




**BATAVIA CITY COUNCIL
SPECIAL CONFERENCE MEETING**

**City Hall - Council Board Room
One Batavia City Centre
Monday, May 9, 2016
Before the Business Meeting**

AGENDA

- I. Call to Order**
- II. Vibrant Batavia Discussion**
- III. Adjournment**



To: Honorable City Council
From: Jason Molino, City Manager 
Date: May 5, 2016
Subject: Vibrant Batavia Proposal review

At the April 25th Council meeting, several Council members requested additional information to clarify the Vibrant Batavia Committee's efforts to address the 2015 resolution that outlined funding. To best address these questions, below is a review of how each condition outlined in the resolution was addressed.

- 1. \$45,000 be committed for fiscal year 2015-2016 and \$25,000 be committed for fiscal year 2016-17;**

The 2015-16 funding was utilized last fiscal year and the 2016-17 is available for the current fiscal year.

- 2. Vibrant Batavia develop a plan to be presented to City Council during the 2016-2017 fiscal year that will outline a multi-year funding approach, that demonstrates Vibrant Batavia's sustainability and deliverables in future years.**

The April 21st memo from the City Manager outlined the Vibrant Batavia Committee's proposal which provides a multi-year approach identifying both sources of funding and uses. Most specifically, the multi-year plan outlines the completion of the original 5-year investment from the Community Improvement Plan providing for targeted and city-wide investments in City neighborhoods. The plan also identifies a program objective of developing performance measurements to assist in measuring the impact of the proposed programming in future years.

- 3. The multi-year plan should include financial commitments from community partners, institutions or alternative funding sources such as, but not limited to, grants, foundation support, etc. and articulate a steady or decreased City financial commitment during the multi-year plan period.**

The proposed multi-year plan identifies several fund sources and financial commitments to complete the two year proposal including the already committed funding for the year by City Council,

outlined in the proposal, other funding sources such as grants would still be considered and pursued if the grant program parameters fit within Vibrant Batavia's initiatives. However, to rely on grant funds without prior notification of receipt is not good practice.

4. Vibrant Batavia is to secure a minimum financial goal of \$15,000 from alternative funding sources other than the City for the fiscal year 2016-2017.

Use of the \$33,000 of auctioned funds is the alternative funding source. At the onset of planning for this proposal, the property was originally identified as a potential rehab-house to be transferred to the NeighborWorks Rochester for redevelopment and sale to an owner-occupant. In exchange the City would receive the Community Organizer support services from NeighborWorks. Unfortunately this transaction was not possible due to some legal hurdles that were identified during the research process. Instead the recommendation was to use the proceeds from the auction to still support the Vibrant Batavia efforts.

5. The City Council reserves the right to revoke the 2016-2017 funding if the alternative funding source goal cannot be demonstrated.

The City Council can still revoke the funding committed for the 2016-17 fiscal year.

The City Council also committed \$5,000 from the 2014-15 Vibrant Batavia budget towards a new playground slide for Austin Park. It was requested that the Vibrant Batavia Committee raise the remaining funds to cover the cost of replacing the slide. The committee raised \$1,121 in funds towards a new slide. However, it should be noted that due to the extent of the vandalism in Austin Park City staff has recommended not replacing the slide until improved lighting and tree removal is completed to improve street visibility.

Recommendation

Despite whether individual City Council members agree or disagree with the notion that the conditions outlined in the 2015 resolution were met, the Vibrant Batavia Committee, which originated from the City's Community Improvement Plan, is an established City committee, created by resolution by the City Council. As such, the direction and funding support for the Committee's initiatives comes from the City Council.

The Vibrant Batavia Committee, at the request of the City Council, put together a multi-year plan, outlining deliverables for future years and identified funding sources to complete the proposed plan. This includes the hiring of a new Community Organizer and partnership with NeighborWorks to execute the identified objectives.

Because the multi-year plan includes initiatives that require neighborhood engagement of the Community Organizer it is recommended that the two year proposal be approved by City Council, as anything less would prove difficult in hiring a committed Community Organizer.



To: Honorable City Council

From: Jason Molino, City Manager 

Date: April 21, 2016

Subject: Vibrant Batavia proposal

Background

The Vibrant Batavia initiative sprouted from recommendations made from the City's Community Improvement Plan ("Plan") in 2012. The Plan outlined a series of recommendations to support neighborhood-based activities and to collaborate with a new resident/community organizer regarding volunteer efforts. These activities were to target re-energizing the sense of pride that defined Batavia for so many years, yet which has, to a certain extent, become dormant. The planning of the activities and their execution were to act as a stepping stone to move Batavia past this stalemate. While the recommendations were to be viewed as an outline not as a script, the onus was on promoting the civic heart of Batavia. In doing so, we would, as a community, emerge as a fuller understanding of Batavia's history, its assets, and its potential to be a great small city. There would be an improved sense of cooperation and more participation in the civic process, especially in government, schools, and community groups. And, over time, there would be a new ability to achieve the goals of positive change that will serve the city well.

