



A G E N D A

REGULAR MEETING LA JUNTA URBAN RENEWAL AUTHORITY

La Junta, Colorado

July 27, 2023

4:00 p.m.

Council Chambers

CALL TO ORDER

ROLL CALL (City Clerk)

Board Members P/A

Supervisors

Others

Ayala
Bennett
Coffield
Herasingh
Horton
Madrid
Roberson
Sweikert

CITIZEN PARTICIPATION

MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING (Chairperson)

Regular Meeting June 22, 2023

FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (Treasurer)

June 2023

Investments – ColoTrust

REPORTS – Project Updates

A. Plaza Building (Nancy Bennett)

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

A. Strategic & Communications Plan – Sheryl Trent of SBrand (Zoom)

NEW BUSINESS

A. Urban Renewal Director Comments

B. Unfilled Board Position Interviews

Erin Monroy

Norberto Villanueva

C. Governing Body's Comments

ADJOURN

LA JUNTA URBAN RENEWAL AUTHORITY

CALL TO ORDER: The La Junta Urban Renewal Authority Board of Commissioners held a Regular Meeting on Thursday, June 22, 2023 at 4:00 p.m. in the Power Board Room. The meeting was called to order by Chairperson Bennett.

Board Members Present

Absent

Nancy Bennett
Trevor Herasingh
Daniel Horton
Randall Roberson
Lily Sweikert

Joe Ayala
Trevor Herasingh
Toni Madrid

**Subject to approval at the
July 27, 2023
Urban Renewal Meeting**

Also present: Cynthia Nieb, Economic/Urban Renewal Director
Aimee Hill, City Building Code Officer
Gregg Portch, La Junta

CITIZEN PARTICIPATION:

1. Gregg Portch: Very interested in La Junta and wanted to see what Urban Renewal was about.

MINUTES: May 25, 2023

Chairperson Bennett asked if there were any corrections or additions to be made to the May 25, 2023 minutes. Hearing none, a motion was made by Trevor Herasingh, seconded by Randall Roberson, that the minutes for May 25, 2023 be approved as published. The motion carried unanimously.

MINUTES: June 6, 2023

Chairperson Bennett asked if there were any corrections or additions to be made to the June 6, 2023 minutes. Hearing none, a motion was made by Randall Roberson, seconded by Lily Sweikert, that the minutes for June 6, 2023 be approved as published. The motion carried unanimously.

FINANCIAL STATEMENTS: May 2023

Randall Roberson explained the budget and the expenses so far this year. The Board has overspent the budget by \$35,000. There's still money if an amendment is needed. There is still well over \$100,000 in savings.

The May 2023 financial statements were provided for the Board's review.

BALANCE SHEET

ASSETS

- Total cash at the end of May was \$137,435.02.
- Notes receivable was \$2,625.00. (One note was paid in full leaving only one pending note.)
- Investments were \$415,836.03 (COLOTRUST).
- Total assets are \$555,896.05 for the month ending May 2023.

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LIABILITIES

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

STATEMENT OF REVENUE/EXPENDITURES

BUDGET TO ACTUAL

Interest in the amount of \$1,722.76 was received. Tax increment of \$66,767.14 was received from property tax collections. Expenses for the month of May were as follows:

- \$67.50 – Rocky Ford Daily Gazette
- \$42.43 – Southeast Colorado Power (Welcome LJ Sing)

The 2023 budget is \$182,500.00 less \$12,881.27 in expenses less \$9,300 encumbered leaving a budget remaining of \$160,318.73.

Chairperson Bennett asked if there were any questions or corrections regarding the May 2023 financial statements. Hearing none, a motion was made by Lily Sweikert, seconded by Trevor Herasingh, that the financial statements for May 2023 be approved as presented. The motion carried unanimously.

REPORTS:

A. Plaza Building

Chairperson Bennett: The Gates Family Foundation awarded a grant for \$50,000. The electrical inspection has been passed. Electric is hooked up and SECCP is paying the bill.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

A. Strategic & Communications Plan. Sheryl Trent sent out survey and interview questions by email.

Cynthia Nieb: In looking at the Community Survey, under question no. 1, technically we don't do business development, we only do building development. I'll ask for that to be taken out.

Lily Sweikert: On that same section, my concern is that nobody seems to know what the Urban Renewal Authority actually does. To start a survey off by this question is going to be problematic. I'd recommend, asking more of what La Junta needs. Perhaps including a list of things that URA has done.

Randall Roberson: This is a good list of names that the survey went out to.

Lily Sweikert: We're always talking about including the Chamber of Commerce, Main Street Open for Business in collaboration with what we are doing. The Police Department would be a good group in terms of safety. The Engineering Department should also be included.

Cynthia Nieb: How about the AVRMC? They're not in the tax district but they are a major partner. The other survey, is the "internal survey questions." It asks things like strengths, positive/negative trends, top three priorities, challenges or obstacles standing in the way of success, what things do you want to preserve.

