



**City of Cedar Rapids
DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MINUTES
City Hall Training Room
Wednesday, July 15, 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; Anne Russett, Community Development Planner; Matt Myers, Traffic Engineering Manager and Anne Kroll, Community Development Administrative Assistant.

Council members Shey and Vernon approved the minutes from June 17, 2015 with unanimous consent.

Recommendation Items:

1. Cedar Lake

Jennifer Pratt, Community Development Director, stated that Friends of Cedar Lake is an active group of citizens who came together to create community support to improve Cedar Lake. They are developing a vision plan that includes the Lake's water quality/watershed, the adjacent area, and recreational opportunities. In January 2015, the City entered into an MOU with Friends of Cedar Lake, Linn County Board of Supervisors, and Alliant Energy (owner of Cedar Lake) to form a Steering Committee. The purpose of this Committee is to plan for future enhancement of Cedar Lake as an amenity for the community. The Cedar Lake Steering Committee has met every two to four weeks to explore options for additional recreational and development opportunities. In June 2015, it was agreed that prior to obtaining grants and determining long-term ownership, the desired end use of the lake needs to be defined through public engagement. The following is a timeline for public engagement:

July 28, 2015	City Council consideration of resolution supporting Public Engagement strategy
Aug./Sept.	Friends of Cedar Lake completes Vision Plan. Cedar Lake Steering Committee works on messaging and Public Engagement.
Oct.	Focus group discussions
Nov.	First Open House
Dec./Jan.	Second Open House

Ms. Pratt stated that Friends of Cedar Lake have been working on this for a while and there is a fear that this process tends to be long and it is possible to lose momentum. This strategy provides Friends of Cedar Lake time to complete their plan, time to work with the Cedar Lake Steering Committee on messaging and public outreach, and clear milestones that will build the momentum necessary to keep this project moving forward.

Council member Weinacht arrived at the meeting at 4:07 p.m.

The Development Committee members all shared their concerns with the timeline and asked if it could be shortened up. Ms. Pratt stated that staff will work as quickly as possible but it has been found in these processes that it takes time, especially with four different groups, to keep that coordinated.

Dale Todd, on behalf of Friends of Cedar Lake, stated that they appreciate the work done by City staff and value public input, but have concerns about the timeline. It would make more sense to hold public engagement in the summer/early fall while the Cedar Lake area is actively used. Friends of Cedar Lake would like to be ready for the Legislative Session.

Council member Vernon suggested having an open house at Cedar Lake while it is nice out, so that people can have a hands-on experience. Council member Weinacht suggested doing public engagement in conjunction with the Mound View Neighborhood Association meeting because that could move the timeline up by a month.

Council member Vernon spoke about the trails around Cedar Lake and suggested having multifamily housing on the City-owned property set back from the Lake.

Robin Cash shared his concerns with water management and public safety. Mr. Todd stated that there have been discussions about that and there will be more discussion on mechanics and hydrology.

Council member Shey made a motion to recommend moving forward with the strategy and timeline for Cedar Lake public engagement. Council member Weinacht seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Informational Items:

1. Main Street Update

Jennifer Pruden, Czech Village/New Bohemia Main Street District Executive Director, stated that since 2009, Main Street has seen over \$33 million dollars in private investment and that currently, that same amount is in progress with new additions. There have been ninety (90) new businesses creating two hundred ninety one (291) new jobs. Ms. Pruden shared the 1-5 year goals and the progress of those goals. So far in 2015, eleven (11) new businesses have opened in the Main Street District. Ms. Pruden shared the statistics from a parking survey. Since 79% of visitors prefer free parking and a longer walk over paid parking next to their destination, Ms. Pruden recommends having the free parking at a distance and keeping the parking up close as paid parking. On July 29, 2015, the Main Street District will have an available property tour for new businesses to see the space available. Ms. Pruden shared the resources available through Main Street and information about the Czech Village/New Bohemia Main Street Revolving Loan Fund.

Council member Vernon stated that things are going well in this district. With the New Bohemia area becoming so active, we need to make sure the Czech Village is included. The parking is an issue and it is a good idea to have free parking further away and charging a little more for closer parking.

