



City of Cedar Rapids
DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MINUTES
City Hall Training Room
Wednesday, November 18, 2015
4:00 p.m.

The meeting was brought to order at 4:04 p.m.

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

Council member Shey motioned to approve the minutes from October 21, 2015. Council member Weinacht seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Presentations:

1. Housing Market Analysis

Mary Bujold (Maxfield Research and Consulting, LLC) presented on the Housing Market Analysis for the City of Cedar Rapids. The objective was to provide up to date information and demand estimates for housing products in Cedar Rapids. The approach was to identify current and future housing needs for residents in Cedar Rapids and the surrounding area and identify what has changed since the previous analysis. The goal was to provide decision makers with an overview of housing conditions for existing and future residents. Ms. Bujold provided an overview of the study and the following key takeaways:

- Cedar Rapids' housing market remains healthy and growing
 - Baby Boomers are expected to have the greatest impact on housing demand over the next 20 years (aging older adult population)
- For-sale market pricing continues to increase, time on market has decreased and total sales activity is increasing but at a slower rate
- Higher number of two-bedroom rent decreases from one year ago with the update. Rents for new product are nearly equal to product that is 15 to 20 years old.
- Modest drop-off in construction for the Flood Impact Area, but this is expected to come around as more housing is developed (projects under construction and planned); neighborhoods transforming areas in the core locations.
- Drop in employment may have temporarily reduced absorption of new rentals; important to watch employment growth
- A slight increase in owner-occupied housing (atypical for most metropolitan areas over this period).
- Continued interest in living in the Downtown area; growing diversity of options

Council member Shey asked what the trends are since Ms. Bujold has been doing this for the past six years. Ms. Bujold stated that there has been more of an emphasis on downtown housing and Cedar Rapids has continued to grow. When this was first done, Ms. Bujold was surprised at the significant manufacturing employment base, but the recession has hurt that sector; however, that is happening all over and not just in Cedar Rapids. Ms. Bujold applauds the community in terms of how, after the flood, they have really started to gain momentum in redevelopment in the core.

Council member Weinacht asked if Cedar Rapids is growing in the senior area where is the growth coming from. Ms. Bujold stated that as people get older and look at alternate housing projects some of those people relocate from rural areas where there is less of that housing product available. Sometimes seniors will follow their children to be closer to their grandchildren, which also contributes to that growth.

Recommendation Items:

1. Low Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC) Projects

Paula Mitchell, Housing and Redevelopment Manager, provided some background for the (LIHTC) Projects:

- The City received 3 new requests for support for LIHTC projects.
 - Two (2) workforce housing proposals.
 - One (1) senior housing proposal.
- If funded, the proposals would create 154 new units.
- Options for Local Government Contribution include land, Urban Revitalization Tax Exemption, and Tax Increment Financing.

Ms. Mitchell reviewed the Kingston Village II project along with the following staff recommendation:

- Disposition of City-owned parcels
- Vacation of ROW – portions of 7th Avenue and intervening alley ROW.
- Qualifies for 10 year, 100% tax abatement through Urban Revitalization Tax Exemption.

Ms. Mitchell reviewed the Cedar Hills Apartments project along with the following staff recommendation:

- Qualifies for 10 year, 100% tax abatement through Urban Revitalization Tax Exemption.

Ms. Mitchell reviewed the Cypress Residence project along with the following staff recommendation:

- Qualifies for 10 year, 100% tax abatement through Urban Revitalization Tax Exemption.

Ms. Mitchell shared the next steps:

- November 18 – Development Committee review and recommendations.
- December 1 – City Council consideration of City participation.
- December 7 – LIHTC applications due to IFA.
- March 2016 – IFA announces awards.

Council member Vernon asked if projects are affordable. Ms. Mitchell stated that they are. This is workforce housing and typically the rent is such that the individuals living in the housing do have to be part of the workforce or have subsidies from another source.

Council members Vernon, Shey, and Weinacht approved sending this to City Council for the December 1, 2015 meeting with unanimous consent.

