

MINUTES

URBAN RENEWAL AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MEETING

5:30 P. M., NOVEMBER 7, 2019

A/V CONFERENCE ROOM

Tiffany Wesley-Plear, Vice Chair, called the meeting of the Charleston City Council Committee on Urban Renewal and Economic Development to order at 5:30p.m., NOVEMBER 7, 2019, in the Audio/Visual Room in City Hall.

Committee Members Present:

Tiffany Wesley-Plear, Vice Chair
Naomi Bays
Ben Adams
Caitlin Cook
Jennifer Pharr

1. Approval of Previous Minutes – Councilmember Bays moved to approve the minutes of the previous meeting on 9-5-2019. Councilmember Adams seconded. There was no objection and the minutes were approved.

2. Bill No. 7836

Councilmember Wesley-Plear introduced Director of Planning, Dan Vriendt. He explained that the process of creating the plan had been progressing for around 1 ½ years. The process had slowed in order to get input from the public. He reminded the Committee that it is a living document that can be amended even after approval and passage through council.

Councilmember Wesley-Plear introduced James Yost and David Gilmore (GAI Consultants, Inc.) and Adam Krason (ZMM Architects & Engineers). Krason stated that they conducted 10 different stakeholder meetings as well as a tour of the Housing Improvement Zone to meet with individual homeowners. The plan represents a visual representation of various goal and strategies. Yost described the plan's contents, previously presented to the Committee.

Reverend Matthew Watts commented that the presented plan is more user-friendly than the previous one. He and several other community organizations have conveyed to developers of the plan that they believe it violates the 1952 Urban Renewal Law. He further stated they believe a budget of estimated costs is required to be submitted with the plan along with redevelopment demolition plans and housing redevelopment plans. City Attorney, Kevin Baker, responded that he has reviewed the law, and believes the plan does comply. He stated he would be willing to review the law again before the bill went to Council.

Ricardo Martin asked what specific projects were planned that he would be able to tell the people in his community about. Baker responded that the budgetary requirements are for specific projects, of which the proposed plan does not include. Ron Butlin (CURA) added that that it is a strategic plan to come up with ideas that could be implemented throughout the entire West Side. The catalytic idea is to focus on the home improvement zone.

Bob Hardy asked what will happen to the original 2008 plan, specifically the plan's mention of advocacy groups. Krason responded that the basis of the original document has been incorporated into the amended plan, and referenced Article 7.7.

Councilmember Cook asked what had been accomplished from the 2008 plan. Yost answered that Chapter 1 shows what was done and the associated costs.

A representative from the Kanawha Valley Foundation stated that the plan is a conceptualized road map of what the area could be. The next phase should involve detailed plans and costs.

Councilmember Adams motioned to postpone Bill No. 7836 until the next scheduled meeting. Bays seconded. With the ayes being in the majority, Bill No. 7836 was postponed.

Councilmember Adams motioned to adjourn the meeting. Councilmember Pharr seconded.

Meeting adjourned.