



SANDY URBAN RENEWAL BOARD MEETING

Saturday, December 09, 2023 at 10:00 AM
38975 Proctor Blvd and via Zoom

MINUTES

ROLL CALL

PRESENT

Chair Stan Pulliam
Board Member Chris Mayton
Board Member Laurie Smallwood
Board Member Rich Sheldon
Board Member Kathleen Walker
Board Member Carl Exner
Board Member Don Hokanson
Board Member Phil Schneider

ABSENT

Board Member Khrys Jones

WORK SESSION

1. Sandy Urban Renewal Board Retreat: Project Planning and Strategic Direction

The City Manager summarized the staff report, which was included in the agenda packet. A variety of background reports and supplementary materials were hyperlinked directly from the staff report.

The primary purpose of the work session was to provide direction to staff on future projects and spending for the Sandy Urban Renewal Agency (Agency); and more specifically to gauge overall support for further analysis on the “bunker building” (annex), to inform the Board of other eligible projects within the district, and to more narrowly focus future spending.

After reviewing the general purpose of urban renewal, the City Manager provided an update on recent efforts to study the feasibility of renovating the annex building into usable space for the City, particularly for parks and recreation usage and potentially for other City uses such as library space or city hall and/or council chambers space. It was noted that the Parks and Recreation Department has had a great deal of success in developing programming, and that the additional space provided by the building could be effectively used. It was also noted that the annex building is a deteriorating asset, and that exploration of its potential use is prudent.

It was suggested that programming in the annex building could be used in part to address the community’s need for childcare services. Concerns were raised however about the proper

role of the City in providing childcare versus the private market, and that the most effective use of urban renewal may be to rehabilitate commercial building spaces to make them ready for business. An overview of expenses dedicated to the Community Campus site since its purchase was also provided.

General Board discussion regarding renovation of the annex building ensued, pertaining to the following topics:

- Clarification that the programming breakdown shown in the staff report assumes that the entire building would be occupied by Parks and Recreation. It was noted that the City would still have substantial unresolved space needs in this scenario
- Discussion on the potential disposition of the existing community center if Parks and Recreation were to move to the annex building
- Concerns about facility management capacity and the need to centralize the City's services; concerns with moving Library functions to the annex
- More space would be available to accommodate City functions if a third floor is added to the annex; discussion of an approach to financing such a project was provided
- Locating City employees on Pleasant Street could provide economic stimulus

More general discussion ensued on other potential opportunities for beneficial investment of funds within the urban renewal district. The staff report overviewed several potential possibilities, including implementation of the Pleasant Street Master Plan, execution of a development agreement at the Community Campus site, strategic property acquisition, City Hall reinvestment, development of a new more flexible strategic business investment program. Discussion included specific potential properties to purchase, long term plans for the Operations Center, and needs for staff expertise related to economic development and urban renewal management.

Discussion also occurred related to the potential formation of a parks and recreation special district, parks and recreation needs in the community, and the potential for voters to support a property tax measure. It was also suggested that a potential district might have interest in the annex facility.

Three potential visions for the future direction of the urban renewal agency were distilled: (1) demolition of the annex and renewed focus on property acquisition and redevelopment efforts, (2) a similar vision but with retention of the annex and pursuit of a parks and recreation district, and (3) renovation of the annex facility as envisioned in the feasibility study.

The Board engaged in discussion on their preferences between the three potential visions outlined above. Discussion covered the following issues:

- Renovation of the annex is a singular opportunity that should not be passed up, and is a surer thing than redevelopment projects; concern that demolition of the annex would make the City's space problems worse
- The original intention of the purchase of the Community Campus property was to activate Pleasant Street
- Importance of business recruitment
- Importance of SandyNet moving to new facilities at the Operations Center

- Possibilities for a future parks and recreation district acquiring properties for a recreation center and/or ball fields, thus freeing the Agency to focus on redevelopment projects
- Review and discussion of the stated goals and objectives of the Agency within the Urban Renewal Plan
- Concern about short-sightedness, and emphasis on the importance of commercial development and revenue collection
- Concern that retaining a public building on the Community Campus site could make development on the site less attractive
- Concern about investing all available bonding capacity into one project at the Campus; concern that it would not spur effective activation of the street
- Questioning of whether a parks and recreation district would have interest in the annex; note that the decision of whether to pursue a district could affect the decision of what to do with the annex building
- Discussion of potential facility construction options for a parks and recreation district
- Discussion of the potential for redevelopment projects to transform the downtown
- Discussion on the investment advantages of acquiring property, and the advantages of engaging in development agreements and controlling the future of development on strategic sites
- Concern that redevelopment projects may take significant time; concern over the failure rate of certain categories of businesses
- Recognition that Sandy is a tourism-based economy
- Discussion on the logistics of pursuing a parks and recreation district, including PAC formation, meetings requirements, polling, organization, and decision making
- Discussion on the merits of a City-led district formation effort, rather than a community-led effort

After engaging in the above discussion, it was the consensus of the Board that insufficient support existed to move forward with a renovation of the annex building. Rather, the consensus of the Board was in support of an initiative to revitalize and reorient Sandy's economic development and urban renewal programs in furtherance of an action plan involving property acquisition and redevelopment projects within the district. Appropriate staffing should be ensured by the City Manager to develop a team that can proactively develop a vision, pursue opportunities, and present proposals for Board and Council action.

Additional thoughts from the Board included:

- Discussion on timing and funding of new SandyNet facilities
- Usage of the Community Campus property post demolition for events such as the Mountain Festival carnival; importance of applying gravel and taking other measure to ensure the site is usable for such activities
- Potential for partnerships with the school district on the Community Campus site
- Discussion of the prospects for Pleasant Street in the future; comparisons to other communities
- Importance of public perceptions and conflicts of interest regarding property acquisition
- Importance of planning with tangible goals and performance measurement
- Encouragement to court the mass timber industry in the region

- Discussion of future potential to use limited urban renewal funds to address space needs at City Hall

EXECUTIVE SESSION

The Board met in executive session pursuant to ORS 192.660(2)(e)

DRAFT