

## LA JUNTA URBAN RENEWAL AUTHORITY

**CALL TO ORDER:** The La Junta Urban Renewal Authority Board of Commissioners held a Regular Meeting on Thursday, May 12, 2022 at 4:30 p.m. in the Council Chambers. The meeting was called to order by Chairperson Bennett.

### Board Members Present

Joe Ayala  
Nancy Bennett  
Christine Coffield  
Trevor Herasingh – via ZOOM  
Justin Miller  
Lily Sweikert

### Absent

Daniel Horton  
T.J. Martinez

**Subject to approval at the  
June 9, 2022  
Urban Renewal Meeting**

Also present: Cynthia Nieb, Economic/Urban Renewal Director  
Melanie Scofield, City Clerk/UR Secretary  
Randall Roberson, La Junta  
Bette McFarren, Rocky Ford Gazette

### CITIZEN PARTICIPATION:

1. There was not any citizen participation.

### MINUTES: April 14, 2022

Chairperson Bennett asked if there were any corrections or additions to be made to the April 14, 2022 minutes. Hearing none, a motion was made by Justin Miller, seconded by Trevor Herasingh, that the minutes for April 14, 2022 be approved as published. The motion carried unanimously.

### FINANCIAL STATEMENTS: April 2022

The April 2022 financial statements were provided for the Board's review.

#### BALANCE SHEET

##### ASSETS

- Total cash at the end of April was \$340,048.05.
- Notes receivable was \$5,575.00
- There are no investments.
- Total assets are \$345,623.05 for the month ending April 2022.

##### LIABILITIES

- There were no outstanding bills at the end of April.

#### STATEMENT OF REVENUE/EXPENDITURES

##### BUDGET TO ACTUAL

Bank interest in the amount of \$2.25 was received. Tax increment of \$12,388.66 was received from property tax collections. There was a double posting for the January power bill for the Welcome to La Junta sign – the corrected expense on the financial .27. The following bills were paid:

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UR/ED Director (1 <sup>st</sup> Quarter)	\$ 3,110.00
Vance Johnson – MSOB Grant	\$17,713.30

The 2022 budget is \$229,015.00 less \$41,174.83 in expenses and \$20,266.80 (MSOB PYMT #2) in encumbrances leaving a budget remaining of \$167,573.74.

Chairperson Bennett asked if there were any questions or corrections regarding the April financial statements. Hearing none, a motion was made by Trevor Herasingh, seconded by Justin Miller, that the financial statements for April 2022 be approved as presented. The motion carried unanimously.

Investments – ColoTrust: Aliza is still working on them. Everything seems to be going just fine.

### REPORTS:

#### A. Plaza Building

Chairperson Bennett: We are ready to go. The permits have been issued. We are now just waiting on the contractors.

Director Nieb: The Colorado Creative Industries put a very nice press item about the Plaza Building. When they came to visit; they loved that building

### NEW BUSINESS

A. **Blight/Strategic Plan.** Michael Yerman, SCEDD Senior Planner, shared the April 28<sup>th</sup> Recap from two Council retreats. Recap of 6 Key Goal Areas:

- Staff – Example Goal – The City Council recognizes the importance of an experienced, well trained and community minded staff that is appreciated for its hard work to complete the goals of the City.
- Downtown – Example Goal – City Council envisions a safe flourishing downtown that provides the City with a strong commercial tax base where existing businesses and property owners are supported by policies that encourage special events, activation of public rights-of-ways, and rehab or innovated reuse of properties.
- Infrastructure – Example Goal – City Council strives to be active stewards of the City's existing aging infrastructure by actively planning for maintenance and upkeep while taking advantage of external resources to leverage the City's limited financial assets.
- Communication with Citizens – Example Goal – The City Council wants to ensure that its electorate is well informed of the ongoing successes and future plans through transparent and reliable communications.
- Public Safety – Example Goal – The City Council envisions a safe secure community for its families and youth by providing its staff with the resources and policies necessary to protect its citizens.
- Economic Development and Community Amenities – Example Goal – The City Council wants to promote the growth of its tax base by continuous improvements

to its existing business core and create unique regional amenities that provide its workforce the ability to grow and establish strong community ties.

**B. Hazardous Material Mitigation.** Matt Ashby shared the La Junta Brownfields approach. The EPA's Brownfield Assessment Program.

- Created to help address a vast number of brownfield properties nationwide.
- Grants and technical assistance to support community revitalization through assessment, cleanup and job training grants and technical assistance.
- Public-private partnerships.
- Congratulations La Junta! \$500,000.

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) defines a brownfield as:

- "Real property, the expansion, redevelopment, or reuse of which may be complicated by the presence or potential presence of a hazardous substance, pollutant, or contaminant."
- There are an estimated 450,000 brownfields in the U.S.

