

ONONDAGA CIVIC DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION
Regular Meeting Minutes
May 14, 2015

The Regular meeting of the Onondaga Civic Development Corporation was held on Thursday, May 14, 2015 at 333 West Washington Street, Syracuse, New York, 13202, in the large conference room on the 1st floor.

Cydney Johnson called the meeting to order at 8:31 am with the following:

PRESENT:

Cydney Johnson
Len Manfrates
James Farrell
Ravi Raman
Alison Miller
Ben Dublin
Matthew Marko

ALSO PRESENT:

Julie Cerio, President/CEO
Honora Spillane, Secretary
Karen Doster, Recording Secretary
Linda McShane, Office of Economic Development
Steven Coker, Office of Economic Development
Rachel Endress, Harris Beach
Owen Kerney, New Urban Space
Kate Auwaeter, New Urban Space
George Curry, New Urban Space
Duane Owens, Juneteenth
Kitty Rice, Juneteenth
Mike Metzgar, OCC
June Castle, VNA Homecare
Aida Mariani, VNA Homecare

APPROVAL OF REGULAR MEETING MINUTES – APRIL 9, 2015

Upon a motion by Ravi Raman, seconded by James Farrell, the OCDC Board approved the regular meeting minutes of April 9, 2015. Motion was carried unanimously.

TREASURER’S REPORT

Honora Spillane gave a brief review of the Treasurer’s Report for the month of April 2015.

Upon a motion by James Farrell, seconded by Ben Dublin, the OCDC Board approved the Treasurer's Report for the month of February 2015. Motion was carried unanimously.

PAYMENT OF BILLS

Honora Spillane gave a brief review of the Payment of Bills Schedule #049.

Upon a motion by Alison Miller, seconded by James Farrell, the OCDC Board approved the Payment of Bills, Schedule #049 with General Expenses being \$10,679.24 and marketing expenses being \$1,386.75. Motion was carried unanimously.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The Conflict of Interest was circulated and there were no comments.

NEW URBAN SPACE

Kate Auwaeter stated that she is here on behalf of the Syracuse Urban Renewal Agency and they are seeking \$200,000 from the Economic Growth Fund for the design work for the new Urban Space project. She stated that the New Urban Space project is in the heart of downtown will create a real civic and cultural destination spot for the whole community and bolster what is going on with the revitalization efforts. She stated that Mayor Minor has made this a priority.

Kate Auwaeter displayed a slideshow to orient the Board to the space. She stated that the New Urban Space is located on the 200 block of South Salina Street between on less than an acre site. She stated that requests for applications for a design team were sent out and 25 teams submitted. She stated that they selected a team led by MELK Urban Design out of New York City and in addition Cecil Balmond and C & S Companies will be on the team.

Kate Auwaeter stated that the design was divided into 2 phases. She stated that Phase 1 takes them through schematic design and includes robust public participation piece which will start in the spring which they have funding for through funding from City sources and the Community and Gifford Foundation. She stated that they are seeking OCDC's support for Phase 2 which

will bring them through to shovel ready. She stated that OCDC's support is critical to help them meet their timeline of being in the ground next spring.

George Curry stated that it is currently an unfortunate design solution to a very important space. He stated that he believes this is an important project and they are looking for a world class urban space.

Bob Doucette stated that the response to this was gratifying and they were the best in America. He stated that the firm that they picked is the edgier firm and they wanted a world class design solution for this space so that it would be a place that Syracuse would be known for. He stated that he is hopeful to receive the grant from OCDC to get this thing on the way.

James Farrell stated that he supports this project and it fits OCDC's criteria and guidelines. He stated that it's a long term investment of Syracuse. He stated that he thinks the Board should support it.

Cydney Johnson stated that she agrees with Mr. Farrell. She stated that we love to support things where any parts are local and it is nice to see C & S Companies listed. She stated that she can't think of a better place to spend OCDC's money.

Ben Dublin asked for further explanation of the funding. Kate Auwaeter stated that they do have a long term commitment of \$200,000 in construction funds by the Connective Corridor. She stated that they do have a plan moving forward in terms of raising those funds and will be a major public private partnership. She stated that they will be seeking State funds, local dollars and a corporate and community capital campaign to get them there. She stated that they are looking to Regional Economic Development Council as a significant source of funds and possibly the Upstate Revitalization Initiative.

Ben Dublin stated that there is a lot of speculation about the rest of the money. He asked if the City is willing to step up and absorb the total cost of they can't get REDC money. Kate Auwaeter stated that she thinks that is to be determined and there is a real strong commitment from administration for this project but she can't answer at this point.