The greatest costs of the initiative would be the time and effort by a vast number of residents and business leaders. **But there was to be no doubt: this effort would not be accomplished only through volunteers.** Institutions, government, and businesses need to be actively involved and willing to participate financially. There must be a defined position, funded for both the staff costs and the program costs. And those costs must receive a commitment for several years. The estimated staff costs for these efforts were \$42,000 per year, for no less than a five year commitment from the City. In addition, more than \$50,000 a year would be needed to carry out the various initiatives generated through these efforts and through the volunteer activities. The total investment over a five year period was estimated at just over \$460,000, with a five year commitment from the City of just over \$252,000 and the remainder from the community.

At the completion of the Plan, City Council immediately authorized the creation of the Vibrant Batavia Task Force, comprised of volunteer residents and business owners, charged with reviewing the plan and making final recommendations to City Council as to what activities should be initiated within the community. Within the next year, the Task Force presented to City Council a review of their findings which identified four specific categories to focus on over the next three years: economic development,

marketing, neighborhood spirit and neighborhood restoration. In March 2013, the City Council appropriated \$45,000 to support the first year's recommendations and monitor the success of the program prior to making another two year commitment. Also, as part of that commitment the Task Force was to support a fundraising/sponsorship goal of \$22,000 for the first year. The City Council then formally created the Vibrant Batavia Committee by resolution to furthering the Plan's initiatives supporting economic development, marketing, neighborhood spirit and neighborhood restoration throughout the City of Batavia. As recognized, the requested funding and commitment the City and community were reduced to a part-time position and budget of about half of what was recommended in the Plan.

Accomplishments

The City Council has since funded two additional years, with a fourth year commitment contingent upon a multi-year plan and objectives. Over the three years of support significant accomplishments were made with respect to achieving the originally established intentions. For example:

- Bringing members from across a wide cross section of our community and organizations together – over hundreds of volunteers and thousands of volunteer hours
- Logo and tagline completed.
- Partnered with NeighborWorks Rochester and hired a community organizer to coordinate community outreach initiatives.
- Participated National Night Out.
- Sold “Shop Around” Batavia Decks as fund raising initiative.
- 5 Coffee Talks with over 50 residents attending.
- Neighborhood activities: Earth Day Celebration, Day of Caring – Holland Ave. area, Pearl St. Ext./Round About flower planting, Mulch project on South Spruce, Hutchins St. clean up, Farrell Park Ice Cream Social, Lewis St. Ice Cream Social, Morton Ave. Block Party, Summer in the City – Chalk Art Festival/Kids Zone, Pringle Park beautification project, Stiletto & Sneaker Walk, Art on Fire – Fire Hydrant Painting, Hutchins Street ice cream social & pumpkin painting party
- Centennial Celebration: Opening Ceremony, News Year Celebration/Fire Works, 100th Celebration time capsule, 100 Tree Planting, Legacy Gift - Centennial Sundial, Historical Walking Trail, Centennial Street Banners, Picnic in the Park – July 4th Party, Closing Ceremony/Human 100 Photo
- Participated in Christmas parade
- Assisted Summit Street residents to mobilize: Designing street toppers & welcoming packets for new residents
- City-wide bike rack project
- Community-wide yard sale
- “Light up the Park” fundraiser to help revitalize Austin Park
- Published multiple editions of Vibrant Times telling the City's success stories

Vibrant Batavia leveraged over \$50,000 to support editions of the Vibrant Times publication and “Shop Around” decks.

Lastly, the Centennial Committee, which was established and supported by Vibrant Batavia raised over \$135,000 of business and resident sponsorships to support the 2015 year-long Centennial Celebration.

Budget

For fiscal years 2013/14, 2014/15 and 2015/16 the City committed \$125,000 for Vibrant Batavia activities. In each year, the committee diligently managed expenses to ensure greatest impact was received within a frugal budget. As result each year the committee did not expend the maximum budget, and total expenditures for the past three years equals just over \$101,000, thus leaving a cumulative balance of \$24,000 that currently remains in the City's Committed Fund Balance.

