



Redevelopment Authority of Lehigh County
October 2, 2025 Meeting

The regular meeting of the Redevelopment Authority of Lehigh County was held at 9:00 a.m. by Zoom video conference. A recording of this meeting is available at: <https://www.lehighcounty.org/Departments/Community-Economic-Development/Lehigh-County-Redevelopment-Authority>.

ATTENDING

Board Members: Oscar Ghasab (OG), Ricky Gower (RG), Kent Herman (KH), Jill Seitz (JS), David Weinstein (DW), Michael Yeager (MY). Quorum obtained.

Also in attendance representing the Authority, Chris Gulotta (CG)

County Staff: Virginia Haas (VH), Cyndi King (CK)

ABSENT

Frank Kane (FK)

Public Guests – Anthony Alcalda (Borough of Catasauqua), David Bernini (resident of Catasauqua), Anthony Molchany (Whitehall Township Industrial Commercial Development Authority)

AGENDA ITEMS

CALL TO ORDER at 9:00 a.m. by MY.

Public Comment on Agenda Items – None

Review and Approval of Minutes of September 4, 2025 Meeting

No questions or concerns on minutes from the previous meeting; motion for approval of minutes made by DW; seconded by RG. No opposition; all in favor. Minutes approved.

Financial Report and Approval of Bills – See Tab B

Four invoices to be paid from the Operating Payables account total \$6,392.92 to be paid as follows: The Gulotta Group \$5,260.75 with the Elias Property Group billed \$845.00 for technical services rendered by the Executive Director on the MacArthur Road project pursuant to the agreement between the parties and the balance of the total time spent on this project, \$780.00, charged to the state grant for technical services rendered, and \$187.50 billed to the Borough of Catasauqua for the Executive Director's time on the Iron Works project during the month of September; King Spry \$646.00; CR&Y \$420.00 (accounting service), T-Mobile \$66.17 phone bill for the Executive Director's use specifically for RALC business.

Two invoices to be paid from the Grants Payable account total \$29,100.78 to be paid as follows: Two invoices from Iron Works Development Group with combined total of \$1,846.38 and the most recent invoice from Iron Works Development Group for \$20,861.48 for substantial land development work performed by their engineer, T&M.

The total bills payable for the month of September is \$29,100.78.

CG did not yet receive the financial statement from the accountant this month; he will forward that to the board once he receives it. MY asked for comments, questions, or concerns concerning the bills to be paid and there were none.

MY asked for a motion to approve the bills. RG made that motion which was seconded by DW. No opposition; all in favor. Six invoices approved for payment.

OLD BUSINESS – None

STATUS REPORTS - Executive Director's Report - See Tab C

IRON WORKS PROJECT

The Borough of Catasauqua submitted an application for Redevelopment Assistance Capital Program (RACP) funding of \$2,250,000.00 for site improvements to complete future phases of the project specifically those expenses associated with the construction of the retaining wall which is necessary on Front Street to make this street 2-way. Hopefully, applicants will be notified in the first

half of 2026. CG made note of the invoices submitted for payment that the developer is making progress with the land development plan and floodplain studies during this due diligence phase. CG is very satisfied that the Iron Works Development Group work on this project is moving forward toward a closing. CG reminded the Board about the application for \$1,000,000.00 in funding to the Main Street Matters program for this project. He is hoping to be notified by the end of this year.

The RACP grant was applied for as back-up funding in the event the Main Street Matters program funding is not awarded to this project. CG is hopeful that funding from a Local Share Application (LSA) grant, which was applied for November 2024, will be awarded in November 2025 which, if received, will function as a contingency plan to fund the retaining wall.

MY asked for questions, comments, or concerns. DW inquired if CG thinks Iron Works Development Group are working ahead or is VM Development Group on target in this due diligence phase. CG replied, “on target.”

MY asked CG whether anything is incumbent upon the Borough as far as the infrastructure in the development of the site. CG believes the Borough’s expectations of the developer are very clear and he is not aware of any requirements of the part of the Borough to move the project ahead. There is existing water capacity and sewer capacity; Bridge Street going into the site would be improved by the developer but not the Borough. Parking would also be provided by the developer. CG went on to say that the developer is notifying the Borough throughout this initial draft of the land development plan; he expects to be included in a meeting between the parties to review the first phase plan and which would also include the buildout of all phases.

