

Burns Harbor Redevelopment Commission Minutes of Wednesday, July 13, 2016

The Redevelopment Commission of the Town of Burns Harbor, Porter County, Indiana met in its regular session on Wednesday, July 13, 2016 in the Town Hall. The meeting was called to order by Redevelopment Commission Vice President, Andy Bozak at 6:00 p.m.

The Pledge of Allegiance to the American Flag was recited.

Roll Call:

Commissioner (Toni) Biancardi	Present
Commissioner (Eric) Hull.....	Present
Commissioner (Nick) Loving.....	Present
Commissioner (Marcus) Rogala	Present
Commissioner (Andy) Bozak.....	Present
Commissioner (Brandon) Kroft (non-voting member)...	Absent

Additional Officials Present

Attorney-Clay Patton
Economic Development Director-Joseph Rurode
Grants Developer-Tina Rongers
Communications Director-Danielle Ziulkowski
Building Commissioner-Bill Arney
Recording Secretary-Marge Falbo

Approval of Minutes

Commissioner Loving made a motion to the approve the June 8, 2016 meeting minutes. Commissioner Rogala seconded the motion. Commissioner Bozak-Aye, Commissioner Biancardi-Aye, Commissioner Hull-Aye, Commissioner Loving, Commissioner Rogala-Aye.

Motion passed.

Reports

Commissioners

None

Attorney

None

RDC Engineer

None

Economic Development Director

Rurode says from an Economic Development standpoint our goals are to protect and enhance Burns Harbor's character, increase tax revenues, and create a vibrant sense of place where residents and visitors will want to gather. We want to tie these things in with the greater vision of Congressman Visclosky and other regional organizations. What is being described with this great vision that LiveWorkLearnPlay put together for us, is how we go from the big production and the great presentations they've put together to actually attaining it. The most important thing we can do at this point is to have a financial strategy in place. We need to be wise with our financial resources in terms of TIF, tax abatement, and other tools. The Umbaugh report will help with this. So at a minimum, we really want to do is:

- Create a five-year budget for prioritizing these projects
- Look at what our greatest return will be on investment
- Make sure we have consensus from the elected officials and the community as a whole

Examples would include something like the Fiber project or trying to build a new Municipal building. It just makes sense, because we are a small town, to try and understand the Town's means and it's limited financial resources. We're going to need help from a regional or State funding standpoint as well as public and private partnership. The most important thing we can do is show that we have a financial plan in place. We have been building a rapport and pairing relationships and starting to get a better sense of what we can and can't do. It's really after we have actual financial funding that we can start taking action on some of these things.

Rurodes says he has been a little too prudent with the money, trying to save it and not putting smaller projects ahead just because we want to be mindful of what it is we are trying to do. That is the general strategy of how we work together on that. On a smaller scale, the more granular activities, we're working with items that are associated with community development such as:

- The Food Truck Square,
- Working with property owners to help attract business to the area which help and benefit the community
- Land acquisition opportunities
- Marquette Greenway Trail
- Interacting with other economic redevelopment leaders, whether it's neighboring communities or larger organizations.

We are getting close to creating a financial strategy. As soon as we have the timeline from Umbaugh, we will be able to move forward and really start working with these external sources of funding that are going to be necessary for some of the larger things the Town wants to do. Commissioner Bozak asks Rurode if he knows where we are at with Umbaugh. Commissioner Rogala says they are in the final stages right now.

Grants Developer

Rurode asks Commissioner Bozak if he may add and says a lot of what we do ties into Rongers role and she can shed some insight or even elaborate on what I have said. There are plenty of different things to pursue in terms of funding and we have learned that you have to have a very specific plan. For example, the Market Greenway Trail, is a well-received regional project. But, when we start doing projects that oriented specifically for Burns Harbor we don't have a financial plan. It makes it very challenging. So that's why we have to be able to show that we can be a trusted business partner whether it is with a public or private partnership or with somebody that is going to provide funding regionally or from the State.

Rongers agrees with what Rurode has been talking about. Having a solid financial plan is key in being able to effectively communicate what your priorities and project needs are with other potential funders and partners. It enables you to say "Here is our vision, here's how we would like to get from A to B. How could you work with us so that we can leverage our limited funds with the resources that you have to create this economic benefit and amenity value in our community and also support some of the larger needs of the region alongside the desires of our residents.

