

Russiaville Redevelopment Commission (TIF Board)

Regular Board Meeting

3/27/2025

Present: Myrna Claar, Mark Fulk, Rick Homkes, Cindy Hurst (via phone), Kevin Johnson, Ned Sutherland

Absent: None

Guest(s): Mark DuBois, Scott Gaskins, Lynn Hale, Darlene Homkes, Jill Newby, Jon Newlin, Natalie Newlin, Don Parvin, Greg Stephens, Kyle Zahn, Barrett Bates, Lori Seaman

Start: 18:00

Topics

Welcome

- The meeting was opened by President Mark Fulk, who stated the purpose of the meeting get input on how to move Russiaville forward, making a better community. He also stated that this is the first meeting that would be testing the new recording and streaming system.
- As a prelude, Mark F outlined improvement projects (both accomplished and considered). These included ES town signage, decorative lighting on Main Street, NS town signage, crosswalks, generators, and a sidewalk on Kinsey.

Group Discussion

- Greg started the meeting discussion with a request as to how TIF areas affect schools. Rick responded with a short summary and offered to go over more information outside of the meeting.
- Darlene stated that an improved community is linked to improved schools. She then said how important safe walks (sidewalks) are to protect everyone from P-K to seniors
- Ned asked that the entire community work together. He defined a “third space” and stated how such spaces are needed in a community. He then listed three items that he believed should be worked on. These are a safe walk to school (part of the broader Cloverleaf Trail plan) and local assisted living options for seniors.
- Jill discussed the Inclusive Playground project at Community Center Park and how it would be good for the community. The Park & Tree Board raised \$325K for the project and then applied for a grant from the State of Indiana. Jill was very happy to announce that a \$325K matching grant had been approved by the state. This money would be spent on the playground, shelter, and restroom. She also stated that it was important to continue improvements to the Town Park and to the Trail.

- Mark F discussed how the Town had plans for a subdivision north of the Western Heights subdivision and how some water (and fire hydrant) and access points have already been done.
- Don discussed how the Town has purchased five acres north of the current waste water treatment plant in hopes of building a new and expanded plant on that property. He also outlined how new LED street lights around the town have saved money in energy costs. Lastly he stated that he believes the biggest problem is volunteers and the related need to focus on getting your organizations started.
- Mark D started by stating the community and schools are very connected and that “A thriving school = a thriving community.” He also mentioned the need for an eating place in the town and how this would help make the town a place where people would want to stop and stay. He announced that the Western HS Jazz Group had just won state. Discussion then went to the building behind the Dollar General. This could be a place for the bus garage and a vocational welding program. He reminded people that Western Schools employs 400 people. Lastly he asked the TIF/RRC Board to spend money on big projects that would have a lasting impact, not on a set of small projects.
- Rick added to that by stating while not all projects could be big, it would be important that even small projects be part of a big theme. His example was signage, which shows the town is still thinking of improvements in image and how people think about the Town. Lastly he repeated an earlier comment on the need for senior housing options so that people could stay in Russiaville as they age.
- Jon asked that the board and the community not just try to bring people into the community, but support them once they are here.
- Don brought up the old Doctors Clinic on Main Street and how it has been empty for some time.
- Kyle brought up that the school has a \$40 million budget and there has to be concern over how a new TIF district could impact the schools, especially in the current political climate.

Closing

- Mark F thanked all who came and contributed to the discussion. The Board will now think about all that was said and how it could be incorporated in a plan to make a better Russiaville. He made a request for motion to adjourn. Approved unanimously.
- Meeting ended at 19:03.

Next Meeting

- The next meeting will be the fourth Thursday of April, 4/24/2025, at 18:00.

rlh