

DON GRAY

CAPITAL TOWNSHIP CLERK

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MINUTES

CAPITAL TOWNSHIP BOARD OF TRUSTEES

JANUARY 11, 2021

CALL TO ORDER/ROLL CALL

The Capital Township Board of Trustees met by phone due to the Governor’s Executive Shelter in Place Order regarding COVID-19. The following members answered to roll call: Joe Aiello, Richard Berning, Brad Carlson, Alysse Aiello Hewell, and Lakeisha Purchase. Mark Crawford, Alderman Andrew Proctor, Richard Thompson, Mayor Jim Langfelder, and Jim Zerkle were also present. Bruce Stratton was present as Legal Counsel.

MINUTES

A motion was made by Trustee Berning, seconded by Trustee Carlson, to amend the Minutes of the December 14, 2020 meeting. Trustee Berning stated he wants to amend Paragraph 3 under Public Speaker to change the word descendants to ancestors. Upon a roll call vote, there were 5 Yeas – 0 Nays on the amendment. There were 5 Yeas – 0 Nays to approve the minutes as amended.

ENOS PARK TIF DISTRICT

Supervisor Aiello stated the Enos Park TIF district is on the Agenda. They will move this item up on the Agenda to discuss it. There were no objections.

Mayor Jim Langfelder stated the Enos Park area is located within the medical district. The YMCA was a recent development in the area. They helped build that \$35 million project with TIF funds. It was a combination of the downtown and Enos Park TIF funds. They pledged around \$5.9 million. Since 2015, they have changed the structure. Previous administrations would pay a direct subsidy to the Enos Park Neighborhood Association. They would use the money for things such as streetlights and for developing properties. They had accumulated about 75 properties. They have changed that because of the sheer magnitude of it and difficulty in developing. They

started focusing on a partnership to transition with what they had done previously to more of a community development. They started a rehab program for Veterans, individuals, and first responders for home ownership to try to stabilize that area since it has been a high crime area. Through that, they had 29 homeowners using about \$199,000 in TIF funds, and approximately an additional \$245,000 in private investments since around 2018. These individual homeowners are preserving their houses, so it has been a successful program.

Enos Park has about 75 properties and is an accumulation of what individuals would consider land bank; however, with a true land bank, you find financial resources to help develop those resources. How do you maximize the properties and move them towards development. The other initiative they have going with the City is they put in a request through Bloomberg Harvard University. They have been involved and asked that they provide a 10-week program to develop a strategy for the City and Enos Park to maximize the use of those resources for development and the vacant properties. He asked if there are any questions regarding Enos Park. Trustee Berning asked what the Bloomberg Harvard grant would provide. He knows it will be not only for Enos Park but also for the City's economic development. Mayor Langfelder explained that he does not like announcing things before they come to fruition, but they have been selected among 40 mayors to participate in this program in regards to the pandemic. They have been participating in this for over 6 months on a variety of items. Once initiative they offered was an equity initiative, which they are currently participating in. It looks at your budget to make sure the services you are delivering are equitable to the individuals you serve. The other initiative is digital inclusion and community engagement. There are three components right there. The fourth one they are trying to be approved for is for a ten-week program where they look at their processes and the vacant properties they have. Enos Park has 75, the Springfield Project has around the same. There is also the City of Springfield and the Sangamon County Trustee. They need to develop a strategy to maximize and leverage financial resources for redevelopment. They would have an individual come here and help with the process, and would meet with the entities involved to come up with a strategy to improve processes in moving vacant properties through the tax rolls. Trustee Berning stated he thinks this is a good idea.

Richard Thompson stated it sounds like Harvard Bloomberg is somewhat duplicating the initiative of the Springfield Project. Are they also going to look at bringing in more funds through grants or through fundraising to the township? Mayor Langfelder explained it would not be real duplication because the Springfield Project is looking at donating the properties back to the City. They have been maintaining those properties. Like they do with Sangamon County Trustee properties, they don't charge for it but just took over the responsibility through their Public Works Department. He has gotten grief over not charging, but he does not think they should be charging. With regards to the Harvard initiative, that would be an independent voice. When you bring government into the equation, they want to make sure there is an independent voice to assure the properties are used for what they are intended to be used for, and having that partnership with any government. With regards to financial resources, there would be the opportunity for grants. He has seen it with other avenues where they were not able to apply for it.