While progress is being made on the Food Truck Village, as part of that activation of the Downtown four-acres, Rongers says she is focused on the Marquette Greenway plan. We have funding for the first one-mile stretch from Babcock over to State Road 149, so part of the thought is "can we find a source of funding for the second phase of the project which is the two-mile stretch that would get us from State Road 149 over to Portage." We engaged in some conversation, and circled back with the RDA and talked about that. We can't seem to find out what other transportation funding would be available for that segment and what would be the timeline. Our hope is that there is a secondary funding opportunity to cover that second stretch of the regional trail. What we learned is that we as a community need to be talking more with our neighboring cities and towns to align regional projects like the Marquette Trail and some of the other economic development objectives we have like the 4-acre site. The nature of regional funding is changing, meaning originally you would approach an organization such as the RDA with your proposal. However, their funding model has changed, they have to go to the State for approval. We will now have to be more strategic about how we fulfill our redevelopment needs. This is a consideration we need to have more discussion on, as well as connect with leaders at the RDA, so we can better understand what is happening at a regional level and how Burns Harbor fits into a larger economic development strategy for funding. When it comes to some of the master development initiatives we are still in conversations on how best to proceed with projects like the 4-acre site. This takes us back to the financial planning which is the right place to begin. We also need to know who we should be formulating stronger partnerships with. We will need to be working more closely with our neighbors, our neighboring communities and with regional funders to see how we best fit into the funding scheme.

Commissioner Bozak asks if Rurode if he has reached out to other RDCs. Rurode replies in previous years he has met with Porter officials and next week he will be meeting with the Economic Development Director of Portage to talk about their new Sportsplex.

Live Work Learn Play

Rurode says there isn't much to report as their contract has wound down. They certainly are available, as needed, but they have moved on and they have provided a great service.

Communications Director

Ziulkowski says she is working on communications efforts to support the RDC and Town's overall mission. As a sneak peek for everyone here tonight, the following press release is going out tomorrow morning profiling TransUnited and all their great services and great contributions to the Town and is a perfect opportunity to educate the public in all the great numerous businesses that we have here in Burns Harbor.

Better Burns Harbor:

Small-town company, Trans-United, transports big through world Trans-United super load

Burns Harbor may total just about 7 square miles with roughly 1,400 residents. But tucked inside this small, charming town stands a leading-edge company transporting more than 223 million pounds annually throughout the world.

For more than 50 years, Trans-United, Inc. has focused on freight transportation, moving specialized or oversized loads in 48 states, Canada and Mexico. Established in 1964, Trans-United loads and delivers any type of open trailer cargo from standard, legal dimensions to super loads.

Family-owned and operated, Trans-United originated out of Texas before relocating to the Midwest and eventually to Gary in the 1970s. The company moved to its Burns Harbor corporate office in 1997. Location as well as access to industry were just a few reasons the company choose the town.

Trans-United President/CEO Jeff Fleming said, "Burns Harbor welcomed us into their town. The location is ideal for business, especially transportation, having close access to the ports, expressways and Route 6. The town is filled with great people with hard working mentalities and we greatly enjoy doing business here."

On any given project, Trans-United hauls 500 to 200,000 pounds of goods door-to-door via:

- Flatbed/Less Than Truckload (LTL) fleet with the latest equipment
- Specialized over dimensional freight
- Super load with custom trailer fabrication, versatile equipment, internal permitting department and company-owned escort fleet
- Project planning with port shuttle, rail and barge services, crane and rigging capabilities, import/export coordination as well as port and stevedore coordination
- Warehousing
- Logistics

Town Council and Redevelopment Commission member Toni Biancardi said, "Trans-United is just one of many great examples of the successful and diverse businesses located in the Town of Burns Harbor. The overall positive business climate, low tax rates, talented local workers, close proximity to road, water, rail and air transportation options as well as neighborly town atmosphere — Burns Harbor supports its current employers and welcomes newcomers."

Most recently, Trans-United business has picked up due to large equipment needed at craft breweries gaining popularity throughout the nation. This past spring, a 13-axle truck transported a 46-foot-long beer tank to a regional brewery through downtown Chicago. The challenging delivery required careful planning and problem-solving.

