



City of Cedar Rapids
DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MINUTES
City Hall Training Room
Wednesday, January 23, 2013
3:00 p.m.

Meeting was brought to order at 3:06 p.m.

Present: Council members Vernon (Chair) Olson and Shey. Staff members present: Christine Butterfield, Community Development Director, Julie Sina, Parks and Recreation Director; Kevin Ciabatti, Building Services Manager; Jennifer Pratt, Community Development Planner; Seth Gunnerson, Community Development Planner; Thomas Smith, Community Development Planner; Brad Larson, Community Development Planner; and Alicia Abernathey, Community Development Administrative Assistant.

Council member Vernon stated the Development Committee of the City of Cedar Rapids meets monthly and the purpose of the committee is to look at development issues that involve community, neighborhood and economic development. Items are brought forward to the agenda from Christine Butterfield, other City staff, Council members and sometimes citizens.

Council member Vernon called for a motion to approve the minutes from the regular meeting on November 28, 2012 and the joint meeting on December 11, 2012. Council member Shey made a motion to approve the minutes of the November 28, 2012 and December 11, 2012 meetings. Council member Olson seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously with none opposed.

Informational Items and Updates

Council member Vernon stated the Development Committee Issue Processing Chart is a way of keeping track of items that have come before the Committee, when they came forward and if follow-up is necessary. Council member Vernon stated informational items and updates are also part of the packet. One of the update memos pertained to signs and Council member Vernon pulled the item for discussion by the committee.

Council member Vernon stated there is a proposed sign moratorium for off-premise signs. Christine Butterfield, Community Development Director, stated in October 2012 the City Council discussed having the Development Committee talk about signs. On November 27, 2012 Seth Gunnerson, Community Development, provided a presentation showing what other cities in the region are doing to address signage issues. The Development Committee decided to take on immediate steps requiring all off-premise signs be a Conditional Use and then look at long-term steps. The long term step included sign caps and maybe aesthetics, while the immediate step included modifying the C-2 and C-3 zoning requirements. The provision tied to signs would be

changed to a Conditional Use. The City Planning Commission (CPC) reviewed the Conditional Use change on January 10, 2013 and expressed concern of addressing the policy issue in steps and made the recommendation to take on the entire review comprehensively and do a moratorium until the process is complete.

Council member Vernon stated there needs to be a process in which the City thoroughly looks into the sign ordinance for on-premise, off-premise, digital, etc. without several sign permits coming in, therefore, a moratorium would need to be in place. Council member Olson stated the moratorium should be as short as possible as a lot of the research is complete and it should not take long before staff has a recommendation for City Council. There are various forms of digital signs and the type of signs that cause issues for the area need to be addressed. Council member Vernon stated the moratorium should be in place for 180 days and if the ordinance can be completed sooner it's better than not having enough time.

Ms. Butterfield went over a tentative timeline stating in February, March and April staff will draft the ordinance and meet with stakeholders. Staff will return to Development Committee in April with the proposed ordinance. This will also need to go before the City Planning Commission in May and a motion setting a public hearing will be in June. Council member Vernon stated Development Committee is in favor of a 120-180 day moratorium with the ordinance change on the first City Council meeting possible.

1. Greene Square Park

Jim Kern, Greene Square Park Citizens Committee, stated in early 2012, Bradd Brown and himself were asked to make a presentation to Downtown Rotary to use Greene Square as a celebratory 100 year anniversary project, which did not win. However, the Public Library Board and Museum of Art Board initiated the process of redeveloping Greene Square Park. Stakeholders including the Library, Museum of Art, First Presbyterian Church, Waypoint, Visual Arts Commission (VAC), Cedar Rapids Parks and Recreation Department, OPN and Ryan met early in 2012. A small committee was created to implement a number of suggestions and ideas into a concept plan for Greene Square Park renovations.