How are Brownfields Created?

- Economic transition
- Infrastructure failures
- Incorrect monitoring
- Illegal dumping
- Natural disasters

Common Contaminants:

- Dry cleaners: chlorinated solvents like TCE and PCE.
- Gas stations and rail yards: petroleum, lead.
- Manufacturing: metals, PCBs, solvents
- Rail yards: Fly Ash, heavy metals.

Impacts of Brownfields:

- Economic – tax base loss, onsite and in surrounding area, property value decrease, minimal job creation, inability to leverage investment of employment money.
- Social – blighted building, eyesores, public safety (crime), public and emergency services (police, fire, public works), public health risks.
- Environmental – Sprawl/Greenfield development, land use conflicts, air and water quality, toxic runoff, potential creation of new brownfields.

What is the Cost of Doing Nothing?

- Loss of tax base
- Economic Development is stymied
- Negatively affects the properties in the area
- Uncontrolled environmental contamination – public health risks
- Environmental Justice

Benefits of Cleanup and Redevelopment:

- Economic – Increases property values, job creation, ability to leverage investment and employment.

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- Social – Removes health and safety hazards, removes eyesore, creates jobs, housing, open space, commercial/retail, decreases crime, neighborhood revitalization and property value increase.
- Environmental – Preserves open space, promotes infill development, removes threat to environmental health.

EPA studies have shown:

- A 32-57% reduction in vehicle miles traveled when development occurred at a brownfield site rather than Greenfield.
- Fewer vehicle miles traveled equal a reduction in pollution emissions including greenhouse gases.

What activities can you do with a Brownfield Grant?

- Environmental Studies
- Redevelopment Visualizations
- Redevelopment Finance Pro-Forma
- Incentive Estimates and Tax Increment Packages
- Structural Assessment
- Cleanup Planning
- Zoning/Building Code Recommendations
- 3D Animated Visualization
- Site Planning
- Leveraging Other Grants (MSOB, 1271 Housing, Abatement & Demolition)

### **C. Urban Renewal Director:**

1. Planning: We need to make a one year, three year and five year plan for how we are going to move forward. We need to make sure to tie it in the page 3 of the 2021 State Statute on how blighted areas are defined and safety.

Eight Main Questions to Ask When Setting a Priority:

What?

Why?

How?

When?

Who benefits?

How much does this cost? Is there a program/grant to offset costs?

Who is in charge and doing the work to get this done? Capacity?

End Result?

Things to Consider:

- Budget (we usually get around \$73,000-\$75,000 per year)
- Bang for the buck. How can we stretch our dollars with partnerships, programs, & grants?
- Impact on blight and safety—this must be part of the equation (see p.3 of the 2021 Statute)

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- Big projects? Small Projects? What is the impact? Who benefits? The entire TIF area? One business?
- Small grants/loans versus leveraging grants.
- Hazardous material mitigation? Where? How? Can we train for job creation?
- Salvage? Who would run this endeavor?
- Geographic area concentration? Downtown? Along HWY 50? OR, underutilized buildings?
- Blight: what is the City's approach? What is our approach?
- What are the City's goals? How can we complement those goals?
- We need to start working with Planning/Engineering on code and land use and work alongside the City. That's in our 2007 plan. How do we do that?
- Other considerations

5:40 p.m. – Christine Coffield departed the meeting.

### ADDITIONAL DISCUSSION:

- Activating second stories
  - Leveraging money
  - Asbestos removal
  - Need consistent foot traffic downtown
  - Getting double the tax value
  - Brownfield grants (0% match on assessment/20% match on clean-up)
  - EPA has a revolving loan program to help fund clean-up
  - Possible salvage of building components
2. Work Session: We will schedule a work session prior to our June meeting to work on our planning goals.
  3. MSOB Updates: We are in our 4<sup>th</sup> quarter now. We'll be finishing by June 30<sup>th</sup>. It looks like everybody is going to finish and they are finishing beautifully.
  4. La Junta Rise Branding: The Colorado Creative District has combined with Main Street. A lot of their missions are very similar and it increases the amount of money that we get. It also increases the ability to develop programs. We did a branding about a month ago and came up with La Junta Rise. We are currently working on two projects, 1) creative itineraries for locals and visitors along with events, and 2) a survey of all the cultural creatives in La Junta along with outreach with these folks. We received \$11,000. From NEA.

### D. Governing Body Comments:

1. Mayor Ayala: We received the assessment grant for \$500,000.
2. We have pushed back the downtown walking tour. Per Michael Yerman's suggestion, it will be a night time tour. I will let you know when it is going to be re-scheduled.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 6:01 p.m.

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Melanie R. Scofield, Secretary

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Nancy Bennett, Chairperson