"Burns Harbor is immensely grateful and committed to its business community for the many contributions to bettering the town. Trans-United sets itself apart by providing the highest level of responsiveness and care to each and every load," said Marcus Rogala, Town Council member and RDC president.

But town leadership is not the only one noticing Trans-United's expertise. The company was ranked one of the top 50 largest North American specialized carriers by American Cranes and Transport for two consecutive years in a row in 2014 and 2015. Today, the company has grown to include agents throughout North America.

Trans-United credits its success to its 125 dedicated and talented employees. Located just off S.R. 149, the 30,000-square-foot facility boasts veteran drivers with one of the lowest driver turnover rates in the industry.

"We pride ourselves on our ability to handle the most challenging jobs. To do so, we have assembled a team of the most experienced drivers supported by the best operations specialists in the industry," Fleming said. "The result is we're able to match the right driver and equipment to each specialized load to achieve an unmatched level of customer service and satisfaction."

For more information on Trans-United and its services call 219.762.3111, visit www.transunited.com or Like on Facebook at www.facebook.com/truckismo.

Burns Harbor looking for interested businesses!

The Redevelopment Commission hosts informal meet-and-greet events to promote a better Burns Harbor through building alliances between town leadership and the business community. Local businesses are invited to host these events or, like Trans-United did this past April, host monthly RDC meetings to educate the public on their services and offerings. For more information, contact Councilwoman and RDC member Toni Biancardi at tbiancardi@burnsharbor-in.gov.

Pictured above: One of Burns Harbor's many successful and diverse businesses, Trans-United, moves specialized and oversized loads like this exhaust gas recovery system throughout the nation, Canada and Mexico.

News Flash posted on: July 14, 2016

The Communications Committee plans on sending regular press releases like the one above and have already been in contact with the next possible Better Burns Harbor candidate to see if they are interested.

Ziulkowski refers to a report which was sent to the Committee to help them better understand how Burns Harbor is being represented in the media. It helps to practically prepare for a future strategy for communications moving forward, as well as show the value of these professional communications efforts. Most notably, it's important to mention that while not exactly through the RDC work but ties into the RDC's mission of building a positive identity for the Town was the Footloose promotional efforts. There was a twenty-minute interview on Indiana 105 FM. This was significant because that interview lead to multiple on-air mentions leading up to the event. Obviously, there are no funds in the budget to do traditional paid advertising, so this was a great example of a non-traditional public relations opportunity that we benefitted from at no extra cost to the Town. So moving forward this is a great type of option we can look at. It was the result of a properly executed pitch to them. I think we have really built a good initial relationship with the radio station and hopefully we can utilize that moving forward.

Commissioner Bozak says it that wasn't all about the 5k, they talked about the Parks also.

Ziulkowski says yes, they seemed very willing and interested to ask tons of questions and they wanted to know more about the Park Department as a whole, all of the events and all of the services. Therefore, again, if the media is showing interest in things like that then the public is very interested too. These are all positive good things to look forward to.

Duneland School Board Representative

Commissioner Bozak says the Duneland School Board Representative, Brandon Kroft is not here tonight because he is attending School Board meeting.

Rurode says the School Board monthly meeting is the first of the month and due to the 4th of July holiday, they rescheduled it for this evening. Mr. Kroft should be here next month and is excited to meet everyone.

Correspondence

None

Old Business

Food Truck Square

Commissioner Rogala says the electricity was installed today and things will start coming along. The August 6th movie night is what we are going to aim to accomplish and Rurode can touch on that. We have the agreement put together and it has been reviewed by the Town Council. Commissioner Rogala says he is thinking about possibly having a small opening ceremony before the movie night. Hopefully we will be able to provide some burgers and brats.

Commissioner Biancardi asks if we have a schedule of some food trucks.

