

**Minutes**  
Board of Directors Meeting  
Tuesday, May 28, 2019  
3:00 pm  
Mayor's Conference Room

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**Board Members Present:** Mayor Ben Walsh, Vice-Chair Helen Hudson, Treasurer David Delvecchio

**Staff Present:** Stephanie Pasquale, Debra Ramsey-Burns, Meghan Ryan, Esq.

**Others Present:** Owen Kerney

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**I. Call Meeting to Order**

Mayor Walsh called the meeting to order at 3:02 P.M.

**II. Roll Call**

Mayor Walsh noted all Board members were present.

**III. Proof of Notice**

Mayor Walsh acknowledged notice of the meeting had been timely and properly provided.

**IV. Minutes**

Mayor Walsh asked for a motion to approve the minutes from the May 1, 2019 Board of Directors meeting. Ms. Hudson made a motion to approve the minutes. Mr. Delvecchio seconded the motion. **ALL BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED THE MINUTES FROM THE MAY 1, 2019 BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING.**

**V. New Business**

None

**VI. Items for Discussion**

**1) Perseverance Park Update**

Owen Kerney from the City's Planning Department provided the Board with an update about the Perseverance Park project and the bidding to contractors to update the park. He advised that the bid packets were sent to multiple contractors. One contractor came to the pre-bid meeting. Ballard Construction was the only contractor to submit a bid and it was very high. That bid included a base bid and an alternate. Both were over what SURA allocated for the project. Mr. Kerney advised that he is currently working with SURA staff to come up with a plan to

potentially omit some items to meet budget. The large poles with the mirrors on them may be omitted to save costs. Mr. Kerney met with the design team as well to revise the plan to get within budget. There are a lot of furnishing in the design that are expensive and can potentially be omitted. The total bid was \$480,000. The base bid was \$383,000. SURA allocated \$300,000 in SURA funds for the project. Mayor Walsh advised that he desires to refresh the public space and then SURA can always add onto that later. There is potential to add public art at the park in the future. Mr. Kerney advised that this was just an update to keep the Board informed so the next time there will be an actionable item.

## 2) **Blueprint 15**

Ms. Pasquale presented the idea of SURA acquiring properties in the Blueprint 15 area. There are properties in this designated area that are eligible for seizure by the City for back taxes. These properties could be seized and transferred to SURA in order for SURA to hold title to the properties for development. There are also properties in this area that are already owned by the Land Bank or City-affiliated entities. The Department of Neighborhood and Business Development has identified six clusters to focus on for site acquisition. There are 39 seizeable parcels, which are mostly vacant land. The City's Treasury department has already sent out seizure notices for those identified parcels to move the seizure process forward.

A lot of the parcels are owned by the City, Land Bank and the Syracuse Housing Authority. The Syracuse Industrial Development Agency (SIDA) owns thirteen. Some are also church-owned. Syracuse Model Neighborhood Corporation owns six. National Grid owns one. Southeast Gateway also owns one property in the area. Ms. Pasquale explained that the purpose of this discussion is to just provide the Board with more information. She also identified pros and cons of the project. Site control is a pro. The cons mainly have to do with owning property such as having to pay property taxes, insurance and the cost of acquisition. Ms. Hudson asked a question about acquiring property from OCIDA. Ms. Pasquale stated that OCIDA has acquisition procedures that would have to be followed as well. Mayor Walsh asked Ms. Pasquale to remove the railroad land from the list of targeted properties. Mayor Walsh also asked what the justification is for not going the usual route of the City seizing properties and selling them to the Land Bank. Ms. Pasquale indicated that there is a lot of pressure on the Land Bank to divest of land. Urban renewal is the best utilization of the properties. The Land Bank has a Board with strict policies while SURA is more nimble. Ms. Hudson stated that she has been approached by some constituents and that she would like to see the properties go to SURA. Mr. Delvecchio agreed that the properties should stay with SURA and have a plan for the expenses as SURA has limited cash flow. Ms. Pasquale advised that there are some parcels SURA may have to purchase to be able to acquire all identified in a cluster.

Ms. Pasquale then provided the Board with a summary of SURA's cash flow. SURA has very limited income/revenue. She suggested that SURA should divest of its valuable properties. She told the Board that this plan is a gamble but is calculated to have money to cover and recoup that money. The properties identified in the plan are very selective and chosen for a reason. Both the

Common Council and the SURA Board would need to approve sale/acquisition if this project moves forward. Mayor Walsh asked Ms. Pasquale to check on the railroad parcel that appears to be seizeable. He also asked to look at the properties around I-81. Mayor Walsh identified one City-owned parcel that one developer was interested in years ago and suggested checking with Assessment on the plan/value of the property.

## **VII. Adjournment**

There being no further business to discuss, Mayor Walsh asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting. Ms. Hudson made the motion. Mr. Delvecchio seconded the motion. **ALL BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED THE MOTION TO ADJOURN THE MEETING AT 3:24 P.M.**