



**City of Cedar Rapids
DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MINUTES
City Hall Training Room
Wednesday, May 20, 2015
4:00 p.m.**

The meeting was brought to order at 4:02 p.m.

Present: Council members Vernon (Chair), Shey, and Weinacht. Staff members present: Jennifer Pratt, Community Development Director; Bill Micheel, Community Development Assistant Director; Paula Mitchell, Housing and Redevelopment Manager; Kirsty Sanchez, Community Development Planner; Anne Russett, Community Development Planner; and Anne Kroll, Community Development Administrative Assistant.

Council member Weinacht made a motion to approve the minutes from April 15, 2015. Council member Shey seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Presentations:

1. Pedestrian/Bicycle Bridge Project

Steve Sovern, Committee Chair for the Southside Investment Board, presented on the former Rock Island Bridge south of the 16th Avenue Bridge and stated that rebuilding the bridge would complete the trails system within the community and would be an outstanding element of the community tying NewBo and Czech Village together. Funders have been in contact with the Southside Investment Board. CRANDIC has done some preliminary engineering work and confirmed the foundation of the bridge is substantial. CRANDIC and the engineer confirmed using the existing bridge is less costly. Mr. Sovern presented photos of rebuilt bridge. In order for this to happen, the bridge needs to belong to the City. Southside Investment Board is urging the City to negotiate with CRANDIC. Ron Griffith and Rita Rasmussen have started researching this project.

Council member Vernon stated that this is part of the Master Trails Plan for the City. Mr. Sovern stated that this would intersect Mt. Trashmore. Ms. Pratt stated that this project is in the Corridor MPO's Vision Plan and that is helpful when getting grants. Staff is working on the ownership issues and things are moving in the right direction.

Council member Weinacht stated that there is funding for maintenance when Site One is turned into green space, but there is a lot of work to do to make that happen. This can fit into the Vision with the trail coming through, but that is several years down the road. Mr. Micheel stated that currently the Solid Waste Agency has thirty percent design level for Site One. There is a broad stroke vision of what the final use of Mt. Trashmore will be. It will certainly involve trails and trail connections. Locating funding sources is the next step.

Dale Todd stated in regards to the Flood Control System, some type of short term levee system needs to be included in the area. Mr. Sovern stated that the Alliant Substation has been brought up to the 500 year floodplain. That is the level to which the flood walls will be built and that is essentially the level at which the bridge exists today. Council member Shey stated that it needs to be built so that it can survive another flood.

Council member Shey asked what materials will be used for the reconstruction. Mr. Sovern stated that the metal would stay, but the old steel would be removed. The design will be the exciting aspect of the project. Council member Shey asked if the price quote was just for the basic bridge. Mr. Sovern stated that is correct and that the design will raise the price up. The MPO staff believes it could cost up to \$4 million.

Council member Vernon stated that this will create a loop that many people will like and use. There is a need for public/private partnership and the MPO as well as what the City needs to do. City staff and MPO staff will need to be assigned to this project in the short-term. Since flood planning is in process, HR Green and Stanley will need to know what is going on as well. This presentation will be communicated to City Council. Council member Shey stated that when this is presented to the public it should not be called a bicycle trail, but a pedestrian trail.

2. CR Youth

Kirsty Sanchez, Community Development Planner, stated that in January 2015 staff attended the Public Safety Youth Services Committee meeting. It was recommended that staff work with a group of students from Iowa BIG (program for project based learning) to create a framework for a youth program. This framework will be presented to Youth Services on June 9, 2015. This will provide them the opportunity to learn how local government works and to work with City staff on different projects. For Community Development, it is a great opportunity to use their feedback when updating Envision CR. The students were taken on a tour of vacant City-owned parcels to get their ideas on what the City should do with those parcels.

Five students from area high schools presented their ideas for vacant City-owned property. Some of the ideas presented were an outdoor theatre, a glow in the dark park, a temporary art exhibit open twenty-four hours a day/seven days a week, an area schools garden, and downtown mini marts.

Council member Shey stated that temporary sites that rotate keep things new and different for the area. The glow in the dark park with swings is a great idea. Council member Vernon thanked the students and told them what great ideas they had. Ms. Pratt stated that staff will use the student ideas.

