

NIAGARA FALLS URBAN RENEWAL AGENCY
Minutes of Meeting January 29th, 2018
City Council Chambers – 745 Main Street
Niagara Falls, New York

Present: Mayor Paul Dyster
Council Member Andrew Touma
Council Member Kenny Tompkins
Council Member Ezra Scott Jr.
Council Member William Kennedy
Mr. Michael Hooper
Mr. Robins
Mr. Mooradian (late arrived at 5:06)

Absent: Council Member Christopher Voccio
Ms. Doreen O'Connor

Staff Mr. Anthony Vilaro
Present: Mr. Richard Zucco (late arrived at 5:10)
Mrs. Michelle Shaughnessy
Thomas DeSantis
Mark Diodate

Mayor Paul Dyster called the meeting to order at 5:05 P.M. Roll was called and a quorum was present.

Welcome New Members:

Mayor Dyster welcomed Council Member Kennedy at this time. Council Member Voccio was unable to attend this meeting but Mayor Dyster welcomed him as well.

Nomination and Election of Chief Fiscal Officer for 2018:

Council Member Tompkins nominated Council Member Touma, seconded by Council Member Kennedy. No further nominations for this position were made.

POLLED VOTE:

In Favor: 8
Opposed: 0

Nomination and Election of Alt. Fiscal Officer for 2018:

Council Member Touma nominated Council member Tompkins, seconded by Council Member Kennedy. No further nominations for this position were made.

POLLED VOTE:

In Favor: 8
Opposed: 0

Nomination and Election of Secretary for 2018:

Council member Tompkins nominated Mrs. O'Connor, seconded by Council Member Kennedy. No further nominations for this position were made.

POLLED VOTE:

In Favor: 8
Opposed: 0

Nomination and Election of Alt. Secretary for 2018:

Council Member Tompkins nominated Mr. Mooradian, seconded by Council Member Touma. No further nominations for this position were made.

POLLED VOTE:

In Favor: 8
Opposed: 0

Approval of 2018 regular Meeting Schedule:

Mr. Vilardo stated that the URA meetings could remain on Mondays as they have been of change to Wednesdays, opposite of City Council Meetings.

Mr. Robbins nominated the Wednesday schedule, seconded by Council Member Touma.

POLLED VOTE:

In Favor: 8
Opposed: 0

Approval of Banking Resolution:

Mayor Dyster stated that M&T Bank would continue to maintain checking or saving accounts and certificates of deposit for the City of Niagara Falls.

Mr. Robbins motioned this item, seconded by Council Member Touma.

POLLED VOTE:

In Favor: 8
Opposed: 0

Approval of Minutes of URA Meeting dated November 28th, 2017:

Council Member Touma motioned this item, seconded by Mr. Robbins.

POLLED VOTE:

In Favor: 8
Opposed: 0

Approval of 2018 URA Budget:

Mr. Zucco stated the Revenue in the Budget may increase or decrease depending on lease payments.

Mr. Robbins stated that he liked that fact that the Auditor is being changed every few years for a fresh set of eyes reviewing records.

Council Member Tompkins Motioned this item, Seconded by Council Member Touma.

POLLED VOTE:

In Favor: 8

Opposed: 0

Approval of Lease Commencement for 3625 Highland Avenue:

Mr. Vilardo stated that this is being pushed back a month at this time. A door was damaged and Engineering is currently repairing.

Council Member Kennedy suggested to the room that everyone should visit the 24th Street location. He was very impressed by their product/process.

Council Member Touma motioned this item, seconded by Council member Kennedy

POLLED VOTE:

In Favor: 8

Opposed: 0

Approval of grant of option to purchase 3625 Highland Avenue:

Mr. Zucco stated this is the last step in the entire Urban Renewal disposition process. The purchase price will be \$865,000.00 with one-half of the rent to be paid by Sandstone Springs LLC and Sandstone Springs Holding LLC, to NFURA under the current lease to be applied to the purchase price if option to purchase is exercised.

Council Member Touma asked Mr. Vilardo if he was confident that Sandstone would purchase the property. Mr. Vilardo stated he was confident that they would purchase.

Mr. Mooradian asked if the purchase price could change at all. Mr. Vilardo stated no it could not.

Mr. DeSantis stated that Sandstone Springs was originally looking at property in Buffalo prior to 3625 Highland Avenue becoming available to them. They have done great things with their existing building and even on this building already.