Matthew Marko asked what the schedule is. Kate Auwaeter stated that Phase 1 is a 5 month process and looking at October for schematics.

Matthew Marko asked if environmentally speaking will there be consideration in Phase 1 or later in the final design phases. Kate Auwaeter stated that preliminarily Phase 1 will include some engineering studies to address those issues and won't be an afterthought. .

Matthew Marko stated that he has confidence in the team but is concerned about moving forward without more of the public outreach and participation and an understanding of the environmental impact to this space. He stated that in his opinion he doesn't see there is an impact to the New Urban Space schedule if the Board waits until next meeting for additional information.

Ben Dublin stated that his concern is this will sit on the shelf and not go into action. He stated that he thinks this project is an excellent but \$200,000 is a lot of money and his fear is that Phase 2 will be funded but if Phase 3 doesn't have the money it won't come to fruition. He stated that is why he asked if the City was in a position to step in. He stated that he supports the project but can we take this up after the REDC funding and application process. Julie Cerio stated that we won't know about REDC funding for about 6 months.

Cydney Johnson asked what would happen if there was a delay in OCDC's commitment. Kate Auwaeter stated that they want to show up to major funding sources saying they have strong County and City support and with OCDC's dollars they will be able to get this constructed.

Bob Doucette stated that he understands but if they don't get through Phase 1 they don't have a shot at getting the money and the \$2,000,000 gap in his mind doesn't seem like an insurmountable gap. He stated that there is a risk involved and they are asking OCDC to take a little bit of that risk on behalf of the City.

Alison Miller stated that she echoes the sentiment as far as the funding part and also that the project is great and she supports it. She asked for a breakdown of the grant portion and what they are looking for from the capital campaign. She asked what is needed and what is back up plan if they don't get funding. Kate Auwaeter stated that for the capital campaign they have around half million dollars, community fundraising is about \$25,000-\$30,000, the Connective

Corridor is \$200,000 and there is an opportunity to redirect some other Connective Corridor related funding toward this project for another couple hundred thousand. She stated that they are looking for \$500,000 from REDC and about \$100,000 from local foundation support.

Cydney Johnson stated that it sounds like almost 50% is somewhat local within this community that is provided and without the REDC money they are at 50% of what they believe can come out of the community to support the project. Kate Auwaeter agreed.

Ben Dublin stated that he is not sure if he feels better or worse about the source of funding because he thought New Urban Space was going to rely heavily on REDC but there are so many variables. He asked how much the City has received in REDC in the past. Honora Spillane stated that she is not sure but the trouble with REDC in a project like this is the public-private ratio so the leverage of a \$500,000 ask to \$3,000,000 project isn't great. She stated that it is typically at least 5:1. She stated that she thinks it's better that they are going conservative on the request.

Cydney Johnson stated that she feels better if there is not heavy dependency on REDC because she thinks that's a dangerous proposal thinking more will come out than realistically. She stated that she thinks we are remiss if we don't support this now and get it moving forward.

Ben Dublin stated that he would feel more comfortable if he saw a clear plan of where the money was coming from even if it is somewhat speculative. He stated that it is a phenomenal project but he would like to see more of a plan where the money is coming from and maybe vote at the meeting next month. Bob Doucette stated that the difficulty is to get to those decision makers in a month.

Matthew Marko stated that if they have a 5 month timeframe for Phase 1, he doesn't see why giving the Board a month or 2 to see better progress on the public outreach, schedule of the process and the funding of the process would be problematic. He stated that he would be more comfortable tabling.

Honora Spillane stated that within OCDC's service contracts, we can put mile stones in so they can continue going forward so the Board has some insurance in terms of capital fundraising timeframes and maybe dollar milestones.

Ben Dublin asked if it is an option to table the project. Julie Cerio stated that it has to be by majority vote to table. Ben Dublin asked the Board to come up with a list of questions and work with Ms. Spillane.

Cydney Johnson stated that New Urban Space is saying it is not a 30 day process. Alison Miller stated that she doesn't understand why it wouldn't be a 30 day process. She stated that she is not asking for commitments but a plan. She stated that she would like to see where the funding is coming from and the backup plan if they don't get the funding.

Cydney Johnson stated that they are asking us for funding to prepare the final proposal so they can go out and solicit the 3rd part which is funding to build. She stated that they are not asking us to fund construction.

Matthew Marko stated that he understands that and asked if the funding is for Phase 2 of the design. Cydney Johnson agreed.

