

**Tompkins County Industrial Development Agency  
Board of Directors Meeting Final Minutes  
June 10, 2020 at 2:30 PM - Via Zoom Conference Call and LiveStream**

**Present:** Rich John, Jennifer Tavares, Martha Robertson, Laura Lewis, Mike Sigler, John Guttridge, Anne Koreman

**Staff Present:** Heather McDaniel, Ina Arthur (TCAD), Russ Gaenzle (Harris Beach)

**Guests Present:** Jason Crane, Costa Lambrou (City Harbor LLC)

### **CALL TO ORDER**

Rich John called the meeting of the **Tompkins County IDA** to order at 2:35 pm.

### **PRIVILEGE OF THE FLOOR**

Two comments from the public were received via email and read into the minutes of the meeting:

**Theresa Alt, 206 Eddy Street, Ithaca NY 14850** – Back in February at the public hearing about City Harbor I said that the project was fine and surely should be built but that it could stand on its own two feet. A project with lots of attractive amenities but no housing affordable to low or moderate income people should not get a tax abatement. Since February a lot has changed. The City now faces \$15 million or more in property tax shortfall. Undoubtedly the County and Schools also face lost tax revenue. So, this is not a time to hand out tax abatements for market rate housing. City Harbor will be built — maybe the amenities will have to wait. It will be rented with or without them. And it will be able to pay taxes.

**Stephanie Heslop, Tompkins County resident** – It is always wrong to give tax abatements to luxury projects while people are homeless; in this moment it is obscene. And why would you write into the meeting minutes that the resolution for City Harbor had passed unless you want to make it very obvious that its passage is a foregone conclusion?

### **ADDITIONS TO THE AGENDA – Proposed TCIDA Housing Policy - Discussion**

### **OLD BUSINESS**

#### City Harbor LLC – Final Approval

**Martha Robertson moved to approve the authorizing resolution for City Harbor LLC. Laura Lewis seconded the motion.**

Heather McDaniel reported that the City of Ithaca has issued the final SEQR determination for this project. Also the IDA has held a public hearing.

Costa Lambrou commented that the NYS DOT provided comments that were not in favor of increased traffic from increased development in the area and the proposed mitigation measures including pedestrian safety at the Route 13 crossing. The City of Ithaca and stakeholders will continue to work with the DOT to meet local and state goals.

Rich John asked about the water levels at the project site. Jason Crane commented that the engineers for the project have studied this issue and the whole site will be raised by 1 foot so that the 100 year flood level can be exceeded.

**A vote was called on the motion. The motion passed 7-0.**

## **NEW BUSINESS**

### 2019 IDA Job Report

As a condition of the IDA's Recapture Policy, all active projects are reviewed to see if they have met their job creation projections. For 2019 there were 49 active projects in various stages of construction and exemption type that were approved between 2003 and 2019. Thirty of those projects were under a PILOT agreement in 2019. The remainder are under construction and using sales tax exemptions. Projects retained or create 2,309 jobs. Of those that reported, total payroll in 2019 was \$123,984,025 with an average wage of \$26.85 per hour.

Ten projects did not meet job creation or retention goals. There was no recommendation to commence a recapture of funds at this time. Each of these ten projects have been reviewed and an explanation for not meeting the job creation goals was supplied in an accompanying memo that was included in the agenda packet along with the project report.

A discrepancy on the IDA application employment chart and the annual employment verification form has created the appearance that existing jobs have declined over time for many projects because the application asks for "total jobs" and the annual verification form asks for total FTEs (full time equivalent jobs). This discrepancy has been corrected on the application.

**Laura Lewis moved to accept the 2019 IDA Job Report and confirm not moving forward with any recapture procedures. Martha Robertson seconded the motion. The motion was approved 7-0.**

Martha Robertson commented that next year's report may look worse as the hotels downtown are not doing well due to the COVID-19 situation.

### Proposed IDA Housing Policy - Discussion

Heather McDaniel presented the proposed IDA Housing Policy to the Board. The policy outlined two options for multi-family rental housing projects with 20 units or more.

- 1) Set aside a minimum of 20% of the units available for residents earning less than 80% of median income and be subject to a regulatory agreement by a local, state or federal agency for compliance for a period of at least 20 years, or
- 2) Make a one-time payment to the Tompkins County Community Housing Development Fund. The payment amount is \$7,500 x 10% of the total unit count payable in full at closing.

This policy would apply to multi-family residential housing project in the following areas:

- City of Ithaca's Downtown Density District
- City of Ithaca's Waterfront Zoning Districts
- Lansing Town Center Incentive Zone
- The redevelopment of a Brownfield site that is registered as a DEC inactive hazardous waste site

**Martha Robertson moved to accept the proposed IDA Housing Policy and to make it applicable to all multi-family housing projects moving forward as well as changing the percentage in option 2 from 10% to 20%. John Guttridge seconded the motion with an amendment making the payment amount \$25,000 x 20% of total unit count. Martha Robertson accepted the amendment as friendly.**

Rich John commented that he would rather have the policy go to the Housing committee for discussion and modification.

Laura Lewis said she is of two minds. The non-IDA members of the Housing Committee should weigh in on the policy. However, she would like to get a housing policy onto the books.

Martha Robertson stated that she does not want to consider another housing project without a policy. Perhaps the IDA Housing Committee could meet to consider this policy before the next IDA Board meeting and then at that meeting the Board could consider approval of the policy.

Anne Koreman and Laura Lewis agreed with this. Laura Lewis asked that a few scenarios be presented at the next Board meeting.

Heather McDaniel stated that it has almost been a year since the IDA Housing Committee met (July 2019). Since that time the IDA has agreed to consider housing projects on a case by case basis. The projects that have been approved in that time are, Ithaca Arthaus – 100% affordable, 327 W Seneca – 100% affordable, and City Harbor – significant public amenities that outweighed the benefit of providing a set aside of affordable housing units.

Martha Robertson withdrew her motion with the assurance that the Housing Committee would meet in June and provide input.

**CHAIRS REPORT** -- None.

**STAFF REPORT** – Heather McDaniel reported that there are a few project applications in process.

**APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES** – Anne Koreman moved to approve the May 15, 2020 TCIDA Board meeting minutes. Mike Sigler seconded the motion. The motion was approved 7-0.

**EXECUTIVE SESSION** – Jennifer Tavares moved to enter executive session to discuss a matter that could lead to potential litigation. Anne Koreman seconded the motion. The motion was approved 7-0.

**ADJOURNMENT** – Laura Lewis moved to adjourn the meeting. Jennifer Tavares seconded the motion. The motion was approved 7-0.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:15 pm. **Minutes were approved at July 8, 2020 Board meeting.**