

**Meeting Minutes**  
**State College Borough Council**  
**June 16, 2006**

The State College Borough Council met in a work session on Friday, June 16, 2006, in the State College Municipal Building Council Room, 243 South Allen Street, State College, Pennsylvania. Ms. Dauler called the meeting to order at 12:00 noon.

Present: Catherine G. Dauler, Council President  
Thomas E. Daubert  
Elizabeth A. Goreham  
Donald M. Hahn  
Craig R. Humphrey  
Jeffrey R. Kern  
Ronald Filippelli

Also present: Thomas J. Fountaine, Borough Manager; Thomas S. Kurtz, Assistant Borough Manager; Carl R. Hess, Director of Planning; Herman L. Slaybaugh, Zoning Officer; Mark A. Whitfield, Director of Public Works; Sheila Lubold, Recording Secretary; members of the media; and other interested members of the public.

Public Hour - Hearing of Citizens: There were no citizens present wishing to speak.

**Discuss Redevelopment Authority.** Mr. Fountaine explained a redevelopment authority (RDA) is a mechanism available to municipalities to facilitate community development. Redevelopment authorities are used by municipalities throughout the country to provide a mechanism to finance and manage redevelopment projects including economic development activity and housing projects.

Recently the Fraser Centre Steering Committee met to receive an update on the project and to discuss the increase in interest rates and cost of building supplies. Some concern was expressed concerning the need for other funding opportunities. These concerns were expressed to the DID Board and the Board took the concerns one step further and recommended that Council establish a RDA as a tool to be used to help facilitate the Fraser Centre.

Mr. Hess presented an overview of the establishment and powers of a redevelopment authority and explained the authority would facilitate the ability for Council to help with projects they think would benefit the community.

In 2004 state legislation was amended authorizing boroughs with a population of 10,000 or more to form RDAs and Council is responsible for taking action to establish the authority. Mr. Hess's presentation explained the process of forming the committee is straight forward and similar to the process taken to establish other authorities, boards, commissions and committees (ABCs). Council would enact an ordinance and incorporation documents would be filed with the state. Next the state would issue a Certificate of Incorporation at which time the Mayor would be able to appoint members. The authority would then prepare the by-laws and could begin operations.

Mr. Hess stated there are both advantages and disadvantages to establishing the Authority. Some advantages would be the flexibility in negotiating redevelopment contracts and the ability to control projects through the approval process. Council would have more flexibility in selling to a developer that meets the needs and wants of the Borough. Council would also be able to protect the public's interest in providing housing, commercial, retail and industrial redevelopment. Some disadvantages would be Council turning over some control of projects once the proposals and contracts were approved. Another disadvantage is the time needed for public process. Also, the authority would be an independent agency.

Mr. Hess also explained the redevelopment areas will be identified and certified by the Planning Commission and must conform to the comprehensive plan adopted by Council. The redevelopment area plan can include area boundaries, land use plan after development, proposed zoning or map changes, as well as other items. Once an area is certified for redevelopment the authority can hold hearings before finalizing proposals. The redevelopment proposal must conform to the redevelopment area plan, may include all or only a portion of the redevelopment area, and the authority can hold hearing on redevelopment proposal.

Council questioned what effects the formation of a RDA would have on the Fraser Centre project. Mr. Fountaine stated it would not affect the development and approval of the project but could affect the financing of the project.

Mr. Hahn stated he would hope the projects that are inappropriate for the Borough would be eliminated by zoning ordinances. Mr. Fountaine clarified the RDA would be able to negotiate with developers and would allow for more flexibility and a greater ability to undertake projects that follow the goals of the Borough.

Mr. Hess was asked if the same comprehensive plan that is currently being used for zoning would still be used. He stated it would be the same plan that is currently being used. The RDA could suggest rezoning changes but Council would still retain the authority to rezone a piece of property.

Mayor Welch felt the authority would be a useful tool to have if needed for use of future projects. Council questioned if the same staff members and solicitor would be used and how much staff time would be required for the RDA. Mr. Fountaine stated the Borough staff would also provide staff for the RDA and there is a possibility that additional staff would be needed in the future but Council would have to agree to any staff changes. If the RDA is doing its job the tax base will grow and there should not be a drain on resources. Mr. Hess added the authority could use its own counsel but could also use the Borough solicitor.

Council questioned if a member that is appointed to the authority has a direct interest in the property, would they be able to excuse themselves from the authority's decisions for that project. Mr. Fountaine said this issue is addressed in the agreement but there is a need for more clarification.

Ms. Dauler opened the meeting for comments from citizens.

Dave Lee, Chairman of the DID Board of Directors, stated the DID unanimously voted to ask Council to develop the RDA. In the opinion of the DID, the pros strongly outweigh the cons and they would like for Council to continue at a good pace to develop the authority.

Dolores Taricani, Vice-Chairperson of the DID Board of Directors, spoke about a personal situation in which her property was taken by eminent domain. She did not fight the process because she believed in the downtown and agrees that any tools that would be available for improvement of the downtown would be an asset.

Theresa Lafer, member of the Community Development Block Grant Citizens' Advisory Committee, stated she has found a problem with affordable housing and working with the RDA would help with affordable housing.

Nick Petnick, 452 Homan Avenue, stated he would like for Council to proceed carefully when considering the establishment of a RDA. He expressed his concerns and gave an example of property in Altoona that was owned by his family and was taken by eminent domain. The project for which the property was taken was not completed and the area remained a gravel parking lot for about forty years. A few years ago the lot was paved and made into a parking lot.

Zoe Boniface, 404 S. Patterson Street, spoke as a public citizen and questioned what type of person and expertise would Mayor Welch be looking for when considering people for appointment to the authority.

Mayor Welch stated he would consider people who live in the Borough and have knowledge and experience with planning, financing, housing, and management. He would also welcome any input from Council on forming the Board for the authority.

Mr. Fountaine acknowledged there appears to be a sense of urgency with this issue. If Council would like to provide help to the Fraser Centre project, they will need to move on establishing the authority and will need to keep on schedule.

Ms. Dauler asked Council if there was consensus to move ahead with the RDA. Council agreed and stated all Council members with the exception of Mr. Humphrey would be available on July 14, 2006 for a special meeting.

Council requested staff to follow-up on possible pitfalls of establishing the RDA and determine what burden, if any, there would be on Borough staff.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 1:11 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

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Cynthia S. Hanscom  
Assistant Borough Secretary