

BISMARCK RENAISSANCE ZONE AUTHORITY
MEETING MINUTES
April 13, 2023

The Bismarck Renaissance Zone Authority met on April 13, 2023 in the Tom Baker Meeting Room in the City-County Office Building at 221 North 5th Street and remotely via the online platform Zoom. Chair Christianson presided and was present in the Tom Baker Meeting Room.

Authority members present were Jim Christianson, Mike Connelly, Kirsten Dvorak, Joe Fink, Dustin Gawrylow, Curt Walth and Greg Zenker.

Design Advisor David Witham and Eric Hoffer were present.

Staff members present were Sandra Bogaczyk (Office Assistant II), Jannelle Combs (City Attorney), Ben Ehreth (Director of Community Development) joined via Zoom and Daniel Nairn (Senior Planner).

Guests present were Kate Herzog (The Downtowners), Rikki Roerich (Deputy Director for the Division of Community Services at the North Dakota Department of Commerce), Todd Van Orman and Bruce Whittey (former Renaissance Zone Authority members), Kent Wild (Architect, WildCRG), ARC of North Dakota and ARC of Bismarck.

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Christianson called the meeting to order at 4:00 p.m. and welcomed guests present individually.

MINUTES

The minutes of the December 8, 2022 meeting were distributed prior to the meeting.

MOTION: A motion was made by Mr. Fink and seconded by Mr. Walth to approve the minutes of the December 8, 2022 meeting. The motion passed unanimously by voice vote with members Connelly, Fink, Dvorak, Gawrylow, Walth, Zenker and Chair Christianson voting in favor.

RENAISSANCE ZONE PROJECT – 500 NORTH 3RD STREET AND 112 EAST AVENUE E LANDER GROUP – EXTEND RENAISSANCE ZONE DEADLINE FOR MULTI-FAMILY HOUSING PROJECTS

Mr. Nairn gave an overview of the staff report and stated that the applicant, Lander Group, is requesting approval of an extension of the completion deadline tied to the approval of the New Construction Renaissance Zone projects called Renaissance Lofts and The Grove at 500 North 3rd Street and 112 East Avenue A, respectively, to July 31, 2023. He stated that the project is largely completed and that the applicant is expecting a Certificate of Occupancy in the next month or two.

Mr. Nairn stated that, based on the findings contained in the staff report, staff recommends

granting an extension of the deadline to complete both Renaissance Zone projects until July 31, 2023.

MOTION: A motion was made by Mr. Zenker and seconded by Mr. Fink to approve granting an extension of the completion deadline tied to the approval of the New Construction Renaissance Zone projects called Renaissance Lofts and The Grove at 500 North 3rd Street and 112 East Avenue A respectively to July 31, 2023. The motion passed with members Connelly, Fink, Dvorak, Gawrylow, Walth, Zenker and Chair Christianson voting in favor.

DOWNTOWN DESIGN REVIEW – 400 EAST BROADWAY AVENUE PRESIDIO PROPERTY TRUST – GRAND PACIFIC CENTER EGRESS STAIRS

Mr. Nairn gave an overview of the staff report and stated that the applicant, Presidio Property Trust, is requesting Downtown Design Review approval of a building addition to the Grand Pacific Center at 400 East Broadway Avenue. He directed all present to building images and renderings to show where fire code requires alteration of the exterior to meet code and explained that there will be a minor visual change to the building's current appearance. The project consists of a new interior alteration for an emergency egress stairway for upper floor offices to be occupied.

Mr. Nairn noted some issues raised by design advisers, regarding the use of EIFS as a surface material and consideration of a more rectilinear massing for the staircase.

Mr. Nairn stated that, based on the findings contained in the staff report, staff recommends approval of the proposed building design for 400 East Broadway Avenue as presented in all submitted documents and materials, with consideration of design suggestions and the condition that any substantive revisions to the approved design must be reconsidered by the Downtown Design Review Committee prior to implementation.

Mr. Fink asked if there were any alternatives to using EIFS. Mr. Wild stated that he had a difficult time matching the façade and it seemed the most appropriate material to use.

Mr. Hoffer stated that a possible alternative could be a pre-cast panel similar in tone but stated that he had no major concern with EIFS due to the light use in this project.

Chair Christianson stated that it might be barely visible in its limited location and felt there was no large negative visual impact using EIFS.

There was discussion about the roof and doorway connections with the garage.

MOTION: A motion was made by Mr. Fink and seconded by Mr. Zenker to approve the proposed design for 400 East Broadway Avenue as presented in all submitted documents and materials, with consideration of design suggestions and the condition that any substantive revisions to the approved design must be reconsidered by the Downtown Design Review Committee prior to implementation. The motion passed with members Connelly, Fink, Dvorak, Gawrylow, Walth, Zenker and Chair Christianson voting in favor.

Mr. Ehreth joined the meeting at this time, via Zoom.

OTHER BUSINESS

DISCUSSION ABOUT REAUTHORIZATION OF BISMARCK'S RENAISSANCE ZONE PROGRAM

Mr. Nairn gave an overview of House Bill 1266 and that it provides Bismarck and other cities with expired Renaissance Zone programs the ability to seek reauthorization of the program through the same procedures as in the past, including a request for reinstatement of the program by the Bismarck City Commission, with support from Bismarck Public Schools and Burleigh County.