Kate Auwaeter stated that they do have a road map to get them to the full construction budget. She stated that in a month's time they should be under contracts and the public participation piece will have been initiated. She stated that over the next couple months they will be going to the sources and discussing the project and it is their desire is to be able to go to the legislative delegation saying they have the support of the City and County.

Owen Kerney stated that the initial dollars and all of fundraising for the capital dollars needed has begun and will continue for the next 30 and 60 days. He stated that this funding is easier for them when they can say the design is funded. He stated that with an 18 month process every month counts so he thinks to be cognizant, delaying makes their job harder but he understands.

Cydney Johnson asked if the project could go forward without OCDC's funding. Owen Kerney stated that these are critical dollars and no.

Ben Dublin stated that he doesn't see how the actual work being done is being delayed. Owen Kerney stated that the immediate steps may not be affected but he thinks the ultimate addressing primary concern could be slightly affected by a delay.

Alison Miller stated that she is confident in the team and perhaps the road map will provide assurance to her as well but she needs a more assurance on her side.

Upon a motion by Ben Dublin, seconded by Len Manfrates, the OCDC Board approved a resolution to table the meeting. James Farrell and Cydney Johnson opposed. Motion was carried.

Ravi Raman stated that he is sorry the project didn't pass because he was ready to vote today. He stated that it is a great project but some of the points that came up are very valid. He stated that the points brought up are not an anti-project comments but constructive.

JUNETEENTH

Duane Owens stated that he is the President of the Juneteenth Board and along with him is Kitty Rice who is Treasurer. He stated that they are seeking a \$40,000 request to help bridge a gap in their funding for this year's 2015 Juneteenth celebration which marks the 150th year. He gave a background on how the Juneteenth celebration came to be.

Kitty Rice stated that the first Juneteenth festival in Syracuse was celebrated in 1988 at the newly constructed Southwest Community Center with about 50 people and that is where discussions started to make this event bigger, better and more informative. She stated that thought it was important for African Americans and all people in Syracuse because of the diverse population we serve to learn more about the contributions of African Americans here in Central New York.

Duane Owens stated that having things going on culturally and spiritually for the citizens of the area will make them want to come here. He stated that when they moved to Clinton Square the festival grow from 50 people to 5,000 to 20,000 people. He stated that the festival also promotes a strong entrepreneur spirit and numerous businesses have grown as a result of it. He stated that

the festival itself highlights entrepreneur spirit, empowerment of all cultures and the diverse community that Central New York has, and highlights the importance of the CNY history, the Underground Railroad and abolition movement. He stated that just as important as building nice buildings, structures and parks, we need to have nice cultural events and help retain the talent in this area. He stated that those things are important to the growth of a city and they think this festival is a highlight to that and the growth of CNY and Syracuse.

Kitty Rice stated that she always thinks of the festival not only to show the sense of diversity here in Syracuse but it gives them an opportunity to be exposed to human services information like voter registration, health screening, insurance and other professionals to improve the quality of their lives. She stated that this is one of the few festivals designed for the entire family.

Ravi Raman stated that he is a big supporter of Juneteenth and thinks they are doing a great job. He stated that his company does work for Mr. Owen's department in the County and he doesn't believe he has a conflict of interest but he wants to avoid an appearance so he is going to abstain but he strongly urges the Board members to vote for this.

James Farrell asked how this fits directly with our guidelines and he perceives that we are funding an equivalent of operations and he has a concern with that. Julie Cerio stated that this is not typical but it is the additional things that this particular festival provides to the citizens of Onondaga County. She stated that there are health screenings, voter registrations, social services and how people can get help with things. She stated that it is entrepreneurial and a place to put your foot in the water to start a business. She stated that this is something we need to help with if we want it to happen. She stated that it is lessening the burdening of County government which fits into our mission.

Duane Owen stated that not only do they provide the social services but they have job recruitment. He stated that this festival has been a catalyst for economic growth over decades.

Ben Dublin stated that our community has a remarkably rich history and this is a very fitting tribute to that. He stated that he would like to commend them because this is a lean festival budget and clearly money is not wasted. He stated that it serves a real need and he supports it.

Matthew Marko asked if OCDC has funded this in the past. Julie Cerio stated no. She stated that Steve Coker has looked into alternate funding sources because we can't continuously fund.

