

- I. **Call to Order:** The RDA meeting was called to order at 4:00 p.m. with **Gus Olympidis** convening and noting that there will be no voting today since Chairman **John Clark** was not physically present.
- II. **Roll Call:** Present: Harley Snyder, Howard Cohen, Gus Olympidis, Lou Martinez, Ned Ruff and Bill Joiner. John Clark was present via telephone. All members were present constituting a quorum.
- III. **Approval of Minutes:** **Gus Olympidis** requested approval of minutes from the previous meeting. On a motion by **Bill Joiner** and a second by **Howard Cohen**, the minutes of March 28, 2006 were approved.
- IV. **Report of Chair:** Chairman **John Clark** attended the meeting via conference call. There was not a report from the Chairman for this meeting but will have a complete report at our next scheduled board meeting.
- V. **Treasurer's Report:** **Howard Cohen** provided an overview of the Treasurer's Report. It was announced that the RDA currently has \$6,856,427.11 in the bank invested in a variety of interest-bearing accounts. Monthly expenses so far for April were announced. On a motion by **Bill Joiner** and a second by **Harley Snyder**, the Treasurer's Report was approved.
- VI. **Working Group Report:**
 - a. **Ethics Update:** **Gus Olympidis** reported that the status of the ethic's issue has remained the same since the March 28, 2006 meeting. He will have more to report on for the May 9, 2006 meeting.
Tim Sanders announced that the RDA has accepted the State Ethics Commission's recommendation. The RDA standards will be those of the State of Indiana.
 - b. **Marketing and Image Development:** **Howard Cohen** expressed the importance of having an RDA brochure to disperse to people, possibly to answer any questions. This is a key marketing piece. **H. Cohen**, **G. Olympidis**, and **L. Martinez** have sent information to **T. Sanders** on what should go into the brochure. **T. Sanders** has met with a graphic designer and presented the ideas of the above three board members. The price of the brochures is between \$1,200 and \$4,000. **H. Cohen** wants a rough draft of the brochure by the next meeting to discuss text and design. **T. Sanders** passed around example brochures that he received from the graphic designer.
 - c. **By-Law Discussion:** **Ned Ruff** reported on the by-laws. He and Dave Hollenbeck have not had a chance as of yet to discuss the by-laws. **N. Ruff** will have more to report on by the next meeting that is scheduled for May 9, 2006.

Bill Joiner reported on the Accounting Audit Report. The Request for Proposals for accounting services was made public on March 20, 2006. The deadline was April 10, 2006. The RDA has received four proposals from local accounting firms. The Accounting Working Group will receive copies of each proposal for review and meet to consider the proposals and make a recommendation to the RDA board. A recommendation is expected at the May 9th RDA board meeting.
- VII. **Phase I Planning Document Discussion:**
Tim Sanders reported on the Phase I Planning document. He explained that Phase I entails the hiring of a consultant for overall strategic plan offered by the RDA. It is necessary to get a long range plan done. This plan needs to target timeline and budget, the return on

investment, the projected or expected need for an ongoing subsidy and any projected or expected federal matching funds. It was suggested the NIRPC look at their plan that **Bill Sheldrake** is going to complete. **B. Sheldrake** can deal with the above mentioned targeted items. If **B. Sheldrake** can address the targeted items, the RDA can come up with an overall strategic plan more quickly less expensively. The money is available but the RDA has until July 7, 2006 for it to be approved. No decision has been made but there is a planning working group. **T. Sanders** wants to meet with the group shortly and hopes it meets the needs.

- **Ned Ruff's** initial thought was that this can not be a full plan and pointed out the land-use planning should be contained in it.
- **Lou Martinez** wants all the different economic models to use the same data.
- **Ned Ruff** wants a RFQ (Request for Qualifications).
- **Harley Snyder** wants the working group to develop a timeline for the different stages for looking at out plan. He stressed the quality but does not want to wait until 2008.
- **T. Sanders** - spoke with Chuck Shalio about a timeline already and foresees no problem with the arrangement.
- **Gus Olympidis** wants to produce a report ASAP. He wants an interim plan to be followed by a more comprehensive plan.
- **Harley Snyder** - the public has an interest in RDA work and will be appreciated more if we get this done in a timely fashion.

VIII. Action Items

a. *Regional Bus Authority Request:*

Tim Sanders reported on the Regional Bus Authority's request. The RBA needs \$125,000 to the region-wide study. The FDA requires that the RBA have funding in hand. The RBA wants \$37,500 in hand by April 21 (or around that time). A copy of the agreement can be found the meeting packet. **Lou Martinez** said that the negotiations will decide out metrics. **T. Sanders** reminded everyone that at the last RDA board meeting, the board approved a request from the RBA for \$200,000 over the next two years to provide administrative support for the Authority. The remaining \$100,000 of their request was contingent upon a negotiation between the RDA and the RDA. **T. Sanders** met with NIRPC and concluded that the expenses are appropriate. The RDA will receive quarterly updates regarding the administrative expenses as the study continues. **T. Sanders** recommends that the RDA agree to fund the RBA in the amount of \$37,500 beginning on or about April 21, 2006. This date follows an RBA board meeting and is the first date they will have the authority to open a bank account so they can receive money. **T. Sanders** recommends at the next board meeting, an approval of an additional \$120,000 that the RBA is asking for be made. One eighth of the \$300,000 will be distributed quarterly. Writing a check in the amount of \$37,500 would start the process.

- **Ned Ruff** - are getting a report?
- **T. Sanders** - we will have the opportunity to speak with the RBA whenever we want and they will send us quarterly invoices.

- On the topic of ethics, **Dennis Rittenmeyer** has every intention to embrace the State's ethics code and is expected to do that shortly. The result of this can be found in the Director's report.

IX. Executive Director's Report:

Tim Sanders asked the board if he can have permission to write the RBA a check for \$37,500.

Harley Snyder – Only if the Attorney General's office approves prior distribution of funds.

Tim Sanders asked the board to approve the remaining \$100,000 at the next meeting.

Gordon White (*Attorney General's office*) needs to agree to an agreement and does not have the finished document yet.

Tim Sanders wants to use the document in the packet.

Gordon White will get the Attorney General's document done as soon as possible.

Gus Olympidis – we can do this at the next meeting.

Howard Cohen – Does this apply to staffing? We might be delaying the RBA. Can the Chairman and **Tim Sanders** sign off on the money?

Members of the Board – want to review document first.

Howard Cohen – does not want to delay the RBA.

John Clark – this has already been decided upon.

Gordon White – can circulate document to members ahead of time for review.

Howard Cohen – when the document is done, can we give it to **Tim Sanders**? **Tim Sanders** can then circulate the document to the board members and then approve it.

Ned Ruff – this violates the open door policy. This is something that needs to be approved at a public meeting.

Gordon White – agrees.

Approval of contract will take place at the next RDA board meeting, May 9, 2006.

Gordon White – if changes need to be made to the contract, this also needs to take place at a public forum.

Tim Sanders – Theoretically, this can be a four-month process.

Lou Martinez – wants a discussion on what the steps are after a proposal has been approved.

X. Public Comments:

Jon Costas, Mayor of Valparaiso, is very excited about the commuter railway in Valparaiso.

Craig Phillips gave a presentation on Village Station, Transit-Oriented Development Planning. Highlights from the presentation were that Village Station is a catalyst for bringing new rail line to NW Indiana and Valparaiso and this will bring an increase in quality of life for Valpo residents.

XI. Adjournment: On a motion by **Ned Ruff** and a second by **Howard Cohen**, the meeting was adjourned.