Bradd Brown, OPN, stated the group started the process by taking a look at other parks in the United States to decide what things could be incorporated into the Greene Square Park. Parks reviewed included Chicago's Lake Shore East Park, Iowa City's Pedestrian Mall, Des Moines' Pappajohn Sculpture Garden and the St. Louis' Gateway Mall.

Mr. Brown discussed the group's priorities including:

- Provide a large, open green space for gatherings and events.
- Provide a play area for children that is sculptural in appearance.
- Provide a low-maintenance, interactive water feature.
- Provide flexible opportunities for sculpture.
- Provide areas for picnicking.
- Maintain the historic diagonal walkway.
- Provide a permanent Holiday Tree stand.
- Consider a location and utilities for a portable skating rink.

Mr. Brown presented a concept design of Greene Square Park which included the elements that could potentially be included. The concept design shows the park incorporating with the Public

Library and the Museum of Art. Mr. Brown went over the individual project costs, the total cost and the action plan for the project with the goal start date of September 2013.

Mr. Kern pointed out the majority of the funding would come from private entities as there are several interested parties. Mr. Kern pointed out the most expensive piece of art the City would acquire would be used in Greene Square Park and could potentially be done without City funds. Council member Vernon asked if the existing trees would remain in the park. Mr. Brown stated the plan is to preserve as many of the trees as possible. Council member Olson stated the park is already a busy space and with the proposed improvements it will become a busier space, especially when the library opens. Mr. Kern pointed out OPN and Ryan Construction are willing to approach the project as a way of giving back to the community. Mr. Brown stated an update, to the Development Committee, can be provided in March or April.

2. CPC Work Plan

Brad Larson, Community Development Planner, stated a meeting was held to review the City Planning Commission's (CPC) charter, accomplishments from 2012 and had a discussion regarding the CPC goals for 2013.

Scott Overland, CPC Chair, stated a lot was accomplished in 2012. Some of the highlights from 2012 included increased communication with other boards and commissions, representation at Development Committee, and attending neighborhood meetings for controversial issues. Another item accomplished in 2012 was the update of the CPC By-Laws that had not been updated in 15 years. The By-Laws are significantly shorter and modernized to what the commission is doing. The commission has moved to a three week schedule which allows for reasonable meeting lengths and there has been no need for special meetings.

Mr. Overland went over the CPC goals for 2013 including:

1. Assist in Developing a Sustainable Development Measurement Tool.
2. Increase knowledge of CPC by attending training opportunities.
3. Based on City Council direction, participate and contribute to the development of the City's Comprehensive Plan.
4. Increase interaction and communication with City Council.
5. Implement improvements to meeting formats to encourage public attendance.

Council member Olson stated CPC is an important commission so member attendance is critical. Mr. Overland stated every three months he checks in on member attendance and addresses any issues. Council member Olson stated it should be mandatory that there are training sessions in order to understand what the CPC does. Mr. Larson stated training sessions are provided for all new members and the Community Development Department funds the training. Council member Vernon requested the CPC make City Council aware of any controversial issues or changes.

3. HPC Work Plan

Thomas Smith, Community Development Planner, stated the Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) is an eleven member committee appointed by the Mayor and approved by City Council. Mr. Smith stated the HPC hosted their first annual Preservation Showcase in May 2012 which included demonstrations of restoration techniques and information about historic buildings and districts. As part of the showcase the first ever Preservation Awards ceremony was held to honor the City's most outstanding preservation efforts. The HPC also made improvements to their

website which now includes additional documentation and updated forms. The HPC also worked with salvage operations such as Habitat for Humanity's ReStore program. ReStore goes into buildings that are going to be demolished to salvage any historic materials they can for resale.

Mr. Smith went over the HPC goals for 2013 including:

1. Continue to implement projects from the FEMA Memorandums of Agreement and Letter of Agreement with the City.
 - These projects are incorporated throughout the work plan and include items such as historic surveys, historic district nominations, calls for photos and documents from the community for databases and booklets, and preservation events.
2. Host a larger Preservation Showcase with more participants and increased publicity.
3. Improve communications and coordination with other local preservation interest groups.
4. Distribute an informational mailing to property owners and residents in the City's local historic districts to provide more information about the historic district guidelines, paint rebate program, Preservation Showcase, and other HPC matters.

