



GOLDEN URBAN RENEWAL AUTHORITY

Memorandum

To: GURA Board of Commissioners
From: Mark Heller, Executive Director
Date: January 22, 2009
RE: January 26, 2009 Meeting Memo

This memo will assist in the discussion of the following agenda items:

V1. Financial: 4th Quarter/Year End Report

The preliminary financial statements provided in the packet are not audited. They do not include payment of a few 2008 obligations such as the \$55,000 budgeted for downtown City Services, and they estimate 4th Quarter figures for my salary. On the balance sheet, the negative balance in the primary operating account at year's end is merely a timing issue where checks were issued for 2008 expenditures but funds were not transferred into the account to cover the expenditures until 2009. Similarly, the expenditures for the parking garage are reported differently in different years do to the change in reporting format, yet all expenses are accounted for. Audited financials will not be ready for another several months.

V2. Human Resources: Inter vs. Entry Level Planner

GURA's current intern Steven Williams will be moving on to an internship with the City of Denver, which has a good track record of promoting interns to full time positions. This is an excellent career move for Steven and we wish him well. He will spend the next few weeks working on the business attraction package and facilitating the façade program.

GURA has had one or two interns on staff for almost four years, and their contributions (and affordability) have been essential to achieving GURA's ambitious programming over that period. GURA's budget for wages includes approximately \$30,000 for interns/planners, about 2/3 of which was allocated for the intern. Rather than hiring an entry level planner (which would likely generate the need to provide benefits), I plan on hiring two interns within the \$30,000 budget. Depending on the work load and the productivity of the interns, I could request a budget supplement later in the year.

V3. Communications: Annual Report Update

The second draft of the annual report is being finalized for printing.

V4(a). PV Downtown

At the prior meeting, the Board expressed interest in a program that would subsidize the installation of electricity-generating photovoltaic panels on an undetermined number of buildings. This agenda item will allow continued discussion on the economic feasibility of such a program, whether it is a program that would prevent or address blight, and whether and how much of the CoBiz loan proceeds might be committed to this program.

V4(b). Process for New Urban Renewal Projects and Other Downtown Organizations

During last meeting's discussion on the process of establishing a new urban renewal project at "Bowling Alley Point," several questions were raised for which I was to provide answers. "Bowling Alley Point" is the several blocks of commercial properties including the bowling alley, near the new traffic circle at 24th and Ford/Jackson. After speaking with GURA's counsel, my understanding is as follows:

1. Does each new urban renewal project require a new petition of twenty-five registered electors? No. Only the initial creation of an urban renewal authority requires the petition. Once the urban renewal authority is created, it can manage as many additional new projects as City Council might approve. The current downtown district is currently the only urban renewal project that Council has approved. It is always City Council that approves new blight studies and new urban renewal projects. As part of those approvals, City Council would direct or assign those projects to GURA.
2. Can GURA spend its funds beyond the current district boundary? Yes, with limitations. Although two recent amendments to the Urban Renewal Act permit spending beyond the boundary, such spending must be related to fulfilling the downtown urban renewal plan. For example, GURA could assist in Clear Creek stream bank modifications beyond the GURA district if improving those conditions would improve the conditions of Clear Creek as it flowed through the GURA district.
3. Can GURA spend its funds to commission a blight study for a part of the city beyond the current downtown district? Probably not, due to the constraint described above. Such a study would have to be paid directly by the City or paid by GURA and reimbursed by the City by prior agreement.
4. What would a blight study and urban renewal plan cost for the Bowling Alley Point area? Blight studies are conducted by less than a handful of planning consulting firms in the Denver Metro area. One firm estimates that a blight study and urban renewal plan for the Bowling Alley Point area could be accomplished for less than \$20,000.

While City Council has recently endorsed the concept of an urban renewal project for Bowling Alley Point, City Council has not authorized any expenditures for this effort. The idea of urban renewal in the area was first raised back in 1988-1989 when it was discussed but not included in the 1989 Downtown Urban Renewal Plan. Last summer, six property owners in the Bowling Alley Point area signed a request for more information on the mechanics of establishing urban renewal in the area and to know more about urban renewal generally. Since August, I have met with all but one of the commercial property owners in the area to provide the information they requested, and have found that a strong majority of them would welcome urban renewal and none would object.

As GURA and City Council further consider the possibility of urban renewal in this area, it should be known that one of the area's property owners, Henry Tiberi, is a long-time friend and has recently acted as my real estate broker in the purchase of my Golden home.

In previous meetings with Council regarding urban renewal at Bowling Alley Point, the discussion focused more on the general concepts rather than on the procedure of creating a new urban renewal project. Now that a preliminary round of outreach and property owner input has been completed, perhaps another meeting with Council is appropriate to discuss next steps in procedure, including whether Council wishes to commission a blight study and urban renewal plan for the area.

IV(c) Arch Design

This agenda item will allow discussion of the kinds of sidewalk design enhancements surrounding the 13th Street Arch. Design choices and materials can have a significant impact on the cost of the project.

VI(a) Golden Vision 2030

This agenda item will permit the discussion and the appointment of a GURA representative to the Local Advisory Committee of the Golden Vision 2030 effort. A memo on point by Theresa Worsham is included in the packet.

VIII. Staff Report

DBSI Bankruptcy

On Monday, January 19, I received two notices from the Delaware Bankruptcy Court requiring our response by 4pm Thursday, January 21 to DBSI's proposed cure of its outstanding balance for the Clear Creek Square Parking Garage maintenance costs. DBSI proposed a cure of \$600 whereas it owes slightly more than \$2,000. I directed GURA's attorney to file our request for the full amount owed, and have also instructed him to limit future work since the amount at issue could easily be matched by his attorney fees. It appears that DBSI is interested in selling the Clear Creek Square office building and associated parking condo units.

Cinema in Golden

Over the last several weeks, I have spoken with all three partners in the American Mountaineering Center about the concept of using the Foss Auditorium for Thursday-Sunday independent cinema. They endorse the concept and I will present the idea more formally after additional research. Next week, I am meeting with Howie Movshovitz, director of the Starz Film Center and Colorado Public Radio's film critic to further explore this concept.

URA Legislation

I have been actively communicating to the CO-APA Legislative Committee and to the Colorado Municipal League regarding the two bills introduced thus far that would adversely impact urban renewal.

X. Discussion of Potential Redevelopment of Lot 4

This will be discussed in Executive Session if necessary.