Alderman Andrew Proctor explained that the Enos Park Association has done a lot of great things with the neighborhood. The neighborhood is right there for an opportunity for new construction. They have been right there to start to get things done, but then the shoe drops and things like COVID happen. There is a lot of interest to continue redevelopment in the area, especially with the two hospitals there. There is a lot of interest in improving the neighborhood. If the TIF is not extended, that would be a huge tool that would be gone, and would put the neighborhood in a further decline. Individual homebuyers would be able to access the money they put to the TIF through their property tax. This has been successful, and they want to continue seeing this success and hope to get their support.

Trustee Purchase asked about the success from the program to subsidize for roof and siding reimbursement. Mayor Langfelder stated there are two projects. The Visual Arts Center and the YMCA at the corner of 4th & Carpenter. If you have not done so, you should at least drive by or go over there. It was a \$35 million project and would not have been possible without the TIF. The \$5.9 million was split between the downtown TIF and the Enos Park TIF. If the TIF is not renewed, they would have to allocate dollars from the downtown TIF. Right now he does not know of any community that has this type of construction project going during a pandemic. Springfield did do something right with a project of that magnitude. They also have the County Market across the street and TIF dollars were used for that. You can work, walk, and play in that area and it all transcends into downtown. The issue is if they don't renew. They know there are 75 properties with Enos Park Association and there are dilapidated properties. The City helped demolish 20 properties over the course of a few years. He appreciates Supervisor Aiello bringing up the Park South TIF to him yesterday where the FBI building is off Stevenson Drive. There has not been another development since that TIF has been absolved. Here you have brand new buildings and plenty of property to develop and not one development has taken place since that was dissolved in 2015. Some of the other projects they have developed through community development block grant funds was the veteran's housing. There were nine units they converted into veteran's housing working with the 5th Street Renaissance. They used CDBG funds for that and for other housing units. A main partner in all that is Abundant Faith Christian Center. Alderman Proctor would probably know of others that he is missing.

Alderman Proctor emphasized the homeowner rehab projects that individual homeowners can access with TIF's. There is also a plan to expand the number of people who can acquire TIF funds for home ownership to include medical staff at the hospitals and teachers. Without the TIF funds, that opportunity won't be available.

Trustee Carlson asked if the 75 properties they mentioned are all privately owned. Mayor Langfelder stated they are all private properties owned by the Enos Park Neighborhood Association. Supervisor Aiello stated it is residential properties and some may be commercial property.

Mayor Langfelder brought up the question of accountability and transparency. One of the things he did when he first came into office was put into place the Community Economic Development Commission, so all TIF projects would go through that commission. That commission would make a proposal to the City Council and the City Council would then put it through their hearing process and have the final vote. The City Council meetings are aired and sometimes other meetings are aired on cable. With the independent body, there is a banker, School District #186 finance person, and some developers, so there is a mix of individuals on there to provide a different viewpoint. He values that because he doesn't appoint people who are likeminded with him, they are more broad based from different viewpoints. You should try to bring that aspect to any committee or commission for great decision-making.

Alderman Proctor stated he hopes they get an extension for the Enos Park TIF. They have the opportunity today to get it done. They would appreciate getting a letter from Capital Township. Trustee Carlson asked what the timeframe is on this. Alderman Proctor said sooner rather than later. There is House Bill 570 out there and Senator Manar indicated, if they get a letter they would be able to possibly get this done today. Mayor Langfelder mentioned the Pillsbury area that needs help. He has pulled back from that because Enos Park is a work in progress. Treasurer Aiello brought up some concerns and they are addressing those. If the Enos Park TIF is not renewed then all of those dilapidated homes will just sit there.

Trustee Purchase stated last month she mentioned calling a motion for them to do a letter in support and Supervisor Aiello said he had to do more research. She asked if they could now do a motion since the Mayor and Alderman Proctor have spoken. Supervisor Aiello stated he is not sure they are at that point yet. He expressed concerns yesterday with the Mayor and he sent a document that not everyone has been able to read. He wants to get that out to everyone along with some things they probably should ask for. He talked with some other taxing bodies and they are not going to be able to provide a letter for another week or two. He does not know that they need to make a decision today. Trustee Purchase asked if they can call a special meeting if they get everything they are asking for. Supervisor Aiello stated they could.