Rurode says we are working on finalizing that and we do have some vendors lined up for August 6th. As described in some of our conversations, it's a late start. Most of these vendors have been booked up throughout the entire summer, so it is very challenging to find people for July and August. The fact is that it's an unproven event and they want to see success. It's really critical that when we do have these early events that we do it right, we do it well and that's its managed properly. We need to show that there is head count and volume because they're in demand and they can be selective and pick and choose where they want to go right now. We have some dates but I'm cautious to advertise just yet based on the fact that we want to try to attract a few more and we don't want to advertise a date and have a food truck backing out. They're nimble, they're on wheels and they can go where they want so we need to create some confidence and faith in securing the dates that we're talking about. I also think it would be beneficial for us to look at the month of October and try to take advantage of the fact that there are not nearly as many vendors booked up. It's an opportunity to plan some very specific theme type events that will help attract and draw people. Every person that I've asked has been very intrigued with the idea and for those that are booked want to know more about this and participate with us this next year. For those that are still weighing their options, they're intrigued, but it's a different concept because they are going to fairs, festivals, private events and those are assured dates for them so we have to really get the programming down and make it worth their while. I think that we've done well as far as getting some interest and attention out there with the thirty-six dates we tried to book in a month. At least through the end of September we're going to have seven to nine different dates when we'll have food trucks out there, but if we can really focus on September and October I think we can really perfect the art of this and be better prepared for the following year.

Commissioner Bozak asks if we are going to look at weekdays and said Rurode mentioned that. Commissioner Bozak says it's an option that might help. Rurode says that it quite possible but we need to find the balance of vendors available so we don't have vendors serving the same type of food. He states while food trucks are great they're more interested in going to themed events, live music, something that is advertised. The Stars Wars event is a great first idea but just having stand-alone food trucks without a marketable event is something we need to focus and work on.

Commissioner Rogala asks if Rurode if he thinks he could have some dates booked in a week. Rurode says he supposes so.

Commissioner Rogala says if Rurode thinks he can start securing dates within a week we can start booking entertainment. October is good for Oktoberfest. Brats and beer. We can do a Beer Garden sometime in October. We need to start booking dates and we need the food trucks in order to have the entertainment. We need to get something started even if it's once a week so if we can commit two or three food trucks and a little band or maybe a tournament, it's a start.

Commissioner Rogala says he understands that August 6th is the Lake County Fair and we'll be competing with that but while I've been working at the site, people have been stopping left and right asking when it's going to start.

Rurode says he will try to get vendors but we want to have this marketed well. We have interest, we have media who wants to promote this, we have Indiana Dunes Tourism that wants to help us. We just need to do this right. I'm just cautious for the future of this and I'm trying my best but I think we need to focus on later dates. If you want an update in a week, I would be happy to provide that.

Rongers says she wants to bring it back to the Food Village which was a stepping stone for economic redevelopment. I think if we come back to that initial goal of activating the four-acres, and then look at the summer target which is difficult because of the timing of the food trucks and so forth, how could we from an economic development standpoint best leverage an October event. For example, we could look at the timing when the RFP for the Marquette Greenway Trail would come out and then we could use the site as part of the celebration for the Greenway Trail. We have to make sure that everything we're doing comes back to our economic redevelopment objective which is the activation of the four-acres. So, I think that looking at Fall dates makes sense and I think we can look at the Bike Trail, for instance, and tying that into it and raising awareness about the Trail:

- how it improves public health
- how it alleviates congestion; and
- provides a safe alternative for biking and walking to our transportation centers in the area and getting over to other communities

We need to step back and look at how a Fall date could best leverage our economic redevelopment story. This way we are coming back to the core of our mission which is the redevelopment strategy as opposed to just putting up a Food Truck Village by a certain date to have an event. We need to shift from this being an event to the activation of the site. I think we are close and with Danielle's help we can figure out how to present this to our residents. This way when we get excited in a meeting and say this is what we can do, we can then step back and say this is how it ties into our economic development strategy. Considering that when we try to go for a Grant we need to be able to say that this Food Truck Village was an impetus for the development of the four-acre site. If we have a Food Truck Village that has no impact, we can't write that as part of the story. I just want to give food for thought and I think it makes sense for a Fall launch.

Rongers says we need to make some distinction about what types of events we are going to have and how these events tie back to economic redevelopment of the community. I think we could have a range of event types, but as we are booking them we need to know how they will tie back to our economic development story. The question is how do the different array of activities tie back.

Commissioner Rogala says it's the community gathering place, that's what we're doing and that is the main focus. You have your first story with the Star Wars night.