Matthew Marko stated that he has some concern about long term implications but certainly 150th anniversary, 26th anniversary in Syracuse and the promotion is valuable. He asked Mr. Owen's to work with Commissioner Rhoads to see if there could be an environmental aspect to the event like Save the Rain. He stated that this Board is focused on the economic but there is certainly the social aspect and as long as the environmental is part of that and he sees all three of those he can get behind it. Duane Owens stated to Mr. Marko they would love to do it.

Matt Marko stated that if you can link with Save the Rain there is an economic value to that. He stated that if they can show these are linked and provide the same value to the community at an event like this it has a return benefit to the environment.

Alison Miller stated that she supports this project and asked how in prior years they funded the gap. Duane Owen stated that they have reduced some aspects of the festival through the years. He stated that it used to be a 4 day event and last year they were in a local neighborhood park.

Upon a motion by Alison Miller, seconded by Ben Dublin, the OCDC Board approved a resolution approving an Economic Growth Fund service contract with the Juneteenth, Inc. of up to \$47,050 and the signing of the service contract and all other related documents by an officer of the Corporation. Ravi Raman abstained. James Farrell opposed. Motion was carried.

ONONDAGA COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Mike Metzgar gave a presentation on how they are changing the direction of their workforce education and also opening up new funding streams to the college.

Julie Cerio stated that we are looking for what OCDC dollars did like how many students in the program, how many students waiting and did we fund you enough. Honora Spillane stated that we wanted to make sure the Board was fully briefed on what was going forward at OCC.

Mike Metzgar stated that they will not have financial aid online until late fall so the \$40,000 plugs that hole for them because students coming into the programs they are building don't have direct access to direct funding.

VNA HOMECARE

June Castle stated that VNA Homecare is a homecare agency with a managed Medicaid long term program and just started Home Aids of CNY. She stated that they provide services in the community, nurse visits, home health aide, homemaker skill level services and they provide services to over 8,000 people a year. She stated that they are requesting grant funding for employee training. She stated that they want to invest in their middle management and give them the opportunity for advancement and also the opportunity for people who they support.

Aida Mariani stated that she completed the application with specifics about courses they would like their leadership team take. She stated that they have roughly 500 employees and about 50 are considered the middle management group. She stated that with the expansion throughout New York and with what they are doing with homecare services they can use this to train their employees and improve the retention rate but really just hone in on their skills. She stated that they can take what they learned and bring it to the next level, like a teach the teacher and benefit from it in more than one way.

James Farrell asked how this will take their business beyond Central New York. He stated that he can be supportive of this if this is bringing dollars into CNY that would be here otherwise. June Castle stated that a majority of their employees are Syracuse based. She stated that they provide an insurance plan outside of Onondaga but it is basically managed here in Syracuse. She stated that they are in 11 counties.

James Farrell stated that this money is in essence seed money so the money is inside Central New York and competing with companies but no dollars are coming in. Honora Spillane stated that is not a requirement of the EPP training.

June Castle stated that they were just approved for 30 more counties and their vision is that they want to be the Upstate plan and provide services to the underserved population.

James Farrell asked if this money is going to fund the growth of the business outside CNY. Honora Spillane stated that the goal of the Employee Productivity Program is to enhance the skills of people working in companies so that company is more efficient. She stated that the focus is not on the company's growth, it is about strengthening the workforce they have. She stated that those are critical dollars that we fund that not a lot of other sources can fund. She stated that in terms of the business growth a 30 county increase would be great and we want to see VNA succeed but they are not going to succeed in that growth plan without strong employees that are growing with the business.

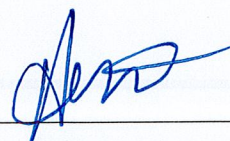
Ben Dublin stated that he thinks this is good and any time our local businesses train their workforce they are training our workforce as a community. He stated that this program was designed exactly for this and fits into exactly what we want it to. He stated that he is supportive.

Ravi Raman asked who the company is doing the training. Honora Spillane stated that it is Development Dimensions International from Bridgeville, Pennsylvania.

Ben Dublin stated that the community and government funds low level workforce development but we don't fund that mid-level and that is a real gap.

Upon a motion by Ben Dublin, seconded by Ravi Raman, the OCDC Board approved a resolution approving an Economic Growth Fund Employee Productivity Program service contract with VNA Homecare to fund up to \$12,500 for employee training and authorizing the signing of the service contract and all other related documents by an officer of the Corporation. Motion was carried.

Upon a motion by Ravi Raman, seconded by Ben Dublin, the OCDC Board adjourned the meeting at 10:03 am. Motion was carried unanimously.



Honora Spillane, Secretary

