

September 25, 2025

**URBAN RENEWAL AUTHORITY BOARD**

**Regular Meeting – 5:00 PM**

**A) CALL MEETING TO ORDER**

Vice Chair Kristin Stephens called the regular meeting to order at 5:00 p.m. in the C I C room at 300 Laporte Avenue, Fort Collins, Colorado, with hybrid participation available via the City's Zoom platform.

**B) ROLL CALL**

**PRESENT**

Vice Chair Kristin Stephens  
Commissioner Susan Gutowsky (arrived at 5:09 p.m.)  
Commissioner Melanie Potyondy  
Commissioner Emily Francis  
Commissioner Dan Sapienza  
Commissioner Tricia Canonico (arrived at 5:02 p.m.)  
Commissioner Kelly Ohlson  
Commissioner Julie Pignataro  
Commissioner Kristin Draper

**ABSENT**

Chair Jeni Arndt

**STAFF**

Acting Executive Director Josh Birks  
Secretary Alia Jackson

**C) EXECUTIVE DIRECTORS' AGENDA REVIEW**

Acting Executive Director Josh Birks provided an overview of the agenda, including:

- No changes to the published agenda; however, on Item 2, in the motion language should include 'eminent domain.'
- The first discussion item is an update to the redevelopment strategy and plan for 1636 North College Avenue.
- The second discussion item is a motion to consider going into executive session relating to the property at 1220 North College in the North College Urban Renewal Plan Area.

**D) PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

None.

**E) PUBLIC PARTICIPATION FOLLOW-UP**

None.

**~~F) ADOPTION OF CONSENT CALENDAR.~~**

## G) COMMISSIONER REPORTS

None.

## H) DISCUSSION ITEMS

The method of debate for discussion items is as follows:

- Chair introduces the item number and subject; asks if formal presentation will be made by staff
- Staff and/or Applicant presentation (optional)
- Chair requests public comment on the item (three minute limit for each person)
- Board questions of staff on the item
- Board motion on the item
- Board discussion
- Final Board comments
- Board vote on the item

Note: Time limits for individual agenda items may be revised, at the discretion of the Chair, to ensure all have an opportunity to speak. **If attending in person, please sign in at the table in the back of the room.** The timer will buzz when there are 30 seconds left and the light will turn yellow. It will buzz again at the end of the speaker's time.

### 1. Update to Redevelopment Strategy and Plan for 1636 N. College Avenue

*The purpose of this item is to provide an update on the redevelopment strategy for 1636 N. College Avenue (1636). Changing conditions around the property have created an opportunity to consider a larger-scale and more impactful redevelopment plan. Fort Collins Urban Renewal Authority (Authority) staff will describe and recommend a revised strategy for managing the redevelopment that enables the Authority to take advantage of the emerging opportunity. Staff will not be seeking direct action from the Board, only to answer questions and receive guidance on the proposed strategy.*

#### STAFF PRESENTATION

Acting Executive Director Josh Birks stated this item relates to the redevelopment strategy and plan for the recently acquired property at 1636 North College Avenue, the former Albertson's property.

Andy Smith, Redevelopment Manager, noted the services of a professional land planner will soon be engaged for a limited scale project involving what the zoning and entitlement challenges and process might be with the property as well as looking at the infrastructure present and private covenants. He also noted staff is pursuing some tactical urbanism techniques as blight prevention to help activate the site, including physical improvements and programming for temporary events.

Smith noted engagement with the community is continuing in terms of frequent meetings with nearby property owners, the association, and various community groups and potential partners. He noted an open house will be held on October 9<sup>th</sup> at the Northside Atzlan Center regarding everything occurring on North College. Additionally, Smith stated noted providing additional affordable housing in URA plan areas is a high priority, specifically at this site. He also noted conversations have occurred with nearby property owners regarding possible URA involvement.

Acting Executive Director Birks requested input regarding making some tactical adjustments in the strategy to try to respond to some of the new developments, particularly the opportunity to create a more coordinated approach to redevelopment that would include partners outside of the URA. He commented on the importance of getting the redevelopment done in the right manner

while not compromising the momentum that has been created. Additionally, having a clear scope and role for how to bring community leadership into the project is important.

Acting Executive Director Birks stated part of the shift in the approach could be to think about the property not as a transfer of ownership but as a long-term ground lease to be able to maintain some control, which could have several advantages. Additionally, he stated delegating the planning and design will help to ensure a strong, clear role for community leadership and community members in the project and will allow the creation of a single point of responsibility that can focus on bringing partners together. He noted phasing the project will allow for long-term participation by the URA and will allow for flexibility and responsiveness.

Acting Executive Director Birks outlined the four major pathways that would need to be considered should the Board take this new approach, three of which would be key to success: tactical urbanism, a governance model, redevelopment plan, and phase 1 development. He stated an important next step would be the formation of a request for proposal for someone to lead the joint association.

#### PUBLIC COMMENT

Joe Rowan commended the staff work on this topic and stated the model being presented makes sense for several reasons as it would help lower the cost of anything that gets developed on the site by allowing the URA to maintain ownership and would provide a partial property tax abatement for the land.