A timeline for reinstatement was discussed and the Return-On-Investment fact sheet included in the meeting packet was noted and recent projects highlighted.

There was discussion about the history of the program and what procedures Renaissance Zone Authority members could take to garner approval from Burleigh County Commission members.

Ms. Roerich discussed the process and guidelines for new legislation. She stated that each reinstated Renaissance Zone in the state would re-enter the program as they ended it, explaining that there is to be no reorganizing or manipulation of blocks from when a city left the program.

Mr. Fink stated that, since Burleigh County does not seem to be interested in proof showing the revenue the program brings to the County, that they need to emphasize other benefits. There was discussion about the demonstrated efficacy of the program at this time.

Mr. Zenker garnered Renaissance Zone Authority members' consensus to bring Renaissance Zone Authority members to City Commission with staff making a proposal to City Commission.

Mr. Gawrylow suggested inviting County Commission to a special Renaissance Zone Authority meeting.

Ms. Combes stated that such a meeting would need to be noticed as a County Commission meeting if a quorum is present.

Mr. Nairn stated that traditionally a County Commissioner had a portfolio assignment to observe the Renaissance Zone Authority meetings but that there is not one presently. He noted that Burleigh County Commission Chair Mathews wished to attend this meeting but was not able to.

There was discussion about who should be invited and to which meeting.

Chair Christianson asked staff to ask Chair Matthews for appropriate dates to attend a special meeting of the Renaissance Zone Authority before June. There was consensus of Authority members who agreed to proceed with the invitation.

MOTION: A motion was made by Mr. Fink and seconded by Ms. Dvorak to proceed with an invitation for the County Commission to attend a special Renaissance Zone Authority meeting, yet to be determined. The motion passed with members Connelly, Fink, Dvorak, Gawrylow, Walth, Zenker and Chair Christianson voting in favor.

REVIEW OF RENAISSANCE ZONE AUTHORITY BYLAWS

Mr. Walth noted a suggested change in Article II B. v.

MOTION: A motion was made by Mr. Zenker and seconded by Mr. Walth to approve the changes as presented with the suggested change. The motion passed with members Connelly, Fink, Dvorak, Gawrylow, Walth, Zenker and Chair Christianson voting in favor.

ELECTION OF CHAIR AND VICE-CHAIR

Authority member Joe Fink stated that he was willing to volunteer for the Vice-Chair position.

Chair Christianson stated that he was willing to Chair for another term.

MOTION: A motion was made by Ms. Dvorak and seconded by Mr. Zenker to nominate Authority member Joe Fink to the position of Vice-Chair and Jim Christianson to the position of Chair. The nominations were approved with members Connelly, Fink, Dvorak, Gawrylow, Walth, Zenker and Chair Christianson voting in favor.

RECOGNITION OF TODD VAN ORMAN AND BRUCE WHITTEY

Chair Christianson thanked Todd Van Orman for his nine years and Bruce Whittey for his twenty-one years of service and loyalty to the Renaissance Zone Authority.

MOTION: A motion was made by Ms. Dvorak and seconded by Mr. Walth to approve the recognition of appreciation of Todd Van Orman and Bruce Whittey for their years of dedication and loyalty to the Renaissance Zone Authority. The motion passed unanimously by voice vote with members Connelly, Fink, Dvorak, Gawrylow, Walth, Zenker and Chair Christianson voting in favor.

REPORT FROM STAFF

Mr. Nairn stated that the Quality Title certificate of occupancy for 425 North 5th Street has been issued and the project is in the process of closing.

Mr. Nairn stated that the Denizen Partners' project at 630 East Main Avenue is expected to be completed once invoices are produced.

Mr. Nairn stated that the notice for a new Renaissance Zone Authority member should be published soon.

REPORT FROM DOWNTOWNERS

Ms. Herzog discussed the legislation for reinstating Renaissance Zones in North Dakota and noted that the Downtowners requested the amendment that Renaissance Zones become reinstated with the same terms as when they expired.

Ms. Herzog stated that a separate bill is underway that includes a secondary Renaissance Zone Island of three blocks and allows renewals to be granted for up to ten years to avoid the hardship of having to renew at such short intervals.

Ms. Herzog noted that smaller cities liked the possibility of having a Renaissance Zone to revitalize after a flood or other disaster.

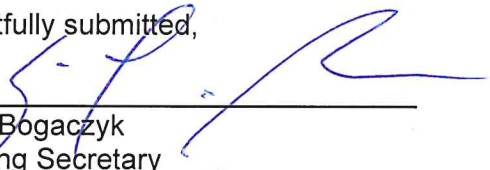
Ms. Herzog described several possible future projects for Bismarck.

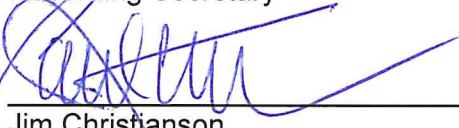
Mr. Fink stated how important it is to emphasize the City's support of business in proposing better and larger projects by having a longer sunset on reauthorization of the Renaissance Zone. He further stated that businesses should be able to rely on longer-term program availability to create more complex projects, knowing the City is not going to end its agreements.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the meeting of the Bismarck Renaissance Zone Authority adjourned at 4:50 p.m. to meet again on May 11, 2023.

Respectfully submitted,



Sandra Bogaczyk
Recording Secretary

Jim Christianson
Chair