

Minutes of the special meeting of the Ogden City Redevelopment Agency held on Tuesday, July 14, 2026 at 7:05 p.m., in the Council Chambers, and via electronic meeting, on the third floor of the Municipal Building, 2549 Washington Boulevard, Ogden City, Weber County, Utah.

Present:

Chair	Richard A. Hyer
Vice Chair	Dave Graf
Board members	Flor Lopez
	Kevin Lundell
	Shaun Myers
	Ken Richey
	Alicia Washington

Board Administrator Glenn Symes
Board Deputy Administrator Steve Burton
Board Senior Policy Analyst Clint Yingling
Board Communications Director Brandon Garside
Board Communications Specialist Eric Davenport

Also present:

Executive Director Benjamin K. Nadolski
Chief Administrative Officer Taylor Nielsen
City Attorney Gary Williams
Community and Economic Development Executive Director Jared Johnson
Community and Economic Development Assistant Executive Director David Sawyer
Management Services Executive Director Lisa Stout
Economic Development Director Eric Gibson
Arts Administrator Lorie Buckley
Deputy City Recorder Jason Gould

Proposed Resolution 2026-6 approving the first amendment to the land transfer and development agreement between the Agency and The Lotus Group regarding the Thorstensen Building located at 2331 Grant Avenue

A memo from the Community and Economic Development Department regarding proposed amendments to the Thorstensen Building Land Transfer and Development Agreement (LTDA) came before the Board for consideration. The memo stated the Agency is being asked to consider an amendment to a 2015 LTDA with the Lotus Group related to the Thorstensen Building at 2331 Grant Avenue. The original agreement required approximately 30 market rate loft apartments on the building's upper floors. The proposed amendment would allow Lotus to instead construct 25 income targeted artist lofts and extend the project completion deadline to April 30, 2028. The transmittal includes a proposed resolution that, if adopted, would approve the amendment to the LTDA.

Economic Development Director Gibson summarized the memo and presented a summary of Lotus Company's request to amend the existing 2015 LTDA for the Thorstensen Building, located at 2331 Grant Avenue adjacent to Lindquist Field. The original contract required Lotus to construct 30 high-end, market-rate urban loft apartments or condominiums. Lotus now sought to amend the agreement to permit 25 income-restricted artist loft units utilizing federal and state historic tax credits. Mr. Gibson provided historical context, noting that multiple commitments under the 2015 LTDA went unmet by both parties, including an anticipated parking structure, the city's lease of space in the Hearst Building, and the original commercial tenants' failure to occupy the ground-floor spaces. Over the years, Lotus explored office use, pursued a condominium application that was not completed, and later sought an alternate solution for the upper floors following market disruptions caused by COVID-19. Lotus was subsequently awarded federal and state historic tax credits to advance a residential conversion of the building's upper floors. Mr. Gibson outlined the fiscal implications of the proposed amendment. Moving from 30 to 25 units and converting to income-restricted use would modestly reduce property valuation and unit-based fees to the city. However, he noted that the project was projected to generate approximately \$20,000–\$25,000 in annual property tax revenue and approximately \$500,000 in annual local economic activity. He further cautioned that if the amendment were denied, the upper floors would likely remain vacant for the foreseeable future, as no other development interest in a market-rate product was currently on the table. Mr. Gibson emphasized that the city's overall housing strategy called for a strategic mix of product types, and that Ogden disproportionately bears the regional share of income-targeted housing units at approximately 83 percent.

Christian Graf, Development Manager with Lotus Company, addressed the Board alongside Ricky Becerra, Associate, and Craig Smith, legal counsel. Mr. Graf emphasized that income-restricted does not mean low quality, noting that the LIHTC structure enables higher-quality finishes than market-rate construction could currently support at Ogden rents. He clarified that the units would be set aside at 60 percent AMI, and that under the 140 percent rule, a qualifying couple could earn well into six

figures and remain compliant. He highlighted that the amendment language specifically proposed 25 artist loft units conforming in style, quality, and use to the goals of the Nine Rails Creative District.

Mr. Becerra reinforced the fiscal and community case: the upper two floors are currently vacant and generating minimal property tax revenue; the project would preserve a 100-year-old building to National Park Service standards at no cost to the city; and the income-restricted rents—projected at approximately \$1,300 for a one-bedroom and \$1,500 for a two-bedroom—would leave residents with meaningful discretionary income to support the local economy. He noted that the downtown submarket vacancy rate stands at 9.2 percent, below the five-year average, and that the affordable product type is performing at 6.6 percent vacancy.

Mr. Smith, speaking of the legal framework, observed that the 2015 project area plan included a goal of promoting housing where none previously existed in the Thorstensen area, and that the proposed use was consistent with that plan. He noted that the project also advances historic preservation and workforce housing objectives, and that the financial infeasibility of market-rate construction in this building was not a matter of preference but of economic reality.

