

**City of Madras  
Madras Redevelopment Commission  
Official Meeting Minutes  
October 18, 2011**

**I. Call to Order**

The Madras Redevelopment Commission's (MRC) regular meeting was called to order by Chair, Councilor Tom Brown at 5:32 p.m. on Tuesday, October 18, 2011 in the Madras City Council Chambers.

**Members in Attendance:**

Chair City Councilor, Tom Brown; Vice Chair Mayor, Melanie Widmer; City Councilor Kevin O'Meara; Commissioners: Doeshia Jacobs, Doug Lofting, and Patty Woll.

**Members Absent:**

Blanca Reynoso

**There was one vacancy**

**Staff Members in Attendance were:**

Community Development Department: Director Nick Snead and Specialist Tammy McHaney; City Administrator Mike Morgan; Assistant City Administrator/PW Director Gus Burrell; Chief of Police Tom Adams and Assistant Chief of Police Tanner Stanfill; Finance Director Kathy Snyder.

**II. Consent Agenda**

- a. Adoption of Agenda
- b. Approval of Vouchers
- c. Approval of Minutes from September 20, 2011

Director Snead requested a change to the agenda and asked to add the invoice request from Madras Bowl Phase II.

**A MOTION TO APPROVE THE CONSENT AGENDA WITH CHANGES WAS MADE BY VICE CHAIR MAYOR WIDMER AND SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER PATTY WOLL. THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**III. Visitor Comments**

There were no visitor comments.

**IV. MADRAS BOWL PAYMENT REQUEST**

Director Snead presented his staff report with pictures. He noted the pictures reflected the work had been completed and explained that the invoice for \$27,066.27 would fully draw down the Madras Bowl funds that had been allocated.

**COMMISSIONER COUNCILOR KEVIN O'MEARA MOTIONED TO APPROVE THE PAYMENT TO MADRAS BOWL.**

Chair Councilor Brown pointed out the difference in the invoices and the request for payment and assumed Madras Bowl was responsible for that difference.

**THE MOTION WAS SECONDED BY COMMISSION DOUG LOFTING.**

Commissioner Councilor O'Meara clarified that this was a final payment for this phase.

Director Snead noted this was the last payment for all phases.

**THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**V. Report on Street Trees – Jon Burchell**

Supervisor Burchell introduced himself and noted in 2008 he took over supervision of the City of Madras parks in addition to the golf course. He provided a brief description of his activities. In the spring of 2009, the downtown trees had received major pruning which raised the canopy to approximately six or seven feet to allow pedestrian clear passage.

He said he had been monitoring unhealthy trees and trying to let the trees grow tall but he had received calls from multiple businesses on the north side of Highway 97 between B Street and C Street in 2010, so a minor pruning had been conducted to expose commercial business signs. In 2011 they continued pruning and monitoring unhealthy trees, removed the “suckers”, provided more minor pruning to maintain the canopy clearance, removed the dead and/or dying branches and made irrigation repairs.

He said without the help of the Urban Forestry Commission (UFC) this type of maintenance on the trees would not be possible. He explained the UFC was an advisory group with a management plan created in 1993; made up of volunteers that trimmed, planted and approved all the trees. He said he took his approach from them.

He noted the UFC had taken a walk downtown and provided a picture by picture explanation of street trees. He noted that some of the trees had been badly pruned in their early years, some had damage from car doors and vandalism and some were just planted in the wrong place.

He provided pictures of trees and awnings; some of them existed together and some had conflict. He spoke on the overhead utility lines and noted that some of the trees had been “topped” which really stunted their growth. He said that the UFC was very interested in burying overhead lines underground. He noted his philosophy was to let the trees grow.

He informed the Commission that the UFC had agreed some minor pruning on some of the odd growing branches was needed; they had agreed to map and identify trees in the downtown corridor and keep an ongoing record of the types of trees and their growth. He said they would like to replace the wrong type of trees with the right type of trees because the right tree in the right place with patience would make all the difference twenty five years later. He noted the hardest thing for people was waiting that long, but with the proper sun/shade and traffic being

considered the trees should excel. He said it was a good thing to diversify the types of trees because if disease or insect attacked, all trees would not be lost.