2. CBO/DRTAC Overlay District Standards

Kirsty Sanchez, Community Development Planner, stated that staff has been working with DRTAC and the Czech Bohemia Overlay District on reviewing and providing updates to the existing standards. Ms. Sanchez shared a map of the district boundary. The overlay districts were created to provide higher development standards. Standards apply to all development in the districts except for single or two-family homes. Ms. Sanchez shared that the requirements for the Czech Bohemia Overlay District would be divided into four sections:

- Building Massing, Orientation and Site Design
- Building Design
- Site Furnishings and Landscaping
- Signage

In addition, there are design recommendations that are not required, but should be taken into consideration. The recommendations would not be incorporated into the ordinance, but are included in the Design Manual. Ms. Sanchez shared some highlights:

- Greater attention to the pedestrian experience
- Standards on site furnishings and landscaping
- Creation of design recommendations to be included in Design Manual

Ms. Sanchez shared changes to the proposed updates:

- New recommendation item – Whenever possible, salvageable historic materials should be retained and reincorporated into existing buildings.
- Stucco was added into the language in #22 and the last sentence was removed.
- Amend Overlay District boundary to align with Main Street and the proposed SSMID.

Ms. Sanchez shared the next steps:

- December 3, 2015 – City Planning Commission
- December 15, 2015 – Motion Setting Public Hearing
- January 12, 2016– Public Hearing and 1st Reading of Ordinance
- January 26, 2016– 2nd and possible 3rd Reading of Ordinance

Council member Vernon asked what happens if a builder does not want to follow the standards and recommendations? Ms. Sanchez stated that with the standards the builder would have to follow those, but the recommendations cannot be forced on them. There is a great success rate; however, 70% of the recommendations received have been implemented.

Council member Shey made a motion to approve sending this to City Council for the December 15, 2015 meeting. Council member Weinacht seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

3. Parklets

Seth Gunnerson, Community Development Planner, provided an overview of the Parklet Program over the last three years:

2013:

- 3rd Street Enhancement
- Four parklets purchased for 3rd Street SE
- Implementation Plan

2014:

- Updated sidewalk cafe policy
- Two larger parklets installed (at Zins and Lost Cuban)

- Additional planters for outdoor seating at Popoli
- 2015:
- Two larger parklets installed at Zins and Lost Cuban

Mr. Gunnerson provided a program cost recap and an assessment of the program:

- Parklets worked, showed viability of outdoor seating
- Publicity
- Copied in other communities
- Added to the visual aesthetic downtown
- Positive feedback from downtown stakeholders

Mr. Gunnerson shared the following issues:

Number of Parklets

- City has material for 2 large or potentially 3 smaller parklets for 2016
- Additional businesses would require additional purchases

Role of the City

- Availability of street crews
- Labor costs

Project Scope

- Limited to Downtown SSMID

Mr. Gunnerson stated that staff recommends developing a policy for 2016 which achieves:

- Selling existing parklets:
 - Remove the City's ownership and responsibility to install
 - Priority to existing businesses
- Allow for privately constructed parklets
- Explore options for continued City assistance
- Create promotional and informational materials to assist

Council member Shey asked if the business owner has the rights to the parklets. Mr. Gunnerson stated that the restaurants lease the space from the City. They are required to have insurance and the responsibility to monitor the area. Council member Shey likes the idea of having privately constructed parklets. People really seem to like sitting outside. Council member Weinacht likes the idea also because the City has constraints on what can be put into it. These should be placed in other parts of the City as well.

Council member Vernon is glad the City did this so that businesses know it can be done. The City put these parklets up late this year and most business would want to get these out as soon as possible, so having this option done privately lets those businesses set up the parklets when they want to.

Council member Weinacht made a motion to move this forward to City Council in January after the new policy has been developed. Council member Shey seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

4. Highway 30 Area Study

Anne Russett, Corridor MPO, stated that City of Cedar Rapids requested funding from the MPO for the development of a Highway 30 study. The study is to address concerns regarding requests for development and the availability and provision of services, particularly transportation and sanitary sewer. This is a technical analysis and not a plan. The study examines the following in

the context of 2 growth scenarios: conceptual service improvements for transportation, water, sanitary sewer, and storm water; environmental impacts from development; and fiscal impact analysis. A task force that included representatives from the City of Cedar, City of Ely, Linn County, and the Iowa DOT provided input and guidance throughout the development of the study. Ms. Russett shared a map of the study area.

