

LA JUNTA URBAN RENEWAL AUTHORITY

CALL TO ORDER: The La Junta Urban Renewal Authority Board of Commissioners held a Regular Meeting on Thursday, March 27, 2025 at 4:00 p.m. in the Council Chambers. The meeting was called to order by Chairperson Bennett.

Board Members Present

Absent

Joe Ayala
Nancy Bennett
Carly Johnson
Toni Madrid (via Zoom)
Ben Mason
Zach Miner
Erin Monroy
Randall Roberson
Angel Saucedo

**Subject to approval at the
April 24, 2025
Urban Renewal Meeting**

Also present: Melanie Scofield, City Clerk
Cristian Estrada, Deputy City Clerk
Maureen Rikhof, La Junta

CITIZEN PARTICIPATION

There was no citizen participation.

MINUTES: February 27, 2025

Chairperson Bennett asked if there were any corrections or additions to be made to the February 27, 2025 minutes. There being none, the board moved to a motion.

MOTION TO APPROVE THE FEBRUARY 27, 2025 MINUTES AS PUBLISHED: ERIN MONROY

SECOND: CARLY JOHNSON

AYE: Ayala, Bennett, Johnson, Madrid, Mason, Miner, Monroy, Roberson, Saucedo

OPPOSED: None

The motion carries.

FINANCIAL STATEMENTS: FEBRUARY 2025

Treasurer’s Report: There is virtually not much of a report to give this month; we took in \$1,225.00 of interest last month and \$146.00 of tax increment money, for a total of \$1,373.00 approx. income. There was \$42.00 of expenditures for the electric of the welcome sign; as of right now in our cash account, we have \$13,810.00. There is \$374,000.00 in our investment account. Notes receivable is for \$1,250.00. Total assets for February \$389,111.00. Next month, we should be taking in the big dollars from the tax increment district. In 2022, we took in \$70,000 in the month of April; in April 2023, we took in \$66,000 and in 2024 we took in \$84,000. Presumably, we will be in the range from \$75,000-\$80,000 to add to the investments.

LA JUNTA URBAN RENEWAL AUTHORITY

MOTION TO APPROVE THE FEBRUARY 2025 FINANCIAL REPORT AS PRESENTED: BEN MASON

SECOND: ERIN MONROY

AYE: Ayala, Bennett, Johnson, Madrid, Mason, Miner, Monroy, Roberson, Saucedo

OPPOSED: None

The motion carries.

REPORTS:

A. Plaza Building (Nancy Bennett)

- Plaza Building is moving along nicely.
- The tin ceiling is up – the guys putting up the ceiling are kind and seemingly care about the building as much as people in La Junta do.
- The drywall is nearing completion; floors and painting will be next.
- SECCP will be receiving the Stephen A. Hart Award on April 3, 2025 in Denver, CO for the Plaza Building. A few members from SECCP will attend the meeting in-person in Denver.
- The Brewfest is coming up in June; that fundraiser will aide for items not covered by grants for the Plaza Building.
 - Erin Monroy: Has there been any change in the projected completion date of August 2025?
 - Nancy Bennett: So far, everything is going according to plan.
 - Ben Mason: Has all of the electrical been completed on the building?
 - Nancy Bennett: It has been completed. As soon as the electrical was completed on the building, they have been able to move forward with the construction.
 - Toni Madrid: Are there plans to do an open house at some point?
 - Nancy Bennett: Absolutely. Upon completion is when there would be a possible open house. We will not set a date for that yet.

B. Chestnut Apartments (Maureen Rikhof): Maureen Rikhof, La Junta, gave updates on the Chestnut Apartments.

- Not sure if any of the board members have driven by 322 Santa Fe Ave. (Chestnut Apts.) to see any of the work that has been going on.
- There has been brickwork done to the outside of the building.
- Ground has broken on the utility building across from the alley.
- We are still working on sourcing the windows locally, and they have yet to be purchased; have been in conversation with Sarah Kappell at History Colorado to ensure that we are following guidelines for historic designation.
- Soon, we should be able to conduct interim tours.
- We post weekly updates to the Chestnut Apartment Facebook page on the progress of the construction.
 - Ben Mason: How many apartments will the building have, once construction is completed?