He suggested the MRC use the UFC when designing new facades because they could identify the right type of tree for that location. He told them that a major pruning would be done in the fall of 2012 and minor pruning would be done in the spring.

Commissioner Lofting questioned the UFC's opinion of the trees along 5<sup>th</sup> Street in front of the old Stag Restaurant.

Supervisor Burchell said the majority of the Commission thought that every tree needed to be pruned, some majorly and some minor. Overall, they were impressed with the trees and thought they were healthy even though lateral branches needed to be pruned.

Commissioner Lofting asked if there were overhead problems.

Supervisor Burchell replied no and said the only overhead problems were at "Spiffy" car wash.

Chair Councilor Brown pointed out that the branches of the trees on the block of the old Stag Restaurant were almost tall enough to go beyond the commercial signs and awnings.

Supervisor Burchell noted that every city faces this same dilemma.

Commissioner Lofting questioned sidewalk damage.

Supervisor Burchell said there was no sidewalk damage except for the older maples as noted in the picture and that the damage was minimal. He pointed out those trees were located outside the downtown corridor; had been planted without irrigation; had been watered by truck and were planted in too small of a square. He said those types of trees would not be planted in the downtown corridor in the future.

He mentioned the City's current design to plant a tree was changing. The base area is larger, different grates (which are being traded out) and the bricks are permeable for water and air so the roots did not have to rise.

Commissioner Jacobs asked if the UFC would recommend larger grates for the trees by "Spiffy" car wash.

Supervisor Burchell noted that was definitely an option the UFC had discussed.

Administrator Morgan stated that the City had discussed working with the prison's welding class to make decorative wrought iron fences to avoid car doors from damaging tree trunks.

Commissioner Jacobs asked if the UFC had considered removing those trees.

Supervisor Burchell said no, however there was one located by the physical therapy office that was hazardous because it was severely damaged. He noted that trees take a long time to die or even show they were having problems.

Commissioner Jacobs asked if the UFC thought the downtown trees were healthy.

Supervisor Burchell replied yes.

Administrator Morgan asked him to explain the inappropriately “topped” trees and how that retarded the trees growth which then prohibited the “umbrella” development.

Supervisor Burchell said that the “dominant atypical maristem” has to be determined in the very early stages of the trees life because it will be the leader branch. All other branches would follow. Once the mairstem was compromised, the other branches tried to become the leader, then the tree has a hard time growing up, it grew out.

Chair Councilor Brown suggested the MRC really rethink awnings. He used the old “World of Treasures” as an example. He noted those awnings were built too far out and were interfering with the street trees.

Supervisor Burchell noted that some cities build special type awnings that allow the trees to grow.

Commissioner Councilor O’Meara asked if cars were damaging the trees by the “Sonic” restaurant on the north side of town.

Supervisor Burchell said the trees had been cut. He said he could not confirm, but he thought it had been an ODOT employee. He had been notified that someone in an orange vest had cut down four or five trees on purpose and left the trees on the ground. He assumed the trees had been blocking the highway signs.

Administrator Morgan requested Supervisor Burchell send those pictures to him and he would look into this because the MRC had paid for all of the landscaping at the North “Y” during that realignment.

Supervisor Burchell noted that ODOT had, “signed off” on the landscaping plan for the realignment. He wished they had come to the City first because he would have looked at selectively cutting the branches to expose the signs.

Director Snead bestowed his appreciation to Supervisor Burchell for his efforts. He noted that the UFC were people who genuinely cared about the trees and were willing to work with the MRC.

## **VI. Five Year Work Plan**

Chair Councilor Brown welcomed new member, Rob Berg and stated that he, Commissioner Berg and Director Snead had attended a well presented down town conference in Baker City.

The Commission welcomed Commissioner Berg.

Director Snead began the discussion on the five year work plan and provided a power point presentation that showed the Commission what they had accomplished in regards to their Urban

Renewal Action Plan. He said the primary goal was to remove blight through property acquisition and restoration (Juniper Auto); façade improvements; financial assistance for public benefit; public/private partnerships for leveraging funds.

