

**TOWN OF PORTER**  
**Redevelopment Commission**  
**303 Franklin Street**  
October 26, 2021

**Meeting was called to order at 6:00 p.m.**  
**Pledge of Allegiance**

**Present:** President Brian Finley, Vice President Tara Duffie, Allison Hultman, David Phillips, and Erik Wagner

**Absent:** Attorney Gregg Sobkowski

**Also Present:** Director of Development Mike Barry, SEH Consultant Glenn Peterson, and Secretary Karen Spanier.

**Approval of Minutes**

Motion to approve the August 24, 2021 meeting minutes was made by David Phillips.  
Erik Wagner made the second.  
Motion carried 5-0.

**Consideration of Claims**

Motion to approve the October claims was made by Erik Wagner, with Tara Duffie making the second.  
Motion carried 5-0.

**Audience Participation**

Rob Albrecht-Mallinger of 3022 State St is here on behalf of the Porter Beach Association.  
He is in favor of the Orchard Trail Extension and read a letter as to the reasons why (herewith attached).

**Reports**

Director of Development Mike Barry had nothing new to report.

**Old Business**

**Business Improvement Grant Program**

Tara Duffie made a modified version of the DEDC Grant application. Duffie said after the modification she did not like the layout of it but felt that the structure was there.

She did have questions however for the Attorney, who mentioned at a previous meeting there were a couple of options for this program. One would be to seek a Bond Issuance, or the other implement a Property Improvement Grant Program.

Duffie said in the application she was comfortable with the Grant amount of \$10,000.00, but asked for Commission thoughts on going lower or higher.

David Phillips asked how many Grants the Commission would be awarding.

Duffie replied, the way it is laid out in the application the RDC could go as low as \$1,000.00 and as high as \$10,000.00. And each application could be decided on as a group.

Another option would be to form a separate Committee to go over all applications and compile a spreadsheet and give their recommendations back to the RDC for final approval.

Another question is if these applications would be available for all Businesses in Town or only in the TIF District.

Town Council President Greg Stinson stated from the audience that the RDC cannot Fund outside of the TIF District.

Director of Development Mike Barry said he believes all of the Businesses in Town are within the TIF area.

After a brief discussion, Barry suggested all Members make a list individually of their questions and send to him and he will compile them and forward them to the Attorney. With the Attorneys answer to these questions perhaps we could get something approved at the next meeting.

### **New Business**

#### **SEH Proposal-Orchard Trail Extension**

Barry asked if everyone was familiar with the unfinished Orchard Trail on Waverly Rd. He said they have been working on a way to complete the Trail.

Barry stated Porter County is going to replace the Waverly Little Calumet Bridge. When they replace the Bridge they will remove the existing Pedestrian Bridge out and move the Trail onto the new Bridge. Then they will connect the piece in between with just paving and stripe up to the I-94 Bridge.

Next, NIRPC and INDOT will be working on fixing the I-94 Bridge. So as part of their remodel of that Bridge we have asked them to pay for upgrading the railing on the side of where the Trail will go.

Barry said when INDOT restructured the intersection on Hwy 20 & Waverly Rd they pulled and put in all the wires for crosswalks on all four sides. The Plan is to take the Trail where it stops at the Orchard Apartments and continue it to the North to Oakhill Rd.

Barry announced when Mr. Hultman did his subdivision he granted us 40 feet of right-a-way for no charge, so we can cross that property to get to Hunters Glen Subdivision where there is a hill that we will have to deal with to get to the 4-way stop at Oakhill Rd.

From there we can cross to the East side of the Road and continue to the North so we're not cutting across Pat's Liquor parking lot. When we get to Hwy 20 we can cross at the push button crosswalk to the waterpark, which will be an Apartment Project someday.

Next there is several different routes we can take, one would be around the North side Hwy 20 up Cloverleaf Rd to Hjelm crossing somewhere over there. Or, we could go up the North side of the Waterpark across the topside of their property, approximately where the wave pool use to be there is a road right-of-way for Coleman St. that extends from Hjelm all the way down to Waterpark property.

We could use that to run the Trail straight up though leading to the neighborhood North of Hjelm weaving around to N Bailey Dr. and then crossing SR49.

We have not determined exactly where that will go yet. But there are a couple routes we are looking into. That is the purpose of this, is to find the simplest, cheapest way to extend the Trail to 49. Then we would cross 49 with what is called a Hawks Signal. Which is a marked crosswalk with

overhead lights and when you push the button it turns on red lights and stops all traffic. You can then cross the road. This has been discussed with INDOT. This would enable us to connect to the Dunes Kankakee Trail, which connects you to the National Parks and Train Station.

The best part is the RDA has left over money from previous Grant, about \$570,000.00, all of which they will committing to a project. Barry is working with them for this Trail project.

The Grant we are applying for is the Next Level Trail Grant which is the State of Indiana program not a Federal program. It is an 80/20 Grant, if the Grant is a 2.5 million project the 20% share would be \$500,000.00 and would be used with RDA funds. The goal once this is done would be zero cost to the Town of Porter.

This \$39,700.00 proposal from SEH would be refunded by the RDA.  
In order to get started for approval we need to submit this it quickly by December 1st.

Allison Hultman made the Motion to approve the SEH Proposal for the Orchard Trail extension.  
Dave Phillips made the second.  
Motion carried. 5-0.

### **Commission Comments**

Tara Duffie stated she just found out the commercial being done in Downtown Chesterton highlighting the beauty of the region will also been done in Downtown Porter.

Brian Finley stated in the future we should not go into lengthy discussions if the topic is not on the Agenda. If it is not on the Agenda we should not be discussing it.

### **Adjournment**

Erik Wagner made the motion to adjourn, with David Phillips making the second.  
Meeting Adjourned at 6:34 p.m.

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Brian Finley, President

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Tara Duffie, Vice-President

\_\_\_\_\_  
Erik Wagner, Secretary

\_\_\_\_\_  
Allison Hultman, Member

\_\_\_\_\_  
David Phillips, Member

Attest: \_\_\_\_\_  
Karen Spanier, Recording Secretary

I am here on behalf of the Porter Beach Association. I encourage the RDC to approve the contract to evaluate routes and perform engineering planning for the Orchard Trail extension. If you are already inclined to approve this, I promise I won't knock very loud or long on an open door. But please let give you five reasons why this is a good idea from my perspective.

- \* People want this. Comprehensive Plan surveys and stakeholder interviews prioritized adding amenities that would help Porter residents make better use of our natural resources, connect visitors to the town to capture some of their spending, and make congested areas safer.

- \* It invests in our greatest strengths. Porter's best natural features are our parks, our lake front, and our river - the proposed path enables residents and visitors to use them. And it enables residents to get to and from another of our greatest assets, the Dune Park train station. On the other side of that coin, it enables visitors to our area to be drawn to our local business.

- \* It enhances property values. People are looking for places to live near but outside the city. The trail's 'green connections' highlight parts of our town that professionals, young families and retirees put great value on.

- \* It's timely! The proposed trail is a complementary project to what we know the National Park System intends to plan and build north of US-12. NLT is well funded now, so it's a good time to plan and build town infrastructure.

- \* It's efficient with tax dollars. Makes the best use of our tax dollars by leveraging the existing Dunes Kankakee trail.

ROB A LIBROCHI-MALLING  
3022 STATE ST.