Council member Shey stated the City does not have the resources to save every historic building in Cedar Rapids. In order for the City to participate in historic preservation, funds need to be acquired. Council member Olson stated the City cannot leave boarded up buildings in a neighborhood that is being redeveloped. Hopefully a developer will rehabilitate or relocate the structure but if not they need to be demolished.

Todd McNall, HPC Vice-Chair, stated more developers are stepping up and becoming interested in historic properties. There are developments that Cedar Rapids needs but are better suited for areas that are not in historic districts and would not require demolition of historic properties. Council member Vernon stated the HPC has evolved as a recommending body to City Council and created a process for how the groups work together. Council member Vernon stated there was once a subjective list of 11 most endangered properties and asked if the HPC could create a list of the top 100 historic properties. Mr. McNall stated the HPC understands the request but feels every historic building in Cedar Rapids is important on some level. Council member Vernon suggested ways of categorizing a list for City Council.

Mr. McNall stated the 11 most endangered list was created to show the buildings the HPC was most concerned about. Mr. McNall suggested instead of a list of buildings it could be a list of criteria. Council member Vernon stated any information provided will be helpful. In Washington D.C. there are some buildings where parts of the original structure remain and new development is built around it. Buildings like that show where the City has been and where it is going. Council member Vernon suggested the HPC also look into developing more historic districts.

Ms. Butterfield stated members of HPC, Save CR Heritage and staff met to discuss creating a Kirkwood curriculum for rehabilitation work to support preservation activities. The goal would be to have a list of groups that have participated in the historic rehabilitation program. Mr. Smith pointed out staff encourages developers to go before the HPC early on in the process to gauge their reaction to the development. This process allows for the HPC to not be surprised when demolition applications come in later.

4. VAC Work Plan

Mr. Kern stated the aftermath of the 2008 flood and trying to catch up with processes that were not in place created a struggle for the Visual Arts Commission (VAC). The VAC was also a

struggle at first because there was no continuity in staff. Over the past two years the VAC has greatly improved due to having staff members such as Nicole Klepadlo, Seth Gunnerson and Jennifer Pratt. The VAC has also improved due to the current commissioners having some sort of background with art.

Mr. Kern stated some of the highlights of 2012 include:

- Purchasing art for the first time since the commission was created,
- Restoring pieces for the Paramount Theatre,
- Determining a location for the Terrestrial Glove (Kirkwood Community College)
- Conducting Community Outreach.

Also, a deaccession policy was written for damaged, destroyed or unusable pieces of art and is ready for City Council approval and recommendations. Council member Vernon requested the deaccession policy come to the Development Committee before going to City Council.

Photos of the future Amphitheater and Convention Center art were presented and Mr. Kern explained the materials used, the location, the size and installation dates. Mr. Kern introduced the Ignite Event stating it will be on March 7, 2013 at CSPA Hall. In 2011 there was a community wide event with approximately 150 people in attendance to present ideas for visual arts.

Mr. Kern went over the VAC goals for 2013 including:

- Complete projects at Amphitheater and Convention Center.
- Facilitate the restoration of the Terrestrial Globe and relocation from the GTC to Linn Hall at Kirkwood Community College.
- Complete inventory and condition reports for all pieces in the City collection.
- Identify maintenance needs and develop maintenance plan.
- Identify locations for art not currently on display.
- Promote public art by creating promotional pieces to engage citizens and by attending community events.

Ms. Butterfield stated the inventory created by Suzy McGrane-Hop, VAC member, is a great resource and gift to the community as there was no system, structure or order to the public art information prior to the 2008 flood. Council member Vernon stated it is important to have pieces of art in key places as the City and the culture of the City are being rebuilt.