He said that they should evaluate what had been done and its effectiveness, look at future projects and make it all fit into the budget. He reminded them of their Urban Renewal Action Plan and how it had been created out of public meetings. He pointed out the strategic projects as a result of those meeting. Some of projects were out of the MRC's purview such as the mitigation of the Willow Creek flood way.

Administrator Morgan explained that the City of Madras had petitioned the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) to remap the flood zone in Madras, however the City was told that would not occur for roughly twenty years. He suspected the data would show the actual flood way similar to the current mapped area anyway. As result, the City created a Flood Mitigation Plan which allowed 126 homes to qualify for flood insurance. Prior to this plan, those homes did not qualify. He mentioned a FEMA program where they would purchase the development rights on properties in the flood zone which removed any future development on that particular lot.

Director Snead concluded by summarizing their accomplishments.

Commissioner Jacobs mentioned Cross Keys, because it was not listed.

Administrator Morgan also mentioned the Sahalle Park expansion, the blight removal as well as the B Street improvement.

Director Snead stated everything was not listed but noted the larger message was that since the MRC's inception in 2003, a lot of projects had been accomplished. He said he had listed the top twenty projects that had been identified by community members in that public meeting. He noted that fourteen projects had been accomplished and that a lot of progress had been made.

He said there was a level of assumption, but he wanted to make sure the Commission wanted to forge ahead with their plan and include the public and private sector for partnerships. He also assumed they wanted to build on key redevelopment efforts and continue the downtown synergy.

He said property taxes would grow and in 2011 their line of credit would be converted into long term financing which would incur cost, but needed to happen. He said there would be monies left over and the discussion should be on what they wanted to accomplish in capital projects in the downtown area for revitalization.

Commissioner Councilor O'Meara questioned the six projects that had not yet been completed.

Administrator Morgan provided a brief history on the original plan and noted that the MRC had hired Walker Macy consultants, to create this plan. He noted that some of the projects listed would always be on going such as sidewalks, marketing area attraction and outdoor recreation (deferred to the Jefferson County Madras Chamber of Commerce) as well as improving and cleaning up business signage (resulted in hiring Cathy Corliss to update the ordinance that created the Commercial 2 zone.)

He said some of the projects listed were not the MRC's responsibility such as allowing and/or encouraging housing on the east side of Madras.

He referred to the development of a new city hall/police station (civic facility downtown) and noted this would be discussed later in the meeting. He continued and noted that getting prison employees to live in town could not be required nor could tax incentives occur, but he did suggest a business incentive program that would also be discussed later in the meeting.

He referred to "streamlining the permit process" and noted that would always be an ongoing issue because the turn around time depended on the level of development going on. If there were a lot of development occurring, applications would take longer to process.

He continued on to a performing arts center and movie theater request. The movie theater had been built but not a performing arts center. He referred to the project of improving school perception, which the MRC could not do, but he thought the school district had gone a long way in that direction in hiring Rick Molitor. He said they were trying to make some changes and working on other issues.

The list had a "swimming pool" which had been built but without MRC funds; the City had provided \$25,000 startup money for three years with the County providing similar assistance.

He said that "Maximizing public use of school/recreation facilities" was occurring at the old Westside Elementary building as it was being converted into a community center utilized by several agencies; again not part of the MRC.

Connecting parks with trails and sidewalks was really being accomplished. He noted that a lot of the projects were not the MRC's direct undertaking, but a result of the investment by the MRC's plan. Last project listed was mitigating Willow Creek flood way thru town.

Commissioner O'Meara said it seemed that sidewalks and the flood plain were the projects that had received the least amount of attention.

Administrator Morgan noted the flood zone was a federal law and the City could not change the flood way itself, so the solution was to build intellectual resources and steer people away from the issues associated with the flood way.

Commissioner O'Meara reminded them that the Council had discussed cleaning out some of the flood way.

Director Burrell responded and noted with the help of the prison crew they were able to "clean" the area but a "root removal" process was not an option. Approvals from multiple Federal Agencies were required to deepen and widen the creek and that was not easy to acquire.

He noted the local Water Shed Council had been working on upstream sedimentation but a major analysis, acquisition and dredging was needed. At this time everything that could be done was being done. He said the plan over time, would be to move people out of that area and create a "green belt".

