



**City of Cedar Rapids
DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MINUTES
City Hall Training Room
Wednesday, June 17, 2015
4:00 p.m.**

The meeting was brought to order at 4:08 p.m.

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

Council members Weinacht and Vernon approved the minutes from May 20, 2015 with unanimous consent.

Informational Items:

1. Housing Access and Affordability

Paula Mitchell, Housing and Redevelopment Manager, shared existing programs that the City has in place to support affordable housing.

- Owner Occupied Rehab – 45 homes/year
- Lead Hazard Control Grant – pre-1978 homes
- First Time Homebuyer – 60 homebuyers/year
- ROOTs – 800+ new homes through 2016
- Multi-Family New Construction – 600+ new units
- Matching funds for State incentive programs (LIHTC, Workforce Housing Tax Credit)

Anne Russett, Community Development Planner, shared some potential regulatory incentives.

A. Housing Affordability

- Voluntary Policies:
 - Density bonuses: Allowance of increased densities for qualified, income-restricted projects.
 - Parking reductions: Allowance of reduced parking standards for qualified, income-restricted projects.
 - Incentives: Allowance of certain incentives for qualified, income-restricted projects, such as waivers or modifications to setbacks, building height, and lot size.

B. Housing Choice

- Second Units:
 - Dwelling unit either attached to or located on the same lot as an existing single-family residence.
- Joint Live/Work Units:

- Joint live and work units are a type of housing that consists of both living space and work space.
- Small Lot Subdivisions:
 - Division of land that creates smaller fee-simple, residential lots.
 - For the City of Cedar Rapids this means the allowance of a single-family lot that is less than 4,200 square feet.

C. Housing Access

- *Reasonable Accommodations:*
 - Policy and procedure for persons with disabilities to request reasonable accommodation from land use and zoning requirements when those requirements are a barrier to equal housing access.
 - Examples include:
 - Allowance of a wheelchair ramp within a side-yard setback
 - Relief from fence height restrictions to allow greater privacy and use of the outdoor space
 - Reduction in parking based on the number of residents who drive

Council member Vernon asked about the Lead Hazard Control Grant. Ms. Mitchell stated that the program provides assistance to homeowners to stabilize or fully abate the lead paint. In the entitlement programs, if the property is built before 1978, lead paint is assumed and all chipping and peeling paint issues are addressed. For the grant, there is a partnership with Linn County and they will send an assessor out to test the paint. Any exposed soil surfaces will be addressed also.

Council member Vernon spoke about the density bonus and some of the issues with people thinking density is negative. Increasing density is a good thing because it is going to show more people on the sidewalks and show more activity. Ms. Russett stated that height limits and maximum densities reduce the number of units, so the more units, less parking, and higher buildings help to make affordable housing projects financially feasible. Council member Vernon likes the idea of incentives for hiding parking underneath the building. Council member Weinacht stated that we need to be cognizant of the fact that density is seen as a negative. There was an issue in the Wellington Heights area that too much density has led to a public safety issue. Jennifer Pratt, Community Development, stated that Wellington Heights and the infrastructure were built for single-family housing. Density was built in a neighborhood that did not have the infrastructure to support it. The density bonus is good for a planned area to avoid the issues when a neighborhood is converted into a different use. Ms. Russett stated that in moving forward with any of these there will be coordination with neighborhood associations and property owners.

Council members Vernon and Weinacht both like the second units housing choice and think staff should look into that option.

For the joint live/work units, Ms. Russett added that the City allows this with the Home Occupation Permit, but this would be specifying that this type of housing would be allowed. Council member Vernon would like to see an incentive to get this type of housing going.

Council member Vernon is in favor of the small lot subdivisions and the affordable homeownership aspect.

Council member Weinacht spoke about having a housing development of tiny houses that are 500 square feet. Several groups have reached out about this type of housing. Council member Vernon asked that staff look up in the Building Code if 500 square feet is allowable.

2. DRTAC

Kirsty Sanchez, Community Development Planner, stated that there are four Overlay District and three of those are active. Those districts are Czech/Bohemia, Kingston Village, and the Ellis Boulevard Districts. Each of those districts has a committee that review building permits and site plans to provide recommendations on how the projects can better the character of the districts. The ordinance passed to make the MedQuarter Overlay District. Staff is working on a resolution establishing the composition of that committee. The Kingston and Ellis Overlay Districts have committee members appointed. The Czech/Bohemia District has been meeting since 2012 and has reviewed over fifty cases. They expressed an interest in updating the standards. The next step is to have an open house. After that, staff will make changes to the draft standards and present them to Development Committee and City Council.

