

Garfield Redevelopment Agency

MINUTES

Monday, October 2, 2023

7:00 PM Meeting

1. CALL TO ORDER

The Garfield Redevelopment Agency meeting for Monday, October 2, 2023 was called to order at 7:03PM

2. SECRETARY'S OPENING STATEMENT RE: SUNSHINE LAW

Notice of the time, date and place of this meeting has been provided at least 48 hours in advance and in accordance with the applicable New Jersey statutes: (1) by publication in The Herald News and The Record both of which are official newspapers of the City of Garfield; (2) by posting of the notice of meeting on the Community Bulletin Board at the municipal building; and (3) by filing a copy of the notice with the City Clerk.

3. FLAG SALUTE

4. ROLL CALL

In attendance were Chairman Andreano, Vice-Chairman Amadio and Commissioners Alfonso. Delaney*, Easom, and Torre, therefore, there was a quorum. Also, in attendance were: Erin Delaney – Redevelopment Agency Director & Secretary, Santo Alampi – Redevelopment Agency Attorney, Denise Ingui – Redevelopment Agency Assistant Secretary, and Stenographer Beth Calderone.

**Commissioner Delaney arrived at 7:41PM.*

5. APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES

Commissioner Easom made a motion to approve the August 7, 2023 Regular Meeting minutes which was seconded by Vice-Chairman Amadio. The motions carried by those present, with Commissioner Alfonso abstaining.

6. NEW BUSINESS

Director Delaney reviewed the 2022 Audit with the Commissioners, which had no comments by the Agency Auditor. She requested that everyone review the Communication with Governance letter in their Board packets. The affidavit was also distributed for the Commissioners' signatures.

7. VOUCHERS

Commissioner Alfonso made a motion to accept the vouchers presented by Dr. Cusmano, via e-mail, which was seconded by Commissioner Torre. The motions carried unanimously by those present.

8. RECOMMENDED ACTION BY COUNSEL

There was no recommended action by counsel.

9. PRESENTATION BY DMR ARCHITECTS – MIDLAND AVENUE FEASIBILITY STUDY

Kurt Vierheilig of DMR Architects attended the meeting and presented the draft feasibility study. He noted that the firm and City Committee met with the following entities: the Garfield Recreation Center, Garfield Boys & Girls Club, Garfield YMCA, and Garfield Library. During said meetings, questionnaires were complete to be able to accommodate and better understand each entity's programming. Chairman Andreano inquired as to who was a part of the City Committee, of which it was noted that the Mayor and former Recreation Director formed said committee. Mr. Vierheilig detailed the concept plan, which consisted of 3 stories, with the gym only being 1 story. Mr. Vierheilig advised that the gym space would have to be coordinated with all parties to accommodate scheduling and programs. He noted that the square footage of the Recreation Center used in the questionnaire did not include the gym or stage area and that the library's square footage would remain the same. Commissioners inquired about not incorporating a pool, to which Mr. Vierheilig stated the decision to not include a pool did not come from DMR. He went on to note that a pool would double the size and cost of the building. Discussion ensued regarding the need for a pool, the residential component, entrance to the Boys and Girls Club, and the Senior Center. Mr. Vierheilig advised that they were specifically tasked with the feasibility study for the community building, and not the residential component.

Vice-Chairman Amadio made a motion to open this portion of the meeting to the public, which was seconded by Commissioner Easom. The motions carried by those present

Patricia Gallagher, Garfield YMCA, expressed her concerns about not being part of the plan and there not being another pool within the community. She requested that a pool be reconsidered or that the City update and keep the current pool and detailed the benefits of having community pools.

Bernard Mirandi, Garfield YMCA Board Trustee & Garfield Resident, expressed his concerns about the YMCA not being part of the plan and there not being a pool considered in the plan. He noted that the City property being discussed is approximately 5 acres. Additionally, he advised that scheduling can become difficult between all parties with only 1 gym.

Richard Rigoglioso, Garfield Mayor, stated that he appreciated the and understands the YMCA's concerns. He went on to note that in addition to Mr. Golabek and himself, the County and developer was included in the Committee meetings and that the developer would be footing the bill. Chairman Andreano inquired as to who the developer is, to which it was noted that only prospective developers were met with and that nothing is set in stone. Mayor Rigoglioso advised that including a pool would increase the cost about \$10 million and would have to be a lift on the City, as opposed to being funded by the County. He also shared that the YMCA is landlocked on Outwater Lane due to a lease that is in place with their property at the Walgreens site. Mayor Rigoglioso said that he would love to include a pool but with a pool there are additional costs, such as additional bathrooms, etc. He inquired as to what the YMCA can offer in perpetuity being that they only have 5 years left on their current pool lease with the Boys and Girls Club.

