MINUTES
City of Keizer
River Road Redevelopment Board
Keizer City Hall Library
Wednesday, August 30, 1995

1. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Smith at 7:03 p.m.

2. ROLL CALL

Chairman Smith advised that Board member Jeff Taylor moved to Boise Idaho to accept a position with the Boise State University Athletic Department. To fill the vacancy on R3B created by Mr. Taylor's departure, the Planning Commission appointed Manny Martinez as its representative. Mr. Smith welcomed Mr. Martinez as a member of R3B.

Mr. Smith noted that Tom Bauer has also submitted his resignation, creating a vacancy on the Board in the Mayor-appointed position.

The following members were present: Tim Smith, Stan Compton, Shannon Blake-Thiess, June Abbott, and Manny Martinez. Donald Porter arrived at 7:52 p.m. Mark Grenz arrived at 7:59 p.m.

Also present were: Community Development Director John Morgan, and Recording Secretary Nona Oxe'.

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

It was moved by Ms. Blake-Thiess that the minutes of July 26, 1995 be approved. The motion was seconded by Ms. Abbott and carried, all present voting aye.

4. APPEARANCE OF INTERESTED CITIZENS

Paul and Judy Whittenberg were present in the audience and indicated that they might wish to speak during the River Road Planning discussion.

5. PROJECT UPDATES

Development Activity

Mr. Morgan reported that Mr. Smith, Mr. Goesch from the Planning Commission, Mayor Koho, City Manager Tryk, and himself, about ten days ago met with Safeway representatives to discuss design issues for the Safeway project. Mr. Morgan acknowledged Safeway's willingness to meet with staff to discuss the project and come to some agreement even though they had no obligation to make changes to their design. Mr. Morgan noted that based on Safeway's design modifications, today staff signed off on the building permit. He acknowledged that the City did not get all that was hoped for, but staff was pleased with the concessions made.

Mr. Morgan displayed Safeway's site plan and pointed out the proposed building location, and where current structures that would be demolished. He described plans for a transit shelter, heavy landscaping, and additional architectural treatment to the building. Mr. Morgan noted that the significant parking lot landscaping would create a canopy over the entire lot. However, for visibility from River Road, Safeway declined to include trees on the front of the lot.

Mr. Morgan advised that it is likely that Shari's restaurant will take the corner pad. Because Safeway retains design review rights for the entire site and they wish to maintain a visual corridor to their store, they are requiring that the Shari's structure be placed away from the corner. Shari's will have parking on the corner, but have indicated that they will site the building and parking to provide enhanced landscaping at the corner.

Mr. Morgan confirmed that other businesses now on the property will be moved, but future locations are undetermined.

Mr. Morgan described concessions made by Safeway with regard to access and landscaping. He noted that the City may allow variances for signage because of the concessions they are making.

Mr. Morgan displayed a drawing of the facade of the proposed building. He pointed out the addition of an awning to break up the expanse of brick across the front of the building. He described other design detail that will enhance the appearance of the building.

Mr. Morgan advised that Safeway will probably exercise their option on the property tomorrow morning, and he anticipated a commitment from Shari's restaurant very soon.

Mr. Morgan reported on the planned Keizer Family Physicians relocation to the a site behind the U.S. Bank building north of Chemawa and River Road. He displayed elevation drawings and described how the building would be sited, and some of the proposed design detail. The owners hope to get building permits sometime in October.

Mr. Morgan confirmed newspaper reports that the Statts Lake project is moving quickly. Staff is also working with the developer on the frontage of Country Glen, the most northerly subdivision on the east side of River Road just past Hidden Creek.

River Road Redevelopment Project

Undergrounding Project

Mr. Morgan reported that PGE has begun work on Chemawa Road. Bids came in lower than the Engineer's estimate. An issue that will cause some cost concerns is Viacom's increased cost for conduit due to the addition of fiber optics for this project. Mr. Morgan confirmed that because Viacom is committed to using fiber optics, they would be using that technology regardless of the City's involvement. Staff will be negotiating the increased costs. The anticipated date for completion of Chemawa Road is January 1.

