

BOARD MINUTES
Monday, February 8, 2021 5:30 p.m.

The FHRA Board met in public session at 9001 E. 59th Street, Lawrence Government Center Public Assembly Room, Lawrence, IN at 5:30 p.m. Meeting was called to order by Mr. Jeff Vest. A quorum was met.

Members present in person: Jeff Vest, Karen Horth-Powers, Jason Fenwick, Russell Brown, and Lacy Johnson present by phone

Staff Present: Aletha Dunston, Heather Millikan

New Business:

First item of new business was adoption of December 14, 2020 and January 4, 2021 board meeting minutes. Mr. Brown made a motion to approve the December and January meeting minutes and Ms. Horth Powers seconded the motion. A board member roll call was taken for the vote and it was unanimous to approve the minutes.

Next item on the agenda was Resolution 2021-01. The resolution is for the execution and performance of a project agreement regarding the conveyance of land to Fort Harrison Partners, LLC for the development of a single-story mixed use building with drive thru capability, an office headquarters building with two stories and approximately 16,000 square feet and certain adjacent parking areas and related infrastructure improvements subject to necessary changes by board officers and executive director.

Mr. Brown stated he wanted to open the discussion and stated he has been on the FHRA board for nine years and for the first time in the nine years that he anticipates a non-unanimous vote for a resolution. He stated he cannot support the resolution or the project agreement that it is approving. He stated as a resident of Lawrence one of the reasons he has invested a lot of time and energy in the Fort is the mixed-use Village plan that was adopted in 2007. Mr. Brown said he believes the approval of the resolution and the contemplated improvements that would result in the approval are contrary to that plan. Specifically, he is concerned about the development of one of the most visible corners in Lawrence Village that would be developed as a single-story drive thru structure. He stated he is also concerned that the FHRA are incentivizing a development related specifically to that single story use and could be conducted with a market rate development that the FHRA would not have to incentivize.

Mr. Brown stated he wanted to make sure his vote is not construed as opposition to the contemplated office building and attraction of another tech company to the Fort Ben campus as that is exactly the work the FHRA has been doing for the last nine years he has been on the board. He feels it is a great use and great end user. To that extent the project agreement does contemplate a master lease being approved by the common council which was his appointing authority, and he will advocate for the council to approve the master lease. He stated he will give credit to the Mayor and the common council where credit is due as they have done a good job of trying to make Lawrence unique from surrounding communities. He stated it is unfortunate that one of Lawrence's most prominent corners is going to be developed with a development that looks like every other community in central Indiana and it is an unfortunate missed opportunity. Mr. Brown stated it is for that reason he will be voting in opposition of the resolution.

Ms. Horth Powers stated she is questioning why the FHRA is selling a lot to a third party when it could be sold out right and potentially will be an end user the FHRA has rejected in the past. Ms. Horth Powers also stated she questions why the FHRA is not taking those monies into the FHRA coffers instead of allowing a third party to benefit from the transaction. She stated the master lease is a great opportunity to encourage the two-story building for the tech company to develop here but the master lease must be approved by the Lawrence council and she would support that but it is not the FHRA's responsibility so the developer will have to manage the process.

Ms. Horth Powers also stated the requested north south road in this proposed agreement is the responsibility of a discussion between the proposed library and what the developer is proposing. Ms. Horth Powers said the FHRA is supporting a building with a minimum of two-stories on this parcel. She would like all of this noted on the record.

Mr. Fenwick stated he appreciates the board members comments and concerns they have expressed. He stated he is excited about the project on the corner at 56th and Lee. The proposed drive thru and retail space would be a Starbucks. The tech company would bring about 85 new high paying jobs in the \$80,000 and above salary range. The Starbucks would likely bring about 750 new visitors and additional foot traffic a day to the Fort area and for those reasons he is in support of the resolution.

Mr. Johnson stated his reasons are the added jobs and increased traffic into the community and his support of his appointing authority which is the Mayor of Lawrence. He stated for these reasons he whole heartedly supports the project set forth.