Ms. Russett stated that a key component of the study included the development of two growth scenarios. The development of these scenarios included input from City and County planning staff and consultants used these scenarios to identify conceptual infrastructure needs and fiscal impacts. Scenario one is planned growth and is consistent with adopted Cedar Rapids and Linn County comprehensive plans. The number of residential dwelling units is 10, 483. Scenario two is market driven growth and represents growth that aligns with recent development proposals. Scenario two exceeds densities allowed by adopted comprehensive plans. The number of residential dwelling units is 22, 640.

Ms. Russett shared the key findings:

- Revenue generated from development with either Scenario does not cover the costs associated with providing City infrastructure and services.
 - Payback period for municipal capital investments are significantly more than twice the timeframe for build-out
 - Operating revenues are inadequate to cover both operating and capital costs
- Infrastructure improvements needed to support growth in the Study Area are significant.
 - Scenario 1: \$86 million
 - Scenario 2: \$192 million
- Concerns exist related to safety along the Highway 30 corridor.
- Impacts to contiguous forested areas, as well as prime agricultural resources, should be avoided, at a minimum, mitigated.
- The capital costs associated with Scenario 2 are over double that of Scenario 1.
- Compared with Scenario 1, Scenario 2 would take over 3 times as long to pay off the municipal share of capital costs.

Council member Shey stated that it is expected that the developer put in the streets and pay the costs, so what is the issue here? Jennifer Pratt, Community Development Director, stated that one of the big issues here is topography, so it is not as easy as extending what we already have. Within a subdivision, those roadways are the responsibility of the developer, but in this case, there is nothing connecting them. Council member Vernon added that the sewer slope is the wrong way and it would take a tremendous amount of dollars to get the sewers going the right way. There is also the matter of roadways to get back into town and a possible bridge to build. Ms. Russett stated that in the fiscal impact analysis there are also ongoing maintenance costs that can be costly.

Mr. Gunnerson went through how this study fits in with the City's comprehensive plan, EnvisionCR.

EnvisionCR:

- Adopted by the City on January 27, 2015
- Classifies future land use by Land Use Typology Areas (LUTA's)
- Urban LUTA's (U-HI, U-MI, U-LI and U-LL) contemplate mixed use development and full urban services.
 - Typical development greater than 2 units/acre

- Others (Agriculture Preserve, Rural) do not contemplate the future extension of City Services.
 - Typical development of less than 2 units/acre

Highway 30 Corridor:

- EnvisionCR Future Land Use Plan calls for limited development along corridor
- Mixture of, Agriculture Preserve, Low Density and Large Lot development with environmental conservation focus
- Most of the area covered by the study is not planned for the extension of City Services

Mr. Gunnerson reviewed the next steps:

- Staff recommends that the City Council accept the findings of the Highway 30 Study
 - Confirms the EnvisionCR Future Land Use Plan
 - Demonstrates high cost to the City to provide services along the Corridor
 - Identifies challenges to future growth along the corridor
- Not a ban or moratorium on development along the corridor
 - Tool for future decision making
 - City Council has final say on annexations, rezoning, and Future Land Use Map Amendments

Council member Shey made a motion to approve the staff recommendation that the City Council accept the findings of the Highway 30 Area Study. Council member Weinacht seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Council member Weinacht would like to see the big picture of where we could grow in other places like Highway 100 and the interchange at Tower Terrace and what those costs would be. Council member Vernon stated that there will be information coming on the Highway 100 Corridor and that they can be pieced together for the entire City Council.

5. City Planning Commission Work Plan

Mr. Gunnerson stated that the following items have been added or carried over to the 2016 City Planning Commission (CPC) Work Plan:

- Develop tools to assist in measuring the effectiveness of projects
- Increase knowledge of CPC through training opportunities
- Participate and contribute in EnvisionCR initiatives and the update to the Zoning Code
- Increase interaction and communication with City Council as necessary

Scott Overland, CPC Chair, stated that the biggest thing next year will be the Zoning Code revisions and everything else carries over from year to year.

Council member Vernon stated that CPC should not hesitate to give Council, especially those on Development Committee, a call if there are any questions or concerns that come up in their meetings. Mr. Overland stated that CPC relies a lot on the Fire Department, Police Department, and City staff. CPC meetings also have presentations that are helpful, for instance, there was a storm water presentation at a previous meeting. Mr. Overland suggests, going forward, to continue with those types of presentations to learn about new methods and ways of doing things. Council member Vernon stated that CPC is a recommending body to the City Council, but the Fire Department and City Staff work under ordinances. Council member Vernon wants the CPC members to feel empowered to go to Council.