2. 11th Avenue and 3rd Street Public Safety

Matt Myers, Traffic Engineering Manager, stated that when intersections are looked at they generally count traffic, pedestrians and bicyclists. There are triggers that move an intersection into an all way stop. For 3rd Street and 11th Avenue the side street volume is so low that it does not hit the triggers for an all way stop; however, Mr. Myers recommends an all way stop because it is difficult to look around the parked cars. When people are walking, it seems they take the extraordinary measures to make it as safe as possible, but cars pull through the cross walk until they can see around the parked cars, so there is the inevitable pedestrian conflict. Future development also plays a part in having the all way stop. There are developments, in the future that the area will build up around the intersection. The risk is the fact that sometimes when you put in an all way stop some people will consider it a nuisance and people could run right through the stop sign. However, there seems to be a lot more benefits than costs to having the all way stop there.

Council member Shey stated that the study probably cannot determine if that intersection is being used as a cut through, but that would be one of the benefits of the stop. Those people will find an alternate route which would decrease traffic there. Council member Shey and Mr. Myers discussed some other options such as lowering the speed limit and adding speed bumps.

Council member Weinacht asked if it was considered to pull the lights at 12th Avenue and 3rd Street and changing that to an all way stop instead of putting an all way stop in this intersection. Would that be more productive in controlling the entire area? Mr. Myers stated that was not considered, but that is a fair question. There are plans to collect core data from key intersections in the City. Right now, traffic engineering is working on the individual requests that come in. Council member Vernon suggested that Mr. Myers come to a future meeting to discuss other intersections.

3. NewBo Parking Signage

Ms. Pratt stated that staff met with Park CR and Economic Alliance and came up with some ideas. In the short term, when parking is free on weekends, there are signs that can be put in place that we already have. Ms. Pratt shared a mockup of the signs and a map of where they will go from Park CR. Parking signs will be at intersections close to Lot 44 and on the overhead signal mast arms. The signs will be the right size and will go along with the character of the neighborhood. There is also signage proposed to indicate the trail access.

4. Housing Access and Affordability

Anne Russett, Community Development Planner, stated that this is a continuation of the discussion at the last meeting where tiny houses were mentioned by Council member Weinacht.

- Micro-Housing:
 - Dwelling units (complete with kitchens and bathrooms) that are smaller than conventional home sizes
 - Some examples exist of units with separate living and bathroom, but communal kitchens
 - Units sizes generally start at 220 square feet, but examples of smaller units exist

Ms. Russett shared some potential benefits:

- Housing Choice:
 - Offers another type of housing
- Housing Affordability:
 - Rental / sales prices are lower due to smaller sizes

- Affordable option to those interested in less space, but close to transit, cultural amenities, etc.
- Potential housing for the homeless
- Environment:
 - Utilize less energy, less building material, and less land (if urban infill / multi-family)
 - Some projects are looking at incorporating composting toilets, greywater management, and rain catchment

Ms. Russett discussed the existing regulations:

- Chapter 32 – Zoning
 - Dwelling Unit Size: Minimum 660 square feet
- May be other issues with other municipal code chapters (e.g. Building), such as:
 - Multi-family, efficiency units proposed below 220 square feet
 - Multi-family units proposed without individual kitchens and bathrooms, but communal facilities
- Building code requires:
 - Fixed foundations
 - Permanent utilities

Ms. Russett shared micro-housing examples of recreational vehicles and single-family. Cedar Rapids has an example with the Herda House at 250 square feet. Ms. Russett also shared examples of micro dwelling units in Seattle and San Francisco. As staff is updating the Zoning Code, the one thing that can be looked at is the minimum dwelling unit size. The Housing Program is working on an update to the Maxfield Housing Analysis and it might be possible to look at market demand for smaller housing units.

Council member Weinacht thanked staff for looking into this. Council member Weinacht discussed efficiency housing vs. micro housing as well as square footage. Council member Vernon suggested giving a range of square footage instead of just a minimum.

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

The meeting adjourned at 5:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Anne Kroll, Administrative Assistant II
Community Development