

***Pulaski County
Redevelopment Commission***

Tuesday, 28 January 2025
Winamac Municipal Utilities Complex
Winamac, Indiana

Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, 23 October 2024
Winamac Municipal Utilities Complex
Winamac, Indiana

Members present: President Brian Ledley (Council) Vice-President Stan Bennett (Board of Commissioners), Secretary Katelyn Bierrum (County Council); Kyle Sefchek (Board), Tina Stacy (Board) Isaiah Tidwell (Council); Joe Cunningham (Board — non-voting advisory member representing local schools). Executive Director Nathan P. Origer, Assistant Taylor Bailey.

Members absent: Jon Frain (Board).

Guests present: None.

Call to Order

President Ledley called the meeting to order at 6:01 *p.m.*

Consent Agenda

With no request for extraction having been made, the consent agenda was approved.

Motion: Mr. Sefchek; second: Vice-President Bennett; no discussion; approval: all.

Old Business

Potential relevant projects — Pleasant View Village: Director Origer noted that he had been working with partners to explore options for creating new workforce-housing opportunities, with some of the community's larger employers having been involved in the conversations. The Housing Taskforce initially had planned to locate the proposed neighborhood on part of the old County farm, but the Town of Winamac had expressed concerns about this site due to the cost of expanding utilities to the location and the site's being within NIPSCO's service area.

Eric Galbreath had reached out to Director Origer regarding the possibility of developing housing on property east of the North U.S. 35 commercial strip; the director noted there a proposed project to serve Tippecanoe River State Park would expand the Town's utility capacity in the area. Winamac had already annexed this property, which is within the Town's electrical service area.

The first phase of the proposed development would likely encompass 20-30 acres, and Mr. Galbreath had proposed a 1031 land swap, with the County offering part of the County farm in exchange; the respective landowners would have appraisals done for their properties, and a dollar-for-dollar trade would take place. The Northwest Indiana Forum had tentatively allocated \$1-million in Indiana Economic Development Corporation READI 2.0 funds for this project.

Potential relevant projects — Willow Creek Villas: Carmel-based Sullivan Development had been in the process of purchasing the property located on East Galbreath Drive located behind the Winamac Plaza from the Galbreath family. The company had received a Low Income Housing Tax Credit award from the Indiana Housing and Community Development Authority to support the development of a 34-unit property, which would be limited to households meeting certain income levels, with three tiers of household-income being required to pay commensurate monthly rents.

Eligible occupants would include both entry-level employees and senior citizens on fixed incomes. Sullivan Development had hoped to break ground soon, with the units becoming available in mid- or late 2025.

This development would not require any assistance from the Redevelopment Commission, but the director wanted to keep members apprised and would be sending drawings of the project to the members following the meeting. Mr. Ledley asked if there is a deadline for when ground breaking must take place; Origer was unsure but willing to investigate further. [This plan became irrelevant once the developer had broken ground not long after this meeting occurred.]

New Business

2025 membership and meetings: All members in attendance agreed to serve in 2025 would their respective appointing bodies renew their terms. The director would ask the president to call project-specific meetings planned as the momentum on any pertinent project might grow; otherwise, there would be likely be three regular meetings scheduled for the year; one in the beginning of the year, one in May or June, and another toward the end of the year.

Other Pertinent Business

Meeting pay: Director Origer advised that he would be sending out documents to the members that must be completed and returned to the Auditor's Office so that members could receive budgeted compensation for their attendance at this year's meetings.

Solar-project revenue: Mr. Cunningham asked for an update on solar-energy projects and the possibility of generating income for local schools. Director Origer noted that the County has just recently received payments from the two solar companies that are the furthest along in development. The County Council had been discussing how these project revenues might be used, but had reached no conclusions yet. The Moss Creek and Bottlebrush projects had received their permit documents, but Director Origer could not provide construction timelines; Mammoth Solar construction had been scheduled to begin in February. Director Origer expressed hope that once projects had begun generating income, the County could make another cut to the local income-tax rate.

Incentives for apartment owners: Mr. Sefchek asked if any consideration had been given to incentivizing current apartment owners to add additional units; Director Origer explained that there are some incentive programs available for housing, but the regulations are complicated, and the programs not generally as favorable toward market-rate rental units as to low-income developments and owner-occupied new construction. The director also noted that the rental market may become uncertain for a while once the Sullivan Project begins assigning tenants.

President Ledley asked if any type of regulatory authority to oversee the care of dilapidated buildings — specifically the second-floor residential units — in downtown Winamac exists. Director Origer explained that some communities have an Unsafe Building Authority, and some communities have adopted a vacant-building ordinance; ultimately, Winamac would have to address such issues.

Monterey housing: Ms. Stacy added that a need for housing in Monterey exists as well, particularly given relocation from the Culver area and employees at Black Gold seeking housing. Director Origer noted that development in the area has been considered, but the completion of the catalyst project in Winamac would likely need to occur first as a matter of resource management. He emphasized that development does not have to occur solely in the county seat. Ms. Stacy added there available land and housing for sale between Monterey and Black Gold could be considered.

Acquisition of existing residential properties: Mr. Sefchek inquired as to whether the Commission could purchase existing housing; Director Origer would review the governing statutes, as he could not confirm if the *Indiana Code* permits the acquisition of residential property in addition to commercial and industrial facilities.

Better project-related communication: Vice-President Bennett noted that it would be beneficial if Lightstream could be made aware of developments its service area ahead of time; this would allow the company to plan service buildout earlier, keeping costs more affordable. The vice-president advised that having this information far enough in advance helps to avoid denials of service due to high costs.

Public Comment

None.

Adjournment

Motion: Mr. Tidwell; second: Secretary Bierrum; no discussion; approval: all 6:48 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Taylor Bailey, Assistant/Recording Secretary

Katelyn Bierrum, Secretary