Arts Administrator Buckley expressed strong support, noting that she maintains a large database of local creatives who would be directly informed of leasing opportunities. She stated that housing for artists has been a longstanding unmet goal of both the Arts and Culture Master Plan and the Nine Rails Creative District Master Plan, and that the project represented an important opportunity to retain local creative talent in Ogden.

Crystal Fleming, Senior Regional Manager with Evergreene Management Group—the property management company for Lotus properties in Ogden—stated that affordable communities she manages are consistently outperforming market-rate properties in occupancy and long-term stability. She noted that Evergreene currently manages an artist-focused residential property in downtown Salt Lake City and would partner closely with the City's Arts Division to market units directly to artists, potentially ensuring that the community becomes a hub for Ogden's creative sector.

Board member Myers asked about unit sizes and ceiling heights, and Mr. Becerra confirmed the building offers a notably open, industrial loft aesthetic. The projected unit mix is 21 one-bedroom units and 4 two-bedroom/two-bath units, averaging 839 square feet. Board Member Myers inquired about return on investment timelines, and Mr. Becerra acknowledged that the project is not a high-margin venture for Lotus, with returns likely extending over 30 years—consistent with how other similar projects in Ogden have been structured.

Vice Chair Graf acknowledged Lotus's track record in Ogden but pressed the developer on why this building should not accommodate market-rate housing. He noted that of approximately 500 units Lotus has built in Ogden, their current thesis is 100 percent affordable and expressed concern that income-restricted residents would have lower discretionary spending than market-rate tenants, potentially undermining the vitality of the downtown core. Mr. Graf calculated that a couple qualifying at the higher end of the income band would have significantly less discretionary income than a market-rate couple and questioned whether the city's downtown could sustain itself economically without a stronger mix of higher-income residents. Mr. Becerra and Mr. Graf responded that the affordable housing structure actually frees up proportionally more discretionary income for lower-earning residents by capping housing costs, and that those residents would spend that income in the downtown area.

Board member Richey raised the question of whether recent state legislation enabling owner-occupied affordable condominiums might offer an alternative path. Mr. Graf acknowledged that he had closely reviewed that legislation but concluded it was not currently financially feasible for this building, as construction costs cannot be reduced sufficiently to comply with the required sale price caps.

Board member Lundell noted that the owners of Utah Brewing Company, a ground-floor tenant, had expressed support for the project moving forward.

Chair Hyer introduced in writing proposed Resolution 2026-6, entitled:

“A resolution of the Ogden City Redevelopment Agency approving the first amendment to the Land Transfer and Development Agreement between the Agency and the Lotus Group regarding the Thorstensen Building located at 2331 Grant Avenue.”

Chair Hyer then called for public input regarding the proposal.

Theresa Bramwell argued that Lotus had received significant City support over the years and should be held to the market-rate obligation of their original contract. She expressed strong preference for owner-occupied condominiums in the building, citing comparable loft projects in Salt Lake City that sold quickly at premium prices, and argued that she, as an artist, would purchase but would not rent an income-restricted unit.

Annie Dunaway expressed general support for affordable housing but raised concerns about Lotus's decade-long failure to meet its contractual obligations and advocated for a condominium model that would provide artists with a pathway to intergenerational wealth through ownership.

James Humphreys argued that the City's revenue is driven primarily by sales tax rather than property tax, and that income-restricted residents would not generate sufficient consumer spending to support downtown amenities. He contended that Ogden's downtown already has a high concentration of affordable housing and that a historic building of this caliber should be supported by owners with sufficient income to maintain it.

Thor Dorosh expressed concern that market-rate ownership is out of reach for his generation and urged the Board not to exclude younger, lower-income residents from living in Ogden. He voiced some skepticism about the "artist loft" framing but expressed general support for workforce-accessible housing.

Laura Lewis stated that the city has enough assisted-income housing and called for more market-rate development to serve residents who earn too much to qualify for LIHTC units but cannot find new market-rate options.

Travis Pate argued that approving the amendment would lock the building into income-restricted use for potentially 30 or

more years, preventing the city from benefiting from the building's prime location adjacent to Lindquist Field as the downtown continues to grow. He urged the Board to reconsider given the city's investment in Lotus and the developer's delayed performance.

Sarah Fisher offered a different perspective, describing the vital role that lower-income workers: baristas, restaurant staff, ski patrollers, and others—play in making Ogden's culture and economy function, and arguing that affordable housing close to downtown supports those workers directly.

Heath Satow pushed back against characterizations of lower-income residents as a burden on the city, noting that many homeowners on the Board likely pay less in mortgage than current renters in Ogden pay in the open market. He expressed support for the project in the context of the WonderBlock development adding high-end units downtown, and argued that the city needs affordable workforce housing to support the service economy that will follow.

