

MINUTES  
Urban Renewal Agency of the  
City of Mountain Home  
Public Meeting held on  
June 30, 2020 10:00AM

Meeting was virtual through Microsoft Teams due to Corona Virus safety measures.

Commissioner Randy Valley called this public meeting of the Mountain Home Urban Renewal Agency to order at 10:01AM and established a quorum. Commissioners Alan Bermensolo, Skyer Jett, Hampton Wright are in attendance. Commissioner Matt Bundy joined the meeting at 10:35.

Guests include:

Brock Cherry-Community Development Specialist for the City of Mountain Home  
Kimberly Balkie-Economic Development Specialist  
Dick Talboy-Talboy Construction/Boise  
Molly Betzold-Public Involvement Team  
Macey Mortimer-Public Involvement Team  
Thomas Mannschreck-Thomas Development/Boise  
Kathryn Almberg-Nonprofit Urban Development Company The Housing Company/Boise  
Ryan Armbruster-URA Attorney

Commissioner Bermensolo welcomed and thanked everyone who came to participate in this meeting. Who is the Urban Renewal Agency? The Mountain Home URA is a unique quasi government entity with the goal of bringing economic development to the city. Their mission is to promote sustainable economic development and community enhancements through partnerships and public/private investment within the Urban Renewal area.

Further introduction of the URA Commissioners:

Randy Valley-Current Chairman. Retired Air Force Master Sergeant. Successful businessman in Mountain Home. Lived in community for over 30 years.

Matt Bundy-Retired Air Force Officer. Current City Councilman and is running to be a State Representative of Idaho.

Hampton Wright-Retired Air Force Master Sergeant. Long time resident of Mountain Home.

Skyler Jett-Deep roots and born in Mountain Home.

All commissioners are looking at the best interests for Mountain Home.

In 1996 Marathon Cheese had put Mountain Home on the short list to establish a plant in Mountain Home. Through discussion with Ryan Armbruster, Mayor Joe McNeil, and Economic Development Director Ron Swearingen, they were able to form the URA in a URA area with the sole purpose of funding the infrastructure to cement the deal between the City and Marathon Cheese to come to Mountain Home. The infrastructure being the sidewalks, streets, and sewer in the area where Marathon Cheese was built. The City put a bond together of about \$20 million to provide for the infrastructure/Marathon Cheese building which over time would be paid back to the URA through

incremental taxes generated by Marathon Cheese as it grew. The revenue paid off the bond payment. Over time the URA has been able to use those dollars to invest in the URA area.

On the URA website the projects are listed that have been done over the past 10 years. One of the big projects started when Stage Stores/Bealls wanted to come to Mountain Home. The URA purchased the old King's building, refurbished it and leased it over 10 years to Bealls. They chose to do an early termination in January 2020 and Stage Stores filed a Chapter 11 bankruptcy and now there is an empty building.

The purpose of this meeting is because the URA has the HUB and Bealls building and are asking for help with development. In 2028 the buildings will have to be turned back over to the City unless developer/developers procure them. These two buildings need to be in the hands of someone who has the same vision as the URA of what downtown Mountain Home should look like.

The Bealls and HUB buildings are at the core of downtown Mountain Home. They are iconic buildings. The Bealls building has been around since the 1960s. It was renovated for Bealls. The HUB building was built in the early 1960s also as a clothing store. The URA vision was to purchase the HUB building from the Scherer family and the Bealls building to create the HUB plaza. The URA has spent about \$900,000 on the HUB plaza for public use. The URA has purchased the HUB building and own the Bealls building. The City of Mountain Home has spent about \$4.5 million so far to refurbish Main Street and 2<sup>nd</sup> Street to revitalize the downtown. The City will end up with new infrastructure that will compliment the HUB plaza and these two buildings.

A unique thing about working with the URA is that creative things can be done. The fair market value of the HUB building is about \$260,000. The Bealls building is a \$720,000 asset. The URA would like to work with a developer on an RFP.

Kathryn asked what is the City's vision for the use in that location. Commissioner Valley stated this is the reason for the meeting today. The URA is looking for ideas from developers. Maybe multiuse, entertain a nice restaurant, brewery, just looking for more ideas.

Brock Cherry stated the City's vision is referred to as the comprehensive plan. When downtown is discussed, it is very diverse and makes an environment of housing options, office, personal services, lawns. What it comes down to is what is the current zoning and what is the area when it comes to the comprehensive plan. He is tasked to make sure that the current zoning ordinance allows for some of the innovative and creative ideas come to fruition. The City needs people to live downtown. This will be the best way to have people frequent downtown. Ideas need to entertain the building being demolished. It may be hard to meet City code. It may be more costly to refurbish.

Commissioner Bermensolo has no problem with the buildings being demolished if the need met the vision. There is a continuing question about the economy of Mountain Home and the engine of the Mountain Home Air Force Base. There is never a guarantee they will always be there. They do need air space and Mountain Home has it all. Mountain Home will have slow continued growth for years to come.

Brock stated to continue to tell the stories of the buildings if they were demolished by tying in existing building materials of anything salvageable. That is where it can be very creative. Some people will never

be happy, but it can be done in a manner where we are not erasing the past but building on it. Development may be somewhat political.

Kathryn is in a historical position and worked with farmsteads in Ada County, they sometimes do a kiosk around materials used in the clubhouse. There can be photo journalism or a display in the new building which can be a component in preserving the building.

Dick Talboy asked if he could walk through the buildings. Advised to make arrangements ahead of time. Contact Commissioner Valley or the realtor showing the buildings.

Commissioner Bundy made a motion to adjourn. Commissioner Wright seconded. All commissioners vote AYE. Meeting adjourned at 10:46AM.

Signed R Valley Date 7-20-2020