Council member Weinacht asked about the make-up of the committees. Ms. Sanchez stated that there are different technical experts such as a licensed architect, an experienced developer in historical rehabilitation, or engineers and also stakeholders and property owners. Ms. Pratt stated that the MedQuarter is different in that they have their own board; however there will be stakeholders included.

Council member Vernon asked if there are plans for signage for the entrance of the MedQuarter. Ms. Sanchez stated that the MedQuarter is working on that now. There will be four monument signs for the entrances of the District. Staff is working with Public Works for street signs with the MedQuarter colors and logo.

Council member Vernon asked about parking signage in NewBo. Ms. Pratt stated that staff had a meeting with Park CR and Economic Alliance. Planners went out and looked at the area to find places for signage. Some strategies were worked out for signage including signs on overhead street lights. Staff will bring this item to the July Development Committee meeting. Council Member Vernon asked about a stop sign at 11th Avenue and 3rd Street. Ms. Pratt stated that Jen Winter is working on that and that staff will give an update at the July Development Committee meeting.

Council member Vernon would like to make sure that the Main Street Program is working with both the Czech Village and NewBo. Both of those neighborhoods are so important to Cedar Rapids and they need to be treated equally.

3. 3rd Street

Seth Gunnerson, Community Development Planner, shared an update of the 3rd Street Corridor.

Actions to date:

- February 13, 2015 – Development Committee Update
- April 7, 2015 – Stakeholder Meeting
 - Review existing conditions
 - Ideas for 3rd Street
- May 13, 2015 – Stakeholder Meeting
 - Review ideas
 - Discuss next steps

Infrastructure and Streetscape Improvements

- Permanent Capital Improvement Projects
- Range from fixes to full-blown street reconstruction
- Funding from multiple sources

Next Steps:

- Gap Analysis
- Develop list of potential projects
- Prioritize for biggest impact and potential future budgeting:
 - Short-term (FY2017)
 - Longer Term

Street Activation Comments:

- Temporary use of the street
- Daily to seasonal displays
- Use by restaurants and retailers
- “Tactical Urbanism”
- Can be individual or group led projects

Next Steps:

- Process to allow use of street
 - “Sidewalk Toolkit”
- Facilitate discussion
- Encourage creativity

Council member Vernon stated that at MPO there was a discussion of glowing stones in the concrete. There will be a test on that this winter at Edgewood. That might be a great idea for 3rd Street. There also needs to be lights added to the gap area and they need to match the downtown side. Council member Vernon stated that these streets need to be developed with retail on the first floor of every building. Third Street should be the first street to do that. Ms. Pratt stated that this is an area that we can do next practices and taking it to the next level.

4. Highway 100 Update

Mr. Gunnerson stated that the first phase of the Highway 100 Extension is currently under construction and phase two will begin next year. This is a future growth area and there is a need to plan for future development. The Highway 100 Corridor Management Plan (CMP) is funded and developed by the Corridor MPO. The Plan is for future land use and necessary infrastructure. It will be compatible with EnvisionCR and other City plans and policies. The land use scenario that is going to be part of the Plan is called the hybrid scenario and it is based on public input. The public input was urbanism for commercial development and conservation focus in residential area. The Highway 100 CMP will provide costs and best practices recommendations for infrastructure needed to accommodate future growth.

Mr. Gunnerson stated that the next steps for the Highway 100 CMP are:

- July – Corridor MPO Policy Board adoption in
- August – Recommendation to adopt at Development Committee
- September – City Council adoption of Plan

Mr. Gunnerson stated that this is a plan that staff has worked on with Linn County and surrounding communities. The vast majority of the corridor is in an area that has been boxed in by annexation agreements with surrounding communities as the future of Cedar Rapids. There is not a lot of controversy over the final area.

Council members Weinacht and Vernon unanimously agreed to adjourn the meeting.

The meeting adjourned at 5:20 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Anne Kroll, Administrative Assistant II
Community Development