- B. Certified Local Government – Opting in for Board Continuation. (Cynthia Nieb):** We had voted to break off the Certified Local Government from the Urban Renewal in case people wanted to opt-out. In being positive, I'm saying those who want to opt-in. Toni Madrid already said that she wants in. If there anybody here today who still would like to be on the CLG? Those on the CLG are: Toni Madrid, Lily Sweikert, Nancy Bennett, Daniel Horton and Trevor Herasingh.

NEW BUSINESS

A. Urban Renewal Director:

1. I pulled together a packet because it hit me that only Lily has ever reviewed grants before. On the top of it, I put my reviewer sheets from my last State Historical Fund grant. I just wanted you to know how complex these things can be and how seriously everybody took the funding in terms of writing comments and giving me direction. I will re-submit.
2. Looking at the La Junta URA Commercial Building Funding Request, originally, I was told that we don't want anymore than two pages for an application because it's too confusing. Well, it's too confusing if you don't explain it. I used more spacing and broke things out explain what the requirements would be. I also changed the application of the questions that are asked because we had two people that had some challenges with ownership. It also includes an "abbreviated business plan."
3. Moving on to the rubric, in terms of criteria, the biggest change I made was under the second point which is, "is the requested cost effective and are the trades people qualified, do the contractors provide guarantees, how did the applicant evaluate them, are relevant photos and scope of work attached. It cleaned it up and going in the direction being asked for.
4. Then we start getting into the rubric review. This will be given to you at least a week ahead of time in your packets. You'll fill it out and anonymously put in your comments and scores. That way we have something to discuss when we get to the meeting.

Lily Sweikert: Question, are we considering covering apportion of the eligible cost or the total cost?

Randall Roberson: In our original discussions in trying to put this application together, the total budget, I'm agreeing with the 49% of eligible costs. It gets complicated. We got amazingly close to having to make a budget amendment to cover some of these expenses. We need the ability to break down what portion we're going to do as a grant and what portion we're going to make a loan. I think it has to be considered on the total project cost.

Cynthia Nieb: It's very hard if you're thinking about it right at the moment and you have to calculate all this stuff in one meeting to figure out what you're doing. That's the reason I've tried to slow you down a little bit. Before you get in that room, you need to think it through, the positives and the negatives. Something should be in there about "what do you think would be an exceptional project?" Rick took me aside and said, "Cynthia, we always gave half grant and half loan together. You guys didn't do that. You're going to run out of money." That was a concern of his. We need to get something back. We could

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cut out the 2% on the loan. We don't need to make money. We just need to replace some of that money. We should think about having one grant run after the majority of the money comes in.

(There was lengthy discussion and compromises regarding setting aside monies and/or having set application deadlines and what that would look like. Cynthia will incorporate these ideas.)

5. We have two people who are interested in applying for the Urban Renewal Board vacancy.
6. You received the email thread regarding the CORE building expenses.

B. Governing Body Comments:

1. There were no governing body comments.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 5:26 p.m.

Melanie R. Scofield, Secretary

Nancy Bennett, Chairperson

La Junta Urban Renewal Authority Member Application June 2023

Thank you for your interest in becoming a La Junta Urban Renewal Authority Member.

The La Junta Urban Renewal Authority (LJURA) is an urban renewal authority that serves as the City of La Junta's redevelopment agency. LJURA is governed by a 9-member board of commissioners interviewed and recommended by the LJ URA Board and appointed and confirmed by the City Council for staggered terms.

LJURA's primary function is to assist the city and property owners in elimination and prevention of slums and blighted areas. To accomplish its mission, the authority works in close partnership with the City of La Junta and City Council. Rather than specifying types of projects and activities, the law allows and encourages LJURA and other urban renewal authorities in Colorado to maintain flexibility and exercise judgment in determining which projects and activities best achieve its goals.

The Colorado Urban Renewal Law (C.R.S. 31-25-101) governs LJURA and all the state's urban renewal authorities. It identifies the criteria under which an area can be found to be blighted and thus eligible for redevelopment using TIF. Under the law, urban renewal authorities can use TIF only when the blight criteria contained in the law are met.

LJURA's mission is the elimination of blighted areas through creative redevelopment in the TIF District. Before the authority may get involved in a project, the area first must be found to be blighted. A blighted area means an area which, in its present condition and use, has substantially and adversely affected or slowed the reasonable growth of the community, hindered the provision of decent housing, or constitutes a social liability to the community, and therefore is detrimental to the well-being of the citizens. The Colorado Urban Renewal Law delineates the requirements for determining blight, and if blight is not found, LJURA cannot get involved.

The La Junta Urban Renewal Authority meets on the fourth Thursday of each month at 4pm, 601 Colorado Avenue. Before completing this application, please make certain that your schedule permits you to attend all or most of the meetings.

We are looking for vibrant, civic-minded members of the community. We encourage creative, analytical thinkers who can argue a good point and convince others or concede to the consensus of the Commission with good will.