Commissioner Delaney expressed concerns about the Agency not having knowledge as to why the County was included in the process for input or knowledge as to background of the meetings held to discuss the plan and pool. Director Delaney concurred and stated that it is insulting to not have the Agency have a voice in the planning or herself as the City Manager/Redevelopment Agency Director, especially when the Agency is the entity that is paying for the feasibility study.

Commissioner Easom inquired as to if the YMCA can contribute something to the community center so that they are included in the new building, such as paying the lease for the pool. Vice-Chairman Amadio noted that the plan would involve losing a gym and pool within the community, as well as a good portion of the Senior Center. Chairman Andreano noted that the Senior Center is often used as a rental space and questioned whether or not there would be space in this building for the same. Mayor Rigoglioso answered by saying the community would be gaining a state/arts center and classrooms for special needs and potentially bringing students back in the City from out of district.

Attorney Alampi advised that the feasibility study only touches base on the programming aspect and not the financial aspect of the plan. Director Delaney then explained that the County would not be contributing to the cost of the community center but, rather, loaning the City money which would have to be paid back through the revenue from the residential component. She stated that, as presented, it is the City that would be footing the bill with no contribution from any other party.

Shane Sudol, Garfield Boys & Girls Club, stated that he felt DMR was very thorough with the needs of the Boys & Girls Club. He went on to say that a lot of the programs would be brought together, which would address the scheduling concerns. Mr. Sudol stated that it is difficult to get coaches, volunteers, etc. and that combining programs would alleviate some of the burden. He noted that he understands the concerns of not having a pool but has first hand experience with how expensive a pool can be to install and maintain. Mr. Sudol shared that they looked at the space from a long-term point of view to get the most out of it. He concluded by saying bringing in out of district students back to the City in this space is something to be explored and that he was very pleased with the process done by DMR.

Patricia Gallagher, Garfield YMCA, shared that the YMCA was originally involved but then never heard back and that they were never asked about their funding/contribution to the center. She, again, requested that the Agency not close their minds to the incorporating a pool and noted that after their lease it can be another entity that utilizes it.

Vice-Chairman Amadio made a motion to close this portion of the meeting to the public, which was seconded by Commissioner Easom. The motions carried by those present.

10. CONSENT AGENDA

2023-20 Authorizing the Issuance and Execution of a Certificate of Completion to Meridia Garfield 99, Urban Renewal, LLC as Redeveloper for Property Known as Tax Block 119.03 Lot 52 Located in the Passaic Street Redevelopment Area

2023-21 Approving the 2022 Garfield Redevelopment Agency Audit

Both resolutions passed by those present, with separate roll call votes. Director Delaney advised that Resolution 2023-20 was reviewed by the City’s attorney and is recommended for approval being that the project is now deemed complete.

11. CORRESPONDENCE

There was no correspondence.

12. OLD BUSINESS

The Commissioners decided to leave Resolution 2023-18: Resolution Authorizing the Agency Chairman to Enter into a Contract with DMR Architects to Prepare an Area in Need of Redevelopment Investigation Study for 458, 466, 474, 490, 506 and 524 Midland Avenue Pursuant to the Local Redevelopment and Housing law, N.J.S.A.40A:12a-1 et seq. as a tabled item as a result of there still being discussion and potential changes on the draft feasibility study that was presented. It was decided that a sub-committee of the Redevelopment Agency be formed to meet with DMR and have input in the feasibility study moving forward.

13. CITIZENS REMARKS

Vice-Chairman Amadio made a motion to open the floor to the public which was seconded by Commissioner Easom. The motions carried by those present.

Patricia Gallagher, Garfield YMCA, inquired about attending the meeting held with the Agency and DMR. Discussion ensued and it was determined that no other entity should be a part of the sub-committee. However, a meeting will be scheduled for all parties to meet at a later time.

Richard Rigoglioso, Garfield Mayor, also inquired about the meetings and who should be involved/meet.

Commissioner Easom made a motion to close the floor to the public which was seconded by Commissioner Delaney. The motions carried by those present.

14. FUTURE MEETING

It was announced that the next meeting will be held on Monday, November 6, 2023, in which the Agency budget for 2024 will be introduced.

15. ADJOURNMENT

A motion was made by Vice-Chairman Amadio and seconded by Commissioner Alfonso to adjourn. The motions carried unanimously by those present.

Respectfully submitted,

Erin Delaney, MPA, RMC
Redevelopment Agency Director/Secretary