Cole Eisenhour, a local muralist participating online and currently working in Salt Lake City, spoke in favor of the project from the perspective of a working artist who had been priced out of Ogden. He expressed that artist loft housing would allow creatives who represent and contribute to the city's cultural identity to actually live there.

ON A MOTION BY BOARD MEMBER MYERS AND SECONDED BY BOARD MEMBER LUNDELL, RESOLUTION 2026-6 WAS ADOPTED UPON THE FOLLOWING ROLL CALL VOTE: VOTING AYE – COUNCIL MEMBERS LOPEZ, LUNDELL, MYERS, AND WASHINGTON. VOTING NO – BOARD MEMBER RICHEY, VICE CHAIR GRAF, AND CHAIR HYER.

Following the vote, the three dissenting Board members offered brief explanations of their votes. Board member Richey expressed hope for the project's economic benefits but stated his belief that the downtown location warranted a higher-end or homeownership-oriented development, and that the door might still be open for a different approach if the amendment had been denied. Vice Chair Graf emphasized that his opposition was not about discriminating against lower-income residents but about achieving income balance in the community, noting that Ogden lacks opportunities for individuals seeking to downsize into ownership in a vibrant downtown setting. Chair Hyer echoed the balance rationale, stating that the City has an excess of rental product relative to for-sale opportunities and that he expects it will be increasingly difficult for him to support subsidized rental projects over ownership alternatives going forward.

Proposed Resolution 2026-7 approving and authorizing the Executive Director to execute the terms and conditions of a participation and incentive agreement for its development of The Vibe Project

A memo from the Community and Economic Development Department regarding a Participation and Incentive Agreement with Color Sky Homes came before the Board for consideration. The memo stated the proposal is related to the proposed development of the Vibe Townhomes project at 2546 Adams Avenue. The project would construct 10 market rate for-sale townhomes on currently vacant property within the Adams Community Reinvestment Area (CRA). Under the agreement, the Redevelopment Agency would reimburse the developer up to \$290,000 from a portion of the new property tax increment generated by the project after construction is completed and the units are built. The project is intended to provide additional homeownership opportunities and would add new residential development within an area identified for reinvestment and redevelopment.

Economic Development Director Gibson summarized the memo and stated the proposed units are three-bedroom, 2–2.5 bath townhomes ranging from approximately 1,048 to 1,500 square feet, priced at an estimated \$310,000–\$440,000, targeting entry-level buyers. The Adams CRA budget was increased in May 2025 and has sufficient funds for this participation. Staff identified a developer funding gap originally totaling \$640,000, which was negotiated down to a proposed Redevelopment Agency incentive of \$290,000 after the developer adjusted project features and scope. The incentive agreement includes a requirement that units be sold to owner-occupants and remain owner-occupied for a minimum of three years. Mr. Gibson identified several site-specific cost drivers that contribute to the gap: significant topographic changes requiring retaining wall reconstruction; a fire department requirement for sprinkler systems in the five interior units due to access constraints; the need to tap utilities from both Porter and Adams Avenues; and design requirements under the Nine Rails Creative District mandating a brick facade and public art installations on both sides of the project. Mr. Gibson confirmed that the existing Butler Way stairs on the property, constructed in 1917, are located on private property, are not on the historic registry, and are planned for removal as part of development. He noted that an alternative staircase connection on city-owned property to the south of the site remains available and was actually the more significant connection anticipated in the Nine Rails Creative District Master Plan. The project was found to align with the Adams CRA plan's goals of attainable single-family and multifamily dwelling units, attached single-family units, and infill development on a currently vacant parcel in a neighborhood in need of reinvestment. Mr. Gibson also noted that the developer, who owns adjacent properties in the area, is positioned to develop other nearby parcels.

Mike Vowles, owner and developer of the site, addressed the Board alongside his wife. Mr. Vowles noted that he has owned the property for five years and explored multiple development concepts before concluding that a for-sale product was the highest and best use. He described the project as one where profitability is uncertain, acknowledging that construction costs and market conditions could result in a slim or negative margin. He confirmed the three key cost items identified by Mr. Gibson - art installations, sprinkler systems, and the owner-occupancy restriction—and stated that the sandstone from the existing stairs would be salvaged and repurposed at his nearby office building.

Vice Chair Graf asked what changes were made to reduce the gap from \$640,000 to \$290,000. Mr. Vowles explained that the primary adjustment was reducing interior finish quality and features.

Board member Washington commented on the historical significance of the site, sharing research indicating that both Butler Way staircases were constructed in 1917 as civic improvements, that the area was vacated by city council action in 1965,

and that the specific parcel was historically the site of the Florence Crittenton Home. She suggested that Mr. Vowles consider adding a historical marker to the property, to which he responded favorably. Board member Washington also raised a question about alignment with the Nine Rails Creative District Master Plan and whether the Arts Administrator had provided input on this project, noting that no such comments had been received. She inquired whether other Council members had reviewed the creative district master plan in light of the project.

