

# HOUSING AND REDEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY OF THE CITY OF SAINT PAUL, MINNESOTA

REPORT TO THE COMMISSIONERS

DATE: APRIL 23, 2014

**REGARDING: AUTHORIZATION TO ACQUIRE TAX FORFEIT PROPERTY AT 820-822 CONCORDIA AND SUBSEQUENTLY CONVEY SAME TO RONDO AVENUE, INC. FOR DEVELOPMENT AS AN AFRICAN AMERICAN MUSEUM AND COMMUNITY CENTER, DISTRICT 8, WARD 1 (PUBLIC HEARING)**

## **Requested Board Action**

The specific actions being requested of the Housing and Redevelopment Authority of the City of Saint Paul, Minnesota (“HRA”) Board are as follows:

- Authorization to request acquisition of tax forfeit parcel 820 Concordia Avenue from Ramsey County pursuant to the terms of the Acquisition Agreement.
- Authorization to convey parcel to Rondo Avenue, Inc. for new construction development for Rondo Community Museum under Acquisition Agreement.
- Waive the HRA Disposition policy.

## **Background**

820 Concordia Avenue (“Property”) is a vacant lot which was the location of the last structure in the original Rondo neighborhood. The land is now a tax forfeited property. Rondo Avenue, Inc. (“RAI”) is a nonprofit organization dedicated to preserving, conserving, and accurately interpreting the contributions of African-Americans to the City of Saint Paul. RAI was founded in 1982, and for the past 30 years has sponsored the “Rondo Days” festival as a means to transmit the history and rich cultural traditions of the vanished Rondo community. RAI seeks to acquire the Property to construct the Rondo Community Museum (“Museum”), which will house historical memorabilia and have ongoing community programming. The facility will also house RAI administrative offices and serve as a meeting space for their organization as well as other community groups.

The City Council, pursuant to RES 13-1854, approved a STAR grant in the amount of \$25,000 to assist RAI with the acquisition of the Property, and the cost to develop architectural/design plans and fundraising material. Ramsey County pulled this property from the December 23, 2013

auction in anticipation of HRA's acquisition request. Assuming approval of our request by Ramsey County, the HRA will, upon the HRA's purchase of the Property, immediately sell the Property to RAI to develop the Museum. RAI's proposal for the Museum, including a draft project timeline, is attached as Exhibit E.

Maps and intended uses of the tax forfeit parcels are shown on **Attachment B**.

### **Budget Action**

There is no budget action requested of the HRA. The acquisition funds were approved by the City Council under the Neighborhood STAR Program Year Round Funding on November 20, 2013 under Resolution 13-1854. The Property will be sold to RAI for the same amount the HRA Board pays Ramsey County for the Property.

### **Future Action**

N/A

### **Financing Structure**

N/A

### **PED Credit Committee Review**

N/A

### **Compliance**

The project will be required to comply with Little Davis Bacon and Vendor Outreach due to the \$25,000 STAR award.

### **Green/Sustainable Development**

The project will be required to comply with the Sustainable Green Policy.

### **Environmental Impact Disclosure**

The HRA will not conduct any environmental testing on the Property, and will convey the Property to RAI in its “as is” condition without any representations or warranties. The HRA will be indemnified by RAI if any environmental, or other, issues arise.

### **Historic Preservation**

N/A

### **Public Purpose/Comprehensive Plan Conformance**

The proposed Museum is very consistent with the policies and priorities detailed in the City of Saint Paul’s Comprehensive Plan. Specifically, the Museum project supports the neighborhood-approved, and city-approved Summit-University Plan Summary Strategy (“SU Plan”) ED-17 to **“Foster cultural tourism as an economic driver for business and workforce development and explore formal designation of the neighborhood as a cultural heritage district.”** This project is the **only project** that has been proposed since approval of the S-U Plan that will help the City and neighborhood achieve the cultural tourism vision.

(The City of Saint Paul Comprehensive Plan Land Use Strategy LU-1.5 and Figure LU-B also identify this area as an Established Neighborhood, where LU-1.7 permits neighborhood-serving commercial businesses compatible with the character of the neighborhood. The community programming associated with the Museum would support these strategies.)

### **Statement of Chairman**

“Being duly authorized by the Board of Commissioners to conduct this Public Hearing, the hearing is now open. This is a Public Hearing called for the purpose of conveyance of a certain Parcel of land located at 820 Concordia Avenue located in District 8, Ward 1 by the Housing and Redevelopment Authority of the City of Saint Paul, Minnesota (HRA).

Notice of time, place, and purpose of this hearing was published in the Saint Paul Pioneer Press on Saturday, April 12, 2014. The Affidavit of Publication of the Notice of Public Hearing will be made a part of these proceedings.

**Property Description**

The HRA proposes to convey the following property in the Summit-University District 8 area described as: Lot 1, Block 5, Edwin Deans Second Addition to St. Paul, Ramsey County, Minnesota

**Purchaser**

Rondo Avenue Inc.

Is there anyone who wishes to be heard on this sale? If not, Chair will declare this Public Hearing adjourned.”

**Recommendation:**

Executive Director recommends approval.

**Sponsored by:** Commissioner Dai Thao

**Staff:** Craig O’Brien, Economic Development 651.266.6695  
Cynthia Carlson Heins, Project Services, 651.266.6608

**Attachments**

- **Attachment A – Resolution for Acquisition of Tax Forfeit Parcel**
- **Attachment B – Map**
- **Attachment C – Public Purpose Form**
- **Attachment D – Census Facts**
- **Attachment E – Rondo Community Museum STAR Report (April 2014)**