



**City of Cedar Rapids
DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MINUTES
City Hall Council Chambers
Wednesday, April 16, 2014
12:00 p.m.**

The meeting was brought to order at 12:03 p.m.

Present: Council members Vernon (Chair), Shey and Weinacht. Staff members present: Gary Kranse, Community Development Director; Jennifer Pratt, Community Development Assistant Director; Jasmine Almoayed, Economic Development Liaison; Caleb Mason, Housing Redevelopment Analyst; Sven Leff, Parks and Recreation Director; Kirsty Sanchez, Community Development Planner; Jeff Hintz, Community Development Planner; Todd Fagan, City Arborist; and Alicia Abernathey, Community Development Administrative Assistant.

Council member Vernon stated the Development Committee meets monthly and the purpose of the committee is to review development and economic issues that involve the community. Items are brought forward to the agenda from City staff, Council members and sometimes citizens.

Council member Vernon called for a motion to approve the minutes from February 26, 2014. Council member Shey made a motion to approve the minutes from February 26, 2014. Council member Weinacht seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously with none opposed.

Informational Items and Updates

○ **Knutson Building**

Jennifer Pratt, Community Development Assistant Director, stated the Knutson Building, located along the river by the Police Station, was purchased in 2013. At the time of purchase the amphitheatre was being finalized and there was talk of using the Knutson Building in connection with the amphitheatre. Upon completion of the amphitheatre it became apparent the Knutson Building cannot be used with the amphitheatre due to elevation issues. Staff is looking into options for the building including putting a floodwall in front of the structure, relocating the structure or elevating the structure on the current site and incorporating the floodwall as the foundation. If relocated, the building could be relocated next to the Mott Building, owned by Linn County, as they are both historic buildings and will create density. The options were presented to the Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) and they are in favor of the City looking into these options. Staff will continue to research options and provide an update to Development Committee before requesting proposals.

Council member Vernon asked if the building was elevated would it be able to provide services to the amphitheatre. Ms. Pratt stated there will still be access issues.

1. Workforce Development Presentation

Jasmine Almoayed, Economic Development Liaison, stated economic development is strongly dependent upon workforce. Workforce is a primary area of concern and a student project was completed that looked at workforce retention and its effectiveness in Cedar Rapids.

Nick Benson, Iowa Initiative for Sustainable Communities, stated this is part of a campus wide engagement initiative at the University of Iowa. The idea is to connect students and faculty with communities in Iowa to work on issues related to sustainability and vitality in our communities. The initiative utilizes graduate students to tackle projects that matter to communities but the communities are unable to complete the projects due to lack of staff time or other reasons.

Misty Rebik, University of Iowa graduate student, stated the Cedar Rapids Workforce Retention project was launched in September 2013. Project partners include the Iowa Initiative for Sustainable Communities and Jasmine Almoayed with the City of Cedar Rapids.

Liz Macias, University of Iowa graduate student, stated research was conducted looking at demographics of Cedar Rapids and the results showed Cedar Rapids is experiencing a loss of 25-40 year olds living and working here. Strong economies are tied to having a diverse and skilled workforce with 25-40 year olds being a major component of the demographic. This age group contributes to a growing population and is essential to economic growth.

Ms. Macias provided migration trends of young workers across the nation from 2000 to 2010. Ms. Rebik referenced Soul of the Community Study by Knight Foundation completed in 2010 pointing out communities with higher attachment to the community experience more Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth and population growth.

Ms. Rebik stated a community survey was conducted and information was collected including perceptions of Cedar Rapids, priorities for Cedar Rapids, demographic information, workplace perceptions and residency. A total of 416 responses were received and the results showed major priorities as better jobs, shopping, and downtown growth and development.

Ms. Macias identified ways other mid-size Midwest cities are combatting the loss of 25 to 44 year old workers. Ms. Rebik identified specific findings based on the research and identified implications for Cedar Rapids.

