

**RENAISSANCE ZONE AUTHORITY  
MEETING MINUTES  
May 15, 2012**

The Bismarck Renaissance Zone Authority met on May 15, 2012 in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor Conference Room in the City-County Office Building at 221 North 5<sup>th</sup> Street.

Authority members present were Dave Blackstead, Jim Christianson, Chuck Huber, George Keiser, Kevin Magstadt, Brenda Smith and Curt Walth.

Technical advisors Bruce Whittey and Jeff Ubl were present.

Staff members present were Jason Tomanek, Kimberley Gaffrey and Brenda Johnson.

Guests present were Jeff Hysjulien & Chris Thompson (JLG Architects), Loran Galpin (Galpin Companies) and Kate Herzog & Dawn Kopp (Downtowners).

**CALL TO ORDER**

Chairman Blackstead called the meeting to order at 4:00 p.m.

**REQUEST OF JLB-BIS, LLC TO MODIFY PORTIONS OF THE PREVIOUSLY-APPROVED PROJECT**

Mr. Tomanek stated that JLB-BIS, LLC proposed to modify the previously-approved rehabilitation project by adding an accessible ramp along the west-facing building façade. Mr. Tomanek stated that JLB-BIS, LLC requested the ability to encroach within the public right-of-way along 3<sup>rd</sup> Street to allow the construction and placement of the accessible ramp. Mr. Tomanek continued by stating that the proposal is considered a modification to the project and it is customary to bring projects back to the Renaissance Zone Authority for review. Mr. Tomanek added that due to the proposed location of the accessible ramp, there would not be sufficient room for trees within the sidewalk/right-of-way. Mr. Hysjulien added that the outdoor seating area behind the building is meant to be an amenity to the site and landscaping would be added to this area.

Mr. Walth raised the issue of corrugated metal as proposed on the north-facing exterior wall. Mr. Walth asked if this material would be acceptable when considering the DC-Downtown Core zoning regulations. Mr. Hysjulien stated that the corrugated metal would be used as an accent material and not the primary material on the building exterior.

**MOTION:** Based on the information and renderings provided, a motion was made by Mr. Christianson and seconded by Mr. Magstadt to approve the modification to the project. The motion passed unanimously with members Blackstead, Christianson, Huber, Keiser, Magstadt, Smith and Walth voting in favor. Mr. Walth added that he has reservations about the appearance of the corrugated metal accent material.

## **REQUEST BY LORAN GALPIN TO ADDRESS THE RENAISSANCE ZONE AUTHORITY**

Mr. Tomanek stated that the letter provided by Loran Galpin, attached as Exhibit A, addresses concerns raised by Mr. Galpin relating to a previously-considered rehabilitation project. Mr. Tomanek added that staff had discussions regarding the level of exterior improvements proposed with Renaissance Zone rehabilitation projects. Mr. Tomanek continued by saying that a small number of previous Renaissance Zone rehabilitation projects did not make exterior improvements; instead, much of the rehabilitation work was done to the interior of the building for various reasons. Mr. Tomanek concluded by saying that the point of Mr. Galpin's letter is to address the need to require exterior improvements when considering rehabilitation projects.

Mr. Galpin stated that the intent of the Renaissance Zone program is to enhance property and add to the fabric of downtown with responsible projects. Mr. Galpin added that several projects have added value to downtown Bismarck but there may have been an opportunity to provide additional streetscape or landscaping elements to enhance the project even further. Mr. Galpin continued by saying that there may be an opportunity to have the applicant make improvements to streetscape and landscape elements after the project has been completed and the business has had an opportunity to become stable. Mr. Galpin suggested the guidelines for reviewing projects may be enhanced to help clarify the need and requirements of rehabilitation projects as part of the Renaissance Zone program in Bismarck.

Mr. Christianson inquired by the process would be to amend the procedures. Mr. Tomanek stated that he and Carl Hokenstad discussed the issues raised by Mr. Galpin previously and the general consensus was that the Renaissance Zone Authority has other policies in place that relate to the Renaissance Zone program and this issue could be handled with a new policy. Mr. Tomanek offered to provide proposed policy language for the Authority's review.

Mr. Keiser stated that there should be a "floor" of expectations for Renaissance Zone projects, in particular, landscaping. Mr. Keiser added that a "floor" level of commitment should be considered as a policy matter. Mr. Keiser concluded by stating that points could be added to the review and staff report to help clarify the intent of the requirements.

Mr. Whittey stated that additional elements including landscaping and streetscape enhancements could be added to the checklist.

Mr. Tomanek stated that he would propose some amendments to the current Renaissance Zone checklist and distribute it amongst the Authority members for review, comments and input.

## **CITY OF BISMARCK'S STRATEGIC PLAN**

Ms. Smith stated that the Board of City Commissioners adopted the City of Bismarck's Strategic Plan and she has been tasked with the Community Character portion of the strategic plan. Ms. Smith discussed the need for an update to the downtown master plan, relief of parking problems along the Rosser Avenue corridor, a public plaza in downtown Bismarck, Quiet Rail Zone and increased opportunities for market-rate housing in downtown Bismarck.

## **STATUS OF APPROVED RENAISSANCE ZONE PROJECTS**

Mr. Tomanek said that no Renaissance Zone projects have been closed out since the last Renaissance Zone Authority meeting.

