

BISMARCK RENAISSANCE ZONE AUTHORITY
MEETING MINUTES
August 12, 2021

The Bismarck Renaissance Zone Authority met on August 12, 2021 in the Tom Baker Meeting Room in the City-County Office Building at 221 North 5th Street. The meeting was held remotely via the online platform Zoom as well as the meeting room. Chair Christianson presided.

Authority members present were Jim Christianson, Joe Fink, Dustin Gawrylow, George Keiser, Curt Walth and Greg Zenker.

Authority member Todd Van Orman was not present.

Technical Advisor Bruce Whittey was present.

Technical Advisor Steph Smith was not present.

Staff members present were Sandra Bogaczyk (Office Assistant II), Jannelle Combs (City Attorney), Will Hutchings (Planner), Allison Jensen (City Assessor), and Daniel Nairn (Senior Planner).

Guests present were Bryan Dean (Applewood Homes), Rich Skjonsby (Blue Champagne Enterprises, Inc.) and David Witham (Denizen Partners).

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Christianson called the meeting to order at 4:00 p.m.

MINUTES

The minutes of the July 8, 2021 meeting were distributed prior to the meeting.

MOTION: A motion was made by Mr. Walth and seconded by Mr. Fink to approve the minutes of the July 8, 2021 meeting. The motion passed unanimously by voice vote with members Fink, Gawrylow, Keiser, Walth, Zenker and Chair Christianson voting in favor.

**RENAISSANCE ZONE PROJECT AND DOWNTOWN DESIGN REVIEW – 215 WEST THAYER AVENUE
APPLEWOOD GROUP, LLC – NEW CONSTRUCTION OF ROWHOUSES**

Mr. Hutchings gave an overview of the staff report and stated that the applicant, Applewood Group, LLC, is requesting RZ and Downtown Design Review approval for the design of the new construction of rowhomes at 215 West Thayer Avenue. This request was continued from the last meeting so that the applicant could provide more information. Mr. Hutchings stated that the scope of the project was amended from eight to seven rowhouse units in one building and that the Downtown Design Review revision was not complete by the time of the meeting.

Mr. Hutchings stated that, based on the findings contained in the staff report, staff recommends to approve a New Construction Renaissance Zone project for seven housing unit development in a rowhouse-style and to continue Downtown Design Review for 215 West Thayer Avenue until the September 9, 2021 meeting.

Mr. Gawrylow stated that he would support continuing both Renaissance Zone and Downtown Design Review projects until the September meeting when the applicant would be able to provide more information.

A written complaint about an adjacent property owner's retaining wall was discussed at this time, submitted as Appendix A. Ms. Combs stated that there is a specific list of responsibilities the Renaissance Zone Authority has and it does not include determining an approval or denial of a project based on the complaint discussed.

Mr. Zenker agreed that the Renaissance Zone project should be reviewed with the Downtown Design Review since both would have deadlines for completion.

Mr. Whittey asked if staff was working with the applicant on the revisions. Mr. Hutchings stated that he has discussed revisions with the applicant and Mr. Hutchings stated that staff will request to meet with the Technical Advisors before the next meeting.

Chair Christianson opened the public hearing.

Mr. Skjonsby stated his concerns about not having positive interactions with the applicant about a damaged wall on his property and stated that he opposes the Renaissance Zone project. He directed staff to his email response, submitted as Appendix B.

Mr. Dean stated that he has tried working with Mr. Skjonsby and stated that the damage done to his property precedes his activities on the neighboring property.

MOTION: A motion was made by Mr. Zenker and seconded by Mr. Gawrylow to continue the request for the New Construction Renaissance Zone project for a seven housing unit development in a rowhouse-style and to continue Downtown Design Review for 215 West Thayer Avenue to the September 9, 2021 meeting. The motion passed with members Gawrylow, Keiser, Walth, Zenker and Chair Christianson voting in favor. Authority member Fink opposed the motion.

