. VALDEZ: Second.

4 MR. AVITIA: Roll call.

5 Roll Call: "All in Favor": All Abstain: None
6 Opposed: None


7 MR. AVITIA: Motion carries. Meeting
adjourned.

8 ***** Meeting adjourned at 4:50 p.m. *****

9
10 Approval of the Meeting Minutes of Thursday
February 25, 2021

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12 Approved and signed March 25, 2021

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14 
Jesse Avitia, President

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Leon Valdez, Vice-president

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Ezell Foster, Member

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22 Esperanza Ceja-Ramirez, Secretary

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C E R T I F I C A T E

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I, Peggy S. LaLonde, a competent and duly qualified court reporter, do hereby certify that I did report in machine shorthand the foregoing proceedings and that my shorthand notes so taken at said time and place were thereafter reduced to typewriting under my personal direction.

I further certify that the foregoing typewritten transcript constitutes minutes of the said proceedings taken at said time and place, so ordered to be transcribed.

Dated at Munster, Indiana, this 2nd day of March, 2021.

Peggy S. LaLonde



Peggy S. LaLonde, CSR, RPR