- Maureen Rikhof: There will be 11 units; one being a three-bedroom unit, three two-bedroom units, two one-bedroom units, and the rest will be studio apartments. One of the studios would be a short-term use unit for residents whom have families visiting. When the unit is not in use by the tenants, it will be used similarly to an Airbnb or Vrbo.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

A. Funding Application/Program Policy (Action)

- Melanie Scofield: The board has been working relentlessly to make sure everything makes sense and is cohesive with the application and policy. All information from previous meetings and work sessions, as well as email communications from some the board was compiled together in the current Funding Application and Program Policy option.
 - Nancy Bennett: Is there anything that you are aware of that we should check on today?
 - Melanie Scofield: I am good; the only thing that I was thinking after the fact that was not placed in the policy was the loan amount. The board originally had 2.5% for up to six years (72 months). It will be in the contract, but am wondering if the board would like it added to the policy, as well?
 - Erin Monroy: Thanked the City Clerk on gathering all of the information for the policy/application. It is absolutely clearer and more understandable. Wondering about the previous dialogue surrounding the request of saying grant AND loan, as previously it mentioned grant OR loan. If we do change it to 'and', then it would need to be reflected on the policy as well as the application. I also believe that it would be good to add the loan terms to the original policy.
 - Joe Ayala: On the policy, the most the board would award as a grant would be \$25,000. Is the board okay with that? I believe that the amounts should be more to attract larger projects in the future.
 - Erin Monroy: That was the amount mentioned previously for the grant. It was always a max of \$25,000. The maximum for a loan was up to \$50,000.

Dialogue surrounding the specific verbiage of the policy and application and how it would reflect the amount earned depending on percentages. Conversations continued with the amount awarded in a grant versus the amount awarded for a loan applicant. There were also comparisons in amounts that were awarded to previous projects (i.e. Sutherlands) and how would it affect decisions for applicants going forward.

MOTION TO ACCEPT THE URA FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE POLICY AS PRESENTED WITH THE EDIT TO ADD LOAN TERMS ONTO THE POLICY: ERIN MONROY

SECOND: RANDALL ROBERSON

AYE: None

OPPOSED: Ayala, Bennett, Johnson, Madrid, Mason, Miner, Monroy, Roberson, Saucedo

The motion does not carry.

LA JUNTA URBAN RENEWAL AUTHORITY

MOTION TO ACCEPT THE URA FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE APPLICATION AS PRESENTED:
BEN MASON

SECOND: JOE AYALA

AYE: Ayala, Bennett, Johnson, Madrid, Mason, Miner, Monroy, Roberson, Saucedo

OPPOSED: None.

The motion carries.

NEW BUSINESS

A. Governing Body Comments:

- Erin Monroy: Thinking it would be nice to have either a work session or some type of orientation for new members, especially before reviewing any applications. Looking back, I wished that I had more ‘training’ on how everything works with the board. This can be discussed further at a future meeting.
- Once we get our policy finalized, we need to hit it hard on our marketing and communications to get the word out on what we do, who can get money, and who we would like to target. Going along with that, I would like to see the Urban Renewal Authority receive more direction. At our last work session, it was discussed that the URA is a subcommittee of City Council that works on specialized things for City Council. Believes it would be smart if the direction of the URA comes from City Council. Should URA work on larger or smaller projects? With direction, the URA may become better. Is Joe Ayala the liaison from City Council, or just an acting member of URA?
 - Joe Ayala: Confirmed that he is in fact the liaison for City Council; asks the Council to back him up on any board appointments. In agreement to the previous comment about being involved with Economic Development. A work session was had on March 26th with Economic Development; will make sure to send out the announcement for the next Economic Development work session and invited the URA to join in on the conversations at the work session as soon as a date has been decided. Something else to add is last year, there was a walking tour of downtown with the previous URA board. It was not to call out businesses on blight, but to see what is available to reach out for possible applicants. Would like to revisit the idea of another walking tour to see which buildings or businesses may possibly qualify for the grant/loan monies.
- Ben Mason: Is there any reason the board couldn’t email Melanie Scofield ahead of time with ideas for work sessions and the other members included in the email thread, so as to not use time during governing body comments to bring up ideas for future work sessions.
 - Joe Ayala: Run everything through Melanie Scofield for ideas regarding anything; whether it be ideas for agenda or work sessions, run it through Melanie Scofield or Cristian Estrada (Deputy City Clerk).

An Urban Renewal Authority work session is TBA in the Power Board Room of the Municipal Building. Melanie Scofield will reach out to the board members to gauge possible dates for the work session.

LA JUNTA URBAN RENEWAL AUTHORITY

The next Urban Renewal Authority meeting will be held April 24, 2025 at 4:00 PM in the Council Chambers.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 4:44 p.m.

Cristian Estrada, Deputy City Clerk

Nancy Bennett, Chairperson