



**Tax Increment Development District**

**Regular Meeting**

**January 12, 2015**

**1:00 P.M.**

**Council Chambers, City Hall**

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**MEMBERS PRESENT:**

**STAFF:**

12 Chairman Ken Miyagishima  
13 Board Member Miguel Silva, District 1  
14 Board Member Greg Smith, District 2  
15 Board Member Olga Pedroza, District 3  
16 Board Member Nathan Small, District 4  
17 Board Member Gill Sorg, District 5  
18 Board Member Ceil Levatino, District 6  
19 Board Member Billy Garrett (County)

Robert Garza, City Manager  
Rusty Babington, City Attorney  
Linda Lewis, Deputy City Clerk

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**I. Call to Order**

24 Chairman Miyagishima called the meeting to order and asked for a moment of silence. Chairman  
25 Miyagishima led the Pledge of Allegiance.

27 Chairman Miyagishima and a representative from the Animal Services Center of the Mesilla Valley  
28 presented the Pet of the Week.

30 Chairman Miyagishima gave a presentation and recognized Delano Lewis, Chair of the Las Cruces  
31 Downtown Roundtable.

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35 **II. Action Item(s)**

37 1. Approval of Minutes from October 14, 2014 Meeting.

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39 Board Member Silva Moved to Approve the Minutes of October 14, 2014 and Board Member Sorg  
40 Seconded the motion.

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1  
2 Chairman Miyagishima called for the roll on the Motion to Approve the Minutes of October 14,  
3 2014 and it was Unanimously APPROVED. 7-0

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7 2. Request to change TIDD Board meetings to the fourth Monday beginning with the next  
8 quarter.

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10 Board Member Silva Moved to Approve the changing of the TIDD Board meetings to the fourth  
11 Monday beginning with the next quarter and Board Member Small Seconded the motion.

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14  
15 Chairman Miyagishima called for the roll on the Motion to Approve the changing of the TIDD Board  
16 meetings to the fourth Monday beginning with the next quarter and it was Unanimously  
17 APPROVED. 7-0

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21 **III. Discussion Items.**

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23 1. Finance Update

24  
25 Andy Hume, Downtown Planning Coordinator gave an overhead presentation and said our current  
26 total assets amount is \$9,384,536 and both the restricted assets and the non-restricted assets have  
27 been specifically designated for two projects.

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31 2. Downtown Plaza

32  
33 a. Background and Planning Process

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35 Andy Hume, Downtown Planning Coordinator gave an overhead presentation and said over the past  
36 twenty years or so, we've gathered a tremendous amount of public input and conducted a very  
37 thorough planning process. We are the closest that we have ever been to constructing a focal point  
38 for our Downtown which is the Plaza.

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42 b. Design Status

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1 Susan Henderson gave an overhead presentation and said we are impressed with the continued level  
2 of support from the community for a Downtown Plaza. Our goal is that over time the private  
3 property around the Plaza would be redeveloped to create room so in the near-term we are just going  
4 to see just the surface of the Plaza itself and the band stand. There is a concern that if we open up  
5 the streets and allow vehicles to the Plaza area it could diminish the public realm and the pedestrians  
6 and cyclists are also a main concern for us as well. There is something that has happened over the  
7 past 10 years called a “shared space” where the pedestrian and the cyclist have just as much authority  
8 and right to inhabit the space as the automobile. You would allow traffic for the sake of the  
9 commercial and for emergency access. So the alleyway by St. Genevieve near the Plaza could be  
10 completely closed off and be a fully functioning uninhabited part of the Plaza for the large events  
11 and East Organ would remain open and function like Main Street current does through the  
12 Downtown.

13

14 One thing that happened with the recommendation of staff and we agree with, was that the grass was  
15 removed from the north end of the Plaza because of the long-term maintenance costs. The Plaza in  
16 Mesilla has areas of the grass coned off because of the heavy usage and the one in Santa Fe has the  
17 entire grass area blocked off due to the damage to it from the usage. So, the current best  
18 recommendation is that we remove the grass and make the entire Plaza a paved place.

19

20 There has also been a lot of discussion on a water feature and some of the concerns are how we  
21 would keep the water safe and how would we prevent people from drinking it; so, the end results is  
22 a recommendation to have a splash pad. Once you get kids playing in the Plaza; that is a primary way  
23 to activate it.

24

25 Another concern is with the stage. We’re showing a 40 x 60 foot stage but there were a number of  
26 different opinions about how big it needs to be to support your local music environment and your  
27 dance environment, verses the fact that it could be too large and rarely used. So the compromise was  
28 a 30 x 40 foot stage for the near-term and over the long-term make it a 40 x 60 foot stage with a  
29 canopy. We would also need a shade structure for the water pad but then the issue is how do we keep  
30 that from being a barrier for the musical events? So the result was to insert six columns and have  
31 shade sails that can be put up and down when needed.

