

CITY OF RUTLAND, VERMONT
Board of Aldermen Minutes
Public Hearing; VCDP Grant Application
Rutland Housing Initiative
Tuesday, September 6, 2022

Members present: President Doenges, Aldermen Etori, Franco, Barbagallo, Talbott, Tadio, Whitcomb and Davis. Aldermen Savage, Gillam and DePoy were absent.

Also in attendance: Barbara Spaulding, RRA; Brennan Duffy, RRA; Zak Hale, Jon Hale, Mayor Allaire and Clerk Heck.

6:30 PM PUBLIC HEARING VCDP

President Doenges called the hearing to order at 6:30 PM and gave the floor to Barbara Spaulding, RRA.

Barbara Spaulding explained that tonight's meeting was about taking comments from the public regarding the City's VCDP application for 120 Maple Street a Rutland Housing initiative. The application is due September 13th and the draft application has been available at the RRA office for public viewing, since the public hearing was posted on August 19th. The Community Development Board will meet on November 10th to determine the awards. The sources and uses spreadsheet for the application was placed on the desks today along with an introduction letter from Hale Resources and the scope of work for the project. Zak and Jon Hale (Hale Resources) were present to discuss the project.

Jon Hale thanked Brennan and Barbara, who have been fantastic, in doing this application which has been a huge amount of help. They have shown that the City is really trying to put this program forward and help other people who would like to get into this application process.

The building is in pretty desperate need of some rehabilitation, not quite a tear down, the bones of the building are in pretty good shape. It desperately needs a roof and Hale Resources is trying to work with VCDP to maybe get an emergency roof on it, but if not, its going to have to sit until they get someone ready to fix it. The scope of their work is to really do a full gut renovation, which will include new siding, new roof, new electrical, new plumbing, asbestos abatement, lead paint abatement, foundation repairs, and a lot of energy efficiencies improvements.

Zak Hale spoke about the funding package for the project. The overall cost is \$1.2 Million. The VCDP grant is for \$650,000 and they have also raised from VHIP \$130,000 to go directly toward the renovation of the project. Another \$244,000 in private capital has been secured and they plan to use it for this building by leveraging the end product. Then they are working with VHCB the weatherization program and Green Mountain Power and Efficiency Vermont for heat pump rebates. Hale Resources has also done an in kind contribution for the soft costs that have been added to the budget.

President Doenges opened the hearing for public comment.

Alderman Etori feels that the project should not be supported and the numbers given my Hale Resources even pushes him farther into that direction.

Alderman Barbagallo asked a few questions about unit cost, what's included in the rent and feasibility to get those units rented.

Stephen Box spoke that this process has not been open and transparent. He further went on to say that we are guaranteed by law the opportunity to participate in the people's business. He expects to fully participate, but this particular process and this particular journey on this particular project in no way shape or form has been open or transparent or even compliant with the law. A standard that is so low it merely asks you to put stuff in a public place so people know what is going on. Rutland Redevelopment Authority commission meeting where this project was presented convened without a quorum. The person who made the motion to approve wasn't even at the meeting until they called in. That is a violation of the open meeting law, they have to be there at the beginning of the meeting to hear everything at the meeting. The meetings need to be posted and you need to follow the law and you have to allow the public to participate. That cannot happen if the public is not notified. The proposal came to the Board of Aldermen meeting on July 18th and Mr. Box notified the City Attorney and the City Clerk that it was not posted in compliance with Vermont's open meeting law. The open meeting law is pretty specific and here we are today with an agenda that wasn't posted in compliance with open meeting law. We can debate the definition of public all day long, but even the agenda says public hearing. The process is really what gets him going; Is the public worthy of your respect, is the public worth engaging, if so then the behaviors tonight will demonstrate where you stand on whether or not the public should be your partners or spectators. He asked that the meeting be postponed and let's do it correctly with a process worthy of the people of Rutland.

President Doenges asked if there were any more comments from the public. Hearing none, Alderwoman Davis made a motion to close the public hearing at 6:52 PM. Alderman Whitcomb seconded. **Motion passed.**

Respectfully submitted,

Tracy L. Kapusta
Deputy City Clerk