Mayor Langfelder asked who said they would not be able to submit a letter. Supervisor Aiello stated he believes the Park District doesn't have a letter and it's his understanding it probably won't be for a week or two. He doesn't know if it will be this session or the next session. He asked when they come back. Trustee Carlson said the new General Assembly is sworn in on Wednesday. Supervisor Aiello stated he does not think the Park District is going to meet before then.

Alderman Proctor stated he and the Mayor could probably get the Park District letter today. If they get the letter from Capital Township today that would help get the letter from the Park District. If they don't get it before this session concludes then everything has to start all over again. They wouldn't be able to get this done until the Governor signs the bill after May or June. So they would go half the year without the Enos Park TIF being able to help out individual homeowners. He heard Lakeisha make a motion, and he hopes she can get a second on that.

Trustee Carlson stated he would like to see the email Joe talked about earlier. Supervisor Aiello stated he would get the Mayor's email out to everybody and will send them some suggestions of what is expected of them as elected officials and governmental employees. There are probably two or three things they need to ask for if they do a letter because there have been concerns over the years with the way the Enos Park District and the City manages TIF money. He thinks it would help create some transparency to give them some comfort going forward. They are the steward of the money and have to be conscientious of how they are spending their money. They have the opportunity to do a better job of transparency and accountability. They are all in this thing together and are not against economic development. They are for economic development and it is important to do this in a manner so they can be accountable to their taxpayers.

Mayor Langfelder stated they are not going to find a more transparent government than the City government. They are under the microscope constantly. They cannot correct the sins of the past administrations. That is why he put together the Community Economic Development Commission. What he thinks Treasurer Aiello is alluding to are two things. One is they are doing a payout with School District #186. That was done under a previous administration when they renewed the downtown TIF. In this area, the poorest elementary school in this area is McClernand Elementary School. If you haven't gone in there, you should. It is a very transient population with a lot of homeless and low income students, so they felt it was important to support School District #186 with that pay out of the increment they received on a similar formula. The other thing is the Park District. There are areas that need the resources for the parks. They have an ordinance filed with the City Council that would provide increments on the front end. Capital Township's portion is \$5,000 a year to hold this project up. That is something you have to weigh. With the Park District, he thinks it was about \$300,000 on the front end so they could do improvements in this area that is greatly needed. They say, "The city is not spending the money properly". The \$750,000 spent on the roof of the Municipal Building was a legitimate expense, meets all the TIF regulations, and was discussed numerous times at City Council. His position was not to use those funds out of the TIF. He had it budgeted from a different fund. Consequently, with all this angst over the years and condition of the downtown TIF, he requested an ordinance to provide those funds back to downtown. It was changed originally because the Aldermen strongly felt that it be taken out of the TIF because it was doing well at the time. You fast forward to today, and the TIF is not doing so good. They need more resources in there. They have many potential projects for downtown, so they are going to reverse it. If there is something that you want or request, they prefer it is discussed right now, and he and Alderman Proctor can tell you yes or no right now so they can meet the timeline of the letter. He is challenging them to step up and be the leaders they can be to make sure this TIF continues at \$500,000 a year, and not hold it up over \$5,000 a year that goes to Capital Township. As you know, the hospitals would love to see it thriving in that area. The biggest project in Springfield is the rail project. When you move the rail over there, you would then have a corridor that needs developed. That is not his prioritization but is Head of Memorial Hospital Ed Curtis' priority. The Enos Park TIF can help them move in the direction to develop that area to a certain degree with the amenities put in force in the area to help the livability and viability of that area. Springfield was the only city allowed to get a double extension of the downtown TIF

because they had many non-taxing bodies that take up building space downtown. They had a depreciation in their EAV. In the difficult times, that is when you need to challenge yourselves to get it done. Alderman Proctor hit the nail on the head when he said they need to act on it now.

