

MINUTES FROM THE BETHLEHEM REVITALIZATION AND IMPROVEMENT AUTHORITY (BRIA)

May 17, 2018
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, May 17, 2018 in conference room B504 located at 10 East Church Street, Bethlehem, Pennsylvania.

Ann McHale called the meeting to order.

2.0 Roll was taken as follows:

Authority: James Broughal - Absent
Ann McHale
Donna Taggart
John Filipos
Joseph Kelly

Solicitor: Valentino DiGiorgio – via telephone conference

Staff in attendance: Alicia Miller Karner
Denise Rider

3.0 Public Comment on Current Agenda None

4.0 Approval of Minutes dated March 15, 2018 There are no additions or corrections. A motion to approve was made by Mr. Filipos and seconded by Mr. Kelly; the minutes were then approved as presented.

5.0 Old Business

5.1 Wilbur Mansion CRIZ designation

Ms. Karner provided the Board members with a new presentation submitted on behalf of the Wilbur Mansion along with a memo from her outlining the history of the project. The project was qualified on September 21, 2017 when they first came before the board for the construction of a new office building attached to the Wilbur Mansion which includes the renovation of the mansion and demolition of the Masonic Temple. Since then, the project has changed. Ms. Karner stated that the Mayor has is in support of the new project. Ms. Karner turned the meeting over to Mr. Noble (property owner of the Wilbur Mansion) to present the new project.

John Noble, of 1800 Old Mill Road in Bethlehem, thanked everyone for qualifying his project at the BRIA board meeting held on September 21, 2017. Mr. Noble indicated that he was going to continue with his original plan presented in the September 21, 2017 meeting but he then explained that he had a conversation with the owners of Sayer Mansion in November 2017 and learned that their son, Justin Genzlinger, was purchasing it. In March 2018 ownership changed to Mr. Genzlinger and partners. With the change in ownership, an opportunity presented itself to expand Sayre Mansion into the Wilbur Mansion property. Mr. Noble stated that previously the owners wanted to sell the mansion to him.

Mr. Noble then discussed his updated plan. He stated that the first floor will remain open to the public as a restaurant and at this point, the top two floors will consist of hotel rooms. The footprint of the addition has expanded to a four story building. The first floor will be an open event space and the top floors will be modern rooms. This will make the combination of the Sayre and Wilbur Mansions a small luxury hotel which qualifies for a liquor license. This will also allow for year round events instead of the current tent at the Sayre Mansion that is used seasonally.

Ms. McHale asked the Board if there were any questions. Ms. Taggart expressed concern about a ramp shown on the plan that goes down to Wyandotte Street. Mr. Noble indicated that it is not a ramp but a brick walkway that was used as a carriageway 150 years ago when Wilbur Mansion was built. Mr. Noble stated that there is no driveway connection between Wyandotte Street or Bright Street to the property. Mr. Noble stated that the walkway will be enhanced and go down to the traffic light at Wyandotte Street where a lit crosswalk sign is located. In addition, a two-way driveway will connect the two mansions for traffic flow. There will be increased parking and they may need some relief from the City. With no other questions from the Board, Ms. McHale turned the meeting over to Mr. Genzlinger, owner of the Sayer Mansion

Mr. Genzlinger thanked the Authority for having him. He discussed his family history with Sayre Mansion and noted that his family has owned the mansion for over 15 years and have been in the hotel business for over 40 years. In addition to the Sayer Mansion, they run 4 full service hotels. They own and operate 6 restaurants, 6 catering venues. He advised the Board that he would be happy to provide references. Mr. Genzlinger mentioned that his families initial intention was to leave the Lehigh Valley, then decided that they wanted to keep the property in the family.

Ms. McHale asked if there were any other questions from the Board. Mr. Kelly asked when they anticipate breaking ground and what would be the overall timeline investment. Mr. Noble stated that a realistic break ground of five months and the timeline on construction is next year at this time, weather permitting.

Ms. Taggart commented that the new use seems to make sense as it will allow them to capitalize on two historic aspects in the City. Mr. Genzlinger indicated that the historic value is part of their business strategy. He added that more of the public will be allowed to see it as opposed to just driving past it.

Ms. Karner referenced the last paragraph of 6.1 in the minutes dated September 21, 2017 for the wording of the motion. Ms. McHale requested a motion to qualify the project with all of the changes including the addition of the restaurant, hotel event space and hotel rooms.

Mr. Kelly moved to qualify the project for inclusion for the CRIZ as it has been submitted to the Board and authorize submission of documentation to decertify a property of comparable size and to apply to the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania for CRIZ designation contingent upon the developer entering into an agreement with this Authority to begin construction in 12 months and complete the project within 24 months from the date the Commonwealth getting the designation to the Board. The motion was seconded by Ms. McHale.

Ms. McHale asked the Board if there are any questions or comments; being none, Ms. McHale requested roll call:

Ms. McHale – yes

Ms. Taggart – yes

Mr. Filipos – yes

Mr. Kelly – yes

The motion was approved 4/0.

6.0 New Business

None

7.0 Solicitor's Report

Attorney DiGiorgio indicated that a new Memorandum of Understanding should be drafted to redefine the projects timetable of completion as outlined in today's motion.

Attorney DiGiorgio asked Ms. Karner the status of submitting the project for CRIZ designation. She indicated that the Parking Authority signed off on all of their property being decertified. At the time, BRIA didn't move forward on the Long Street lot decertification. A public meeting was held and the application was submitted to the State. The State then advised us that if the application is submitted, we will lose any extra acreage. With the help from Mr. Kelly and Senator Boscola's office, the legislation was modified again to allow BRIA to bank any excess acreage. Ms. Karner believes that the June 7, 2018 meeting will need to be a public hearing to decertify all of the Parking Authority properties. As projects move forward, BRIA can then apply for CRIZ designation on a case by case basis.

Ms. Karner also indicated that the City is modifying the subdivision ordinance so that BRIA can subdivide properties and only include the building footprint as a CRIZ parcel. She indicated that at one point the State allowed us to do metes and bounds but they will no longer allow this because it is too hard to track. The State advised that each project has to have a separate parcel for each project. In order to maximize the CRIZ acreage, we needed to modify the ordinance so parcels can be subdivided, give parcel identification, and keep designation at a minimum. City Council had the first vote this week and the second vote is scheduled for the first City Council meeting in June. Alicia anticipates that this ordinance will pass.

8.0 Executive Director's Report

Ms. Karner noted that the Peron folks want to have the loan documents finalized next week or the week after. She advised the board that everyone is authorized to sign the loan documents for the coffee shop (Starbucks) and they may be called upon to sign. Ms. Karner then completed her report.

Mr. Filipos asked about CRIZ increment with regards to the Wilbur Mansion project. Ms. Karner stated that Sayer Mansion and Wilbur Mansion will have common ownership but will not be collecting increment from Sayer Mansion to put towards Wilbur Mansion. They will get increment for the new addition and the existing Wilbur Mansion footprint. Mr. Filipos asked who will make sure this is accurately documented and Ms. Karner stated that it is up to Mr. Noble and his account to figure out the split between the CRIZ versus non-CRIZ parcel and that Mr. Noble is aware of this.

9.0 Next Meeting Date – June 7, 2018

10.0 Adjournment

There being no further business to come before the Board, a motion was made by Mr. Kelly and seconded by Mr. Filipos to adjourn the meeting. The motion was unanimously approved at 4:03 p.m.

Signed by: Donna G. Taggart

Print Title: Secretary

Print Name: Donna G. Taggart