In addition, last year the City Council committed \$25,000 for Vibrant Batavia activities for fiscal year 2016/17 contingent upon, developing a plan that would outline a multi-year funding approach, that demonstrates Vibrant Batavia's sustainability and deliverables in future years and Vibrant Batavia was to secure a minimum financial goal of \$15,000 from alternative funding sources for the fiscal year 2016-2017.

In total Committed Fund Balance has a remaining balance of \$49,000 committed to Vibrant Batavia initiatives.

Proposed Multi-Year Plan

As discussed in the March presentation to City Council, Vibrant Batavia has continued to focus on neighborhood initiatives that demonstrate positive impact to the property values in neighborhoods in the City. Proposed for the 2016/17 and 2017/18 are Targeted Investments geared towards specific neighborhoods to leverage resident investment and buy-in and City-Wide Investments which build off of resident interest to continue civic engagement momentum.

Targeted investments include the kick off of a "Healthy Blocks" initiatives focusing on curb appeal to improve market value of properties. This initiative would utilize professional architectural services to complete curb side rendering for low cost improvements and provide some matching grants on first come, first serve basis for implementing suggestions.

City-wide investments include continuing the momentum of resident engagement, and include "Coffee Talks" in neighborhood parks, continue telling the positive stories of the community, City-wide yard sale and create a "Home Value" series of workshops providing guidance for landlord and homeowner best practices, flood mitigation and insurance and funding and exemption opportunities.

Also, each year resident confidence surveys will be distributed in the targeted investment areas to establish a base line measurement to gather impressions about the neighborhood with respect to satisfaction, involvement, safety, and outlook. In addition we will utilize current market trends as a measurement of success over time to the targeted investment areas.

Below is a plan for the next two years which would complete the five-year investment outlined in the City's Community Improvement Plan.

2016/17 – Year 4 – \$48,500

Targeted Investment - Healthy Blocks

- Summit Street & Round About area – Total 135 homes – 135 curb side sketches and analysis
- Open house with architect to review best practices and guidance on home improvements
- 20 homes for matching grant

City-wide Investment

- Hire community organizer
- Coffee Talks in neighborhood parks
- Publication of positive stories in community
- Support City-wide yard sale
- Support neighborhood groups and initiatives
- Landlord and homeowner workshop/series regarding best practices, funding/exemptions and flood management/insurance – series to be recorded and replayed on PEG channel
- Administer resident confidence survey in targeted areas
- Monitor housing market trends in investment areas

2017/18 – Year 5 – \$48,500

Targeted Investment - Healthy Blocks

- Two or Three additional streets; at least one street in a low-moderate income census tract – Total 120 homes – 120 curb side sketches and analysis
- Open house with architect to review best practices and guidance on home improvements
- 20 homes for matching grant

City-wide Investment

- Coffee Talks in neighborhood parks
- Publication of positive stories in community
- Support City-wide yard sale
- Support neighborhood groups and initiatives
- Landlord and homeowner workshop/series regarding best practices, funding/exemptions and flood management/insurance – series to be recorded and replayed on PEG channel
- Administer resident confidence survey in targeted areas
- Monitor housing market trends in investment areas

Sources of Funds

The sources of funds recommended for the two-year proposal includes the following;

- ✓ \$25,000 – committed by Council for the current fiscal year
- ✓ \$24,000 – remaining from prior year appropriations
- ✓ \$33,000 – received from the auction of 109 Walnut Street
- ✓ \$15,000 – CDBG funds to support Healthy Blocks initiatives in low-moderate income areas

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In total the \$97,000 needed to support the final two years of the Vibrant Batavia initiatives include existing fund balance that has already been committed for Vibrant Batavia activities, the sale of surplus property and program income the City has acquired from prior CDBG housing rehabilitation grants.

To administer the final two years of the Vibrant Batavia initiatives it is recommended that the City enter into agreement for services with NeighborWorks Rochester. This would include the employment of a community organizer and identification of the above mentioned services and expectations to be performed. It is recommended that the City Council execute said agreement for services at the May 9th City Council meeting.

In conclusion, the Community Improvement Plan recommended a five-year investment of just over \$460,000, with a five-year commitment from the City of \$252,000. This investment is about re-energizing the community and positioning City neighborhoods and housing market to emerge from a dormant and, at times, declining state. If the proposed final two years of the project are completed the City will have committed a total of \$198,000 over five years, which is less than the City contribution recommended in the Community Improvement Plan. By completing the final two years of the Vibrant Batavia initiative the City will ensure its investment from the prior three years has an opportunity to grow and succeed as originally planned.