

Pulaski County
Community Development Commission
Tuesday, 6 August 2024
Winamac Municipal Utilities Complex
Winamac, Indiana

Minutes
Tuesday, 16 January 2024
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Members present: Bill Champion (Advisory Commission on Industrial Development (ACID)), Sheila Jimenez (County Council (Council)), Claude LeMere (Economic Development Commission (E.D.C.)), David Scott (Tourism Advisory Council (TAC)). Department of Community Development (D.C.D.) Executive Director Nathan P. Origer.

Members absent: Brian Ledley (Redevelopment Commission (R.C.)) [personal], Maurice Loehmer (Board of Commissioners (Board)) [business]. D.C.D. Assistant Taylor Bailey [personal].

Guests present: None.

Call to Order

Director Origer called the meeting to order a 6:05 *p.m.* and introduced the members, reviewing their appointing bodies. The one at-large seat on the Community Development Commission (C.D.C.) had not yet been filled.

Consent Agenda

With no requests for extraction having been made, the consent agenda was adopted.

Organization of the Commission

The director noted that, given the decrease in the size of the C.D.C. and the restructuring of its responsibilities, there would no longer be an executive board. The director reiterated that the secretary would not be asked to prepare minutes, only to approve the staff draft before dissemination.

Ms. Jimenez, the incumbent president, volunteered to continue in that office. Mr. Champion agreed to serve as vice-president, and Ms. Jimenez nominated Mr. Ledley to serve as secretary. With no other volunteers having spoken or nominations having been made, nominations were closed, and the slate was approved as presented.

Motion: Ms. Jimenez; second: Mr. Champion; no discussion; approval: all.

Monthly Reports

Executive director's report: The director noted that the busyness of the fourth quarter in 2023 had carried into January, with general County responsibilities — primarily the courthouse-renovation project and work supporting the Council's comprehensive wage adjustment — having consumed a significant amount of time. A substantial increase in local-income-tax revenue certified by the State for 2024 had allowed the Council to address this employer-competitiveness obstacle.

Financial report — 2023 year-end review: The Local Income Tax – Economic Development Fund had ended 2023 with a balance about \$400,000 behind its end-2022 balance, but, the director noted, once the Fund had been reimbursed by courthouse-bond proceeds, it would end 2024 nearly \$1-million ahead of where it had begun the year. The Donation Fund held nearly \$5,900, and the Revolving Loan Fund had ended 2023 with about \$168,000 available.

Monthly calendar: Director Origer directed the members toward his January–April calendar, but no discussion occurred; he suggested that it would fill out as time passed.

Strategic Plan Implementation Report

C.D.C. restructuring: In addition to the C.D.C. vacancy, one seat remained to be filled on the ACID, and the director had found an interested candidate. All four of the newly established governing bodies had met prior to this C.D.C. meeting; the E.D.C. and TAC would likely be meeting

in March, and a TAC committee would be working on updating and expanding the 2017 tourism strategic plan, while the other commissions would probably again convene in May.

Community Foundation partnership projects: The director noted that, as the result of various circumstances, Main Street Winamac had been struggling, but a consultant had been waiting to resume providing assistance to the organization. The director had resumed conversations regarding the proposed County-farm housing project and would continue on this front. The director had several conversations with the Broadband Taskforce's chairman and consultant, including with internet providers proposing projects for the State's next Next Level Connections grant round; the director and the Broadband Taskforce would be revisiting the possibility of commissioning a countywide broadband plan once the results of an appeal of a rejected grant application had been determined.

Implementation, other: After disappointing attendance at the summer coffee hour in Francesville, the director had failed to hold autumn and winter events, but reiterated his belief in their value. Mr. Champion suggested inviting state legislators to be the director's guests, and significant discussion ensued. President Jimenez noted that a town-hall event featuring State Senator Charbonneau and State Representative Culp would be taking place at Tippy's on the Friday of the following week.

Purdue's Manufacturing Extension Partnership would be conducting an intensive, two-week manufacturing-skills course in the jail in early February. The director had met twice with Center of Workforce Innovations personnel regarding training opportunities for workers in Pulaski County.

The director and his colleague in Jasper County had met with a potential consulting team regarding the implementation of the regional agricultural-value-strategy project, while the consultants for the regional entrepreneurship-and-innovation project had already begun their work.

The director has been working with Vice-President Champion and other members of the Pulaski County Industrial Forum to improve meeting structure to ensure that local employers receive sufficient value from their attendance.