#### BOARD DISCUSSION

Commissioner Draper asked about the costs for building owners if the URA pursues a 99-year ground lease. Acting Executive Director Birks replied the URA would consider the proper ground lease terms, including annual rent based on the type of development.

Caitlin Quander, legal counsel, noted a development could potentially pay property tax on just the improvements made, depending on the entity.

Commissioner Ohlson expressed concern about the governance model stating he would prefer to see formally appointed and elected individuals making decisions involving public land and public investments. Acting Executive Director Birks replied there is still more research to be done; however, the governance model and nature of the joint association would be established by the URA Board, and the membership could be appointed by the Board.

Commissioner Ohlson reiterated his concerns that the people making decisions should not benefit from the projects. Acting Executive Director Birks replied that is also a staff concern and stated this is an opportunity to take the \$6.75 million investment for 4.5 acres and expand its influence to include a larger scale of property without having to acquire those properties. He noted there will need to be a required balance if private investors and private property owners come in, as financial gain is their motivation; however, he stated the governance can be set such that that can exist without it dominating the decisions that are made.

Commissioner Potyondy commented on the importance of having a clear set of expectations regarding the broader vision for the property from the URA upon which projects can be vetted. Acting Executive Director Birks noted there will be multiple checkpoints along the way for the URA Board to be engaged. Additionally, there will be regular updates provided by the joint association.

Commissioner Francis noted Boards and elected officials change and stated there is a long history of promising community outcomes in Fort Collins and across the country which are not delivered by the government based on who is in office. She also expressed concern about how long the phased approach will take to build out the project. Acting Executive Director Birks replied

the property that is currently owned by the URA, and any adjoining property it may acquire in the future, cannot sustain more than one or two project phases. He stated some of the discussion around phasing is related to how some of the other properties that are potential partners would come online.

Commissioner Francis cautioned against affordable housing being the center of the project given that it was not the center of the public engagement plan. She stated that while an affordable housing component may make development of the property more feasible, she would caution against it being the focus given the community hub was the desired outcome.

Commissioner Sapienza commended the proposed change and stated he has always felt that some type of master plan was needed for the area. He requested additional information about the phase 1 development. Acting Executive Director Birks replied the intention with phase 1 is to try to keep momentum and have a partner who could be an anchor or an initial part of the development come in earlier rather than later. He suggested that partner could be identified and then participate alongside the URA in terms of master planning.

Commissioner Sapienza reiterated Commissioner Francis' concerns regarding having a focus on an affordable housing component.

Commissioner Canonico commended the proposed changes and reiterated concerns regarding having a focus on an affordable housing component. She asked about URA funding going toward events to help activate the site. Caitlin Quander, legal counsel, replied the purpose of the URA is blight remediation and stated activation could be part of that; however, a focus on physical improvements is a safer and more prudent path. Acting Executive Director Birks stated staff is contemplating having the URA set the stage by creating the environment in which the events can occur, then working with community partners to host events at little to no cost to the URA.

Commissioner Ohlson stated it is likely the institutional memory of the Board will carry over, making it more likely that the original vision for the property is maintained.

Vice Chair Stephens encouraged crossover between the joint association board and the URA Board. Additionally, she asked if URA funds could be used to finance finding a general manager or entity to manage the joint association. Acting Executive Director Birks replied the current assumption is that, because the objective of this entity would be to ultimately execute a plan that would remediate blight, the joint association could likely be supported fairly broadly. However, all funds that are spent on governance and additional expertise cannot be spent on infrastructure or other expenses to help make the redevelopment occur.

Vice Chair Stephens suggested there may be a case to be made that activating the space is preventing blight.

***Clerk's Note: As Item 1 was an update only, no motion was made.***

2. **Consideration of a motion to go into executive session pursuant to C.R.S § 24-6-402(4)(a), (b) and (e) to discuss the potential purchase or acquisition of real property interests, to receive legal advice on specific legal questions, and to determine positions relative to matters that may be subject to negotiations related to the property at 1220 N College in the North College Urban Renewal Plan area:**

***Commissioner Pignataro moved, seconded by Commissioner Potyondy, that the Fort Collins Urban Renewal Authority go into executive session pursuant to: C.R.S. § 24-6-402(4)(a), (b) and (e) for the purpose of discussing with the Authority's attorneys and appropriate management staff the following items, all related to the property at 1220 N College in the North College Urban Renewal Plan Area:***

- **Potential Purchase or Acquisition of Real Property Interests,**
- **Specific Legal Advice on Specific Legal Questions, and**
- **Determine Positions Relative to Matters that may be Subject to Negotiations, Develop Strategy for Negotiations and Instruct Negotiators.**

**A friendly amendment was made to add the following language at the end of the motion: “And that at the conclusion of the Executive Session that the Urban Renewal Authority meeting be automatically adjourned without reconvening in the regular meeting.”**

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

None.

**The motion carried 10-0.**

**I) OTHER BUSINESS**

None.

**J) ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business before the board, the meeting was adjourned at 6:39 p.m.

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Chair

ATTEST:

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Secretary