Chair Hyer introduced in writing proposed Resolution 2026-7, entitled:

“A resolution of the Ogden City Redevelopment Agency approving and authorizing the Executive Director to execute the terms and conditions of a participation and incentive agreement with Color Sky Homes, LLC for the payment of an incentive for its development of The Vibe project.”

Chair Hyer then called for public input regarding the proposal.

Theresa Bramwell expressed enthusiasm for the project, praising the local developer and local architect, and the for-sale nature of the units. She raised concern about the practicality and enforceability of the three-year owner-occupancy requirement, suggesting it could impose undue hardship on buyers who face unexpected life changes such as job loss.

Travis Pate, presenting a packet of materials to the Board, raised concerns about whether the project adequately conformed to the Adams Avenue CRA guidelines for infill development of inner-block parcels, the implications of removing the historic staircase for pedestrian and fire egress, and the geological and historical sensitivity of the Central Bench Historic District in which the parcel sits. He requested that the Board either vote no or continue the item to allow further review.

Debra Darrington, an adjacent property owner and long-time participant in the Nine Rails Creative District planning process, addressed the Board primarily in the context of the broader district. She called on the Council to establish and enforce a standing set of design and use guidelines for the district rather than evaluating each development deal in isolation. She urged the Board to prioritize pathways to owner-occupied, affordable housing over large-scale subsidized rental development, and expressed that the district's historic character and arts identity are being absorbed one development at a time without a consistent framework to hold the line.

Heath Satow, participating online, expressed mixed feelings about a market-rate development receiving public subsidy and suggested the item be tabled for additional discussion and analysis.

There were no additional persons appearing to be heard.

Board member Washington raised several concerns and questions regarding the proposal for the subject property. Most notably, Board member Washington requested clarity on how the project aligned with the Nine Rails Creative District Master Plan. She expressed interest in feedback from Lorie Buckley, the Arts Administrator, regarding how the project would fit within the goals and objectives of the Creative District. Board member Washington shared research she'd conducted on the historical elements of the site, including the significance of the Butler Way staircases and how those historical elements could potentially influence the project.

BOARD MEMBER WASHINGTON MOVED TO TABLE THE ITEM TO AUGUST 11, 2026, WITH DIRECTION TO STAFF TO PROVIDE A REVIEW OF THE PROJECT'S ALIGNMENT WITH THE NINE RAILS CREATIVE DISTRICT MASTER PLAN, TO ADDRESS QUESTIONS REGARDING THE BONNEVILLE SHORELINE AND SITE EGRESS RAISED IN THE PUBLIC COMMENT MATERIALS RECEIVED, AND TO INCLUDE REMARKS FROM THE ARTS ADMINISTRATOR. THE MOTION FAILED FOR LACK OF A SECOND.

ON A MOTION BY BOARD MEMBER RICHEY AND SECONDED BY BOARD MEMBER LOPEZ, RESOLUTION 2026-7 WAS ADOPTED UPON THE FOLLOWING ROLL CALL VOTE: VOTING AYE – COUNCIL MEMBERS LOPEZ, LUNDELL, MYERS, RICHEY, VICE CHAIR GRAF, AND CHAIR HYER. VOTING NO – BOARD MEMBER WASHINGTON.

Following the vote, Vice Chair Graf acknowledged the concerns raised by members of the public regarding the site's historical character and expressed that he placed faith in the Planning staff and Planning Commission having reviewed the project appropriately. He noted that the project's for-sale, owner-occupied nature ultimately guided his affirmative vote. Board member Lundell expressed general support for housing production across all product types. Board member Myers stated that while the project is not perfect, it meets a demonstrated need in the city, and expressed particular confidence in the project's architect, Cameron Lewis. Board member Washington acknowledged the difficulty of the decision, noting her desire for more discussion about alignment with the creative arts master plan and the three-year occupancy requirement, but offered congratulations to the developer.

Executive Director Comments

Executive Director Nadolski offered no comments.

Board member Comments

Board Member Richey echoed sentiments shared throughout the evening regarding housing as a pressing community issue and expressed appreciation for the passion and commitment demonstrated by representatives of Lotus Company.

There being no further business to come before the Agency, **BOARD MEMBER RICHEY MOVED THE MEETING ADJOURN AT 8:56 P.M. MOTION WAS SECONDED BY BOARD MEMBER LUNDELL, ALL VOTING AYE.**

JASON GOULD
DEPUTY CITY RECORDER

RICHARD A. HYER, CHAIR

APPROVED: September 8, 2026