32

33 Board Member Smith said I think it is key to have this area remain uncluttered. Did you have a  
34 human size sundial in one of your pictures?

35

36 Susan Henderson said that is actually in the paving of the stage; with it being on the stage itself,  
37 when it is not being utilized by an event, it is a way to get the children to become the event.

38

39 Board Member Levatino said I do like the idea of having the St. Genevieve street closed down when  
40 it is necessary but having it open for pedestrian and other traffic.

41

42 I’m also please to hear about the splash pool water feature; I just love that idea and am so glad you  
43 incorporated it into the plan.

1  
2 I am concerned that there is no grass. I understand the challenges of having grass but I really think  
3 a grass area is very important so I would like to see it incorporated into the plan.  
4  
5 I do support the concept of “the less cluttered, the better” and I want this to be as flexible a place as  
6 possible but I’m not convinced that we need a permanent stage.  
7  
8 Susan Henderson said there has been a debate over whether or not to have grass but because of the  
9 size of this space and the long-term maintenance issues; artistically and emotionally, I think you do  
10 need grass; practically and economically, I think it’s a challenge.  
11  
12 Board Member Billy Garrett asked how many seated people will the Plaza hold during an event?  
13  
14 Mark Johnston, Parks and Recreation Director said about 1,400.  
15  
16 Board Member Billy Garrett said regarding the grass, I’ve been involved with a number of events  
17 in the Mesilla Plaza and at certain times of the year it is miserable to be on the grass because of the  
18 mosquitos and nats.  
19  
20 Board Member Small said if we have a grass area and it becomes unusable space then it would be  
21 quite limiting so I appreciate that point very much. We need to make this an active place when there  
22 is no events taking place there. The way it is now, there is no shaded place for a group of people to  
23 meet and sit down and talk.  
24  
25 Susan Henderson said it is our recommendation that between every pair of trees there will be a bench  
26 which would also add seating capacity at events.  
27  
28 Board Member Smith said I know the movement of the St. Genevieve monument is some what of  
29 a concern and it has been said again, and again, that East Organ Avenue has to be opened up. As  
30 tight as those arbors are next to that, I think to open it up we would have to move at least one of them  
31 so how problematic is moving the arbors?  
32  
33 Susan Henderson said I would be against moving the arbors because we don’t intend for this to be  
34 an over engineered space because then the traffic goes through there too fast.  
35  
36 Board Member Smith said the concern I would have would be running into the arbors so that remains  
37 an area that I would like for us to be cautious with.  
38  
39 Also, some people have expressed their concerns to me regarding the moving of the St. Genevieve  
40 monument so I think that does need to be voiced; that if there is either a way for it to stay where it  
41 is or stay very visible as part of our Downtown; that even though it doesn’t belong to the City, it is  
42 something of importance to people.

1  
2 I spoke with someone who has a building Downtown and we're both concerned about it being the  
3 same paving as what is already present. It seems like it would be a bit much of the same thing so I  
4 appreciate the cross shape that goes from the stage to the water feature and I think that helps bring  
5 some interest in. In discussions on whether to have a zia sign or a sun dial, perhaps when we go into  
6 the coloring of the pavement or how we structure it, it might make sense to do some kind of north,  
7 south, east, west, kind of thing. To me, that would acknowledge our Native American past and help  
8 orient people where the true north, south, east, and west are because our plaza isn't true north.

9  
10 Board Member Silva said there are five items that I think are standing out; one is there needs to be  
11 some type of cultural tie to the history of Las Cruces. In terms of the open space approach, I agree  
12 100% with that but I'm not sure about East Organ Street because we might be able to work that into  
13 the Plaza area. I like the water feature and I think it would be a nice focal point of the Plaza. I do  
14 support having grass and I can't imagine us having a plaza without grass so I think we just need to  
15 overcome the challenges that come with it. Also, I do think it is a must that we have a performance  
16 stage.

17  
18 Board Member Small said I'm comfortable with moving forward with making this usable and adding  
19 as many of the appropriate features that allow for that but I'm not convinced that grass is what we  
20 will ultimately end up doing.

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c. Stage on the Plaza

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26 Mark Johnston, Parks and Recreation Director gave an overhead presentation and said today, we  
27 need to focus on what is the purpose of this plaza; is it a specific use, is it multi-purpose, how many  
28 events are we really going to hold a year, what portion of that plaza are we going to hold the events  
29 on, and what are the size and type of the events? The stage constraints to consider are the size of the  
30 audience, the stage height, the costs, and the operations and maintenance of it. Also, we could  
31 consider having a permanent stage with the ability to expand when necessary and we would have to  
32 follow ADA requirements for having a ramp.

