

During its March 9 meeting, the Auburn Community Redevelopment Authority heard about several ongoing and potential projects.

Regarding previously approved CRA rehabilitation projects, Terri Bishop reported that Auburn Plumbing & Heating and Edward Jones would soon be ready for their inspections and will request approval of funding at the next CRA meeting.

CRA Chairman Dennis Wittmann and City Clerk Sherry Heskett have been working with CRA attorney Marc Abbott involving the proposed expansion of the TIF Project Area 1, which basically extends about two blocks wide from south of the old middle school to Crestview Shopping Center on the city's south side.

### BPW Won't Use TIF Funds

Richard Schneider, Board of Public Works Chairman, discussed an account entitled Northwest Sanitary Sewer which was designated years ago to receive \$60,000 in Tax Increment Financing. However, the Northwest Sanitary Sewer Project never became a reality. Schneider said the utility's legal counsel has advised that the BPW's consideration for accepting TIF money was a legal matter and if the BPW accepted the \$60,000 from the CRA it could jeopardize the utility's funding on its Sixth Street Sewer Project. Therefore, the BPW cannot accept the funds due to the risk of losing other federal funds which it is receiving. He added that the BPW will provide a written explanation as to why they cannot legally accept the CRA funds. Wittmann said Abbott is working on the situation and will resolve any concerns as to where funds from the Northwest Sanitary Sewer Account can be used. Also, JEO Consulting Group is preparing a map of the area involved.

### Possibility of Library Receiving Funds Questioned

Kendall Neiman thanked the CRA members for the work which they do. He also had questions about funds designated for the Northwest Sanitary Sewer project possibly being used instead for a library expansion/remodeling project that has been in the planning and fund raising stages for several years.

During the February 16th CRA meeting, Dick Hahn with the Auburn Memorial Library Board presented a proposal that the money currently available in the Northwest Sanitary Sewer Account be designated to the library project if the CRA determines that to be a suitable alternate use for the roughly \$100,000 currently in the account.

Neiman questioned the use of CRA monies by an entity that doesn't pay taxes. Instead, he suggested such money would be best used by parties that contribute towards the TIF bucket. "The library is a worthy cause, but are you opening a 'can of worms' if you give them funding? Could this funding be better used to bring in industry to our area or by job creation?" he asked "In my mind, the library addition is not what TIF funds are supposed to do. I'm not against the library expansion project. They [library officials] have other means to raise money," Neiman said.

### South Auburn Project

Mary Kruger told the CRA, "I don't believe contributing to the library is what this TIF money is intended for either." Instead, she had a proposal for CRA monies to help with a revitalization

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effort around the Nemaha County Courthouse area.

During her presentation, Kruger requested money for a South Auburn project and also asked if there is a form to complete to be considered to receive TIF funding. She mentioned a plan created years ago by Marty Shukert which included new sidewalks and lighting for the courthouse area. Kruger noted that at that time each lighting fixture would cost about \$2,000 and she would be willing to approach citizens to request donations for this part.

Kruger added that South Auburn has a lot of history and she has visited with many of the business people in the area who would like to see some infrastructure improvements. She again asked if there is an application form so this project can move forward.

CRA member Darrell Kruse said, "We need to include everyone in South Auburn in a meeting with the CRA and the BPW to discuss projects and how to move forward." Kruger will look into finding a date, time and place for this meeting.

Wittmann discussed a project proposed by Rich Wilson. He also said there was some concern about the TIF area map available during the earlier phases, but right now there is no funding available 'in the bucket'. Wittmann indicated he would write to Wilson acknowledging receipt of his letter and note that at this time there are no funds available.

April 13 Next Regularly Scheduled Meeting

The next CRA meeting is scheduled for noon on Tuesday, April 13 at Auburn City Hall.

Edwin Johnson wasn't present for this month's meeting.