

**RENAISSANCE ZONE AUTHORITY
MEETING MINUTES
October 15, 2013**

The Bismarck Renaissance Zone Authority met on October 15, 2013 in the David J. Blackstead Meeting Room in the City-County Office Building at 221 North 5th Street.

Authority members present were Curt Walth, Jim Christianson, Kevin Magstadt and Brenda Smith.

Authority members Chuck Huber, George Keiser and Jeff Ubl were absent.

Technical advisors Bruce Whittey and Morgan Andenas were present.

Staff members present were Jason Tomanek (Planning), Brenda Johnson (Assessing) and Hilary Balzum (Planning).

Guest present was Nick Strom of Goldmark Property Management/Norma Apartments, LLP via telephone.

CALL TO ORDER

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

INTRODUCTION OF MORGAN ANDENAS – NEW TECHNICAL ADVISOR

Ms. Andenas introduced herself and stated she is a graduate of Montana State University and currently employed with JLG Architects. She also said she has lived in Bismarck for a year and a half, has two years left as an architect in training and is originally from South Dakota.

MINUTES

The minutes of the September 17, 2013 meeting were distributed with the agenda packet.

MOTION: A motion was made by Mr. Christianson and seconded by Ms. Smith to approve the minutes of the September 17, 2013 meeting as received. The motion passed unanimously with members Christianson, Magstadt, Smith and Walth voting in favor.

RENAISSANCE ZONE PROGRAM PROJECT

215 North 3rd Street – Norma Apartments, LLP – Rehabilitation

Mr. Tomanek stated that the applicants are proposing to rehabilitate the 18-unit apartment building that was damaged by fire. The proposed work includes rehabilitating the units and the accompanying hallways where the fire occurred, replacing the roof and insulation, redesigning the units with modern functionality and new electrical infrastructure throughout the building. Other improvements would be updates to the plumbing, heating, and ventilation systems and new insulation.

Mr. Tomanek also stated the improvements will not significantly increase the value of the property but that they are the most needed and logical at this time.

Nick Strom of Goldmark Property Management stated he has received the professional opinion of CW Structural Engineers in Bismarck and they said the rehabilitation of the Norma apartment building is a good project for reconstruction, since even with the significant loss it experienced in the fire, it is still a manageable repair and the building itself is structurally sound.

Chair Walth asked if the estimated value in the staff report includes the land value. Mr. Tomanek replied it does not, it only includes the value of the building.

Ms. Smith asked Mr. Strom if he is anticipating the rent rates of the apartment units to increase or the demographics to change. Mr. Strom said the current rent rates are \$500-\$570 and they are only expecting a small increase when the building re-opens in the spring. He said the demographics of the renters are not likely to change, but they are hoping to appeal to modern renters by creating more contemporary and openly spaced units.

Mr. Christianson inquired about the average square footage of the units. Mr. Strom replied they are fairly small with multiple small rooms in each, which is why they want to open them up and create multiple large efficiency units.

Chair Walth asked if there will be an elevator in the building and if it is required. Mr. Tomanek said the occupancy standard of the property does not currently require an elevator.

Mr. Whittey asked if any exterior rehabilitation will be included. Mr. Tomanek said the exterior is in generally good shape overall, with the exception of the northeast corner, which was charred by smoke and flames as well as multiple windows that were damaged.

Mr. Whittey also asked if the property meets all current landscaping and regulatory requirements and Mr. Tomanek said it does.

Mr. Strom added that it is the intention of the owners to replace all of the windows in the building. Chair Walth asked if a full exterior assessment has been done and Mr. Tomanek said CW Structural Engineers will do a full assessment.

Mr. Christianson said he encourages the owners to find a window casing that is compatible with the look of the surrounding area and to even make it part of the conditions of the motion when it is made.

Mr. Strom said he will make a note of the window request and would accept it as part of the motion that the window color be reviewed before the replacements are done.

MOTION: A motion was made by Mr. Christianson and seconded by Ms. Smith to recommend approval of the request for designation of the rehabilitation of the Norma Apartments, LLP for the building at 221 North 3rd Street as a Renaissance Zone project, with the condition that the color of the new window casings be approved by staff. The motion passed unanimously with members Christianson, Magstadt, Smith and Huber voting in favor.

Renaissance Zone Program and CORE Incentive Program Application Fees – Discussion

A discussion was held regarding the possibility of implementing Renaissance Zone and CORE Incentive Program application fees. Mr. Tomanek said it is required that a public hearing on each project be published once a week for two weeks, with an average of \$50-\$100 per legal ad. In addition, 30-60 notices are sent to adjacent property owners at \$.40 each with the total cost being around \$100-\$150 per project. He also said this does not include billable hours from work put in by staff. He explained that Community Development charges \$500 for a zoning change no matter how many lots it includes or how long it takes from start to finish. The minimum application fee in Community Development is \$25, which is for lot modification applications which are completed in-house.

Ms. Smith asked how many applications are received that never go through. Mr. Tomanek said hardly any do not get completed and that the cost is usually lost on things like the publishing of legal ads.

Chair Walth said he feels both are great programs and a \$100 fee is peanuts compared to the improvements it brings to the area.

MOTION: A motion was made by Mr. Magstadt and seconded by Ms. Smith to implement a \$100 application fee for all Renaissance Zone Program and CORE Incentive Program applications effective January 1st, 2014, pending approval by the City Commission. The motion passed unanimously with members Christianson, Magstadt, Smith and Walth voting in favor.

OTHER BUSINESS

Chair Walth stated he would like to discuss downtown building restorations with the Downtowners Association at the next meeting. He also said comments for Steve Saunders, MPO Planner, on the Downtown Subarea Study needed to be finalized and given to the study consultant, Crandall Arambula, by the end of the month. He then called for a special meeting to be held on October 29th, 2013, at 4:00 p.m.

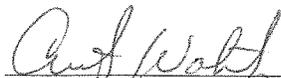
ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, Chair Walth adjourned the meeting of the Bismarck Renaissance Zone Authority at 4:40 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,



Hilary Balzum
Recording Secretary



Curt Walth
Chairman