Mr. Morgan confirmed that all property owners and merchants in the affected area have been notified of the work to be done. He emphasized the excellent response to the work already done by Salem Electric on River Road.

In response to a question about the green light poles already installed on River Road, Mr. Morgan acknowledged that the light heads do not come in green. Although incorrect heads were installed, they will be replaced with ones that are also silver.

Banners

Ms. Blake-Thiess reported that the subcommittee is in the process of reviewing vendor material. They are currently waiting for additional material to be submitted.

Gateways

Mr. Morgan advised that City-owned property between the new Manzanita extension and the Gas Station on River Road might come into play in considering a location for a gateway. The Council has declared the land surplus property, making way for its sale. They service station owners have indicated an interest in buying the property, however, there has been some interest on the Council in retaining the property for City use. Mr. Morgan suggested that this might be an agenda item for discussion next month.

Mr. Morgan responded to questions about the size and location of the surplus site, and about its intended use when it was acquired by the City.

Sign Grants

Mr. Morgan reported that Council approved sign grants for Keizer Family Physicians, Shutterbug, Abby's, and Burger King. The request from Keizer Outdoor Power Equipment was tabled by Council for a month until there is indication of what will happen with the property.

Mr. Morgan pointed out the significant opposition to the sign code by Knecht's. He was unsure what problems would be incurred bringing them into compliance.

In response to a question about signs at the bowling alley, Mr. Morgan described which signs were noncomplying, and explained what allowances might be considered with respect to a variance in exchange for a landscaping plan to soften the appearance of the parking lot. He noted that Greer Brothers Landscaping is currently working on a landscaping design, and pointed out that this might be an appropriate case for a landscaping grant by way of the property improvement program.

Housing Rehabilitation

Mr. Morgan reported that staff will approve three more loans tomorrow, totaling eight approved. He noted that some projects are already well underway. It is anticipated that of the 154 applied for, 20 grants will be funded. For the benefit of the new member and members of the audience, Mr. Morgan briefly explained the program and the types of improvements that will be done. He noted that four of the five already approved are located west of River Road.

Mr. Morgan responded to questions about a specific deteriorated property, and code violations at the Triple Tree furniture store.

Added Item - Cherry Avenue

Chairman Smith expressed concern that with attentions diverted to River Road and Chemawa, Cherry Avenue seemed to have disappeared from the forefront of redevelopment planning. Considering all the hard work already expended by R3B in developing a plan for the area, he asked if Mr. Morgan could explain why Cherry Avenue redevelopment had been sidelined.

Mr. Morgan referred to the Community Development Major Project Schedule calendar distributed last month to R3B, the Planning Commission, and the City Council. He noted the high volume of work currently assigned to the Community Development Department, and explained that in prioritizing assignments, the Cherry Avenue project was considered to be the least time-critical, and thus was moved back to about January 1.

Mr. Smith asked if the Neighborhood Associations were aware of the shift in focus. Mr. Morgan felt that they probably were not. He noted, however, that they receive copies of all agendas and minutes.

Ms. Abbott pointed out the commitment made by the City to do the south end of town first, including a focus on Cherry Avenue. She expressed concern about jumping from one project to another.

Mr. Morgan confirmed that Cherry Avenue was just being delayed for about three months. He noted that he met last week with John Spencer, Dick Woelk and Bill Peterson to touch base on the status of the project. The engineering work is basically done. John Spencer is now focusing more on the economic development part of the project. Mr. Morgan stressed that it is not possible for the project to accelerate at this time due to the heavy workload and the lack of staffing resources.

Chemawa Activity Center Land Use and Transportation Plan

Mr. Morgan advised that the Plan was delivered today from the consultants. It will be going to the Planning Commission and City Council within the next three months. There appears to be a strong market for freeway-oriented development at the intersection, and significant industrial development north of that.

Mr. Morgan noted two implications of the Plan with regard to the renewal district: any development's competition with the River Road merchant community; and, the method for financing the infrastructure. With regard to financing the infrastructure, the consultant recommends a three pronged approach: formation of a local improvement district; lottery money through an Oregon economic development grant; and formation of an urban renewal district. Mr. Morgan explained how any financing approach would still have to fit within the $10 tax rate limit.