Trustee Purchase mentioned that Joe said he received an email after Noon today and she asked the Mayor to go over that email. Mayor Langfelder stated it was about what he just went over regarding School District #186 and the Park District and transparency and accountability. Trustee Purchase asked Supervisor Aiello what items they are asking for. Supervisor Aiello stated they are asking where the money is going and who is getting the money. They are asking what properties there were and what improvements were done. He thinks things have been fixed, but they still see problems with the City and how they handle their TIF districts. They are all in this together and some things need to change. He wants to see an accountability of some of those expenses. They owe this to the taxpayers. People feel like they are being left out and are not part of the process. They need to see how the money is being spent. Mayor Langfelder stated he could provide this information of the 29 individuals within the next half hour. He never received that request. He asked who that request was sent to. Supervisor Aiello stated he talked about this for a long time. Mayor Langfelder asked if it was the Economic Development Director or the Aldermen or who was it? Supervisor Aiello stated that is not important. What is important is that you get this information out to them.

Trustee Purchase asked if some of the neighbors who had concerns were able to speak about this. Supervisor Aiello stated he is not sure they want to speak, but Andrew is aware of some of those people. Alderman Proctor said he has not spoken to anyone who has said they have issues with how the City is running the TIF because of the changes they have made regarding individual homeowners being allowed to access the TIF dollars. It has been a huge success. He has heard only good things about the procedures they put in place. Supervisor Aiello stated the comments he received were about the old system. Trustee Purchase said she also has not received any negative feedback.

Supervisor Aiello stated they could set up another meeting later in the week and he will send them out an email.

A motion was made by Trustee Purchase to send the letter of support from Capital Township to the City of Springfield to renew the TIF.

Jim Zerkle pointed out on a technical point of view that what Alderman Proctor said is correct. The delay is very problematic if it gets pushed into the new legislative session. That means all the existing bills go away and they have to start from scratch. That could mean a summer or fall situation, so months of potential delay. That could be very problematic for the City of Springfield and/or the area. What you are doing is a very potentially damaging situation by way of just the technical requirements because of the way the legislature works. He doesn't think they would have come up, except in part Senator Manar said they would try to move on it if they got the letters. The timing is somewhat important. All of the taxing bodies are fully

satisfied with going forward. The school district is the biggest taxing body and they are in support of it. The technical problems with the legislative process are very real.

Trustee Carlson stated in light of just receiving an email just a short while ago, he still has some questions in general. Why can't they go into regular session and get this done in the summer? Some of these properties have been vacant for so long already.

Supervisor Aiello stated it has been difficult getting the letters because there is a lack of trust in the way TIF funds have been managed and operated and with the problems in Enos Park. To clear the air, they are not holding this up over the \$5,000. It is about the way things have been managed and mismanaged over the years. They need to quit stumbling over the past. There is no doubt about that. Something needs to change in order to create a little confidence in these taxing districts. You went out and promised money to all these different groups and bought them off with the money. It doesn't change anything if you buy them off with the money. Let's make some significant changes to create accountability. He just doesn't think they are there yet.

Trustee Purchase asked where they are at with the motion. Supervisor Aiello told her she made a motion and there was no second as of yet. Trustee Purchase stated they were about to make the motion and Zerkle chimed in to say something. Supervisor Aiello asked for a second. There was no second to the motion. The motion failed.

Trustee Berning stated the Mayor and Jim Zerkle commented that Andrew had a lot of background knowledge on this too. Is this special legislation for them as it is written at General Assembly stating that each taxing district has to provide an okay to move forward? Supervisor Aiello stated it does not say that. Alderman Proctor explained that it is a staff process. In regards to the legislation, it is a regular bill being considered during veto session. There is language to attach House Bill 570 to get it done. They are just waiting on this letter. Supervisor Aiello clarified there is nothing in House Bill 570 right now that mentions the letter. Alderman Proctor stated that is correct. The staff is waiting on the letter from Capital Township.

Mayor Langfelder stated he thinks the Corporation Counsel that worked with the attorney for the Park District thinks they would be appalled if you think they were buying them off. What they have heard all along is "You don't include the taxing bodies". So, when they do include them, you are saying they are buying them off. Springfield has all the taxing bodies within it. They have all these jurisdictional boundaries within the City of Springfield. Alderman Proctor has to only worry about those residents in his area, but Jim Langfelder, as Mayor, as with any mayor, has to be concerned with all the properties in the City of Springfield and all the individuals they are here to serve. They are discussing in Washington D.C. and throughout their country, the divisive nature of which you are alluding to. In the Land of Lincoln they go by Government of the People By the People and For the People. That is what it is all about, plain and simple. How do they improve people's lives? All they are asking for is an extension of the TIF to improve people's lives in a distressed area, plain and simple.

