

CITY OF BATAVIA – SPECIAL CONFERENCE MINUTES MONDAY, MAY 9, 2016

Present were Council President Jankowski and Councilpersons Canale, Christian, Viele, Briggs, Pacino, McGinnis, and Tabelski.

Call to Order

Council President Jankowski called the meeting to order at 7:55 PM following the business meeting.

Vibrant Batavia Discussion

Mr. Molino noted that Vibrant Batavia (VB) was a City committee that Council created through resolution and it was Council's choice to fund it or not. As an alternative source of funding for the \$15,000 from the 2015 resolution, Mr. Molino noted that it was discussed to transfer a foreclosed home to NeighborWorks who could revitalize and sell it. He noted that, because of legal issues, that couldn't happen so the City would sell the house and put the proceeds towards VB. He noted that the Community Improvement Plan identified a five year investment into neighborhoods with the point being to gather streets to gain a bond. He noted that the proposal in front of them was a 2-year plan to finish out the five years. Mr. Molino explained that a tangible impact planned for the next year was to implement architectural renderings and offer low cost suggestions to add value to homes in the Summit and roundabout area. He noted that it would show investment in their homes and would help with resale value. He noted they would also have landlord and homeowner workshops to teach them how to build strength in the housing market and would use best practices from NeighborWorks. Regarding the slide, Mr. Molino explained that the City tasked a volunteer committee to replace a slide that was the City's responsibility and the replacement was held up because of other things that were being worked on in the park. He noted that the proposal was about finishing the 5-year plan.

Councilperson Briggs noted that she was getting the biggest complaints about property maintenance and Mr. Molino noted that the workshops were thorough and would cover a variety of topics. Councilperson Christian asked if VB raised the \$15,000. Mr. Molino noted they didn't need to *raise* it they just needed to get it from an alternate funding source which was going to be the sale of 109 Walnut St which was complete so they met and exceeded it. Council President Jankowski compared it to a Habitat house where NeighborWorks would turn a blighted house into something nice. Councilperson Christian noted that she was not in favor of using that money for VB. Councilperson Canale stated that he could appreciate how a lot of Council felt but asked them to consider that most ventures start with an initial plan that you try to follow, there are successes and failures, and then the failures are looked at to see where you can reorganize your plan to be more effective. He felt that was what Council was doing with VB – looking at the short comings, reorganizing and moving forward. He felt VB refocused their energy by moving from general ideas and direction to more specifics, they've just begun, and are redefining their

direction. He felt it would be unfair to cut them off, there was still a lot of work to be done and they needed an opportunity to do that. Councilperson Canale stated that they would be cheating the residents of the City of Batavia if they cut funding right now. He understood the financial concerns and other things that needed to be improved but felt if we didn't have the people to live in the neighborhoods to appreciate the great sidewalks then we don't have much. He felt VB needed to be given a chance and felt, with such a great group of volunteers VB had, it would be a slap in their face if we cut them. Councilperson Christian felt that the main person who did all of the neighborhood work was Chief Heubusch and felt him and the police deserved the credit. Councilperson Viele asked how many houses were auctioned. Mr. Molino noted it was a one-time deal and not necessarily a viable option long term. He noted that we usually get six or so per year. Mr. Molino stated that community development was the responsibility of the City and the committee Council created to carry out that responsibility.

On roll call to determine if VB funding would move to the business agenda, the vote failed to move the item to the next meeting by a vote of 5-4. Councilpersons Tabelski, Hawley, Pacino and Canale were in favor of moving it to the next meeting.

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Special Conference Meeting adjourned at 8:30 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

**Heidi J. Parker
Clerk-Treasurer**

05/09/2016