## **OTHER BUSINESS**

There was no other business

## **ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business, Chair Blackstead adjourned the meeting of the Bismarck Renaissance Zone Authority at 4:55 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

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Jason Tomanek  
Recording Secretary

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David Blackstead  
Chair

MAY 11 2012



P.O. Box 2567  
Bismarck, ND 58502  
701-258-6663

To: Renaissance Zone Committee  
Re: Discussion on Zone approval criteria as it relates to exterior design improvements and landscape development.  
Date: 5-9-12

Dear Committee Members,

My office is requesting an opportunity to meet with the Renaissance zone Committee to discuss the application process.

I appreciate the chance to meet with the Renaissance Zone Committee to discuss the process as it relates to applicants and how it applies to the exterior improvements and landscape development for their properties.

I have observed how difficult it is presently to have an applicant request approval for their project because the interior work meets the minimum requirements under the guidelines and yet they intend to do little or nothing with the exterior of their building.

They come with plans that are not complete, with costs that are not specific, and with no intention to improve the exterior character of their property in either landscape or architectural upgrading, even when the property is sorely in need of enhancement or upgrading.

Some of these properties may have been historically significant but today are no longer contributing due to past cover up and numerous remodeling mistakes. But

regardless of the significance of a building I believe, as I think the committee does, that it would be only reasonable that any property seeking Public funding assistance not assume they get the benefits with out also contributing to the visual image and character of the downtown.

I firmly believe that, when I appear asking for Renaissance Zone support and approval on a project, I have a responsibility to provide all information that pertains to:

1. Design of exterior of the project showing all materials being used.
2. Exterior improvements. Show the Committee clearly what exists today, show what is proposed, and demonstrate how the renovation will help the property contribute to the downtown architectural fabric and character.

It should not be enough to say.... "I would like to do some exterior improvements". I believe that every project should has responsibility to improve its exterior character or demonstrate why its present condition is satisfactory if it is going to be designated as a renaissance Zone Building and receive the tax incentives that goes with such a designation. This should be especially true when it's clearly evident that such an improvement when made would benefit both the property and the downtown.

If I, as developer, want consideration of my project for approval, I need to step up and demonstrate that my project not only deserves it but that my improvements proposed are adding to the downtown's image and not just doing some interior fix up. If it is deemed that the exterior of my building is in tact and is contributing to the character of the district, then perhaps, additional exterior improvements may not be required.

I recognize their needs to be flexibility and the Renaissance Zone Committee should be permitted to exercise

flexibility when a project is demonstrating that it is adding to the downtowns image and not just getting benefits because its making some interior improvements.

3. Landscape improvements. The fact that city plantings exist on a property I would not think would be sufficient to say the site is landscaped ... A reasonable plan should be required as it has been for most applicants

4. Costs for exterior and interior improvements need to be identified clearly.

I would think detailed Estimates could be acceptable for approval but all should be subject to bids and lien waivers being provided substantiating the bills paid at the end of the project. I think this is presently required and if so it is a good step.

I have more questions than answers but I think such an open discussion could be helpful .Its certainly awkward and difficult to review an application that is sketchy and incomplete. You know that more than me.

The desire by everyone is to naturally help and encourage every property owner to invest in his property. At the same time I think everyone understands that, such an investment is much definitely easier to make when the value of Zone incentives are available to the owner and their tenants.

I can see where it can be difficult to require additional exterior improvements on a property, since it could result in the applicant walking away. A same time, I would suggest in some cases that this might not be a bad message to send.

Getting a Renaissance Zone designation does mean it's not a cakewalk or just because some money is spent the project gets approved. Quite the contrary ... its an incentive that has to be earned.

"Do it right and be rewarded."

"Do it half heartedly" and you may not get approved.

Seems like a fair position to me.

My desire is to do what ever I can to be a part of seeing our downtown continue to improve. At the same time I would hope that property owners would understand that, just because they submit an application, does not mean they will automatically be approved.

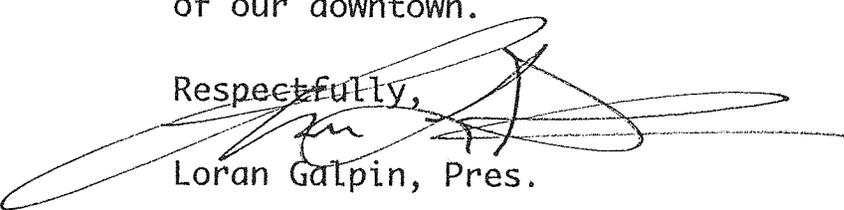
It can be very awkward to review a sketchy incomplete submittal. It can be difficult to always know where the line is at, on what can be asked for, or how an owner can encouraged to bring a better project forward.

The Renaissance Zone Committee does not need to apologize for asking for better than what is submitted. And above all it is important that we ask for the best and not accept what seems to meet the minimum test.

The Renaissance Zone Committee's leadership and desire to make our downtown special is why you sit on this Committee. Our community applauds all of you for the time you take from you're business and family to be a part of this effort.

My hope is that an open discussion on such issues may help all of us in continuing the process of improving the image of our downtown.

Respectfully,



Loran Galpin, Pres.

Galpin Company Inc