

OTTAWA PORT DISTRICT
MINUTES OF REGULAR MEETING OF NOVEMBER 18, 2016

ROLL CALL

Keith Conrad called a regular meeting of the Port District to order at City Hall on November 18, 2016 at 8:00 a.m. with the following board members present: Keith Conrad, William Franklin, Jr., Charles Sheridan, Mark Stoudt, Katie Troccoli and John Stone. Also present were Boyd Palmer, Reed Wilson, David Noble and Rich Burton.

MINUTES

Minutes from October 21, 2016 meeting were presented and approved by unanimous vote following a motion by William Franklin, Jr. and second by Charles Sheridan.

COMMUNICATIONS

Invoices were received from Ottawa Area Chamber of Commerce and a domain name provider.

TREASURERS REPORT

Katie Troccoli reported that there is \$736.39 in checking and \$9,550.45 in savings. The billing of the Chamber of Commerce for \$295.00 was approved on motion of John Stone and second by William Franklin Jr. A billing for a domain name was tabled for later consideration.

CITIZEN COMMENTS

Boyd Palmer provided updates as to a recent successful retention meeting held with himself, Dave Noble and the managers of Petsmart and MBL. Boyd shared about his meeting with the regional manager of Farm and Fleet, who is pleased with the store's success. The pet food and candy areas will be expanded, and the site is on list for outside renovation within the next few years. Boyd spoke about a recent power outage in the northern retail district, which has been an ongoing problem. Immediately following the outage, calls were made to Ameren and a sit down meeting is planned with Ameren and seven companies most affected by the outage.

Boyd shared news that the Project Pillar, which had been shopping for a location to move 500 manufacturing jobs has decline the Ottawa site and all sites in Illinois. Per their statement, all Illinois sites were eliminated due to the cost profile being too great vs. other states. The project manager did share their belief that the Ottawa industrial park did not offer enough possibilities but was impressed with the strength of Ottawa's presentation.

Reed provided updates on the buildings downtown in various stages of sale. The completion of roadways in the downtown Ottawa area should help the downtown area. Reed noted the Cris Kringle Market will be December 10-11 and will feature vendor filled German made huts. If it is successful, the market will be expanded to several weeks long. Ottawa is working with LouDog for a craft beer festival next year. Reed further spoke about the America Duchess, an all suite luxury ship, which will be outfitted to add IL River to its current list of cruise lines. The IL River cruise will feature six stops, the last one being Ottawa. It will dock at the west end of Allen Park. Heritage Harbor has also had its best year thus far selling real estate. Heritage Harbor is also active in marketing both real and rental property.

Reed commented that MCAT and other regional public transportation are struggling despite MCAT now being Medicaid qualified. Lack of State of Illinois payments are a part of the problem. Reed commented that the EDC is working on the website to start to promote the area. Board members commented that the Port District's website is not currently linked to the City's website and other sites where the Port District should have a presence.

Dave noted the city had the most residential construction it has had in a long time. Inspections have taken place or are scheduled on Novak's veterinary clinic, Verizon, CVS, Dairy Queen and Holiday Inn. Dave and Reed also commented on slow progress in working on the Central School environmental remediation.

MEMBER REPORTS

William Franklin, Jr. had no update on the Multimodal Project. He expects the vendor retained by the group to prepare the report has not been paid due to lack of State of Illinois payments.

Katie Troccoli spoke of her concerns about the railroad which were table to later in the meeting.

Keith noted he spoke with Jeff Heimsoth and will provide further update at the next meeting regarding the dry stack building project and possible involvement of the port district

OLD BUSINESS

Keith Conrad introduced discussion regarding railroads and switching yards for the railroads in the Ottawa area. He commented about the possibility of a switching yard near Silica so that switching does not take place near Route 23 and Champlain Streets.

Dave Noble presented a map and spoke about logistics of the current trains. At current, the railroad has to make 10 different trips through Ottawa to make one train. Dave is exploring options for a switching area directly at and near the Silica facility which could serve both the CSX and Railnet. Such a facility would require a new I&M Canal crossing near the old Canal Lock. Much further work is needed with engineering. Letters of intent would be needed from both US Silica, CSX, and Railnet. Work would then need to begin with DNR. The Port District could potentially help with financing or grant work. David expressed concern that the project not increase rail traffic across the Route 23, Champlain Street, or Boyce Memorial Drive.

ADJOURN

There being no further reports or business, the meeting was adjourned at about 9:00 a.m. upon motion of Katie Troccoli and second by Charles Sheridan and unanimous oral vote. The next regular meeting of the district will be December 16, 2016.