33

34 Board Member Pedroza asked do you have a preference to any of the suggestions?

35

36 Mark Johnston said a stage is in the eye of the beholder and most bands travel with their own stage  
37 now a days. We are currently buying a 24 foot by 30 foot portable stage that is hydraulically driven  
38 so I can set it up with two of my staff and it comes with speakers and lights.

39

40 Board Member Pedroza asked do we have storage available for any temporary structures?

41

42 Mark Johnston said storage could be an issue but we could use under the stage as a storage area.

1  
2 Board Member Smith asked do we have a comparison on what a permanent stage would cost verses  
3 the cost of a mobile stage?

4  
5 Mark Johnston said the portables run between \$80,000 and \$160,000 depending on the add-ons.

6  
7 Susan Henderson said the 30 by 40 we were proposing is three feet tall and that does include a ramp,  
8 it is about \$40,000 to \$60,000 so if you had the expandable wings then you're in a better price point  
9 with a permanent plaza. The permanent plaza itself with the sundial would be an additional place  
10 to sit and would also be an activator.

11  
12 Board Member Smith said regarding skateboarders and such platforms, do we have any kind of  
13 statistics as far as what happens in other locations where there are stages?

14  
15 Mark Johnston said the higher you go, the more risk you have but I don't have anything infinitive.  
16 I can tell you that the more use you get in an area, the less wrong use you get.

17  
18 Board Member Levatino said I am concerned about the liability issue with someone falling off the  
19 stage or kids playing around and someone getting hurt, and I think that is an issue that we really have  
20 to be conscientious about and take seriously. Also, I notice none of the drawings of the stage show  
21 it being enclosed so I'm concerned about the acoustics in an open stage.

22  
23 Mark Johnston said there are portable acoustical clam shell designs that we could consider and if  
24 there is a permanent stage built then we wouldn't need a permanent cover but it would come down  
25 to the maintenance and operation costs of it. We can move forward with the design of plaza and  
26 address the stage, what it looks like, and its configuration at a later date.

27  
28 Susan Henderson said a permanent stage could hold a temporary back drop and as the area is built  
29 out, the acoustics will get better.

30  
31 Ruben Smith, Member of the Public said I am a member of the Downtown Partnership and I have  
32 given our concerns to Place Makers. I'm just asking that you listen to this group of people that have  
33 come forward. It has to be a permanent structure and it has to be the proper size.

34  
35 John Scheltz, Member of the Public said Las Cruces is the art hub of New Mexico and we were  
36 recognized as a school system of distinction in supporting the arts. So, if we had a permanent stage  
37 then there would be a lot of spontaneous productions put on by our schools who don't need a big city  
38 sponsored event.

39  
40 Ruben Smith said we can't compare ourselves to Santa Fe, Albuquerque, or even Mesilla because  
41 we are unique to ourselves and we do need to have a permanent structure Downtown.

1

2 Frank Leto, Member of the Public said I am with Las Cruces Sun News and I feel strongly that this  
3 plaza is going to be a huge economic development driver. We'd like to have a permanent stage and  
4 we are excited about having a water feature in the Plaza. We are in support of having grass and we  
5 think a permanent roof or structure needs to be put in place to protect the artists and the stage.

6

7 Ed Verplew, Member of the Public said I am glad to hear that there will be a sundial in the Plaza and  
8 I would like to make sure it is technically correct and educational.

9

10 Chairman Miyagishima said I just want to say that I am supportive of having a permanent stage.

11

12 Robert Garza, City Manager said based on my assessment of long-term costs, I would like for you  
13 all to consider having a permanent stage that would be sufficient in size to handle the size of the  
14 Plaza and the events that we would have there.

15

16 Board Member Sorg said we currently have closed streets in this area and I would like to know if we  
17 have to open them up because there is going to be a plaza there?

18

19 Susan Henderson said if you get any commercial use facing the plaza they will have to have a place  
20 for service requirements and for people to drop off guests that have accessibility issues. The main  
21 reason for opening up streets is for accessibility.

22

23 Board Member Sorg said I would like to see a permanent stage and if we have a shade structure over  
24 the stage then the sundial will not work on the stage but it could work if it was incorporated in a  
25 splash fountain. Also, I do agree with having grass in a small area of the plaza.

