

MINUTES FROM THE BETHLEHEM REVITALIZATION AND IMPROVEMENT AUTHORITY (BRIA)

January 16, 2020
3:30 p.m.

1.0 Call to Order

A meeting of the **Bethlehem Revitalization and Improvement Authority (BRIA)** was held at 3:30 p.m. on Thursday, January 16, 2020 at Town Hall located at 10 East Church Street, Bethlehem, Pennsylvania.

Mr. Kelly called the meeting to order.

2.0 Roll was taken as follows:

Authority: Joseph Kelly
Ann McHale
Donna Taggart
John Filipos
Mark Jobes

Solicitor: Edward Andres

Staff in attendance: Alicia Miller Karner
Denise Rider
Chris Jones

3.0 Reorganization

3.1 Appointment of Chairperson

Mr. Andres requested a motion to appoint a Chairperson. A motion was made by Ms. McHale to appoint Mr. Kelly. The motion was seconded by Mr. Filipos. A motion to close the nomination was made by Mr. Filipos and seconded by Mr. Jobes. Being no further nominations, Mr. Kelly was unanimously appointed Chairperson.

3.2 Appointment of Vice Chairperson

Mr. Kelly opened nominations to appoint a Vice Chairperson. Mr. Filipos made a motion to nominate Ms. McHale. The motion was seconded by Ms. Taggart. A motion to close the nominations was made by Ms. McHale and seconded by Mr. Filipos. Being no further nominations; Ms. McHale was appointed Vice Chairperson with Mr. Kelly, Ms. Taggart, Mr. Filipos and Mr. Jobes in favor. Ms. McHale abstained from voting.

3.3 Appointment of Secretary and Treasurer

Mr. Kelly opened nominations to appoint a Secretary and Treasurer. Ms. McHale made a motion to nominate Ms. Taggart as Secretary and Mr. Filipos as Treasurer. The motion was seconded by Mr. Jobes. Being no further discussion, Mr. Kelly closed the request for further nominations. Ms. Taggart and Mr. Filipos were unanimously appointed Secretary and Treasurer respectively.

3.4 Appointment of Solicitor, Executive Director and Financial Assistant

Mr. Kelly requested a motion to approve the position of Solicitor as Mr. Andres, Executive Director as Ms. Karner and Financial Assistant as Chris Jones. A motion was made by Mr. Filipos and seconded by Ms. McHale. Being no further discussion; Mr. Kelly closed the request for further nominations. Mr. Andres, Ms. Karner and Mr. Jones were unanimously appointed Solicitor, Executive Director and Financial Assistant respectively.

3.5 Appointment of Assistant Secretary

Mr. Kelly requested a motion to appoint Mr. Jobes, Ms. McHale and Mr. Filipos as Assistant Secretaries. A motion was made by Ms. Taggart and seconded by Mr. Kelly. Being no further discussion, Mr. Jobes, Ms. McHale and Mr. Filipos were unanimously appointed Assistant Secretaries.

4.0 Public Comment on Current Agenda

None

5.0 Approval of Minutes dated December 19, 2019

There are no additions or corrections. A motion to approve the minutes was made by Ms. McHale and seconded by Mr. Jobes. The minutes were then unanimously approved as presented.

6.0 Treasurer's Report

Mr. Filipos indicated that the report is unchanged compared to the update at the December 19, 2019 meeting with the exception of a different period end date of December 31, 2019. A motion was made by Ms. McHale and seconded by Ms. Taggart to approve the Treasurer's report. The report was then unanimously approved.

7.0 Old Business

7.1 Christmas City Hotel, LLC, Extension Request

Ms. Karner noted that approval of CRIZ designation of 1.1 acres was issued to Christmas City Hotel, LLC 2 years ago. Ms. Karner also noted that the Mayor believes that this is a great project and he supports the current two year

extension request that is before the Authority today. The Mayor would also like the Authority to consider an automatic two year renewal provided the project is progressing. Mr. Kelly then directed the conversation to Mr. Haines.

Mr. Haines asked if the Authority had any questions for him based on the letter he recently provided stating the current status of the project and his request for an extension. Ms. McHale requested the status of the contingent land lease. Mr. Haines indicated that Tony Hanna, Director of the Redevelopment Authority (RDA), is working on it with the Mayor. Mr. Haines stated that some of the property belongs to the City but a majority belongs to the RDA and that all of the details were provided to Mr. Hanna. Mr. Haines stated that without the easement, there will be no project. Mr. Jobs inquired if Alicia is involved with this process. She stated that she is involved and that in addition to the easement in the back to ensure access is out to Union Boulevard, there is another issue that is related to the parking area located to the south of the hotel on Main Street. Presently, the hotel does not own this property. Appraisals and additional steps are necessary for ownership change. Currently, the price is being negotiated for acquisition and there are additional items that Mr. Hanna has to wrap up.

Mr. Jobs asked what the milestones would be for the automatic two year renewal. Mr. Kelly stated that HARB approval is helpful to show progress and also suggested an annual update. Mr. Haines confirmed that he has his architectural designs completed as part of the original application process and that he had an informal meeting with HARB without official approval. He stated that HARB liked the project.

Mr. Haines indicated that the project is a timing issue. Investors are afraid to take on a major investment based upon how the market was going in the past 1.5 years. He stated that when he first applied for the investment, there were no other conference centers in the works and there were 3 less hotels in the area. He needs to wait to determine what the impact will be to his hotel once Wind Creek opens their hotel and conference center.

Ms. Karner reminded everyone that this has not gone to the Commonwealth. There are 3 conditions that the BRIA, Administration and Christmas City Hotel LLC agreed to previously that need to be satisfied prior to the application being submitted to the Commonwealth. Those conditions are, land development approval, 50 parking spaces in the garage open 300 days a year for the public, and the required matching funds.

Ms. Taggart asked for details on how the 2 year renewal will work. Mr. Kelly suggested it be contingent on HARB approval at which time the 2 year renewal will occur. The Authority will still want annual updates. This would be up to the Authority to discuss and agree upon.

Mr. Jobs questioned if the easement should be in place as a contingency also. Mr. Kelly indicated that it can be an agreement of terms and condition. It was reiterated that there will be no project without the easement and Mr. Haines will not be purchasing the property unless he does the project. The agreement would go into place if the project occurs.

Mr. Filipos asked if the easement is not in place, will the Authority still have the opportunity to extend the project. Mr. Kelly indicated that the Authority would come together to discuss the matter again.

Mr. Jobs asked what the occupancy rates have been and Mr. Haines provided that information to the Authority.

Mr. Kelly asked if there are any additional questions. Being no further questions; Mr. Kelly made a motion to accept the 2 year extension with aforementioned conditions precedent of HARB approval and an easement agreement in place with the City and annual review with the Authority. Ms. McHale seconded the motion. Mr. Jobs asked if the annual review will be coming back to the Authority for discussion. Mr. Kelly advised him that it would. Being no further questions, the motion was unanimously approved as presented.

8.0 New Business

None

9.0 Solicitor's Report

None

10.0 Executive Director's Report

Ms. Karner indicated that she expects the Wilbur Mansion project to return in February with a request for approval of project changes and time extension which is up in May.

11.0 Next Meeting Date – February 6, 2020

12.0 Adjournment

There being no further business to come before the Board; a motion was made by Ms. McHale and seconded by Mr. Filipos to adjourn the meeting. The motion was unanimously approved at 4:06 PM.

Signed by: 

Print Name: Mark Jobs

Print Title: Assistant Secretary