

**MINUTES OF A SPECIAL MEETING OF THE  
MICHIGAN CITY REDEVELOPMENT COMMISSION  
JUNE 28, 2007**

The Michigan City Redevelopment Commission met in a special meeting in the Planning Department Conference Room, City Hall Building, 100 East Michigan Boulevard, Michigan City, Indiana, on Thursday, June 28, 2007, at 4:00 p.m. local time; the date, hour, and place duly established for the holding of said meeting.

**CALL TO ORDER**

Chairman Ken Behrendt called the special meeting to order at 4:00 p.m.

**ROLL CALL**

Upon roll call, the following members were noted present: Ken Behrendt, Ed Bigda, Marc Espar, and Joie Winski. Richard Richey was absent. (4 present, 1 absent) Staff in attendance: Executive Director John Pugh, Attorney Michael Bergerson, and Secretary Debbie Wilson. Public in attendance: Basil Souder, Lohan Anderson; Joel V. Stauber, Lohan Anderson; Jason Greenbaum, Harlem Irving; Dan Radtke; Eve Noonan; Ed Noonan; Mark Pastoret; Jason Mergl.

Chairman Behrendt stated that this is a kick-off meeting for the Re-use Plan by Lohan Anderson.

**PRESENTATION BY LOHAN ANDERSON – RE-USE PLAN**

Representatives of Lohan Anderson introduced themselves – Basil Souder, Principal and Joel V. Stauber, Director of Planning. Mr. Souder stated that Lohan Anderson is a firm of approximately 45 people. They are architects, interior designers, and planners. They have been in business as Lohan Anderson for approximately 4 years and are located in Chicago. Previously the firm had a number of different names and grew out of the office and practice of Mies van der Rohe in Chicago. Dirk Lohan is the grandson of Mies van der Rohe. Mr. Souder has been with the office since 1982. He is a registered architect and principal in the firm. He has worked on a number of waterfront planning projects including parts of City Front Center, Kingsbury Park, and the redevelopment of North Burnham Park (reconfiguration of Soldier Field) – all in Chicago. Mr. Souder will be the project principal on this project, working with Joel Stauber as the Planner.

Mr. Stauber stated he is the Director of Planning at Lohan Anderson. His background includes planning projects, master planning, waterfront projects, and urban design.

The introduction was followed by a power point presentation showing examples of waterfront projects they have done. The first example was a project in Chicago of which they designed an entire water edge for half a mile along the Chicago River. This project was a 40 acre site – Michigan City’s redevelopment area is approximately 50 acres. Also shown was a five acre park called the Chicago River Esplanade which was redeveloped from an old industrial site. This is a public place used for television (ER, While You Were Sleeping) and for advertising, as well as being a respite in the city. They were also involved with the design of Centennial Fountain water arch on this site. They showed the residential development along the Esplanade – 3 and 4 story townhouses which are part of larger dual tower condominiums. He noted the grade separation between the public area and the more private front yards and pointed out the court areas to sit down and eat.

Kingsbury Park is a 28 acre planned unit development on the Chicago River. There is a 2 million square foot building which was owned by Montgomery Wards (the former Montgomery Wards Catalogue Building). The land and existing buildings were sold at auction to a developer who wanted to create height, density (FAR), and a number of dwelling units in order to attract other developers. The Plan is anchored at both ends by a public park. One particular challenge with this project, because of the massiveness of these buildings, was getting people through the buildings to actually activate the river walk. Different destinations were created with restaurants and other entertainment at the ends of the pass throughs. Eventually over time, these activities will grow together to create one long viable river walk. Mr. Stauber noted three distinct zones between the water and residential areas – marina docks along the water, public right-of-way, front yard green space before the residential.

North Burnham Park (Soldier Field) was an opportunity to convert 5,000 surface parking spots along the lakefront into what became 17 new acres of greenspace. This area contains more parking now with a two level parking garage south of Soldier Field, a new entrance to the museum campus, and to the north of the stadium is an underground garage for 2,500 cars with a landscape roof on top, a veteran’s memorial wall and other sculptures. A Chicago police memorial has also been built.

Another planning project they are involved with is the relocated Lake Shore Drive in which the northbound lanes were relocated to the west side of Soldier Field. Other uses for North Burnham Park include a hard surface sports and circus area, sledding hill in the winter which is used for bicycling in the summer, a stadium green, the memorial lawn, a children’s garden, etc. The three museums have been united in a campus with parking and traffic circulation.

Mr. Stauber discussed what they see as existing Trail Creek site characteristics. Looking south over the high bridge (Hwy 12 going over Trail Creek) is Blue Chip on the left bank and Blocksom on the right bank, along with water edge opportunity for redevelopment. He said this site is not dissimilar in appearance to what City Front

Center looked like before it was redeveloped. Michigan Boulevard is both an opportunity and a challenge. The opportunity is it provides access into downtown, but the challenge is it has five lanes of traffic, two lanes of parking and a median with nothing in the middle. It is about 80' of asphalt for a pedestrian to cross. He pointed out that trees could be planted to make it into a boulevard that is easier for pedestrians to cross. The boat storage area is a major feature. A suggestion would be ferry access across Trail Creek for pedestrians. The new 22-story hotel will probably be iconic for Michigan City. Looking north from Highway 12 there is an opportunity to extend pedestrian access along Trail Creek to Washington Park. Mr. Stauber pointed out that the turning bridge is already an iconic attraction. He noted that there is already other significant marina and condo development along Trail Creek.

Attorney Bergerson stated that there is no public access on either the north side or south side of the creek.