Trustee Purchase asked if Joe could get that descriptive spreadsheet he was looking for so he can also send that out with your letter. Mayor Langfelder stated he emailed the letter and will get the list to them today. Trustee Purchase asked what day this week they will be calling the meeting again. Supervisor Aiello stated they could figure that out when they get to that point on the Agenda.

Mayor Langfelder expressed his appreciation for their time and consideration.

SUPERVISOR/GENERAL ASSISTANCE EXPENDITURES

A motion was made by Trustee Purchase, seconded by Trustee Berning, to approve payment of the Supervisor/Collector/General Assistance Administration Expenditures in the amount of \$750.00. Upon a roll call vote, there were 5 Yeas – 0 Nays.

TOWN CLERK/TOWN ASSESSOR EXPENDITURES

A motion was made by Trustee Purchase, seconded by Trustee Aiello Hewell, to approve payment of the Township Clerk/Township Assessor's Administration Expenditures in the amount of \$501.98. Upon a roll call vote, there were 5 Yeas – 0 Nays.

LEGAL COUNSEL REPORT

There was no report from legal counsel.

SUPERVISOR'S UPDATE

There was no update from the Supervisor.

ENOS PARK TIF DISTRICT

Supervisor Aiello stated they have already discussed the majority of this subject. He will be waiting for some emails and will send out some things he thinks they need to consider with regard to transparency and accountability that they can all live with going forward. They should probably meet next week since this has to be published in the newspaper. They don't have enough time to publish it if they meet this week. Trustee Berning asked if they recess this meeting, in his opinion they have covered the issue of this subject because it is on the agenda. Supervisor Aiello asked Bruce Stratton for his opinion on this. Bruce Stratton stated they are in session now and they could technically recess the meeting until next week. You don't want to overdo that because you don't want it to look like some sort of circumvention of the Open Meetings Act. Supervisor Aiello asked if they could just recess until Thursday. Bruce Stratton stated they could. Supervisor Aiello stated they would do that and put notices on the website and the bulletin boards in the building. Bruce Stratton stated they could technically do that because they are in proper session now and can recess to the new date. The concern is if you want to continue the meeting again next week. How long does that keep going on?

Trustee Berning explained that is one of his problems with the entire TIF program, not just Enos Park. Administrators have come in, that being the Mayor and staff, and look at things and say they just kick the can down the road. He doesn't think they are interested in that. Supervisor Aiello has asked for some additional information, which he is looking forward to seeing. In his opinion, they could recess this until 7:00 p.m. tonight since it is covered in the agenda. When they act upon it, and this meeting is closed, they don't have any further duty. Supervisor Aiello stated they could just recess until 12:00 p.m. on Thursday. Trustee Purchase stated they just received something from the Mayor with the information attached to it. Bruce Stratton asked if they would send out notice of this meeting. Supervisor Aiello stated they would notify the media. Everyone agreed on recessing until 12:00 p.m. on Thursday.

OLD BUSINESS

Trustee Purchase asked how it is going at the old building since the Veteran's office moved in there. Supervisor Aiello said they are 100% in there and are providing services. They understand completely where they are with the signage. They will take advantage of the location of old signs. They may strap up some logo signs to the fence. He thinks it is facilitating their needs as they see fit. They feel better there because of parking and some other issues.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Trustee Purchase asked if anyone that wants to sit in and listen needs to contact you that Friday before or Monday of the meeting. Supervisor Aiello stated they could contact him anytime including the day of the meeting.

Richard Thompson thanked them for having him and he enjoyed listening in. He understands their concerns for transparency, and he also understands the \$500,000 or more they are concerned about losing. He is interested in hearing both sides of the equation. Supervisor Aiello stated he is glad Mr. Thompson was with us. The issue of transparency and accountability is important nowadays. As they go through this thing with COVID, public funds are more precious than ever before. As they can see, people are fighting for funds, and he is fighting for accountability and transparency because there has been issues in the Park District and with the City. He hopes things work out for everyone in the end on this issue.

ADJOURN

A motion was made by Trustee Purchase, seconded by Trustee Berning, to adjourn the meeting to Thursday, January 14, 2021 at Noon. Upon a roll call vote, there were 5 Yeas – 0 Nays.

Don Gray
Town Clerk