

**MINUTES OF THE REDEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY OF THE CITY
OF READING HELD ON 20th JUNE 2019**

The Redevelopment Authority of the City of Reading held a meeting at 815 Washington Street, City Hall, 3rd Floor Conference room in the City of Reading, County of Berks, and Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, on 20th day of June, 2019.

The meeting was called to order at 5:01 p.m. by Mr. Jacobson, Chairman and on roll call, the following were present:

Mr. Melvyn Jacobson,	Chairman
Mr. Juan Zabala,	Vice-Chairman
Dr. Lazaro Pepen	Treasurer/Secretary
Mr. Wellington Santana	Member

Absent:

Mr. Glenn Steckman Member

Also present were:

Mr. Dennis Witwer, Executive Assistant
Mr. Keith Mooney, Barley, Snyder
Mr. William Murray, Parking Authority, Chairman

Upon roll call, Mr. Witwer declared a quorum.

Consent Agenda:

Before approving the consent agenda, Mr. Zabala asked that the public comment be moved to the end of the meeting, Dr. Pepen seconded the motion. All members accepted.

New Member introduction:

Mr. Wellington Santana was introduced to the board. He was newly appointed by Mayor Scott. Mr. Santana stated that he is a longtime resident of the City of Reading and looks forward to helping move the city forward into a brighter tomorrow.

Reading Parking Authority:

Mr. Jacobson asked the board to indulge him for a moment as he asked that Mr. Bill Murray from the Parking Authority addressed the board.

Mr. Murray stated that the Parking Authority board had been advised that there had been some interest from outside parties to purchase the state parking lot located at 624 Penn Street, which the RRA is owner of. He said that the Parking Authority would be very interested in purchasing the lot and would like to be considered if the RRA is contemplating selling.

Mr. Murray stated that the Parking Authority had recently dedicated a good amount of money to be paid out to the City of Reading and that the proceeds from the state lot which they manage for the RRA was included in that amount, so it would be important for them to keep control over the lot.

Mr. Mooney advised Mr. Murray that there had been one interested party, however the RRA has not taken any steps to accept the offer.

Mr. Jacobson stated that before the RRA would accept any offer, the board would have to discuss thoroughly the best course of action.

On another subject, Mr. Murray stated that the Parking Authority had paid off the lease agreement for the 2nd and Washington Parking Garage, which they have with the RRA.

Mr. Mooney stated that he was informed have the lease payoff and that he would need to verify the buyout price to make sure that the amount is accurate and that once he had done that, he would make the necessary to move forward with the conveyance of land to the Parking Authority.

Buttonwood Gateway Housing:

Mr. Mooney advised the board that he was in receipt of the offer letter from Mr. Glenn Worgan of Delaware Valley Group for the purchase of properties in the Buttonwood Gateway vicinity for their proposed housing development.

For the edification of Mr. Santana, the board gave a brief history of the project. Mr. Zabala voice his opposition to the project.

Dr. Pepen made a motion authorizing Mr. Mooney and Mr. Jacobson to accept and execute and agreement between the RRA and Delaware Valley Corp. for the purchase of properties owned by the RRA in the amount of

\$70,000.00. Mr. Santana seconded the motion and by a vote of 3 yea's and 1 nay, the motion passed. Mr. Zabala was the single vote against the motion.

RRA Property disposition policy:

Mr. Zabala asked the board if they all had the chance to read the new disposition policy and if there were any questions. There being no questions, Mr. Zabala made a motion to accept the new policy, Dr. Pepen seconded the motion and with a vote of 3 yea's to accept and an abstention from Mr. Santana, the motion passed.

Website:

Mr. Witwer advised the board that he had met with the webmaster who is created the new website and that a full presentation would be ready for the board by the July meeting.

Audit:

Mr. Witwer presented the board with a proposal from Herbein and Company for a 3 year contract as auditor to the authority. Mr. Witwer stated that it was the only proposal submitted and that Herbein was already in charge of the authority's payroll.

The board was pleased with the proposal. Mr. Zabala made a motion to accept the proposal by Herbein and Co. to act in the capacity of auditor for the time frame of 3 years. Dr. Pepen seconded the motion and all members were in favor.

Berks County Redevelopment Authority:

Mr. Witwer stated that he and Mr. Mooney they had been contacted, by Mr. Ken Pick, Director of the Berks County Redevelopment Authority, to help with condemnation and purchase of a home located at 612 Spruce Street which is on the Blight Property listed.

Mr. Mooney explained the power of condemnation to the board and how the RRA would act as a conduit in the process.

Mr. Zabala stated that he would like to have a better understanding of the intent of the Berks County Redevelopment Authority for the property. He stated that he is opposed of adding more homeless shelters to the city residential areas, when those homes could be single family homes.

Mr. Witwer stated that he would invite Mr. Pick to the July board meeting so that he can address all questions and concerns.

Public Comment:

At this time, Mr. Jacobson opened the floor to public comment.

First to speak, Mr. David Lugo. He asked the board for a better understand on how the BPRC (Blighted Property) process worked. He stated that he has had no luck getting information on the process, except for the few conversations that he has had with Mr. Witwer. He stated that the process does not seem to be easy.

Mr. Lugo also asked the status of his agreement to purchase 39 S. 2nd Street. He stated that his offer to purchase was accepted over a year ago and the sale still hasn't gone through. He told the board that he would be willing to hire his own lawyers to finish the deed process and to handle any tax matters if the board would be willing to sell the property to him for a dollar. He advised the board that he has the funds and the contractors ready to start the rehab process on the building. He said that the longer the property sits empty and unkempt, the worse the condition of the property is becoming.

Mr. Jacobson stated that the board would take the offer under advisement and would discuss during executive session.

Next to speak was Rev. Evelyn Morrison. She voiced her concern over the Buttonwood Gateway housing project and the possible ground contamination. There is great concern for any future development on this land do to chemicals that could potentially be found in the ground. She asked that if the board had not yet done so, to vote against the Delaware Valley housing proposal.

Lastly, Mrs. Sheila Perez addressed the board, she, like Rev. Morrison had great concerns about the levels of possibly radiation, lead and beryllium in the ground in the Buttonwood Gateway area. She stated that the protection of the people is at the foremost concern to everyone and that any discussion should not be entered into lightly and quickly just to sell land. She implored the board to not vote for the housing project.

Executive Session:

At this time the board entered into executive session to discuss legal and staff matters.

Regular Session:

The board entered back into regular session.

There being no further business to be brought before the board, Dr. Pepen made a motion to adjourn the meeting, Mr. Zabala seconded the motion; all members were in favor.

Respectfully submitted by:

Executive Assistant