6. DISCUSSION

6.1 River Road Planning

Mr. Morgan encouraged all R3B members to attend a City Council workshop on Monday, September 11 at 5:30 p.m. He noted that the purpose of the workshop is to give Council its first major briefing on River Road planning, and to receive the final recommendations of the consultants.

Mr. Morgan pointed out two major aspects addressed by the River Road planning process. The first being what to do next with the River Road Urban Renewal District public investment. He explained the current stage of the planning process intended to create a cohesive theme in the River Road corridor. He noted that the big question is what should the renewal district be investing in the corridor for the next five years. He outlined several possibilities dealing with infrastructure, landscaping, property acquisition and building structures, all under the mission of creating a viable and vibrant community center.

Mr. Morgan noted that the second matter being addressed is that of writing an entire new zoning ordinance (development code). He stressed that in developing the proper zoning, the River Road corridor presents a greater challenge than other areas within the City. He noted that the Urban Renewal Plan, the Comprehensive Plan, and River Road Design Plan adopted in 1992 all call for the creation of design standards, themes, and focal points, etc. in the corridor, driven by zoning.

Mr. Morgan explained that to bring both aspects together, three consultants were retained to do planning work and come up with ideas. He emphasized that the work of the consultants is not to be adopted, but to provide recommendations to guide the City in choosing what to do. Mr. Morgan noted that he will be writing the River Road zoning based upon input from R3B, the Planning Commission, the Council and the community.

Mr. Morgan noted that the three consulting reports--the River Road Modal Opportunity Study, the River & Chemawa Specific Plan, and a Market and Development Overview in connection with the River & Chemawa Plan--involve three distinct arenas.

Mr. Morgan recalled that COG staff gave a presentation on the Modal Opportunity Study at last month's meeting. He reviewed their recommendations for two focal points within the River Road corridor: one at the Bi-Mart Center on the south end of town, and one at River & Chemawa on the north end. He noted that there has also been some interest from Council in pursuing something at Manbrin and Cherry and River Road.

Mr. Morgan reviewed how grant funds were applied for and received to do design work at the River & Chemawa intersection. The design consultant, SRI/Shapiro, was charged with developing a design concept for the intersection that would provide a basis for economically-exciting, viable development. Mr. Morgan explained how the consultants worked with staff and the community to come up with ideas for the concept.

(Mr. Porter arrived and took his seat at the table.)

Mr. Morgan noted that once a design concept was developed, Leland Consulting Group was retained to do a market analysis to see if such a project would work. Yesterday Mr. Morgan received their next to final draft. The final report will be released next week.

Mr. Morgan stressed that the underlying importance of the three studies relates to what can be gleaned to help write zoning standards.

Mr. Morgan summarized the Modal Opportunity Study recommendations and noted that R3B will be asked what they would like to see incorporated in the renewal plans. He acknowledged that some of the ideas are probably unrealistic, but noted that a major question is to what degree does the Renewal District want to get involved. He emphasized that at $1/thousand the money is not there to do all of the recommendations.

(Mr. Grenz arrived and took his seat at the table.)

Mr. Smith pointed out that many of the recommendations are things that R3B has been trying to get accomplished since it first formed.

Mr. Morgan proceeded on to review of the specific plan for the focal point at River & Chemawa. He noted that the design consultants are currently refining their concept based on the work of the marketing consultant.

Mr. Morgan summarized the preliminary findings of the market analysis. As was anticipated, the consultant found that each year millions of dollars go out of Keizer to other market areas. The indication is that there is opportunity for growth, local employment, and to capture Keizer dollars spent elsewhere. It was also felt that commercial redevelopment would attract dollars from areas outside of Keizer.

Mr. Morgan noted that a strong recommendation of the marketing report is a focus on professional office space. He pointed out the current low vacancy rate, and the report's suggestion that the addition of office space in town will provide employment opportunities and thus create shoppers. The report also indicates that the Specific Plan overemphasizes the market for retail. It suggests that the big market is for higher-density housing near the corridor to help drive the business opportunity.

Mr. Morgan relayed the marketing consultant's feeling that a jump start is critical to the project. The report suggests the creation of a focal point such as a plaza or extraordinary aesthetic treatments in a certain area, possibly going as far as the City being financially involved in putting a project together.