Administrator Morgan referred to the “flood zone” on the map and explained that in the “flood way” no redevelopment could occur. In the “flood plain” zone once the flood level had been determined development could occur if they built one foot above that flood level.

He said the flood way was a small portion of the flood zone and noted the MRC could start purchasing those properties once they came on the market, remove the building, then the flood way was no longer an issue. He said it was not an uncommon practice for cities to place “remediation fees” on utility bills as an opportunity to acquire money to buy these properties and create a green way. He noted this option was a long term vision.

He explained that when FEMA had money in their budget (their money comes and goes), they buy “development rights” on lots within a flood way. Therefore, development could never occur again on that specific site. The MRC could turn that money around and buy the next lot and eventually create a green way. He referred to the “hump” property on 4<sup>th</sup> Street and noted those properties were bought and sold amicably and actually some of the property owners had approached the MRC to sell. He said if the MRC’s partners and leverages money, this could happen easily.

He provided a 10 year budget projection showing a contribution to the “Civic Plaza” that included a Police Station and City Hall. He explained that this spreadsheet showed the “bottom line” at the top. He reminded them that the original plan allowed them to spend \$14 million of principle to accomplish their action plan which included “a court house and city hall” both listed it as vital. He explained that 26% of these tax dollars, would have been distributed to the police department anyway had the MRC never been created.

He explained to the Commission how the property for the Police Station/City Hall had transpired and referred to his spreadsheet. He said the creator of the original plan, Charles Kupper had neglected to make the distinction between taxable assessed value and real market value and when you adjust those numbers, the projected was very close to reality.

He explained that the numbers in green (property tax revenue to MRC) were projected low and said should increase more than 3% based on the new movie theater as well as the proposed O’Reilly’s Auto Parts store.

Director Snead informed the Commission that the real market value in residential zones had decreased due to foreclosures; in the commercial district, there were minimal foreclosures so there should not be a huge drop in the tax base.

Administrator Morgan noted the line of credit acquired in 2006, had an interest rate of a fraction of the prime rate (1.5%) and referred to the yellow line showing the approximate and appropriate time for a second line of credit.

He continued onto the expenses listed on the spreadsheet.

Commissioner Lofting pointed out for the record, the \$40,000 in the 2012 fiscal year for streets and infrastructure had not yet been voted on by the MRC.

Director Snead noted it was budgeted.

Commissioner Councilor O'Meara asked why the \$80,000 in debt service increase to \$200,000 in 2013.

Administrator Morgan noted that he had estimated high but that number would really depend on the interest rate.

Commissioner Councilor O'Meara asked if they must go to a bond at this point.

Administrator Morgan said yes and stated it should sell in March, which was good timing.

He referred to the line item "Building Improvement" (Business Assistance). He explained that recently, the Planning Commission had been working on a color palette for exterior commercial buildings due to the recent "red building" paint controversy. He said he was going to suggest to the Planning Commission, they remove them selves from the "paint enforcement" regarding exterior building colors and amend the ordinance to provide only general guidelines.

He told them that years ago, Commissioner Jacobs had suggested a paint program so he was suggesting the MRC create a "paint" grant program and provide micro loans to commercial businesses inside the MRC district to paint the exterior of their business. He suggested a \$2,500 grant and if the business accepted the grant, they must choose from that color palette the Planning Commission had created.

He said this would benefit everyone. The MRC could fund more programs, the business gets free paint and the community wins as a whole.

He then continued onto the new Police Station/City Hall and explained that \$4,000,000 was needed for construction. He said that each department had been paying "rent" into the general fund even though "rent" had stressed each department. He said that if this had started twenty years ago, the City could pay cash for the new building.

He requested \$1,100,000 from the Commission over the next twelve years. He noted their contribution was critical and referred to the spreadsheet. He explained that payments would "ramp" up to a payment of \$100,000 a year and then "ramp" back down to 0.

He noted during that time, the requested amount was actually less money than what the City would have received anyway if the MRC had not been created and that money would have been spent on the very same project.

He concluded and asked for questions.