Old Business

Revolving Loan Fund matters — general updates: The sheriff's sale of the I.B.C. Thermoplastics property had been scheduled for 19 March; it would be conducted online. The judge had awarded the County \$235,000, which the director did not think the sale would bring; the presence of the machinery inside the facility would likely give potential buyers pause, but, if the County failed to dispose of the property at the sale, it could then work to sell the machine separately and to seek buyers for the property at a lower price.

Meadow Springs Manor had caught up on payments, and the loan would be paid off in the spring. The director had worked with a delinquent borrower to devise a plan that had satisfied both him and Commissioner Loehmer.

Revolving Loan Fund matters — program review: The director had met with President Jimenez and Blake Kasten (formerly of the C.D.C., now serving on the E.D.C.) in November to make updates to the proposed program changes; the director had provided them to the County's attorney, who would be offering comment in the near future. In response to the president's inquiries, the director reported that the Fund's balance had climbed to a bit above \$170,000, and that he had spoken with a couple of potentially interested borrowers, but not with anyone ready to apply.

Solar-energy development: The Indiana Supreme Court had yet to announce whether it would hear appeals of the Court of Appeals' decisions upholding the tax abatements and economic-revitalization area (E.R.A.) designations granted by the Council. The trial over a third E.R.A. designation and tax abatement had not yet been scheduled. Contractors had begun installing site fencing on some parcels, but, otherwise, little construction had occurred. The director and the County's attorney had been working with Doral regarding the Mammoth Solar Economic Development Agreement and potential minor amendments thereto.

New Business

Strategic-plan housing addendum: The director presented a housing strategic plan, which the Board had approved that morning. The plan reflects a synthesis and expansion of the housing language in the *Simply Pulaski* economic-development plan and the Housing Resource Hub's housing strategy for Pulaski County; the director had fast-tracked the development of this plan in response to the Willow Creek Villas proposal for property owned by a Galbreath Family company

east of the Winamac Plaza. The director provided an overview of the contents and overarching vision of the *Simply Home* addendum and emphasized that it should always been open to updates and revisions as future circumstances may dictate.

Willow Creek Villas housing project: Sullivan Development, LLC, a Carmel-based company whose owner's wife is a Winamac native, had been developing a project to submit to the Indiana Housing & Community Development Authority for a special set-aside of low-income-housing tax credits (LIHTC) available for two projects only available for use in Pulaski and three other counties; the director and Winamac Town Manager Brad Zellers had been working closely with the company and Eric Galbreath to make the application as strong as possible. The proposed Willow Creek Villas would comprise 34 two-bedroom, two-bathroom units and a property-management facility across five structures; because the program would be supported by LIHTC, certain income restrictions would apply to tenants, and there would be multiple rental tiers based on income. The 8.141-acre parcel on which it would be developed would still have room for either a smaller, second phase, or a single-family homes or duplexes. Mr. LeMere shared his thoughts on the project, and discussion ensued. President Jimenez noted that the Council had approved a letter of support for the project, as had the Board.

Virtual-attendance policy: The director presented Pulaski County Resolution 2024-C.D.C.-01 for consideration; it would extend the County's policy for virtual meeting attendance, subject to certain *Indiana Code* provisions, to the C.D.C. It was adopted.

Motion: Vice-President Champion; second: Mr. LeMere; no discussion; approval: all

Meeting schedule and 2024 Summit: Director Origer emphasized his desire not to hold meetings for the sake of meeting, noting that, at the same time, the C.D.C's role is primarily to serve as his oversight body, as well as to address issues that might fall into gaps between the constituent commissions; a quarterly schedule was agreed to, with meetings to fall in the second month of each quarter: February (beginning in 2025), May, August, and November. Meetings would continue to be held on the first Tuesday of the month. Director Origer indicated that, given the infrequencies of meetings, he would like to have a one-on-one meeting with each member at least once annually, whether over lunch or in each member's office.

The director noted that the annual Economic Development Summit typically occurs in April, but the C.D.C. no longer would be meeting in the fourth month; the members agreed to keep the Summit in April without a meeting immediately preceding it. The 2024 Summit would be held at a t.b.d. location in Winamac, and discussion ensued regarding potential topics for a the guest speaker to address; Mr. LeMere suggested downtown revitalization with an emphasis on the nuts and bolts of the redevelopment process, with tourism as an alternative.

Other Pertinent Business

None.

Public Comment

None.

Adjournment

Motion: Vice-President Champion; second: President Jimenez; no discussion; approval: all
7:01 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

David Scott, Secretary *pro tempore*

Nathan P. Origer, Executive Director/Recording Secretary *pro tempore*