6. Visual Arts Commission Work Plan

Mr. Gunnerson stated that the Visual Arts Commission (VAC) is a nine (9) member Commission by City Council to advise them on matters pertaining to public art. Mr. Gunnerson and Bill Stamats, VAC Chair, shared the VAC's 2015 accomplishments:

- Relocation of Skyblade
- Installation of the Tree in the City Services Center lobby and reframing and installation of several paintings in City Hall.
- Reviewed and recommended approval of signature sculpture for Greene Square Park
- Public outreach with the unveiling of the east and west walls of the City Hall murals.
- Updates to the Visual Arts Commission website including information about the City Hall Murals
- Completed City Art Brochure

Mr. Gunnerson and Mr. Stamats shared the 2016 VAC goals:

- **Public Outreach and Planning**
 - Evaluate needs for public art within the community
 - Develop a prioritized list for future projects
- **Support Arts within the community**
 - Develop a program to support artists and provide lower-cost semi-permanent public art
 - Evaluate needs for the artistic community
- **Manage the City's Art collection**
 - Complete a survey of the existing collection
 - Identify pieces requiring maintenance or more intensive survey.

Council member Vernon asked if 2% for public art counts within the Flood Control Alignment project. Mr. Gunnerson stated that it depends on the funding source. Art should be part of the project whether it is visual enhancements on the wall, building things in a way that there is focal point where a sculpture could go in the future, or painting murals on the wall every year.

Council member Vernon stated that City needs more murals. Mr. Stamats stated that the City should do more street art because it is an enhancement if done properly and it negates vandalism. Council member Vernon agrees and thinks there would be a lot of volunteers to help with murals.

7. Historic Preservation Commission Work Plan

Anne Russett, Community Development Planner, stated the Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) is also a recommending body to the City Council on historic preservation issues. Most of their work is related to reviewing exterior modification to homes in the City's Local Historic Districts. Amanda McKnight Grafton, HPC Chair, reviewed the HPC's recent accomplishments:

- Planned and hosted the 2015 Preservation Showcase, which featured informative sessions by the preservation expert Bob Yapp and mobile tours that highlighted the city's unique history.
- Hosted the fourth annual Preservation Awards ceremony to honor the City's most outstanding preservation efforts.
- Worked with salvage operations like Habitat for Humanity's ReStore program to salvage historic materials from demolished buildings over 50 years old.
- Worked in partnership with Save Cedar Rapids Heritage and others to relocate a historically significant home in Wellington Heights, saving it from demolition
- Completed the following projects from the FEMA Memorandums of Agreement and Letter of Agreement with the Iowa Economic Development Authority:

- Developed the City's first Historic Preservation Plan
- In partnership with Bruce more, developed sustainable access to the Farmstead Food Collection through digitization and web hosting of archival resources
- Installed new historic districts signs in the City's two local historic districts

Ms. McKnight Grafton stated that for the 2016 Work Plan the Commission has identified a variety of tasks to help achieve the following five goals:

Goal 1: Participate in preservation, salvage and documentation of historic structures

Goal 2: Increase communication

Goal 3: Improve public relations

Goal 4: Provide information and educational opportunities for the public

Goal 5: Provide educational opportunities for HPC members

Some key tasks to highlight for 2016 include incorporation of the initiatives in the Historic Preservation Plan scheduled to commence within one year of plan adoption.

Council member Vernon asked about other neighborhoods that could be considered historic. Ms. McKnight Grafton stated that is one of the HPC's initiatives to see if property owners are interested in becoming a Local Historic District and the HPC has received feedback from the B Avenue National District. There are Commission members who are in the preliminary stages of looking at areas such as Vernon Heights. Council member Shey offered to help the HPC with that. Ms. McKnight stated that the HPC is also reaching out to other property owners to see if they are interested in becoming a Local Landmark.

Council member Shey made a motion to recommend approval of the 2016 Work Plans for CPC, VAC, and HPC by the City Council. Council member Weinacht seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Council member Shey motioned to adjourn the meeting. Council member Weinacht seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 6:06 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Anne Kroll, Administrative Assistant II
Community Development