26

27 Dolores Archuleta, Member of the Public said I am the president of Las Esperanzas and we  
28 understand that in order to leave the plaza uncluttered, the La Entrada monument might not be placed  
29 there so it is our recommendation that it be placed at Klein Park.

30

31 Board Member Smith showed some overhead pictures of stages and said I am leaning toward using  
32 a temporary stage until we can decide how we want to configure a permanent stage.

33

34 Chairman Miyagishima said I think that as long as we conform to what is required and we're not  
35 negligent in allowing railing to be lose; I don't see where the City would be negligent or liable so  
36 I don't want people to think that just because we have a stage that we are a target.

37

38 Board Member Smith said I think there are some real concerns about the visual of the walls that Ms.  
39 Henderson has brought up; what does that end up looking like, how much of a wall does that end up  
40 being, and is that where we would want the wall when we are not having performances because with  
41 a stage a solid wall in the back does help project the sound but that also means that side of Griggs  
42 becomes a long wall. If we are going to do a permanent stage then I would like for us to work very  
43 hard in not making that a solid blank space on Griggs Street.

1 Board Member Small said it seems to me that a permanent stage is the right way to go and it is  
2 important to integrate our cultural heritage.

3

4 Board Member Garrett said I would like to have clarification on the size of the permanent stage.

5

6 Ruben Smith said we are requesting a minimum of 1,800 square feet and ideally, 2,000 to 2,400  
7 would be perfect for incorporating the different venues. Also, a permanent structure will need to be  
8 covered and the shell type covers that could be stored underneath the stage would be great.

9

10 Board Member Garrett said I think we need to make a decision on whether or not this will be a great  
11 performance place and we need to think of this holistically because the stage isn't the only thing that  
12 is critical to a successful performance. I personally think a permanent stage is the way to go but I  
13 want it to be tightly defined in terms of what it actually looks like.

14

15 Board Member Pedroza said I would like to see a comparison on the costs for different sizes and  
16 different types.

17

18 Robert Garza said it would still be a man-made hard surface, concrete, and it would probably be the  
19 same type of surface that you would have on top of the stage so the cost would really be for what you  
20 do to cover it or enclose it. Also, the higher you go up then the more ramping you will need which  
21 will also increase the costs.

22

23 Board Member Silva said we need to consider the functionality of the plaza and the performance  
24 stage and we have to think about the financial aspect of it as well. I think this will have to have a  
25 temporary component to it where certain things go up for certain events and other items are stored  
26 so it will have both a permanent and non-permanent feature to it but functionality should be at the  
27 top of the list. Also, I do think we need to look at the grass aspect because it really does get hot in  
28 Downtown and if it's hot with grass, it is even hotter with cement.

29

30 Board Member Levatino said I assume that the enclosure would only be used when necessary but  
31 the roof would be permanent; correct.

32

33 Susan Henderson said it is permanent; right now it is envisioned as a canvass on trusses.

34

35 Board Member Levatino said the pillars would be something attractive that would be there all the  
36 time; it would be open so you could see through to Griggs and it wouldn't make that area feel  
37 enclosed and cluttered.

38

39 Susan Henderson said correct.

40

41 Board Member Levatino said if we really want to make this family friendly then we need to have  
42 grass because families aren't going to have picnics on concrete.

43

1 Board Member Small said I would like for us to consider green infrastructure in the appropriate ways  
2 to save costs and efficiency.

3

4 Robert Garza said one of the features that has been contemplated is to capture the storm water and  
5 harvest that storm water back into the trees or some place that it could be used.

6

7 Board Member Smith said I would suggest that if we do a permanent stage, that we have the ramp  
8 in the back because of the east to west down hill direction of Griggs Street and I would encourage  
9 us to do steps on the other three sides of the stage. I suggest we go with the minimum stage size and  
10 use the steps to expand the use of the stage and reduce the amount of liability. I advise us to go  
11 forward carefully and I do think that professionals in the area might advise us on how we move  
12 forward with the acoustics and the arrangement of the stage.

13

14 Robert Garza said the next step for this particular issue are that we will be coming back to you at a  
15 potential special meeting to present a plan that reflects your wishes as best as we can, as an action  
16 item for you to vote on.

17

18 Board Member Smith said I would also like to suggest that instead of using adobe for the electrical  
19 box, that we look at perforated metal which could be done artistically and would take up less space.

