



City of Racine

City Hall
730 Washington Ave.
Racine, WI 53403
www.cityofracine.org

Meeting Minutes - Final

Community Development Authority

Monday, September 18, 2023

6:00 PM

City Hall, Room 303

Call To Order

Chair Adamski called the meeting to order at 6:02 p.m.

Michelle Cook, Associate Planner, called the roll.

Approval of Minutes for the August 14, 2023 Meeting.

A motion was made by West, seconded by Mason, to approve the minutes of the August 14, 2023 meeting. The motion PASSED by a Voice Vote.

6:00 Public Hearings

[0909-23](#)

Subject: Consideration of a request from the Community Development Authority of the City of Racine (CDA) through CDA Resolution 23-22 related to property owned by the Young Men's Christian Assoc, of Racine, located at 725 Lake Avenue, for potential acquisition by the CDA for blight elimination and redevelopment and that the CDA acquire such property notwithstanding that it is not in an existing redevelopment area.

Recommendation of the Community Development Authority on

09-18-2023: That the Common Council find that a comprehensive redevelopment plan is not necessary to determine the need for the acquisition of the real estate at 725 Lake Avenue by the Community Development Authority of the City of Racine, the uses of the property after acquisition, and the relation of the acquisition to other property redevelopment by the Community Development Authority of the City of Racine.

Fiscal Note: N/A as the CDA will be acquiring the property and City funds will not be used for property acquisition or recording of necessary documents.

Attachments: [Staff Memo](#)
[Res. 0909-23](#)
[CDA Resolution 23-22](#)
[Racine Literacy Public Comment](#)

Jeff Hintz, Assistant Director, introduced the item and stated that this is a public

hearing for consideration of Resolution 23-22 for the potential acquisition of the property at 725 Lake Avenue for blight elimination and redevelopment notwithstanding that it is not in a redevelopment area. He stated that the public hearing will be to determine whether or not the property is blighted. Hintz showed recent photos of the property showing signs of deterioration and damage to the property. He stated the building closed in 2019 and that the property has not been used since that time. He explained that the potential acquisition would be to demolish the building and prepare the site for redevelopment. Hintz reviewed a timeline of the site. He stated that in August 2023, City staff fenced the property for a cost of \$26,517; in June 2023 a determination was made from the Racine Fire Department that any fire operations would be external only; 62 police calls were made service in the last year; and there have been 41 code enforcement or violations since 2018.

Hintz explained that, at its meeting tomorrow night (September 19th), the Common Council will consider a resolution that will find the following findings: that a comprehensive redevelopment plan is not necessary to determine the need for the acquisition of the real estate by the CDA; that a comprehensive redevelopment plan is not necessary to determine the need for the uses of the property after acquisition by the CDA; and that a comprehensive redevelopment plan is not necessary to determine the relation of the acquisition to other property redeveloped by the CDA. The CDA will then meet again on October 2nd to consider authorization to negotiate and potentially acquire the property.

He stated staff recommends that the CDA recommends to the Common Council that the property be acquired, notwithstanding that it is not in a redevelopment area and that the property be declared as blighted.

Shakoor, II asked if there were any plans for the property as people need to know what could potentially be placed at the site.

Adamski confirmed that the primary action was to determine whether or not the property is blighted.

Walter Williams, Executive Director, stated that the initial intention is to demolish the building to prevent a further nuisance. He stated at this time we are determining the best use for the building.

Adamski opened the public hearing at 6:08 p.m. and explained that each person will be given two minutes to speak.

Kathy Jones, 3231 Walden Way, spoke against the acquisition. She stated the city has done other projects like this and unless a developer is in mind, the cost to demolish the building will be intense. She suggested we go after a developer before we proceed, condemn, and tear down the building.

Lorna Revere, 310 Sixth Street, spoke against the proposal. She believes the money should be spent somewhere else. She stated we have worse types of nuisance on the streets downtown and no proposal should building anything else should come into fruition. She stated the money should be spent on better wages for police and getting more people. She explained that she was tired of the trash and that we were losing the battle with downtown. She stated we should quit chasing the dreams and need to take care of down town. Violence, speed racing, private parties around the lots need to stop. She stated the city is going down.

Melissa H. Warner, 333 Lake Avenue, stated she lives on Lake Avenue and it is devastating and [the building] is permitting vandalism. She state if we let broken windows go, more will happen. The condition is a crisis waiting to happen and does not want any of the kids in a crisis situation. She thinks the building has to come down and does not know the best way to do that, but it has to come down. She expressed if this is the group that will do it, then she is all for it.

