



**City of Cedar Rapids
DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MINUTES
City Hall Training Room
Wednesday, September 24, 2014
4:00 p.m.**

The meeting was brought to order at 4:00 p.m.

Present: Council members Vernon (Chair) Weinacht and Shey. Staff members present: Jennifer Pratt, Interim Community Development Director; Paula Mitchell, Grant Programs Manager; Anne Russett, Community Development Planner; Steve Hershner, Utilities Director; Jeff Hintz, Community Development Planner; Seth Gunnerson, Community Development Planner; and Alicia Abernathey, Community Development Administrative Assistant.

Council member Shey called for a motion to approve the minutes from August 20, 2014. Council member Weinacht made a motion to approve the minutes from August 20, 2014. The motion passed unanimously with none opposed.

Presentations:

1. Cedar Lake

Felicia Wyrick, Friends of Cedar Lake, stated Friends of Cedar Lake meets on a monthly basis with approximately 25 to 30 individuals who attend the meetings. Ms. Wyrick stated Friends of Cedar Lake had a presence at EcoFest, Irish District Fest and the Downtown Farmers Market. Ms. Wyrick identified past presentations Friends of Cedar Lake has provided.

Monica Vernon arrived at 4:02 p.m.

Ryan Anderson, Confluence, stated Cedar Lake has been identified as a brownfield due to chlordane found in the sediment. A brownfield is an area that has hazards to development. Cedar Lake is an 82 acre lake and is surrounded by a 1.6 mile Cedar Lake Loop Trail. The lake is a visible landmark from I-380 and Cedar Valley Nature Trail. The lake does overflow from the Cedar River during flood stage and there are various freshwater fish species in the lake. Iowa DNR categorized the lake as a category 5a water body. Mr. Anderson stated water quality issues include watershed, common water quality challenges and urban water quality improvement strategies. Mr. Anderson identified examples of remediation projects and potential grants.

Council member Vernon asked what scale category 5a is on. Mr. Anderson stated the scale is from one to ten and 5a shows contaminants were found but is not a high priority issue.

Dale Todd, Friends of Cedar Lake, stated the issue was chlordane contamination in the fish but the DNR has indicated the lake can possibly be taken off the impaired lake list.

Recommendation Items:

1. Annual CDBG Prioritization

Paula Mitchell, Grant Programs Manager, stated this is the third year that City Council has undertaken a process to try to prioritize the use of CDBG and HOME funds. There has been a steady decline in the amount of funds the City receives through CDBG and HOME programs each year. The HOME entitlement funds have an additional requirement for the City to set aside 15% of funding for Community Housing Development Organizations (CHDOs). In the past five years there has been a 25% decrease in CDBG funds and a 36% decrease in HOME funds. Ms. Mitchell stated staff recommendations are based off of FY14 final allocation amounts as FY15 numbers will not be available until spring of 2015. Staff recommends \$150,000 of the budgeted \$331,071 in HOME funds be used for eligible CHDO activities.

Council member Shey made a motion to move the Annual CDBG Prioritization recommendation forward to the full City Council. Council member Weinacht seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously with none opposed.

Informational Items

1. Sustainability Update

Anne Russett, Community Development Planner, stated the City Council adopted guiding principles for sustainability in January 2012. The principles included community, growth, environmental stewardship, affordability and innovation. Shortly after City Council adopted the guiding principles, iGreenCR was launched in March 2012. iGreenCR is a coordinated effort between multiple City departments and identifies nine categories for goal setting. Some recent accomplishments of iGreenCR include Cedar Rapids becoming the first city in Iowa to install green bike lanes, participation in the Indian Creek Watershed Authority, adoption of the Complete Streets policy and an \$850,000 investment to install sub-meters to efficiently manage electrical usage. Recent outreach efforts include an Elite Recyclers Class, a booth at "Go Green Day," a DIY Rain Barrel Class and League of Women Voters Clean Streams and Waterways.

Ms. Russett stated the City is currently working on sustainability related initiatives including EnvisionCR. EnvisionCR is the guiding document for policy direction within the City. The structure of EnvisionCR includes guiding principles, six elements and themes. The elements cover the general topic areas of the Comprehensive Plan. Themes underpin the entire plan and sustainability is one of the themes. A symbol of sustainability will be used throughout the Comprehensive Plan document to show which goals relate back to the goal of sustainability.

Ms. Russett stated another initiative is the zoning code update that will commence after adoption of the Comprehensive Plan. This initiative is long term and will ensure consistency with the Comprehensive Plan. The last initiative is Blue Zones which is a community wide effort that helps to create an environment that supports health and wellness. Recent initiatives of Blue Zones include Meet Me at the Market, Walk into Fall and the Skywalk Walking Program.

Councilmember Vernon stated the City needs to continue to move forward on policies. Councilmember Shey expressed interest in a transportation policy. Councilmember Weinacht expressed interest in a watershed policy.

2. Non-Conforming Lots

Ms. Mitchell stated a couple months ago staff brought forward a list of non-conforming lots and City Council asked staff to do some research to see if the lots are viable for development. The lots don't meet the minimum requirements for the R-TN zoning designation and are not adjacent to any other City-owned properties so the lots are unable to be combined with other lots. The primary issues of the lots are square footage, lot lines, and infrastructure. Some of the non-conforming lots have issues with access for water and sewer. Staff brought together a group of builders that have been participating in ROOTs and asked them if the lots are viable for development. Fewer than 10 lots were identified as buildable with some adjustments. The group of builders indicated the issues with the lots make them unmarketable to a buyer as they would only be one or two bedroom homes and would lack off street parking. Staff recommends disposing of the properties, through the sealed bid process, to adjacent property owners.

3. Cell Towers

Jeff Hintz, Community Development Planner, stated an industry and citizen meeting was held on August 13th to discuss some of the issues with recent cases of cell towers. A citizen representatives meeting took place on September 10th and staff shared research with the citizens. Meeting outcomes from the citizen meeting include potentially easing co-location requirements, enhanced design criteria, require neighborhood meetings, revised criteria for evaluating proposals and tiered strategy. Mr. Hintz stated additional stakeholder meetings will be held in October and a recommendation will be presented to Development Committee in November.

4. Interim Zoning Amendments

Seth Gunnerson, Community Development Planner, stated EnvisionCR will soon be completed and staff is hoping to adopt the plan in November. The plan will include a new Future Land Use Map (FLUM) and a new approach to the FLUM. As a result of the EnvisionCR process there will be a recommendation for a comprehensive zoning code update. In the meantime of the comprehensive update staff has been looking at code updates that can happen now.

Mr. Hintz stated interim zoning amendments include expansion of core parking requirements, removal of mandatory 25 foot setback in commercial zoning and requiring building rendering with preliminary site plan application. Other amendments include building placement in key corridors and clarification items for consistency.

5. Med Q

Mr. Gunnerson stated part of the Medical Quarter's Action Plan is establishing an overlay district. The Medical Quarter has identified various zones within the district. Staff is working with the Medical Quarter to establish ordinance language and adopt an overlay district.

The meeting adjourned at 5:42 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Alicia Abernathey, Administrative Assistant II
Community Development