Present: Council Member Kristen Grandinetti  
Council Member Andrew Touma  
Council Member Charles Walker  
Ms. Janet Markarian  
Ms. Doreen O’Connor  
Mr. Christopher Robins

Absent: Mayor Paul Dyster, Chairman  
Council Member Robert Anderson  
Council Member Glenn Choolokian  
Mr. Michael Hooper

Staff: Mr. Richard Zucco

Present: Ms. MaryAnn Colangelo

Others: Anthony Vilardo

Present: Tom DeSantis

Niagara Gazette Reporter

In the absence of Chairman Dyster, Council Member Grandinetti called the meeting to order at 4:35 p.m. Roll was called and a quorum was present (6) members.

Approval of Minutes of Meeting

The Minutes of Meeting dated May 18, 2015, were put before the Board. There were no questions or comments concerning the minutes, a motion for approval of the minutes was made by Mr. Robins, second made by Council Member Touma. The minutes were unanimously approved by voice vote (6) members.

Approval of URA Executive Director Stipend:

Mr. Zucco reviewed a distributed memo proposing the naming of Anthony Vilardo, Director of the Business Development for the City of Niagara Falls, as the new Executive Director of the Niagara Falls Urban Renewal Agency with an annual stipend of $5,200 which, upon approval, would be paid retroactive to June 29, 2015, the first day of Mr. Vilardo’s employment with the City, plus state retirement credit. Mr. Vilardo is also acting as N.F.C. Director.

There was a brief discussion concerning how past Directors were compensated.
Motion to approve Anthony Vilardo as Executive Director of the URA at an annual stipend of $5,200, to be paid retroactive to June 29, 2015, was made by Council Member Touma, second made by Ms. Markarian.

POLLED VOTE:
In Favor: 6
Opposed: 0
Approved

3625 Highland Avenue Acquisition:
Mr. DeSantis said the City is in the process of purchasing 3625 Highland Avenue, 5 ½ acres of industrial property. The Niagara Science Museum is also located in one of the three buildings on the site. The City will take ownership and then transfer the property to the URA. The URA will then undertake a project to see that the property is brought to be market ready. He stated that the site will be prepared for marketing to a developer or if that does not come about we will go to a second plan which will be to renovate the structures ourselves and look to rent them out accordingly. We think this is very appropriate for the URA and it is what the URA was created for. It will implement one of the priority goals of the Highland Area Opportunity Plan which was done a couple of years ago.

Mr. DeSantis discussed other parts of the Highland Plan that are beginning to come into fruition and he said this project is to carry on that implementation and planning. In the future we hope that this project will bring jobs into the community. One of the reasons we are taking this property versus leaving it to the private sector is because there is usually very little reinvestment in brownfields sites and the City often ends up with the property in rem. This way the City can be proactive with the site.

There was a discussion regarding what would happen to the Niagara Science Museum. Mr. DeSantis stated that $30,000 in proceeds from the sale of the property is going to the Niagara Science Museum which is a not for profit and then they will be a paying tenant to the Urban Renewal Agency. The URA and the Economic Development staff will work with the Niagara Science Museum to help them put together a business plan to work with their collection to either reinvest in that site as a permanent home or relocate the collection to another facility. Mr. DeSantis noted that it is a very unique collection.

Mr. Zucco talked about why we are transferring this property to the URA. He said the URA has a set of statutes regulating the acquisition, use and disposition of land for economic development purposes. There is a specific provision in the general municipal law that talks about the acquisition of land for which there is no immediate economic development use by the Agency. He noted that we want to acquire this land in furtherance of the Urban Renewal Plan in which that parcel is situate for eventual use. This has been brought to the Planning Board and it will be presented to the City Council for approval of acquisition and conveyance of the property to the Agency. Mr. Zucco noted that at this meeting was are asking that we take title to the
property, lease the one building to the Niagara Science Museum and authorize the payment of up to $3,000.00 to pay for the tax adjustments and closing/recording costs. In connection with the acquisition we are going to pay all the taxes and bring them current. There was also a loan of about $30,000 that Mr. Dalacu had personally guaranteed to Community Development and we are going to deduct that from the sale and pay Community Development to make them whole. We will do that at the closing.

The following memo outlining the action had been distributed to the Board:

TO: NFURA Board of Directors
FROM: Richard Zucco, General Counsel
RE: 3625 Highland Avenue Acquisition

The City has undertaken to acquire 3625 Highland Avenue, a 5.5 acre former industrial site currently housing the Niagara Science Museum, located on the east side of Highland Avenue. The City will acquire the property with State Finance Law §99-h (casino) revenues. The property is within the boundaries of the Core City Urban Renewal Area.

The site is being acquired for future development. The City or the Agency will be able to access grants for area cleanup, which will be essential for the future development.

Prior to future development, the City will convey the parcel to the Agency. The City Council authorized payment of the $165,000.00 purchase price. It is proposed that the Agency pay tax adjustments and closing/recording costs up to $3,000.00.

Upon closing, the current science museum building will be leased to the Niagara Science Museum. A portion of the sale proceeds will be allocated to the Museum for the lease costs. The lease will be a net-net lease for an initial 3 year term. The rent shall be $400.00 per month, payable in advance each month. The Niagara Science Museum shall be responsible for all utility costs, insurance costs, maintenance of the buildings and snow removal. The Niagara Science Museum shall insure the interest of the Agency as owner of the building for at least $40,000 during the term of the lease. The lease will be renewable at NFURA’S discretion in quarterly (three month) increments.

The acquisition of land by an Urban Renewal Agency for which there is no immediate development use is regulated by General Municipal Law §555. The procedure requires a Planning Board recommendation after a public hearing, and City Council approval. The Planning Board has held its public hearing and given approval. Upon City Council approval, the parcel will be conveyed by the City to the Agency, subject to the Niagara Science Museum lease.

Will the Niagara Falls Urban Renewal Agency authorize all steps necessary to obtain approval for acquisition of 3625 Highland Avenue, with the Agency paying up to $3,000.00 in tax adjustments and closing costs, and the parcel to be accepted by the Agency pursuant to the terms outlined herein if City Council so authorizes acquisition?
There was discussion concerning possible job opportunities and development for the site and the potential for the future of the Niagara Science Museum.

The question was put before the Agency that the NFURA authorize all steps necessary to obtain approval for the acquisition of 3625 Highland Avenue with the Agency paying up to $3,000 in tax adjustments and closing costs and the parcel to be accepted by the Agency pursuant to the terms outlined herein if City Council so authorizes acquisition. Motion was made to approve the acquisition of 3625 Highland Avenue according to the terms set forth in the above communication was made by Council Member Walker, second made by Council Member Touma.

POLLED VOTE
In Favor: 6
Opposed: 0
Approved

Old Business:
There was no old business put before the Agency.

New Business:
There was no new business put before the Agency.

Adjournment:
There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 4:55 p.m.