

**COLUMBIA CITY REDEVELOPMENT COMMISSION MINUTES
AUGUST 11, 2009**

The Columbia City Redevelopment Commission met in regular session with the following **members present**: President Commissioner Carl Siler
Vice President Commissioner Kevin Snell
Commissioner Ryan Pepler

Those absent: Secretary Commissioner Belinda Hawn
Commissioner Robin Arms

After reviewing the **minutes of the June 23, 2009 meeting**, Commissioner Pepler made a motion, which is seconded by Vice President Commissioner Snell, to approve as submitted. On call of the vote, all voted aye. Since the members present at the **July 14, 2009 meeting** are not present at this time, the minutes from that meeting have been tabled until the next regular scheduled meeting.

Ryan Daniels and Shae Young, Office of Community Rural Affairs (OCRA), are present to explain the **Indiana Main Street Program**. Through this program the Commission could apply for small grants concerning downtown enhancement, building site locator database, and/or receive technical assistance. They encouraged the Commission to become involved with the Program as they would receive additional points when applying for grants with OCRA. The stipulations on becoming an active member of this Program would be for one or more of the Commissioners to attend one training session per year, submit an annual report and learn about Indiana Main Street historic preservation. Mr. Daniels felt that Columbia City is a good candidate for this program as there are lots of mixed retail in the downtown area.

Mayor Jim Fleck questioned whether or not the Commission has heard anything from Indiana Housing and Community Affairs (IHCA), which President Commissioner Siler stated no, however, he stated that the property owners in the remaining block of Van Buren from the Eagles, are still interested in selling their property.

President Commissioner Siler reminded the Commission that previously they discussed creating a revolving loan program for the grant they received from IHCA, and use this along with TIF to purchase and develop the area downtown. Attorney Matt Shipman presented the Commission with a **rough draft of a revolving loan program**. Mayor Fleck questioned Mr. Daniels if the Commission could use OCRA funds for such a program. Mr. Daniels stated that they could use a small grant on a 50/50 basis, but not for a revolving loan program. Vice President Commissioner Snell stated in talking with Anne Mannix, she felt IHCA would go along with a revolving loan. Mayor Fleck informed the Commission of different locations they could be looking at for redevelopment within one block of the downtown area. Mr. Daniels informed the Commission **through OCRA they could apply for as much as a \$500,000.00 grant with a ten percent match, which they could use on facades, street lights, sidewalks**

and wayfinding signage. Ms. Young stated through the Indiana Main Street Program they could receive as much as \$10,000.00 in a grant as long as it is used for the enhancement of the downtown area. President Commissioner Siler stated that **IHCA has given them thirty days** to come up with some type of redevelopment, so a decision needs to be made quickly. Vice President Commissioner Snell likes the idea of assisting the Whitley County Consolidated Schools in developing their **technical school in the downtown area.** Mayor Fleck stated that Ivy Tech, Indiana Tech, Huntington University and IPFW all want to expand their services here in Columbia City and a tech school would provide the facility, but parking would need to be carefully considered when deciding on location. Attorney Matt Shipman informed the Commission they really need to decide today, if possible, what the grant will be used for, as they are running out of time. Ms. Young informed the Commission that normally on a revolving loan, if there isn't a zero percent interest, there won't be any participation. Besides, **the grant specifically addressed the use for housing and business.** So far, she hasn't heard anything that pertained to housing. Mayor Fleck reiterated to the Commission that with housing comes a big issue with parking. Currently the residents in the downtown area have no place to park. Vice President Commissioner Snell felt the Commission needs to maintain their integrity with the State and perhaps talk with Joe Paulus. Mayor Fleck said that is why Ms. Young is present today, to help direct the Commission on utilizing the funds. Mayor Fleck stated the Commission **might consider going through Passages, as they can receive larger grants which can be used for rehabilitation, housing and renovation.** Mr. Daniels said this is possible, but they would need a 10% match and hire a grant administrator. After further discussion, Mr. Daniels will be available tomorrow for a meeting if they can arrange it with Passages' Director, Tom O'Neill. Further discussion developed on this issue before the Commission adjourned.

These minutes are respectfully submitted by Martha Acres, Administrative Secretary.