Rurode says it's essential to have a theme, something that's uniquely different that's going to attract the food vendors as well as the residents. It's also a creative challenge and what will bring people here besides the food trucks.

Commissioner Hull says he understands what everyone is saying but how do the food trucks tie into the four-acres or turning that piece of property into the next step. If you go back and look at Chesterton and their European Market. When they initially opened the market it was fits and starts. It was on a weekend and maybe there was one tent. Maybe three cars stopped to look. Now you can hardly drive through downtown Chesterton on a Saturday. It's going to take time, there will be bumps in the road, and attracting those vendors is the difficult part. I understand there is a waiting list to get into the European Market in Chesterton. Eventually, we will get to that point. This is the first step in the big picture. We're going to start this thing. We're ready. We're going to do something whether it's going to work or not. We're going to fumble our way through it, learn from our mistakes so we can make it better.

Commissioner Rogala says that Griffith and Valpo have Farmers' Markets, with craft tables, vendors that come and sell things. This is how they started out. We have the Town rummage sale. We could have tied that together. This is how they started out, they charged \$50 for the entire season. They could come out as many times as they wanted and we are doing the same thing. We just want to start somewhere. Commissioner Rogala tells Rurode he will help him and we'll get it.

Rurode says the dates have been there and all he is suggesting is that when we want to go full scale it's should be a little further down the road. He says he agrees with Commissioner Hull, we should start small, let's learn and build, but you don't want to have a big marketed event when we don't have the vendor support. We're not prepared, we haven't had the repetition ourselves to know what works. It's wanting vendors to return, so you want to build up slowly with success.

In the audience, former RDC member Gene Weibl said Burns Harbor is unique in that it doesn't have the large traffic populations as other towns have moving through it to have a food truck square. Weibl says the Town needs to be very well-prepared and cautious because we're not going to have the second chance that other larger communities get. We need to be very conscious of that fact as well.

In the audience, Gail Van Loon asks if we are going to bus people into our events. I mean to make it look good, we'll have hundreds and hundreds of people. That's what I'm getting at. I mean you are advertising and marketing. Everyone that's going to be over there will need a License to do Business in our town and they have all their proof of insurance and all that stuff.

Commissioner Bozak asks Rurode if he is checking all License to do Business in town. Rurode replies yes.

Another former RDC member Brad Enslin said he agrees it is late for this year to start and there should be a unique attraction at the same location, for example, a Market and that's your anchor. That's what draws visitors who will spend their money at either the food trucks, container village or whatever. We need a draw, some type of anchor that will bring people to that location because that is the idea of Griffiths Market, European Market or the Chesterton Art Fair. You need a sure fire day when vendors know people are going to be there.

Commissioner Hull says as long as we communicate the vision of what we are trying to do this year it's going to allow us an opportunity to grow and figure out what works and what doesn't. So next year we can build upon that. Rurode, Rongers, Commissioner Rogala and others are very adept at the vision of what they are trying to create. Sometime in the future, maybe one of the vendors that's a regular will show up during the week and serve lunch for the mill traffic. Are those opportunities we can grow into? Does that create a sense of place? Possibly, because that stop becomes known to people who are travelling by.

Commissioner Rogala says the site will be set up, so if someone has paid and wants to come during the week, they can just pull up, plug in, and they're ready to go. So it can happen during the week.

Rurode says it's not just limited to food trucks. We are activating the site and trying to create its traction. We're trying for repetition and ritual on this piece of property and that can lead to shipping containers and more permanent retail. It's a long-term process, but that's been the eye opener for vendors. Many of them even recommend saying I have someone who would be interested and would really want to look at possibly coming and setting up their own tent. I do think from a marketing to vendor standpoint it is something we are going to need a little assistance with. Maybe a pamphlet or something we can put together would be very beneficial. We could use someone like Danielle to work on this type of project and have her help us create it. Rurode asks if everyone is ok with that and he would work with Danielle on it. Everyone agreed.

Commissioner Hull says we essentially are the Town and we are trying to do our own thing and this has been this difficult. This is giant eye opener for a business who wants to come here and set up shop. We need to streamline the things so we can make it very simple and easier for them to come in.

Commissioner Bozak says this is what we are doing on the Plan Commission, we're taking those steps. Commissioner Hull says we are trying to.