Council Member Touma motioned this item, seconded by Council Member Tompkins.

POLLED VOTE:

In Favor: 8

Opposed: 0

Approval of payment of taxes for 520 Niagara Street:

Mr. Zucco stated the property transferred to URA in September 2017. At that time there was outstanding taxes of \$1,200.00 that needed to be paid. This Item is for the Board to approve that payment.

Council Member Touma motioned this item, seconded by Council Member Tompkins.

POLLED VOTE:

In Favor: 7

Abstain: 1 (Council Member Kennedy)

Opposed: 0

Proposed By-Law Amendment on Meeting Dates:

Mr. Zucco stated that the current by laws have the day of the week for meetings in them. This item is to remove the word “ Monday” in the by laws. This change will have to be presented to the Board in two meetings, so will be on the Agenda at the next URA meeting as well.

Council Member Touma motioned this item, seconded by Mr. Mooradian.

POLLED VOTE:

In Favor: 8
Opposed: 0

Approval of Cancellation of Lease of Third Street Parking Lot to Jefferson Apartments and Change to Third Street Ground Lease with City:

Mayor Dyster asked for this Item to be walked onto the Agenda. Walk on motioned by Mr. Robbins and seconded by Council Member Touma.

POLLED VOTE FOR WALK ON OF ITEM:

In Favor: 8
Opposed: 0

Mayor Dyster explained that currently the Urban Renewal Agency has a Lease agreement with Jefferson Apartments for the use of a portion of the Third Street parking lot. URA also has a ground lease with the City to operate the Third Street parking lot, not including the Jefferson Apartments parking lease parcel. Jefferson Apartments has approached the City to cancel the parking lease and enter into a parking agreement with the City for this parking lot.

It is proposed that URA and the Jefferson mutually cancel the Jefferson Apartments parking lease, and URA approved including the parcel in the City ground lease. This will allow the City to enter into a parking agreement with the Jefferson Apartments.

Council Member Touma stated this new agreement would mean more money for the City of Niagara Falls.

Mr. Hooper asked why Jefferson Apartments would ask for this change if it will cost them more money in the long run. Mr. Vilardo stated that Jefferson Apartments would like to refinance and the Bank is asking for a longer term on parking arrangement as part of their approval for these funds.

Council Member Scott asked if tonight’s vote was only to terminate the lease agreement. Mr. Zucco said yes that is correct.

Council Member Kennedy asked if the specific details of this agreement will be made available to Board Members before they vote to approve this new parking Agreement. Mr. Zucco stated that those details will be available once the terms are set, but the City Council will vote to approve the new agreement. This vote tonight is just for the URA to terminate the existing Jefferson Apartments Parking Lease and to include that parcel in the City ground lease. That will allow the City of Niagara Falls to agree and to enter into parking agreement Jefferson Apartments. City Council will have final vote on the Agreement terms.

Motion to approve this Item was made by Council Member Touma, seconded by Council Member Tompkins.

POLLED VOTE:

In Favor: 8
Opposed: 0

Approved

Old Business –

Mr. Vilardo reviewed the Core City Urban Renewal Plan Goals. URA received a 1.5 million Grant in December 2017. This Grant will be for the restoration & renovation of existing structures and also new construction of Commercial & mixed use property.

Council Member Touma asked is the City would be working with Niagara University with the use of this grant. Mayor Dyster stated that they would be and some things are already in the works. Council Member Kennedy stated he met with Niagara University last week and they have a Phase 1 and Phase 2 ready to go into place. He will email these to the Board Members this coming week.

Mr. Vilardo stated that within the Grant budget, there may be a need for consultants and then RFP's will be taken for projects etc.

Mr. Robbins stated that if at all possible, he would like to see the road medians taken care of with some of this Grant money. The weeds have taken over and should be cleaned up. Mr. Mooradian also stated that some of the Grant money should be used to improving lighting amongst the City for safety measures. Mr. Vilardo said that he would look into if the Grant guidelines allow the monies to be used for these improvements.

Mayor Dyster stated that the City of Niagara Falls would be looking into a place for a City park. Currently the City has Franco Park, but he believes this will be used for construction staging for upcoming City projects.

New Business-None

Adjournment

There being no further business, a motion for adjournment was made by Council Member Touma, second made by Council Member Tompkins. Unanimously approved. Meeting was adjourned at 5:51 P.M.