5. Core Area Development Patterns

Seth Gunnerson, Community Development Planner, stated staff compared the amount of people living in the core of Cedar Rapids with other communities in Iowa and around the Midwest. Staff looked at the Census data that came out in 2010 in terms of how much of the population is living in higher density development, or 5,000 people per sq mi. The data showed Cedar Rapids has 51% of the community living in high density, which is below other communities in Iowa. 28.5% of the land area in Cedar Rapids has no population due to undeveloped land, industrial zoning or commercial zoning. The average of the communities surveyed had 22% of no population land. Based on these numbers there is potential for infill development in Cedar Rapids.

Mr. Gunnerson presented a population density map of Cedar Rapids pointing out the differences in population throughout the city. In the core of the community, Cedar Rapids lost 6,329 residents in flood affected parcels from 2000 to 2010, while adding 11,900 residents elsewhere. City Council directed new development, through Multi-Family New Construction (MFNC) and

the ROOTs program, be directed to Tier 1 neighborhoods located in the core of the community. One example would be, in the Oak Hill Jackson Neighborhood 151 new units have been constructed by different developers, resulting in \$27.5 million in new investment.

Mr. Gunnerson presented several maps, from the U.S. Census data, pointing out the difference in the core area of Cedar Rapids from 2000 to 2010, as well as the difference between Cedar Rapids and other communities in 2010. Council member Olson asked to include Des Moines, Iowa to the communities of comparison. Mr. Gunnerson stated Des Moines was looked into and their ½ mile number was 3,500 compared to 1,820 in Cedar Rapids with the one mile number being similar to Cedar Rapids at approximately 10,722. Council member Vernon suggested comparing to communities such as Waterloo, Iowa.

Council member Shey stated he was curious about the optimal density in the neighborhoods, such as Wellington Heights. It would be helpful to know which neighborhoods are above or below the base line for density. Mr. Gunnerson stated the density of the individual neighborhoods was looked at and what the people consider to be a part of their neighborhood affects the actual numbers.

Ms. Butterfield stated the questions are what the density is and how density works well. Staff could possibly bring back information that relates to the height, number of stories and placement on lots of buildings. Council member Vernon stated there should be more density in the core area and downtown buildings should have three or more stories.

6. Request for Proposals -707 2nd Street SW & 123 Diagonal Drive SW (DJ Truck Corral)

Jennifer Pratt, Community Development Planner, stated a request was received from the owner of DJ Truck Corral for disposition of 707 2nd Street SW and 123 Diagonal Drive SW. Both properties are directly behind the current DJ Truck Corral site. The properties are currently identified for housing reinvestment from the post-flood Neighborhood Planning Process and the current Kingston planning initiative is underway with the lots included in the plan. A stakeholder session was held on December 13, 2012 and staff is working with JLG as a facilitator for the feedback received. JLG will look at the feedback and staff will return to Development Committee on February 27, 2013 before going to City Council in the spring. Based on the experience in preparing for the dispositions, the results of the Kingston Area Plan would be useful in putting together the disposition. Staff is asking the Development Committee for feedback in order to be responsive to the requester. Staff is looking for direction to proceed with the disposition or wait until the Kingston Area Plan is ready.

Council member Olson stated it would be good to have the Kingston plan finished before requesting proposals as the development may not fit with the plan. Ms. Butterfield stated the City initiated the Kingston Planning Process and will be coming back to City Council for approval. The process will become another layer of the policy that will sit over the neighborhood plan and will be similar to a Future Land Use Map as it will drive disposition and site plan development.

Council member Shey left the meeting at 4:58 p.m.

7. Disposition of 423 5th Street NW (E Avenue Fire Station)

Mr. Larson stated the disposition is for the Fire Station at the intersection of 5th Street and E Avenue NW. The Fire Station was built in 1909 and was closed in 1985. There have been

improvements to the structure since 1985 to keep the building up to code and ensure it did not become a nuisance property. The City currently has no plans for the structure. Staff completed a historic structure report as part of a sewer project that was required as a Letter of Agreement (LOA) for receiving State funds for disaster recovery. As part of the report it was determined the property was eligible for the National Register of Historic Places.

