CITY OF CONCORD
SEARS BLOCK TAX INCREMENT FINANCE DISTRICT ADVISORY COMMITTEE
April 28, 2014 MINUTES

The Sears Block Tax Increment Finance District Advisory Committee (Committee) met on April 28, 2014, in the Second Floor Budget Room, City Hall, 41 Green Street, at 4:30 p.m.

Present at the meeting were Jason LaCombe, Sarah Chaffee, Rosemary Heard, and John Hoyt. Absent from the meeting were members Eric Reingold and Paula Harris. Director of Redevelopment, Downtown Services, and Special Projects Matt Walsh and Administrative Assistant Donna Muir were also present.

At 4:30 p.m., the meeting was called to order.

1. **Review and approval of the May 14, 2013, meeting minutes:** The Advisory Committee reviewed the minutes. A motion was made by Mr. Hoyt to approve the minutes as written and seconded by Ms. Heard. The minutes were approved unanimously.

2. **Discussion of potential use of Sears Block TIF District to purchase the Employment Security property, located at 32 South Main Street:** Mr. Walsh reviewed the City Administration's proposal to utilize the SBTIF to finance the purchase of the NH Employment Security Building, located at 32-34 South Main Street, as well as potential weatherization or demolition of the existing building.

   The Advisory Board had a detailed discussion of the advantages and disadvantages of potentially acquiring the property, as well as the proposed financing plan and long-term redevelopment goals of the property. The Board also discussed potential alternatives, which would allow the City to achieve its redevelopment goals while not taking ownership of the property. The Board also discussed the City Administration's proposed strategy to divest of the property within 5 years. In addition, the Board discussed the potential opportunity costs associated with this proposal vis-à-vis other potential development opportunities within the TIF District.

   Lastly, the board also discussed the advantages and disadvantages of weatherizing or demolishing the existing building, as well as potential interim uses of the property should the City acquire the site.

   Based upon those discussions, the Advisory Board respectfully offered the following recommendations to the City Council regarding this proposal:

   1. *Acquisition of NHES*: That the City Council appropriate $1.9 million in Sears Block TIF District supported bonds and notes to acquire the NH Employment Security site. The Advisory Board affirmed its belief that the long-term economic development benefits which could result from redevelopment site are good cause for the City to directly control the process to secure a private developer for the property. The

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Board also noted that the City has a good history of success with similar projects, such as Capital Commons, Horseshoe Pond, and the Penacook Family Physicians projects.

2. *NHES Weatherization / Demolition Options*: The Advisory Board chose to make no recommendation at the present time about potential weatherization or demolition of the existing building, but wished to revisit this issue if and when an acquisition is completed.

3. *Underground Utilities*: Lastly, the Board reaffirmed its previous recommendation that the City Council move forward with installation of underground utilities on South Main Street between the Concord Food Co-Op and Thompson Street as part of the forthcoming Complete Streets Project. Installation of these utilities would be financed by the Sears Block TIF District.

   The Advisory Board stated that installation of underground utilities will be important in making the NHES site attractive to potential developers; especially if it is the City's goal to secure a redevelopment project of similar caliber as others recently completed on South Main Street.

   Further, the Advisory Board reiterated its concern that should the City forgo installation of underground utilities now, but need to undertake installation sometime in the future to support redevelopment, this would result in significant additional costs due to the need to remove and replace large sections of the newly constructed portions of South Main Street, including new sidewalks and streetscape improvements.

3. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 5:35 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Matthew R. Walsh
Director of Redevelopment, Downtown Services
and Special Projects

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