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TAX INCREMENT REINVESTMENT ZONE No. 5
Retreat & Working Session
BOARD MEETING MINUTES
18TH FLOOR EI PASO CLUB
MAY 15, 2008
4:00 pm

Board Members in attendance:

Veronica Escobar
Pauline Dow
Marc Bernat
Bonnie S.Y. Escobar
Jesse Alvarez
Keith Mahar
George Reynoso
Frank Lopez
Jim Phillips

Members of the Public:

Jim Johnson
Monica Carbajal

Board Members absent:

Hector Gutierrez (excused)
Bill Hooten (excused)
Art Fierro
Rebecca Friesenhahn (excused)

Staff Members present:

Kathy Dodson
Verónica Rosales-Soto
Victor Venegas
Renee Marquez
Sylvia Firth
Rick Madrid

MINUTES

Item 1: Call to order and establishment of a quorum

The Tax Increment Reinvestment Zone No. 5 Board met at the above place and date. The meeting was officially called to order at 4:15 p. m. by Veronica Escobar, Chair, after a quorum was established.

Item 2: Board Re-Introductions Exercise

Exercise lead by Kathy Dodson. All attendees introduced themselves and mentioned something not commonly known about themselves to the group and shared one thing they would like to change in downtown and/or El Paso.

Item 3: Guest Speaker Presentation
TIF Director, Downtown Forth Worth, Inc.

Presentation by Jim Johnson, TIF Director, for Downtown Forth Worth, Inc. who provided a PowerPoint presentation of the lessons learned within Fort Worth in managing a TIF within a downtown area. Examples of the kinds of projects funded with TIF funds was provided by Mr. Johnson in his presentation.

Item 4: Presentation
What Works in Downtowns: best practice models from various cities

Presentation by Rick Madrid of a PowerPoint presentation.

Item 5: Discussion:
Comments and Final Input to Consultant Team
on Phase II – Implementation Strategy Report

Discussions lead by Kathy Dodson and Verónica Rosales-Soto to share an updated matrix of information containing examples of the types of management entities in other cities. Additional comments from Board members for the draft report were also requested.

Item 6: Discussion
Guiding Values Adopted by City Council on July 10, 2006: Review

Discussion led by Kathy Dodson reviewing the Guiding Values Resolution item by item. For each, pointed out status or items for consideration for the future. Items presented and reviewed from the Resolution are the following:

- To produce a feasible plan that has private investment options and potential, and that does not depend entirely on government or taxpayer subsidy.

The Downtown 2015 Plan as adopted by Council in October 2006 is this document

- To identify and pursue opportunities within the plan to preserve historically, socially, culturally and architecturally significant structures and places within the area.

As part of the Downtown 2015 Plan adopted by Council in October 2006, an analysis of the importance historical structures within the downtown plan area was conducted; this report is now one that that Historic Landmark Commission and the Historic Preservation Officer of the city are using to evaluate other possible historic designations within the area; the Economic Development staff work closely with the Historic Preservation Officer on projects that may impact the Downtown Plan area

- To create design standards for renovation and construction within the area that reflects the integrity and character of the existing urban form.

The Downtown 2015 Plan as adopted by Council in October 2006 contains these; however, City staff is considering more comprehensive design guidelines

- To build upon and create new opportunities for public spaces and walkable environments throughout the area, and maximize regional and international art forms.

The Downtown 2015 Plan as adopted by Council in October 2006 highlights possible areas for consideration and projects under discussion will add to this; the Phase II-Implementation report expands on this area and other groups such as the Public Art Committee and the Museums and Cultural Affairs department also work on this areas and provide information to staff and the TIRZ Board as appropriate.

- To add new residential development that includes a mix of housing markets, including at least thirty percent (30%) of which is affordable housing to allow new relocation opportunities for displaced residents within the area.

The discussion on this focused on the relatively high percent of affordable housing envisions which will necessitate additional public assistance to reach that goal; there was discussion on the fact that asking each housing development to meet this goal individually

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would not be feasible. There was an understanding that the vision was not for each project to meet this goal, but that the overall market should strive to meet this.

- To establish a rent stabilization program so that affordable housing units are replaced long term and to insure that 30% of the new housing shall be affordable.

As projects come forward, this can be addressed

- To offer replacement value for all housing displacement and relocation assistance to homeowners within the area.

As projects come forward, this can be addressed

- To provide a relocation strategy that includes financial assistance for businesses and commercial tenant displacement within the area, including allowing property swaps wherever possible to promote local private investment within the area.

As projects come forward, this can be addressed

- To develop a workforce implementation strategy that includes job development, training and placement for area residents, including location of a job placement and redevelopment office within the area.

The current downtown job placement office is: Upper Rio Grande at Work, Downtown Employment Center, 300 East Main Street; El Paso, Texas 79901 located downtown and meeting this goal. This office opened in 2007.

- To celebrate the cultural diversity throughout the area by allowing for the creation and development of special districts.

The Phase II-Implementation report expands on this area and other groups such as the Public Art Committee also work on these areas and provide information to staff and the TIRZ Board as appropriate.

- To look at financial strategies that allow for and promote open investment opportunities to all El Pasoans as part of the plan implementation.

This is already in place with the current incentive programs being available to everyone investing in downtown

- To allow national chain operations that foster modified prototypes that preserves local business activities and fit the El Paso urban scale.

As projects come forward, this can be addressed

- To encourage new public and private investment to the area through the use of financial and development incentives.

Many incentive programs have been created since the Plan adoption.

- To require that, if a Tax Increment Reinvestment Zone is created as part of any plan implementation strategy, at least one member each representing the residential and commercial segments of the area shall be included on the Board of Directors.

This has been considered in the appointments to the TIRZ Board and will continue to be an important consideration.

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- To require that, if any real estate investment trusts are created as part of any plan implementation strategy, all investments and development undertaken within the area shall be in accordance with the approved plan.

All projects within the Downtown Plan area will be required to follow the plan and other established municipal regulations.

- To host regular community and stakeholder work sessions to allow adequate public review, critique and refinement of the plan elements going forward.

The public session on the plan prior to its adoption completed this and there is now a good public process with TIRZ Board meetings open to the public and additional staff outreach activities such as the publication of El Centro newsletter

- To produce an inventory of historical, cultural, and other significant properties within the study area.

As part of the Downtown 2015 Plan adopted by Council in October 2006, an analysis of the importance historical structures within the downtown plan area was conducted;

- To explore 21 st Century mass transit and other transportation options as an integral component of the formal plan development, including light rail.

Sun Metro, the city's public transit provider, is actively working on this issue and the Phase II-Implementation report contains information on these efforts to date

- To encourage the location/relocation of all public sector entities into the study area.

As opportunities arise for relocation of public sector entities, this will be addressed

- To create opportunities after revitalization that allow displaced residents near and adjacent to Sacred Heart Church to return to the area, including senior housing.

As projects come forward, this can be addressed

- To explore alternative opportunities to the arena for catalyst projects within the Entertainment/Arena District that would serve as an anchor tenant or consider relocation of the arena.

Arena study funded by the private section. No action to date.

No action taken

Item 7: Discussion
Board Priority Projects
No action taken

Item 8: Adjournment at 7:45 pm by acclamation.

Approved:

Recording Secretary