State Road 149 Relinquishment Study

Commissioner Rogala says Khalil of Global Engineering phoned and informed him that he saw the State Road 149 Relinquishment Study on the agenda for tonight and asked if Global should proceed with talking to INDOT to see if they were willing to relinquish to us. They will not be doing any studies. This is basically a sit down meeting to discuss the option and to find out if we want to move on it. Commissioner Rogala asks the committee if they want to move on this.

Commissioner Biancardi asks moving forward means.

Commissioner Rogala says it just a conversation.

Commissioner Biancardi says she doesn't understand what the whole idea of relinquishing or what that looks like for the Town. I understand generally.

Commissioner Rogala says right now it's just an idea. Basically, it means to make the town walkable. But before we can plan and spend the money to do any studies we need to know

- how it would look
- what we would do with it
- how much it would cost to maintain

We have to make sure that INDOT would even be willing to do anything like that. Simply to hand it over to the Town or even change it themselves. Basically, it's Indiana's road and we need to talk to them to see if they would be willing to do anything on it or give it to us.

Commissioner Biancardi says we are just going to ask them if they would entertain the idea of having conversations about this.

Commissioner Rogala says no they are having conversations to see if whether they would re-do the road but most of the time it's been relinquished by the towns and cities. It's not going to cost us anything but what Global charges as far as having conversations.

Commissioner Rogala made a motion to allow Global Engineering to have conversations with INDOT to possibly relinquishing State Road 149 to the Town. Commissioner Bozak seconded the motion. Commissioner Loving-Aye, Commissioner Bozak-Aye, Commissioner Biancardi-Aye, Commissioner Hull-Aye, Commissioner Rogala-Aye. Motion passed.

Umbaugh Study Update

Commissioner Rogala says they are in their final stage. We should be hearing in the next week or two.

Marquette Greenway Trail Update

Rurode says basically we are still trying to look at plumbing out the trees for the second phase. We will be starting the RFP process. The RFP would probably go out in September.

New Business

None

Approval of Claim Register

Commissioner Biancardi made a motion to approve the Claim Register. Commissioner Loving seconded the motion. Commissioner Loving-Aye, Commissioner Bozak-Aye, Commissioner Biancardi-Aye, Commissioner Hull-Aye Commissioner Rogala-Aye. Motion passed.

Approval of Financial Report for the Month of June 2016

Commissioner Rogala made a motion to approve the Financial Report for the Month of June 2016. Commissioner Loving seconded the motion. Commissioner Bozak-Aye, Commissioner Biancardi-Aye, Commissioner Hull-Aye, Commissioner Loving-Aye, Commissioner Rogala-Aye. Motion passed.

Good of the Order

Sarah Oudman, a resident said with lots for sale around town, she’s been asked by potential buyers if the Town has plans for redevelopment for those properties. She asked the Commission who she should direct questions to.

Commissioner Hull says the best person to contact would be Rurode.

Building Commissioner Arney says 90% of the time new business opportunities originate in the Building Department where permitting takes place. Usually, individuals are not really looking for redevelopment but a piece of land they can build on. Once I know there is something someone is interested in I tell them if it is permitted or not permitted. If it’s in the Table of Use or not. If you will need a variance or not. At this point my statement is I have a number where you can contact Rurode and he can assist you on what the focuses are for redevelopment.

Ziulkowski said she would put Rurode’s contact information on the Town’s website so that he can be easily found and contacted.

Commissioner Bozak says the Communications team is meeting this week and they will discuss and figure out the best way to handle who to contact for what.

Adjournment

Commissioner Rogala made a motion to adjourn. Commissioner Biancardi seconded the motion. Commissioner Hull–Aye, Commissioner Rogala–Aye, Commissioner Loving–Aye, Commissioner Biancardi–Aye, Commissioner Bozak–Aye. Motion passed.

The meeting concluded at 7:10 p.m.

APPROVED on August 10, 2016

REDEVELOPMENT COMMISSION
FOR THE TOWN OF BURNS HARBOR

Marcus Rogala, President

Andrew Bozak, Vice President

Toni Biancardi

Eric Hull

Nick Loving

ATTEST:

Marge Falbo, Recording Secretary