Mr. Vest called for a motion to approve Resolution of 2021-01. Mr. Fenwick made a motion and Mr. Johnson seconded the motion. A roll call was taken for each board member. Ms. Horth Powers voted no, Mr. Fenwick voted yes, Mr. Brown voted no, Mr. Johnson voted yes, Mr. Vest voted yes. The resolution was approved.

There was no treasurer report currently from Mr. Fenwick.

As Mr. Brown had to leave the meeting, Mr. Vest thanked him for his support and passion for the area. Mr. Vest stated he does not think a board should always be 100% in agreement, but Mr. Brown's vast knowledge and contribution is appreciated.

Update from Executive Director:

Ms. Dunston stated that there is a lot going on at the Fort. She stated pending closing on 4 lots at David Weekley Homes phase 4 there will only be 24 available lots left and is ahead of schedule. The apartments going up at Otis and Lawrence Village Parkway are now named The Otis at Fort Ben and signage should be going up shortly. She explained the change in the name is due to copyright concerns with another development out of state. The FHRA signed the development agreement with the Indianapolis Public Library and it will bring a new 25,000 square foot new branch to the Fort at Melnor and Otis and 56th Street. It will take a regular amount of time to build but a little longer to open due to it needing a new collection and staff. Construction should be done by end of 2022 but opening in early 2023.

The PX building at 5745 Lawton Loop East Drive is the last building the FHRA owns that was inherited from the military. The FHRA put out a Call for Offers and received five good proposals. She said they will be moving on to the interview stage and it will be a few months to negotiate and get it finalized but the FHRA are excited to have someone bring new life to the building.

Ms. Dunston wanted to thank the City of Lawrence's marketing team for helping put together a top-notch video to get the word out about the building.

The FHRA kicked off the design meeting for Civic Plaza project. Ms. Dunston said we will be making some permanent improvements to Civic Plaza using some FHRA funds and other DNR Land Water Conservation Funds the FHRA was awarded.

News at the Fort:

- State of the City Address – The Garrison – March 4th 7:30-9:00am – register with the Greater Lawrence Chamber
- Mark your calendars: Fort Ben Cultural Campus ribbon-cutting event planned for May 22nd
- Unless an exception is made, all board meetings will be held the 3rd Mondays at 5:30pm in the Public Assembly Room of the Lawrence Government Center at 9001 E. 59th Street.

- Please follow **@FortBenIN** on Facebook and **@FortBen_IN** on Twitter – and invite your friends!

Mr. Mark McDermott a resident of Fort Ben stated he sent a letter to the FHRA and the City of Lawrence and would like an update on steps being taken to clean up the property along Birtz and Rising Road. Mr. Vest stated that Mayor Collier sent a letter to the owner of the property, Mr. Burns dated February 4, 2021 stating that Mr. Burns has 30 days to correct the code violations or he will be fined. Mayor Collier is concerned about the issue and it will be handled by the Department of Public Works.

Mr. McDermott asked if anything could be done permanently to revitalize the area. Ms. Dunston stated right now the FHRA are tackling the first matter with the city in getting the area cleaned up. Mr. McDermott stated many of the violations are technically in the city right of way. Ms. Dunston stated the goal is to potentially have it abandoned to become private property.


Mr. McDermott asked about the potential for a grocery store coming to the area. Ms. Dunston stated at least once a year the FHRA goes thru a list of existing grocery stores in central Indiana and the Midwest and contacts them. Unfortunately, right now the Fort does not have the head count to attract a grocery since there are some within a few miles of the area. She stated the FHRA hopes to potentially attract a specialty market at some point.

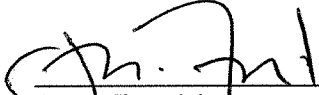
Mr. Vest mentioned that Ms. Dunston has been nominated for one of Indiana's Best and Brightest by Indiana Junior Achievement.

The next public meeting will be at the Lawrence Government Center Public Assembly Room on March 15, 2021 at 5:30 p.m. Masks are required to attend.

Adjournment:

There were no further questions from the public and Mr. Vest adjourned the meeting.



Jeff Vest
President

Jason Fenwick
Secretary-Treasurer