Commissioner Berg asked if there were any other large projects waiting on funding other than the hotel/ theater and the unapproved street expense for \$40,000.

Director Snead no, except their debt that was listed.

Administrator Morgan said this was why urban renewal districts were the most powerful tools in any community and that this Commissions action plan was very well written.

Commissioner Jacobs said she thought it was important for the MRC to invest in the new city hall.

Commissioner Councilor O'Meara said he did not want to base a five year decision on one hour of discussion. He wanted to take time and think about it.

Commissioner Jacobs agreed, but she did not want to stop the momentum of all the good things the MRC had accomplished. She did however, request a nice building if the MRC chose to vote on supporting the city hall. She said that even if the funding took longer than proposed, this building was part of Madras and yes, the MRC had gone "go out on a limb" sometimes but everything had come together. She noted that some of the original Commissioners had participated because Madras had been ugly and now, the Commission had come a long way.

Commissioner Lofting noted that former MRC Commissioners had good foresight because the action plan was a good plan and still very viable. He noted on the list was a new City Hall/Civic Facility and he agreed the MRC should participate. He liked the location. He said the access was good and the project would have his approval to stay the course of the plan.

Chair Councilor Brown said he remembered the meeting at the Senior Center where over 100 people attended. He said it took a lot of work to get here, but everyone there wanted a new city hall and police station and it was their vision had been to locate it exactly where it was slated.

Commissioner Jacobs stated they probably would get some negative responses, but she felt she would be doing the right thing by putting money into the City Hall.

Vice Chair Mayor Widmer noted that Administrator Morgan had made a good point when he explained this money was money the City would have received anyway had the urban renewal district never been formed.

Commissioner Jacobs said she hoped the design was unique.

Chair Councilor Brown noted that good discussion had taken place and agreed with what was being proposed. He thought the Police Station/City Hall was a "given" and asked if a motion was needed.

Administrator Morgan requested a motion.

Commissioner Woll asked if the motion could include the approval of funding without an amount attached.

Administrator Morgan said the spreadsheet showed \$15,000 and should have stated \$50,000.

Commissioner Lofting asked for clarification.

Administrator Morgan explained the fiscal year 2012 was a typographical error and should be \$50,000.

**A MOTION WAS MADE BY VICE CHAIR MAYOR MELANIE WIDMER TO INCLUDE IN THE FIVE YEAR PLAN THE ITEMS NOTED, FINAL PAYMENTS TO**

**THE HOTEL, THE MOVIE THEATER, THE BUSINESS ASSISTANCE PROGRAM, BLIGHT REMOVAL AND THE CONTRIBUTION TO THE POLICE STATION/CITY HALL IN THE AMOUNT AS PRESENTED IN THE TEN YEAR BUDGET WITH THE CHANGE OF \$50,000 IN 2012 INSTEAD OF \$15,000.**

**COMMISSIONER DOESHIA JACOBS SECONDED THE MOTION AND THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**VII. Additional Discussion**

**a. Storm Drainage**

A discussion took place on storm drainage. Administrator Morgan explained that the the north bound side of the "couplet" was the worst and for the remaining businesses the City will be enhancing the area near the old "Stag" restaurant.

**b. South Highway 97 Sidewalks**

Director Burrell informed the Commission that on Tuesday October 25, 2011 from 5:00 pm to 7:00 pm there would be a meeting with the affected property owners regarding the South Highway 97 sidewalk improvements.

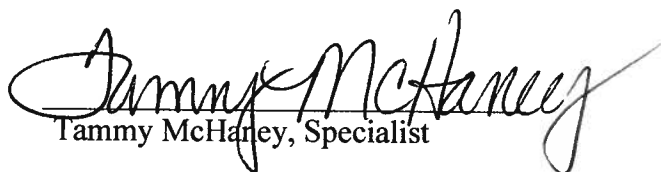
**c. Canyons East Ribbon Cutting Ceremony**

Director Snead noted the ribbon cutting ceremony for Canyons East would be held on October 21, 2011 on site at 12:00 p.m.

**VIII. Adjourn**

**The meeting adjourned at 8:06 p.m.**

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Tom Brown, Chair

  
Tammy McHarey, Specialist