Staff has received interest for potentially rehabilitating or relocating the structure. Staff is proposing the standard evaluation criteria listed below:

- Experienced developer
- Financial/market feasibility
- Reasonable project timeline
- Consistency with neighborhood and community goals

Mr. Larson stated due to the development challenges; staff recommends review of all proposals by the Project Review Group. Mr. Larson went over the following timeline:

1. February 12 – Motion setting a public hearing
2. February 26 – Public hearing is held to consider the disposition of 423 5th Street NW
3. March 5 – Informational meeting for interested parties
4. April 9 – Proposal Deadline
5. April 16 – Evaluation of proposals by staff/stakeholders completed
6. April 23 – City Council Consideration of proposals
7. May/June – City Council consideration of Development Agreement

Council member Olson asked if a minimum value would be set or if it would depend on proposals. Mr. Larson stated there is not an appraisal amount as the City has owned the property for decades. Because the property was not purchased with federal money the City Council has more flexibility in reviewing and accepting prices.

Council member Vernon and Olson recommended the disposition of 423 5th Street NW (E Avenue Fire Station) move forward to the full City Council.

8. Amendment to the New Bohemia Group Agreement

Mr. Larson stated on September 13, 2011 the City Council entered into a temporary agreement with the New Bohemia Group to complete sand volleyball courts at 400 12th Avenue SE, with a deadline of completion for September 1, 2012. Staff had several meetings with the New Bohemia Group regarding timelines and the completion of the parking lot. The New Bohemia Group proposed to finish the parking lot by the end of March 2013. The finished product would include a permanent hard surface parking lot, installation of a fence and painting lines for the parking lot.

John Schnipkoweit, New Bohemia Group President stated the agreement has a lease of three years. Originally the parking lot was supposed to have 70 spaces and the City Market was going to build 120 permanent spots but after discussion it made sense to consolidate the spaces to 120. The New Bohemia Group was then responsible for the construction of the parking lot and the City Market would be responsible for maintaining it. In creating this agreement between the New Bohemia Group and the City Market the scope for the New Bohemia Group was increased.

Council member Olson asked if there would be any landscaping. Mr. Schnipkoweit stated the grass was chemically treated to provide green grass along the volleyball courts. Council member Vernon asked if the volleyball courts would be open in the summer. Mr. Schnipkoweit stated applications will be accepted beginning in March.

Council member Vernon recommended the amendment move forward to the full City Council.

9. Commercial Lighting Requirements

Council member Vernon stated when driving past convenience stores there is spillage from the lights and asked if there was an ordinance pertaining to the topic. Kevin Ciabatti, Building Services Manager, stated staff tracked down three valid complaints received within the last year. The ordinance does not contain a maximum intensity of light at a property line location. There is a need to verify developers are actually building to the standard of their approved site plans.

Council member Olson stated in certain zones it is more critical to use certain lighting over others. Guidelines are needed for people to reference. Council member Vernon also suggested looking into the heights of some of the light poles as it creates another spillage problem. Council member Olson stated the lighting is based on a number of factors including the type of light, location, etc. Mr. Ciabatti stated developers can still have tall lights but the spillage on adjoining properties can be laid out so it does not violate the maximum lamination. The current ordinance only deals with exterior lighting but there have been complaints regarding interior lighting.

Mr. Ciabatti stated if this is a process that is going to be changed, an ordinance needs to be shared with the development community up front. Mr. Ciabatti stated there are companies that designers can use that would take a picture and lay it out to show the intensity of light on a site. Council member Vernon asked how it would be tested to ensure it is not a violation. Mr. Ciabatti stated staff would go out with equipment and measure the intensity of light. The process of verifying in the past was usually done on a complaint basis only and a new process would require more planning from City staff.

Council member Vernon called for a motion to adjourn the meeting. Council member Olson made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Motion passed unanimously with none opposed.

Meeting adjourned at 5:25 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Alicia Abernathey, Administrative Assistant II
Community Development