OTHER BUSINESS

DISCUSSION ON REQUESTS FOR RENAISSANCE ZONE EXPANSION

There was discussion about three options for potential Renaissance Zone expansion and completion of blocks, as noted in the agenda packet. It was noted that the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) was studying the East Main Avenue area to see how it could re-develop. Mr. Nairn reminded Authority members that once a block is closed that it is a permanent status and cannot be opened again.

Mr. Witham gave a presentation for Option B calling for consideration for potential infill projects and collaboration with other possible stake holders as a shared opportunity, as noted in the agenda packet.

Mr. Gawrylow asked if there are any rules on unintentional Renaissance Zone islands if some blocks which made the zone contiguous were to be closed. Mr. Nairn stated Renaissance Zone blocks that are no longer contiguous due to block completion may remain and do not count as an island.

There was extended discussion about the potential status of particular blocks.

Chair Christianson suggested that a subcommittee might be formed and staff recommendations be made.

Mr. Fink suggested that the purview of the Renaissance Zone Authority is to create incentive for redevelopment, while not purposefully helping developers who would build anyway, but that Authority members had a responsibility to point to potential development opportunities that might not normally be completed.

Mr. Gawrylow stated that the Renaissance Zone Authority should be creating a positive situation for investment.

Mr. Fink volunteered to be on any Renaissance Zone expansion subcommittee to be formed. Mr. Gawrylow and Mr. Walth also volunteered to join. Mr. Nairn stated that he would schedule a meeting and advertise the event to the public.

UPDATE ON REZONING REQUEST FOR BLOCKS 11 AND 12, NORTHERN PACIFIC ADDITION TO DF – DOWNTOWN FRINGE ZONING DISTRICT

Mr. Nairn stated that the City of Bismarck Community Development Department – Planning Division initiated a zoning change from the RT – Residential, RM30 – Residential, and PUD – Planned Unit Development zoning districts to the DF – Downtown Fringe zoning district for Blocks 11 and 12, Northern Pacific Addition at the August 25, 2021 Planning and Zoning Commission meeting to address non-conformities and facilitate redevelopment and reuse. Mr. Nairn stated that the Planning Division was approached by two separate landowners within this area to allow building modifications or uses not currently allowed. Letters were sent to the 18 landowners prior to staff submitting this request. Property owners were invited to a meeting on June 7, and one attended. Staff have not received any objections from owners within the proposed area.

Mr. Nairn stated that Authority members do not need to do anything about this request but understand that if included in the DF – Downtown Fringe zoning district that the area would be subject to Downtown Design Review if passed.

REPORT FROM STAFF

Staff had no comments at this time.

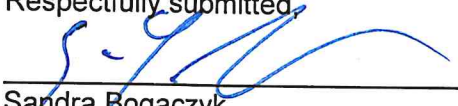
REPORT FROM THE DOWNTOWNERS

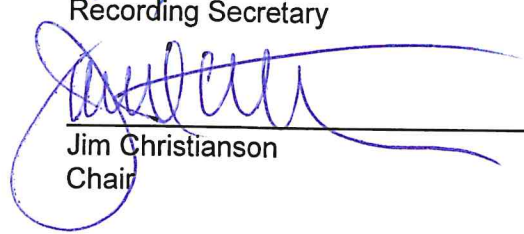
Chair Christianson read a list provided by The Downtowners including updates on events, projects and business owners' recent experiences with street construction and employment. Submitted as Appendix C.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the meeting of the Bismarck Renaissance Zone Authority adjourned at 4:50 p.m. to meet again on September 9, 2021.