RG asked if the RACP grant and the Main Street Matter grant are approved, essentially negating the need to have back-up funding, what would happen to the funds that would no longer be needed? CG said he and the local state elected delegation (Representative Jeanne McNeil and Senator Nick Miller) would make strong arguments that these funds should be approved for work in conjunction with the build-out of future phases. RG concurred.

REDEVELOPMENT OF THE FORMER LEHIGH VALLEY DAIRY PROPERTY

RALC applied for \$2.5 million in RACP funding for intersection improvements at MacArthur and Mickley Roads along with site improvements including water, sewer, and stormwater improvements. Both Senator Miller and Representative McNeil provided enthusiastic letters of support for that RACP application.

Four proposals were received in response to the Request for Proposals to acquire and redevelop this property. These proposals are being reviewed. The Elias

Property Group has the final decision; Mr. Elias is not bound by the recommendation of the RALC. Price stated in the proposal and substantial conditions or contingencies are being looked at during the review of the proposals including title, environmental, zoning issues, financing, experience of the respondents, the development plan including proposed uses. Public benefits, job creation, real estate tax revenues which would accrue to Whitehall Township and the surrounding community, and to what extent the respondent is open to sharing information with the public and to public participation opportunities are areas of the proposal also being reviewed. CG and the Elias Property Group continue to review the proposals and have had follow-up discussion with a few of the firms to clarify information brought forth in their proposals. CG expects to have a recommendation for the Board's consideration within a few weeks.

Since the Whitehall Township Industrial Commercial Development Authority attended today's meeting, CG mentioned that he had a really good conversation with their consultant, Vito Gallo, who told him that the Authority was instrumental in getting a line item in the 2020 state capital budget for economic development projects in Whitehall Township to the tune of \$5-million dollars. The consultant along with both authorities share many interests for redevelopment in Whitehall. MY called for questions, comments, or concerns. There were none.

OUTREACH EFFORTS

The RALC newsletter was attached and distributed to the Board in the Board Packet. The newsletter is also emailed to municipalities, the state elected delegation, all state representatives, the two state senators in Lehigh County, the housing authorities, and to various non-profit organizations involved in community and economic development. This month, the Demolition and Rehabilitation Fund has been highlighted. This fund was approved by the Commissioners in July and it will provide funding for the demolition and rehabilitation of blighted residential properties.

The Property Conservatorship tool is also highlighted in the newsletter this month. This tool, which is not eminent domain, allows a municipality or a non-profit organization with a presence in a municipality to petition the Court of Common Pleas to become the conservator of the property. If granted, this gives the petitioner the right of entry to take whatever corrective action is necessary as deemed by the municipality when the property is not only out of compliance with codes but when it also meets the legal definition of blighted.

CG continues to build relationships and to share information about tools and funding sources. MY praised CG's efforts and success in circulating what the RALC has been chartered to do and what it is doing. MY encouraged him to

continue producing and distributing the newsletter. No further questions or comments.

RESOLUTIONS - None

EXECUTIVE SESSION - None

NEW BUSINESS - None

PUBLIC COMMENT ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS

David Bernini thanked the Board for its continued work. Mr. Bernini asked CG if he suspected most of the southwest corner structures [of the Iron Works project site] to be raised. CG responded, “No.” There is a trestle-like structure in the center of the site which has already been substantially demolished and which will be completely demolished. CG noted that as the scope of work becomes more defined, he can have a conversation with local organizations such as the Historical Preservation Association about the long-term plan of redevelopment of the buildings in the southwest corner of the property, however it is his understanding that only non-historic additions to those buildings would be demolished. CG observed that Mr. Bernini is pointing out the need to consult with people in the community (Catasauqua Historic Preservation Association, in particular) who are valuable resources given the significance of the overall site.

COMMENTS OR ANNOUNCEMENTS

MY asked for any other information for the good of the order. MY asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting. RG made that motion which was seconded by DW. Unanimous voice approval.

The next regularly scheduled meeting of the RALC is in-person on November 6, 2025, at 9:00 a.m. in the Lehigh County Government Center, Room 436, 17 S. 7th Street, Allentown 18101. Meeting is adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,
Cynthia L. King