Chrle Tennessen, 2407 Newman Road, explained he is making a film about the Lakefront YMCA and stated it would be the first one to be torn down. He stated 6,000 Racine residents gave money to build the facility and that it was for the kids, social welfare, and at risk youth for the City. He stated that something should be there for the community regardless of what happens; it was an investment in the community not matter what is decided he hopes it remains a benefit.

Van Carson, spoke. Stated is a firm believer that the YMCA has done great things and that the building obviously needs to be torn down as it is an eyesore and unhealthy. If it is torn down, something needs to be built for our children.

Laura Sumner Coon, Racine Literacy Council, spoke. She stated the Racine Literacy Council has 60 years of serving people of the community. She explained the issues in downtown are delicate and as direct neighbor has growing concerns about the property and knows the trouble the empty building has caused for the neighborhood. She explained that they are in support of the City to acquire and raze the nuisance. She explained the aggression, pervasive loitering, drunkenness, etc. and that the RLC has noticed broken windows in the YMCA and invested in security.

Rose Bogosian, spoke. She stated she is a resident and real estate broker and has residents scared to come out at night. She explained that the property is blighted and unsafe and supports the city's acquisition.

John Crimmings, spoke. He stated he is the broker in charge of selling the building. There is an accepted contract on the property and a developer that is willing to take the building down. He explained that the developer is trying to have a meeting with the City and, if they can, are ready to tear the building down.

James Hooper, 3109 Mt. Pleasant St. – RUSD, spoke. Stated it is clearly a blighted building. Cited experience knowing that RUSD tears down old schools and that is the only way to keep them safe.

Mary McIlivaine, spoke. Stated has seen the area goes through changes and supports the razing of the building. Think about what the buildings would look like if they were not torn down. She spoke about the neighborhood walk done with City departments and explained that she lives in an area saturated with vacant buildings and blighted blocks. She spoke about the disinvestment in the community and stated that we need to do something about unhoused or people who are loitering. She stated she totally supports the razing.

Ken Brown, spoke. He stated it is a real problem in a lot of ways and spoke about the hospitality center and second floor of the HALO. He stated let a private agency go first and leave the government out of it; please do not build subsidized housing or [a building] geared towards one group. He explained if we are going to run the city on property taxes, we should get the best dollars as we possibly can.

Wesley Falen, spoke. He lives across the street has seen the worst of it every morning

and every evening; it used to be one of the reasons that they moved there. He stated besides being a blight, it invites the worst of all situations - if you do not take care of properties (owners) the city has to, otherwise you start down the road of being "Gary" type of situation. He explained something needs to be done about it and it should be for the community as it was for the community. He explained the city will not grow if we continue to have eyesores like this, no one will want to invest.

Annette Harpol, spoke. Stated she used to attend the Y when it was the Y and to see what is happening now is disheartening. She does want to see it torn down, but does want to see the property used. She explained we should lean on the developer and not have the City and tax dollars go to the razing. City and developer need to come together and see how to make it an inviting place for all. She gave examples on the types of businesses that can employ and locate in the space. A place for all of us to enjoy.

Octavio Pabon, spoke. He stated he sees the potential in the building; something for the children and something that the community can use together. He suggested building up the city like Kenosha; Racine is like a ghost city, streets are empty. He stated he loves Racine.

Kathleen (last name ?) - 1728 N Main Street, spoke. Stated she drives past the Y all of the time. The city/tax payers should not have to take it down; it will cost \$3M to take it down. We have so many properties that the city already owns and we are not at a positive. She stated she sees places that are abandoned and demolished; be positive on current properties and let developers develop. We should not be responsible as tax payers to pay for knocking down buildings.

Steve Harrison, spoke and stated the broken windows have invited crime. Supports it being taken down and developed as market rate housing. Stated that spot has the best views of the lake than any of the condos downtown and supports the City having it taken down and selling to developer for market rate.

Kathy Jones spoke again and stated it was a tragedy is that the Y abandoned it and abandoned it the Y downtown.

Frankie Grant, spoke and stated if the Y gets torn down, will there be a Y somewhere. She stated when she came to Wisconsin the Y had many activities for people to participate. If there were places for those types would not have all of those problems. She stated the solution should have been taken care of it 50 years ago because it has been going down hill since then. She stated it was for everyone.

