

Arvada Urban Renewal Authority (AURA) Board Meeting, April 1, 2015

Notes taken by Nancy Young

Farewell, Gunther Toody's and Griffs

The City of Arvada opposes reform of Colorado Urban Renewal Law

Arvada assessments are skyrocketing

5:30 pm. The meeting was called to order. Commissioners present were - Jacobson, Piz-Wilson, Cline, Parker, and Williams. Commissioners Bolin and Delaria were excused by motion. Two citizens attended.

The minutes from the last meeting were approved as written.

Ms. Phair, Executive Director of Arvada Urban Renewal, provided the development update.

- AutoZone has begun constructing their new building. The line that needs to be replaced is really an underground channel, requiring substantial, deep digging.
- Walmart plans to close on the property in May. Most of the hazardous material abatement is asbestos. For the underground contamination, an abatement chemical will be injected into the ground, and the location will become a grassy area.
- The “streetscape” is being negotiated at three corners of the Arvada Plaza. US Bank is willing to provide AURA a right-of-way, at no cost, to create the streetscape at AURA’s cost, by the Bank building (Independence and Ralston Road). The Bank will maintain the streetscape in perpetuity. Negotiations have begun with KFC and the former Valero gas station. The streetscape will affect parking at the former Valero gas station (W. 57th and Independence).
- In the Arvada Square, Loftus has signed a 90-day letter of intent, and AURA has granted them exclusivity for the same period. Loftus has hired an engineer, who has received permission to drill holes to test for contamination. AURA Commissioners asked whether Loftus would consider a beer garden. Ms. Phair stated that Loftus will determine for itself what kind of retail outlets would be appropriate for this location.
- PPOT (the 5-story, rental apartment building on historic McIlvoy Park) will have a “topping off” ceremony on May 5. All AURA Commissioners are invited, as are all members of the City Council. The AURA Board meeting will begin at 6:00pm that day, in lieu of 5:30 pm.
- The Trammel Crow TOD (transit-oriented development) is progressing at a leisurely pace. They are still seeking a grocery store for the development. Land value appraisals are needed before AURA can acquire the land and move the current RTD parking lot to the north. This will pave the way for construction to begin on this project.
- Solana Olde Town, AURA’s largest current project (valued at \$83 million) is moving forward.
- The Hilton Hotel project held a second neighborhood meeting, with about 30 people attending. Four architectural renderings were presented, based on the community’s rejection of the initial rendering at the first community meeting. All four renderings were pre-approved by Hilton, as required. The rendering most liked by attendees was red stucco (giving the appearance of brick) with rounded structures at the base. A citizen also posted a request for voting at a neighborhood organization’s website. The winner was the same rendering as selected at the meeting. The developer was delighted that the least expensive option was preferred.

- The Hilton Hotel project was submitted to the City on March 16th, and AURA gave formal notice to the Vineyard Church to vacate on March 17th. The Church asked if they could temporarily occupy a portion of the former Safeway at the Arvada Square. The developer (apparently Loftus) denied this request.
- The former D-Note space has been leased by Mike Huggins, owner of the Arvada Tavern. The plans are to create a “German beer garden”, with German food and live entertainment. Ms. Phair noted that insiders are investing in Olde Town. She stated that Scott Spears (owner of Scrumptious) opened the new Schoolhouse Libations, and now the Arvada Tavern owner is also expanding in Olde Town.
- Griff’s burger bar is under contract with Larimer Square. No mention was made of what kind of development might occur at that location.

Commissioners made the following comments:

Commissioner Williams

- April 17 will be the third annual State of Arvada address, at the Arvada Center and sponsored by the Chamber of Commerce. Breakfast will be served at 7:30 am. All AURA Commissioners were encouraged to attend since AURA has contributed to most of the new developments in Arvada.
- “We” are working on a transaction for Gunther Toody’s. (Note: It was not clear if this transaction involved the City of Arvada or AURA).
- Commissioner Williams met with the new Executive Director of CDOT (Colorado Department of Transportation). Commissioner Williams emphasized the importance of the Jefferson Parkway at this meeting.
- The CML (Colorado Municipal League) met with the State House Speaker (Dickey Lee Hullinghorst, D. - District 10 - eastern and northeastern Boulder). It appears that the Speaker supports the “county bill” regarding urban renewal reform. CML anticipates “killing” this bill should it be reported out of the House to the Colorado Senate.
- Commissioner Williams is cautiously optimistic that the construction defects bill will be passed this legislative session.

Commissioner and Chair Jacobson:

- If there is no business for the workshop scheduled for April 15, perhaps it should be canceled. By motion, the Board cancelled the April 15 workshop.
- Staff Reports - from Ms. Phair
- BKB, the auditor from last year (and the same auditor used by the City of Arvada), has begun the audit process. They have submitted a letter outlining their plan, scope, and timing of the work.

Commissioner Williams:

- Rumors suggest that the Jefferson County Assessor anticipates that assessments in Arvada are skyrocketing, especially in NW Arvada. The first tax payment to AURA will probably be in April.

- An executive session is needed to assess four land transactions, provide instructions to negotiators, and to approve the minutes from the last executive session. NOTE: The four land transactions are probably Grandview Plaza (site of now Silvis, formerly Udis), Reno Place (AURA headquarters), Gunther Toody's, and unknown.

At about 6:00 pm, Commissioner Williams motioned to enter executive session. Motion approved unanimously. The purpose of the session was to discuss four properties and provide instructions to negotiators, and to approve executive session minutes.. The public session was therefore ended.