



CITY OF NORTH ADAMS, MASSACHUSETTS

Redevelopment Authority

REGULAR MEETING

MINUTES

March 9, 2020

Members present David Bond, Kyle Hanlon, and Rebecca Cohen

Members absent Michael Leary

Others present William Meranti, Building Inspector

Call to order 5:30 pm

Public hearings new business

- **Update on Heritage State Park and urban renewal area**

Vice Chairman Kyle Hanlon opened the meeting to Mayor Bernard for an update. Mayor Bernard explained that he wanted to give an update on EMRCA, the larger scale vision for the reuse of the park and the extension and expansion for the use of the UR-2 zone that Zac Feury has talked about previously. The vision and the plan for the EMRCA has great potential and we are on point to partner with them and move forward. We are currently in a stalled position with the option. We have presented to EMRCA the city's updated option. The option covers Heritage State Park as well as two other parcels. In doing the research for this project, Zac Feury discovered that one parcel is not in the urban renewal area so that will need to be dealt with separately. The parcel south of Sons of Italy is incorrectly included in the previous option that hasn't been exercised. There are two paths for disposition; the first is a surplus declaration through City Council, the other is to hold on to it and make the determination that it should be included within the urban renewal area as we look to extend that both in terms of time and boundary.

To date there is no motion from EMRCA on the option. They have not countered or executed the offer. Without that option we are looking at other uses of the park, including rental of the existing spaces in order to provide revenue while the future development of the park is an open question. Mayor Bernard is working with the Office of Community Development on bringing in a team from the Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) and Mass Development to walk through and talk about potential development strategies and any resources available at the state level to support and incentivize investment in redeveloping the property.

All of the UR-2 area expires in 2021. Mayor Bernard feels that extending it at least in terms of time, if not in terms of boundary lines is the best choice regardless of who takes the lead to develop the park. Zac Feury and Mike Nuvallie from the Office of Community Development will be the parties that help us move that forward. Mr. Feury did a good job of laying out the steps at the board level and bringing the Council in at the last meeting knowing that this will need to be approved by the state.

Mayor Bernard offered to answer questions. Member Cohen inquired about Mayor Bernard's take on whether the EMRCA plan will come to fruition and why there is not more media coverage. Mayor Bernard explained

that the general message is that Mr. Krens and his team still plan on moving forward with their plan, however, they have not taken action. In the meantime, the mayor would like to have a plan B in place in case the EMRCA people are no longer interested.

Member Bond inquired about whether a timeline is in place with EMRCA. Mayor Bernard stated as soon as possible. They have been radio silent with the city. They have had the option for a while, and they keep going dormant. He would like to keep looking at options.

Member Cohen stated that she took a walk through Heritage Park earlier in the day and has a lot of memories of what it used to be and is aware of the potential. She noticed that there is a lot of decay happening and noted that there will be a lot of money needed to improve the property. Mayor Bernard explained that that is a good reason to bring in Mass Development and DHCD to get their expert opinion and see what resources are available and what their suggestions are for a plan.

Member Cohen expressed concern about Freight Yard Pub because they are a family owned business making money and would like to see this move along as quickly as possible for their sake. Mayor Bernard explained that the lease for the Freight Yard Pub was extended.

Vice Chairman Hanlon inquired about whether the parcel in question in the south end is the one that Mr. Feury mentioned at the last meeting as being zoned different. Mr. Feury explained that the parcel constitutes a split lot and the UR-2 district extends part way in to that parcel but not all the way through so part of the parcel is in the industrial district and part of it is in the UR-2 district. Vice Chairman Hanlon clarified that there is a section of urban renewal zoning extending to a section that is not in the urban renewal area. Mr. Feury stated that that section that is in that parcel is in the urban renewal area but because it doesn't encompass the entire parcel, it is not subject to the Chapter 30b exemptions. Vice Chairman Hanlon clarified that for the ease of future development it would make sense to change the zoning and consolidate in to one zone. Mayor Bernard explained that that was the inclination but he wanted to bring to the board for the board's opinion.

Member Cohen requested clarification on the history of why it is a split parcel. Mr. Feury explained that the urban renewal plan, which includes the boundaries for the urban renewal area, were created in 1981. He cannot find any documentation to explain the split. When the new zoning map was drawn recently, they tried to eliminate split parcels but this one remains because it is in the urban renewal area.

Vice Chairman Hanlon requested any questions from the board. No questions.

- **Reorganization of the board**

Vice Chairman Hanlon stated that Chairman Leary asked David Bond to be the nominating committee. Member Bond nominated Kyle Hanlon as chair of the Redevelopment Authority. Member Cohen seconded the nomination. All in favor. Motion carries.

Member Bond nominated Member Leary as vice chair of the Redevelopment Authority. Member Cohen seconded the nomination. All in favor. Motion carries.

Adjournment Chairman Hanlon requested a motion to adjourn. Member Bond made a motion to adjourn. Member Cohen seconded the motion. Meeting adjourned at 5:45 pm.

Respectfully submitted,



Michelle Ells
Redevelopment Authority Secretary