Additional discussion ensued among the speakers.

Adamski closed the public hearing.

Hardy asked what is the other offer that was mentioned during the public hearing.

Williams explained that it was a matter concerning real estate to be discussed during closed session.

Mason explained we are here to determine if the property is blighted and then asking the council tomorrow to allow us to move on the blighted property.

Brief discussion ensued.

A motion was made by Shakoor, seconded by Mason, to adopt CDA Resolution 23-22. The motion PASSED by a Voice Vote.

End of Public Hearings

[0910-23](#)

Subject: Consideration of Resolution 23-23 authorizing the acquisition of a vacant property owned by the City of Racine and located at 1633 West Blvd. by the Community Development Authority of the City of Racine (CDA) for blight elimination and redevelopment and that the CDA acquire such property notwithstanding that it is not in an existing redevelopment area.

Attachments: [Staff Memo](#)
[CDA Resolution 23-23](#)

Hintz explained the item. He stated this was discussed at a previous CDA meeting and this is where the Executive Director would be able to negotiate with the property owner to acquire the property. He reviewed the timeline of the item and stated that staff is recommending that the CDA Executive Director be able to act on behalf of the CDA to accept the transfer of the property.

A motion was made by West, seconded by Shakoor, II, to adopt CDA Resolution 23-23, approving the request. The motion PASSED by a Voice Vote.

[0911-23](#)

Subject: Consideration of Resolution 23-24 acknowledging applicants for the Neighborhood Tax Incremental District 23 (TID 23) Homeowner Repair and Property Enhancement Program.

Attachments: [Staff Memo](#)
[CDA Resolution 23-24](#)

Cathy Anderson, Manager of Economic Development and Housing, introduced the item. She stated we saw the first round of TIDS when 41 addresses were approved and since August, Staff has received an additional 52 applications. She stated that we are looking to receive applications to fund the projects. She explained that roofs, bathrooms, fascia, soffit, are the top items for funding..

Hintz explained the staff recommendations to allocate the funds.

Shakoor asked what is "sufficient funds" .

Hintz stated \$532,000 was received in the TID and next year should be the same. He stated that will fund the more than 90 applications.

A motion was made by West, seconded by Shakoor, II, to adopt CDA Resolution 23-24, approving the request. The motion PASSED by a Voice Vote.

[0912-23](#)

Subject: Consideration of Resolution 23-25 acknowledging applicants for the Neighborhood Tax Incremental District 22 (TID 22) Homeowner Repair and Property Enhancement Program.

Attachments: [Staff Memo](#)
 [CDA Resolution 23-25](#)

It was explained that TID No. 22 opened September 5th and has received 46 applications. Anderson stated this is Round one and likely at the October meeting we will see round 2. She stated kitchen remodels, roofs, and bathrooms are the top items.

Hintz stated that staff recommends adoption of the resolution and stated there is about 1.8 million in funds and is expected to the same next year.

A motion was made by Shakoor, II, seconded by Hardy, to adopt CDA Resolution 23-25, approving the request. The motion PASSED by a Voice Vote.

[0913-23](#)

Subject: Consideration and possible action on Resolution 23-26, a Determination of Necessity for Acquisition of Properties for the Lincoln-King Neighborhood Redevelopment Project.

Attachments: [Staff Memo](#)
 [CDA Resolution 23-26](#)

Hintz explained this item is for the Lincoln King Redevelopment Plan. He highlighted properties as we progress further within the redevelopment plan and stated it is the same as the resolution approved in June, however, includes additional addresses.

West asked if there have been homeowners who have rejected the offer.

Anderson stated we are not yet in a position to make an offer. She stated Terraventure has sat down and explained the process one-on-one, however, no one has made an offer at this time. She explained the process and that it would be approximately two months until we can talk numbers.

West asked how the value of homes was being determined.

Anderson stated that that is why we use Terraventure and the third party appraisal. Homeowner is able to get their own appraisal to see if they match.

Hardy asked if the cost of the appraisal came from homeowner.

Scott Letteney, City Attorney, stated if they want their own appraisal they would have to arrange it themselves.

In response to Hardy, City Attorney Letteney stated that the Resolution of Necessity authorizes the CDA to negotiate and that hope is negotiated sale of purchase.

A motion was made by West, seconded by Shakoor, II, to adopt CDA Resolution 23-26. The motion PASSED by a Voice Vote.

Adjournment

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 7:04 p.m.