Mr. Stauber pointed out that with private ownership there is the opportunity for the private owners to allow public access during certain hours.

Mr. Stauber stated that the North End vision is a statement taken from the Commission's through their workshops – "A dynamic Cultural and Civic Center with a thriving retail corridor, surrounded by friendly, historic neighborhoods with easy access to beautiful Lake Michigan, Trail Creek and Washington Park."

Mr. Stauber pointed out what they envision the Trail Creek goals to include: Create Trail Creek Re-Use Plan to fit with the North End vision; be realistic about proposed land uses; optimize, not maximize the scale of redevelopment, keep infrastructure costs to a minimum; take full advantage of Trail Creek as an amenity; coordinate with other local planning efforts; and using the plan to attract a quality developer.

Mr. Stauber asked for questions or thoughts from the Commission and public about these goals.

Eve Noonan feels the uses should be year round and maybe include housing for students. She also raised the question of opening up the view to the lake as Franklin Street has the library and City Hall located in the path.

Mr. Stauber stated that the 50 acre site they were engaged to look at does not go that far to the west, but he pointed out if the plan is successful it may provide a catalyst for other bigger picture thinking. He said it would be an expensive infrastructure undertaking, but it would not be completely out of the realm of possibility at some future point.

Mrs. Noonan suggested perhaps thinking about making the streets two-way instead of one-way.

Mr. Stauber stated that rather than thinking of them as one-way streets, they need to be thought of in terms of what they call context sensitive solutions. Traffic planning now is has developed new standards for arterial streets in urban areas where there is a balance of access for automobiles and access for pedestrians. Pedestrian friendliness is where there are street trees, easy to cross streets, interest display windows, interesting waterways – all a part of what will create a downtown with 24/7 pedestrian activities.

Mr. Radtke asked what their plans are for the present Trail Creek marina – will it stay in the plans, will it be moved or eliminated?

Mr. Stauber stated that they are very open on what it can be. He noted that there is lot of demand for additional marina space on Lake Michigan, not just in Michigan City, so whatever slips can be provided from a market point of view is a good thing. He said it is important and will be a part of the discussion in the planning process.

Mr. Souder stated that one of the strategies they have been charged with is thinking about some type of linkage to Lighthouse Mall along Sixth Street over to Trail Creek.

Mr. Stauber stated that the casino is a very important element and they will have to think about how to integrate it with the rest of the downtown. He noted the casino is one corner of the triangle in the downtown area – the triangle being the casino to the east, Lighthouse Mall to the west, and Washington Park to the north.

Ed Noonan questioned if they have projected the value of the land now and after it is developed and how much one would pay to buy a square foot land.

Mr. Stauber replied that what they do with urban design and master planning creates value, but they are not the appraisers of how much it will increase. They understand what it takes to get a viable development, but those are important questions to ask the developer.

Mr. Noonan asked if they are upbeat about this project.

Mr. Stauber stated that with regard to this project, they think Michigan City has been undervalued. They are very optimistic. With the casino being an economic catalyst, now the right project catalyst is needed. They think Michigan City has a great opportunity.

Attorney Bergerson asked how the demand to live on Trail Creek is created.

Mr. Souder explained that a variety of different price points has to be offered. There needs to be things to do such as restaurants, entertainment outlets, grocery store, and there has to be security.

Mr. Stauber reviewed their planning process and schedule which began on 6/25/07 and will conclude in twelve weeks on 9/10/07. The process includes site data collection and analysis with the kick-off meeting, collecting and analyzing data, and stakeholder interviews. Re-use plan preparation includes preparing alternatives, an alternatives evaluation meeting, refining plan/standards, a plan review meeting, and a plan report. He also reviewed the project deliverables which includes project mission and goals; site analysis diagrams and memo including North End site context, bus routes and pedestrian paths, existing land uses, and historic structures/district; a re-use framework plan to include an illustrative master plan, roadways, pathways and open space, as well as land uses, densities and building heights; development standards with land use, building location, parking, landscaping, lighting and signage; and an appendix with meeting notes and re-use concept alternatives.

Mr. Radtke questioned the status of the Abonmarche Trail Creek study.

Mr. Behrendt stated that the draft is completed.

Mr. Pugh mentioned that those agencies involved have been invited to the stakeholders meeting as part of a coordinated effort.

Mr. Radtke commented that the butterfly sculptures that were placed in the downtown area look great and it was a good first step.

Mr. Radtke stated that we need to keep in mind the elimination of the use of the automobile and make it viable for pedestrian traffic.

Mr. Stauber stated that they believe in a sustainable approach to urban design so you don't have to get in your car and drive everywhere. It makes for goods cities – people get to know each other. The new generation likes riding their bikes and walking.

Mr. Radtke agreed that if we want to keep young kids in this community we need this type of approach.

Mr. Stauber commented that the successful places today attract people, who as a first choice choose where they want to live and what their lifestyle will be, then the business pursues them because they have the talent; so, if your environment supports those kinds of people, then you will get the business.

Mr. Radtke noted that there are a lot of second homes here and in mid September when they go home, it becomes a ghost town. He said this town should be lively all winter long.

Mr. Stauber stated that the 24/7/365 is a big challenge, but he thinks it is approachable.

Mrs. Noonan suggested the idea of houseboats. Things out of the ordinary might bring some excitement.

In closing, Mr. Stauber stated that they look for participation. They will help facilitate the plan and the people will make the decisions.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

With the purpose of the special meeting having been met, the meeting adjourned at 5:10 p.m.

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Richard Richey, Secretary