Respectfully submitted,



Sandra Bogaczyk
Recording Secretary

Jim Christianson
Chair



August 2, 2021

Applewood Group, LLC
330 Watercress
Bismarck, ND 58503

To Whom It May Concern:

This letter is regarding the vacant lot located at 215 West Thayer Avenue in Bismarck, ND, which is next to my property. This building which was on this property was demolished due to a fire that occurred in the building. During the demolition process, it was brought to my attention that they were leveling the lot and filling it in. At the time, I went over to inspect what was being done. I informed them that the property line was 2 feet from the cement wall which is on my property. I instructed them not to damage my wall. However, they knocked the corner section of the wall off and damaged the integrity of the entire wall. Now, there is rebar that is exposed which could cause serious, life-threatening damage. To this date, it has not been repaired.

Also, I have been in contact with the city of Bismarck because of the overgrowth of weeds on the lot, and they have informed me that there have already been other complaints reported.

I expect some communication from your office as to when I can expect my wall to be restored to the condition it was in before they damaged it.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Rich Skjonsby", is written over a large, stylized, light-colored circular mark.

Rich Skjonsby, President
Blue Champagne Enterprises, Inc.
Phone: [REDACTED]

CC: Brady Blaskowski - City of Bismarck







William Hutchings

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, August 4, 2021 11:56 AM
To: William Hutchings
Subject: FW: Applewood Group Request for Renaissance at 215 N Thayer Ave
Attachments: Letter to Applewood Group.pdf; 215 W Thayer Ave2.jpg; 215 W Thayer Ave3.jpg; exposed rebar.jpg

CAUTION: ***External Email - Use caution clicking links or opening attachments***

See Below:

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, August 3, 2021 11:54 AM
To: 'dnairn@bismarcknd.gov' <dnairn@bismarcknd.gov>
Subject: Applewood Group Request for Renaissance at 215 N Thayer Ave

Daniel,

This is in response to the letter dated July 30, 2021, regarding the request from Applewood Group, LLC, for Renaissance Zone approval for construction of multi-family residential buildings at 215 W Thayer Avenue in Bismarck.

Attached are copies of a certified letter and picture mailed to Applewood Group in regard to damage caused to my retaining wall on my property.

Blue Champagne Enterprises, Inc., Skjonsby Unlimited, Inc., Jewel Investments, Inc., and R.W. (Rich) Skjonsby, President of these corporations, personally oppose any Renaissance approval of this lot for Applewood Group until the damage to my property has been repaired and resolved.

Sincerely,

R.W. (Rich) Skjonsby, President
Blue Champagne Enterprises, Inc.
Skjonsby Unlimited, Inc.
Jewel Investments, Inc.
Phone: [REDACTED]

William Hutchings

From: Kate Herzog [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, August 12, 2021 9:06 AM
To: William Hutchings
Subject: RZ

CAUTION: ***External Email - Use caution clicking links or opening attachments***

Renaissance Zone Authority Members,

Our entire staff assists with TEDxBismarck and will not be in attendance today. A few updates:

- First Street Lofts is near full, as of a few weeks ago they had 51 of 56 units leased.
- Progress on Trestle and Lander Groups two projects are in various stages of construction and we continue to communicate with both groups regularly.
- The need for a parking structure along the Rosser Corridor is being discussed at the Bismarck Parking Authority level. This will need to be completed at a decent pace to accommodate more known and future infill development in and along the corridor, including more housing and Sanford's expansion.
- There are still a few delays or supply chain issues for some construction materials in new builds and renovations Downtown. Windows being delayed also.
- Staffing continues to be the #1 issue for our businesses downtown in terms of a full economic recovery. We have businesses with abbreviated hours, abbreviated days, food supply chain issues, and other factors that are slowing recovery.
- The Main Street Initiative ND Summit will be in West Fargo this year in October, there are in-person and virtual options. This year's focus is on smart, efficient infrastructure. We'll be presenting on panel-- as well as attending in person and encouraging authority members to check it out! <https://www.nd.gov/living-nd/main-street-nd/take-action/main-street-summit>

As always, please let me know if you have any questions or if there is anything we can assist with.

--

Kate Herzog
Chief Operating Officer
Downtowners Bismarck
www.downtownbismarck.com

[Members! Book An Appointment With Me](#)