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d. Board Discussion

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3. Church and Water Streets - 2-way conversion update

Loretta Reyes, Public Works Director gave an overhead presentation and said we are in the very  
early stages of this project so we don't have any construction drawings to show you at this time. The  
total estimated cost for the full reconstruction of Church and Water including a full reconstruction  
of Griggs and Las Cruces with all the amenities is \$15.45 million. There is a State resolution that  
allocates TIDD GRT funding in specific amounts to specific streets. The total allocated amount that  
is remaining from the Main Street project is \$7.46 million so the question is "what can we do with  
that allocated amount"? Our proposed concept is to convert Water Street to two-way traffic, extend  
Water Street to Lohman Avenue, convert Church Street to two-way traffic to Amador Avenue,  
construct "T" intersections at Bowman Avenue and Church and at Bowman Avenue and Water  
Street or we can construct roundabouts at Bowman Avenue and Church Street and at Bowman  
Avenue and Water Street, make improvements to Main Street from Bowman Avenue to Lohman

1 Avenue, convert existing roundabout to two-way traffic, reconstruct Griggs Avenue and Las Cruces  
2 Avenue between Church Street and Water Street, Callecitas at Hadley Avenue, Court Avenue and  
3 May Avenue, and overlay both Church Street and Water Street including ADA improvements in lieu  
4 of full reconstruction. Our next steps are to hire a consultant to prepare a traffic study and  
5 preliminary design by Spring 2015, have staff review and evaluate by Fall 2015, present options to  
6 TIDD Board by Winter 2015, have final design by Summer 2016 and start construction which would  
7 take about 12 to 18 months to complete.

8

9 Board Member Smith said I think that we need to prioritize these so we can get them done as quickly  
10 as possible so we don't lose the funding.

11

12 Robert Garza, City Manager said we are working on securing a loan with New Mexico Finance  
13 Authority and use the TIDD funds for debt service through a sponge bond. We have the funding  
14 available to complete all of the listed street projects; correct Loretta?

15

16 Loretta Reyes said that is correct.

17

18 Board Member Smith said my priority in this list is that we open up Main to Lohman and my second  
19 priority is opening up Water to Lohman because that is a key connecting piece to our Downtown.  
20 My third priority would be getting Main opened up to Picacho and my fourth, I would suggest that  
21 street scaping be done on Water and Church street. My fifth, "T" intersections, if you're just talking  
22 about Bowman where it connects with Water; I like how roundabouts are suppose to work but given  
23 our current experience with them, I'm not sure the city is ready for them. My sixth priority would  
24 be reverting to the two-way and my seventh would be the Callecitas.

25

26 Board Member Sorg said I know we will have a consultant doing all the planning but in that, will  
27 we be getting the information on what kind of traffic controls we will have at these intersections?

28

29 Loretta Reyes said yes, that will be the purpose of the traffic study.

30

31 Board Member Sorg asked will that also include the cost of maintaining these intersections and all  
32 the traffic controls?

33

34 Loretta Reyes said I'm not sure that is something that is normally done in a traffic study but we can  
35 look into it.

36

37 Board Member Small said there were funding constraints for the southern roundabout on Main Street  
38 at the time the street needed to be reconstructed; when did that go away as far as being part of the  
39 plan and what is the status of it?

40

41 Loretta Reyes said we had difficulties obtaining the right-of-way so we had to go back to the drawing  
42 board to come up with a viable solution for that area.

43

1 Board Member Small asked could we amend the State's resolution list of streets?

2

3 Robert Garza said making changes to the allocation is a very risky proposition and you would have  
4 to have a legislative bill approved by the Legislature and the Governor to make a change to that list  
5 or the allocation of funding. Our financial advisors and bond counsels are strongly recommending  
6 that we stay the course and not go back to the arena because we could expose those funds to the  
7 clawback provision.

8

9 Board Member Silva said I don't see extending Water to Lohman on this list.

10

11 Loretta Reyes said that is part of the Water Street two-way conversion.

12

13 Chairman Miyagishima asked have we looked at Court to Alameda?

14

15 Loretta Reyes said Court Avenue between Water and Melendres is on our CIP list.

16

17 Board Member Silva asked what is the cost of hiring a consultant and how are we paying for it?

18

19 Loretta Reyes said it could be \$100,000 to \$200,000, it depends on how we scope the project and  
20 we would pay them through TIDD monies. This is still very preliminary and we will continue to  
21 bring you updates on it.

22

23 Robert Garza said this list of streets and dollar figures was taken to our Legislature in 2005 so these  
24 estimates are ten years old and this list is just a planning document but it has now turned into a  
25 budget guideline for us.

26

27

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29 4. Other Items of Interest

30

31 There were no other items of interest.

32

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35 **IV. Adjournment**

36

37 Board Member Small Moved to Adjourn and Board Member Smith Seconded the motion.

38

39 Chairman Miyagishima said all those in favor signify by saying "Aye."

40

41 Board stated Aye.

42

43 **Meeting Adjourned at 4:27 p.m.**