Recommendation Items:

1. Remaining Lots Available

Paula Mitchell, Housing and Redevelopment Manager, stated that approximately two hundred and sixty-five (265) properties have been disposed of for the ROOTs Program, approximately thirty-three (33) units have been rehabilitated after the flood, over fifty (50) parcels were part of a Commercial redevelopment project, and staff has done disposition to adjacent property owners. At this point, there are fewer than 40 remaining non-conforming lots outside of greenway, construction study area, and 100-year flood plain. There are two different scenarios with these lots that are “standalone” or those that are suitable for site assembly. An example of standalone is 705 2nd Avenue SW where the lot size does not meet the R-TN minimum, it is a shallow lot with difficult access, and there is no adjacent or nearby City-owned property. An example of

suitable for assembly is 625 3rd Street SW. The lot meets the R-TN minimum, the City owns lots at 617 and 623 3rd Street SW, and there is potential for assembly with private land.

Staff recommendation is:

- Continue disposition of standalone non-conforming lots.
 - Offer through sealed bid to adjacent owners.
 - Reduces City's cost to maintain and monitor.
 - City Council consideration of sealed bid disposition.
- Retain lots suitable for site assembly.
 - Parcel status available on City web site.
 - RFPs based on clear project concept with demonstrated market interest.

Council member Vernon asked if the biggest timeline issue was the cost of maintenance of the properties. Ms. Mitchell stated that there are a lot of inquiries from people who are looking at their own parking issues with adjacent properties or they want to expand their property. The cost is another factor and the total cost to maintain is approximately \$200,000 per year.

Council member Vernon stated that there are facilities that are still needed in the community such as a community center, recreation center, or senior center. Council member Vernon would like staff to make up a short list of community needs for these lots, and determine how much more housing or office space is needed. The standalone lots may continue to be sold to adjacent property owners. Ms. Pratt stated that there needs to be interdepartmental meetings to look at multiple lots together and determine City needs, infrastructure issues, or what would be the highest and best use to provide more guidance. Council member Vernon would like an inventory of the lots to be available.

Council member Shey asked if there is a minimum for the sealed bids as someone could offer \$1 for these lots. Ms. Mitchell stated that so far when Public Works sends out the sealed bids to the adjacent property owners they only take what they consider serious bids as there is some monetary value established and then those go to Council. At some point staff may need to look at that and determine what the cost is to maintain versus selling the lots.

Informational Items:

1. Zoning Code Update

Anne Russett, Community Development Planner, stated that staff is developing the scope of work and request for proposals for consultant services to update the Zoning Code. There are three main components to the whole process:

- *New Zoning Code:*
 - Ensures consistency with EnvisionCR and focuses on the design, form, and physical character of development.
 - Consider community context and apply regulations based on the unique character of a diversity of communities.
 - Evaluate a variety of issues, such as use standards, parking requirements, landscaping regulations, and options for promoting connectivity and accessibility.
 - Other issues that may be explored include green site design standards, density bonuses, second units, and joint live/work units.
- *New Zoning Map:*

- A new Zoning Map that applies the new code based on the defining characteristics of the neighborhood (e.g. urban core, historic neighborhood, suburban).
- *Zoning Handbook:*
 - An easy to read handbook that helps laypersons navigate zoning regulations and processes.

Ms. Russett stated the timeline for consultant selection would start in July 2015 with the release of the RFP, proposal deadline and review of proposals in August 2015, interviews in September 2015, consultant selection in October 2015, and City Council approval and contract execution in November 2015.

Council member Shey asked if there will be a whole new Zoning Code or if this is amending the existing one. Ms. Russett stated there will be a new code. Council member Shey asked about the price. Ms. Russett stated that \$220,000 is budgeted.

Council member Vernon stated that with all of the complaints with parking restrictions, those who have built underground parking should get credit. Council member Vernon likes the idea of defining by the characteristics of the neighborhoods.

Ms. Russett stated that the other key piece of the process is an analysis of the existing code and existing needs and stakeholder outreach. The entire zoning map will require a lot of coordination with property owners and other stakeholders.

Council member Vernon stated that infrastructure is a problem and huge challenge that needs to be in sync with the Zoning Code.

Council member Shey made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Council member Weinacht seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

The meeting adjourned at 5:18 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Anne Kroll, Administrative Assistant II
Community Development