2. Request for City-Owned Properties

- a) **214 1st Street SW**
- b) **1016 3rd Avenue SW**
- c) **1216 2nd Street SE**

Caleb Mason, Housing Redevelopment Analyst, stated letters of interest were received from adjacent property owners of three properties. The typical process is to bring the requests to the Development Committee for review and recommendation. The first property, 214 1st Street SW, was acquired through the acquisition program and is located in the Kingston Village area. This property was identified as needed for off street parking in multiple redevelopment proposals for the Gatto building. When negotiating the Development Agreement with KHB Redevelopment, LLC they reiterated interest in this site for off-street residential and commercial tenant parking.

Mr. Mason stated the second property is 1016 3rd Avenue SW and interest was received from a neighboring commercial property owner. This property was made available for the ROOTs program as it meets the minimum definition for a buildable lot but no developers were interested in constructing on this site. The configuration of the site makes it problematic for construction of a house and there are marketability issues based on where the property is located.

Mr. Mason stated the third property, 1216 2nd Street SE, was acquired through the CDBG program and is located in the 100 year flood plain. The lot is buildable but the ROOTs resource cannot be used for construction. The property is located in the New Bohemia area and interest was submitted by a neighboring commercial property owner to use for additional parking.

Council member Shey stated there is a need for a master parking plan for Kingston Village and New Bohemia. Council member Vernon stated when there are more compact neighborhoods there should be incentives or property set aside for shared parking. Gary Kranse, Community Development Director, stated there is a need to look at parking to determine how much parking is necessary. Mr. Kranse stated staff is reactive to requests for property rather than proactive but it doesn't mean the City shouldn't consider a higher standard for the property.

d) Chipping Green – Discussion Only

Mr. Mason stated a letter of interest was received from Ahmann Companies to initiate the request for proposal process for the Chipping Green site. The developer met with the Northwest Neighborhood Association and received a lot of good feedback on a moderately dense housing concept. After the 2008 flood this property was considered for replacement housing but proposals were denied. They were denied based on concerns from adjacent residents on the proposed projects and use of public park land. Currently, the site is not actively being used for organized recreational uses. Community Development and Parks and Recreation staff will continue to research methods for establishing a fair market value for usable park space, covenants and restrictions that might affect the property, and results of the next public input session for Greenway planning. Staff will also determine criteria to guide development proposals and return in May with recommendations.

Council member Weihnacht asked if this was the proposal that had been brought forward in 2008 and was denied. Mr. Mason stated this was not the same proposal. A different developer proposed a plan for the site with higher density than adjacent properties.

3. Overlay District Review Process

Kirsty Sanchez, Community Development Planner, stated the City established three Design Review Overlay Districts in order to encourage quality infill development. Each district has a Technical Advisory Committee that reviews sites plans and building permits to provide recommendations. The committees do not have the ability to approve or deny projects but their recommendations are taken into consideration by approving bodies such as City Planning Commission (CPC) and the Board of Adjustment. Staff met with the Czech Village / New Bohemia committee and they have concerns with the limited opportunity to make recommendations on site plans that are reviewed solely by staff and aren't taken before the CPC. The current zoning ordinance allows staff to require a Preliminary Site Development Plan (PSDP) for any project within the City. Staff is seeking direction on whether to require PSDPs for all new construction, major restoration, and expansion projects with the Overlay Districts.

4. Street Interface

- a) Setbacks**
- b) Trees**
- c) Typology**

Jeff Hintz, Community Development Planner, stated discussions have taken place regarding getting away from a suburban orientated, car dependent development and getting closer to pedestrian oriented development. Ways to get to this would include setbacks strategies such as no setbacks or contextual setbacks and perhaps establishing a build-to line. Mr. Hintz identified ways to address parking concerns, walkability concerns, right of way, and street typology.

Council member Vernon called for a motion to adjourn the meeting. Council member Shey made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Council member Weinacht seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously with none opposed.

The meeting adjourned at 1:49 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Alicia Abernathey, Administrative Assistant II
Community Development