The applications can be obtained from Melanie Scofield, mscofield@lajuntacolorado.org or Cynthia Nieb, cynthia.nieb@lajuntacolorado.org Please complete all of the contact information and the questions and return to Melanie Scofield, City of La Junta, City Clerk, 601 Colorado Avenue, PO Box 489, La Junta, CO 81050, melanie.scofield@lajuntacolorado.org. If you have questions, please contact Cynthia

Nieb at 303-518-8261, cynthia.nieb@lajuntacolorado.org We can include your application the board packet if you send it to Melanie on the third Thursday of the month. You are required to attend the LJURA meeting on the fourth Thursday of the month at 4:00pm to be interviewed and considered for the Board. Thank you for applying!

APPLICATION INFORMATION AND QUESTIONS

Date: July 5, 2023

First and Last Name: Erin Monroy

Address: 1416 Lincoln Ave, La Junta

Telephone Number: 720-308-9074

Email Address: erinmonroy@gmail.com

1. What do you know about Urban Renewal Authorities?

- URAs assist towns in eliminating blighted areas. URAs use TIF to fund redevelopment of blighted areas. I feel like URAs powers are pretty broad - they can plan and implement redevelopment, they can acquire, sell, and lease property, and when needed they do have the power to exercise eminent domain. Because their powers are broad, I have seen that they can get a bad name or be accused of misappropriation of funds. I feel like educating the community on what the local URA is and what it does is an important part of what a URA does.

2. What do you think the Authority should focus on now and in the future (must reflect the directives of the state statute)?

- Increase the vibrancy of downtown La Junta.
 - o Related; figure a plan to increase occupancy of downtown buildings. Increase density; buildings should be mixed-use instead of sitting empty.
- Save and restore any and all historic buildings.
- Help to create a variety of new jobs to attract/retain residents.
 - o Related; create new sources of tax revenue to help support and sustain the town.
- Create more housing options.
- Maintain a balance between healthy, needed redevelopment and not "providing another finance mechanism for developers" (<https://pagetwo.completicolorado.com/2023/04/11/bill-aims-to-restrict-agricultural-land-urban-renewal-areas/>)

3. Why do you think you are a good choice for this position?

I am civic-minded, I have a strong desire to learn and serve the community, and I have a deep appreciation for beauty including historic buildings and architecture. I am also both creative and analytical; in fact, on my most recent employee evaluation, I received the comment, "Erin is analytical and extremely fastidious. Her work quality is without question."

To me, civic-minded means not only caring about my community, but having the desire to learn more about how my community functions. I think it is also taking a look at my actions, taking responsibility for those actions and seeing how my actions can affect those around me. Taking

responsibility for what I put out into the world and being intentional on continually growing and being better. I think you can be civic-minded about anything that you take to heart and care about making better, and by thinking about how your actions can affect everyone. Civics can be something practiced constantly, not just a subject to learn in school.

I have a drive and passion to learn. Since I have moved here to La Junta, I have spent countless hours researching the town – its history, its buildings, its citizens, its leaders, its problems, its climate, its plants and animals... the list goes on (and this is just in my free time). This in itself is civic-minded because I want to learn as much about the town as possible so I can be as mindful as I can and try to let the past inform future decisions and actions.

I have also spent many hours researching LJURA, CLG, TIF, EZ, SBDC, and any other acronym I could cram into my brain, to increase my knowledge and understanding. I have realized that not everyone researches things as I do, and so I can serve as a resource to help educate others on what LJURA does. My research has benefited me in connecting with the SBDC and several other resources to assist in starting my own business. I still have lots of room to learn because I don't feel like I have an actual understanding of TIF and how it works.

I believe in equality. Asking the simple question, "How does this/may this affect others?" ensures that we think about all citizens/all demographics and how they can be given equal access and equal opportunities to affirm their individual rights. I feel part of a URA's responsibility is to identify underserved areas - this goes along with equality - so not just the affluent have access to resources.

Even though I have only lived in La Junta for a little over a year, I care deeply about the town and its residents. I want the town to continue to be revitalized and grow. I want my kids to grow up here and stay here and continue to invest in their community.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Best regards,

Erin Monroy

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APPLICATION INFORMATION AND QUESTIONS

Date: 7/10/2023

First and Last Name: Norberto Villanueva

Address: 709 Edison Ave. La Junta CO 81050

Telephone Number: 719-453-8690

Email Address: axiomrealteam@protonmail.com

1. What do you know about Urban Renewal Authorities?

Urban Renewal Authorities are corporate bodies organized to effect the physical development of their respective municipalities to urban renewal projects to “eliminate and prevent the development or spread of slums and blight.”

2. What do you think the Authority should focus on now and in the future (must reflect the directives of the state statute)?

- a. Revitalization of the downtown corridor to invigorate trade and create employment opportunities.
- b. Perform outreach to property owners to help redevelop and/or acquire those suffering from deterioration and/or dilapidation.
- c. Identify and earmark historical properties for preservation and/or repurposing

3. Why do you think you are a good choice for this position?

An extensive background in sales, finance, and development gained from over 25 years of experience in real estate mortgage loan origination, sales, and development, I possess significant skill sets that will serve the community well.