Ms. Blake-Thiess asked how this project would correlate with the project on the south end of town.

Mr. Morgan answered that the zoning will all happen at once. It is anticipated that the Council will adopt the new zoning in December which will guide design standards for the entire corridor. He felt that if public investment is involved, it might be determined and funded for FY 96-97.

Ms. Blake-Thiess emphasized her concern for the improvement of Cherry Avenue and the south focal point. Mr. Morgan explained that the detailed design work being done for River & Chemawa was made possible by way of grants. It was not possible to extend the grants to do the southern focal point and so no such work has been done specifically for the Bi-Mart focal point. He noted that a lot of the proposed improvements will be reflected in the Cherry Avenue design plan. He emphasized that the City's big investment at that end of town is probably the building of Iris Lane.

Mr. Smith restated Ms. Blake-Thiess' comments to clarify her concern that the renewal dollars should be going for improvements in the southerly part of town.

Ms. Blake-Thiess agreed, and pointed out the prior commitment to improve south Keizer. She did not wish to see the City "bite off more than it could chew," and end up with fragmented improvements.

Mr. Morgan suggested that the costs for Cherry Avenue might be more than anticipated. He felt the important issue was for Council to adopt and have in place the design standards, and planning and zoning requirements. He felt the decisions to fund the public work could wait.

Mr. Porter echoed Ms. Blake-Thiess' concern about abandoning Cherry Avenue. He also was concerned that Council might commit to an absolute long-term project that might exclude future development opportunities.

Mr. Morgan pointed out that the concepts for River Road and Chemawa are general and not specific. They are intended to help form design standards and policy guidelines. He explained how the guidelines will be used as the private market develops.

Discussion followed regarding what role the City might play in developing streets and other public improvements. Mr. Morgan reiterated that one recommendation from the marketing consultant will be for the City to get involved financially, particularly with respect to a jump start for the project.

Mr. Morgan noted that Council was briefed on these issues about ten days ago, with no apparent objections. Their concerns deal with the economic viability of the project, public support, and the degree of public investment.

Discussion followed regarding specifics of the proposed design concept. Mr. Martinez suggested that after-hours entertainment such as a theater should be encouraged. . Mr. Morgan responded to questions about traffic flow and potential higher-density housing. Mr. Porter felt that the work of the consultants provided a good basis for some of the things to happen in an on-going fashion. He felt that over time there would be alterations, but emphasized the importance of retaining the work of the consultants. Mr. Porter also felt some community investment would be necessary. Mr. Compton felt that with guidelines in place market-driven development would occur.

Mr. Smith responded to a question from Ms. Whittenberg about the Cherry Avenue improvements. He explained the plans to give Cherry Avenue a functional face lift, and through redevelopment integrate commercial with residential housing in the area. He pointed out that the goal of Keizer's Urban Renewal at the very beginning was to address the blighted areas in the south.

Mr. Morgan pointed out that Bill Wolf from the South East Keizer Neighborhood Association was recently appointed to the Planning Commission providing a voice for the southerly area of Keizer.

Mr. Whittenberg indicated his willingness to work with the City in developing his property. He is anxiously awaiting decisions regarding design standards and a development concept in order to make final decisions regarding his property's future development.

Mr. Morgan pointed out that staff has been talking to the Whittenbergs about what can happen on the corner using the existing buildings which may be there for another ten years. He pointed out the complexity of enhancing the site at this time and establishing a plan for the long term.

Mr. Morgan responded to a question from Mr. Martinez about the planned Keizer Heritage move of the Old School House. He acknowledged that the marketing consultants would like to see it put at one of the River Road/Chemawa corners. He noted, however, that it will be an asset to the City on the City Hall property.

7. ANNOUNCEMENTS AND AGENDA INPUT

Mr. Smith encouraged all Board members to attend the September 11 Council workshop.

Mr. Morgan noted that at the September R3B meeting the Board can anticipate specific decision making.

8. ADJOURN

There being no further business to come before the Board, the meeting was adjourned by Chairman Smith at 8:45 p.m.