



**City of Cedar Rapids
DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MINUTES
City Hall Training Room
Wednesday, December 16, 2015
4:00 p.m.**

The meeting was brought to order at 4:01 p.m.

Present: Council members Vernon (Chair) and Weinacht. Staff members present: Jennifer Pratt, Community Development Director; Anne Russett, Community Development Planner; Eric Holthaus, Sustainability Coordinator; Sandi Fowler, Assistant City Manager; Bill Micheel, Community Development Assistant Director; and Anne Kroll, Community Development Administrative Assistant.

Council members Vernon and Weinacht approved the minutes from November 18, 2015 with unanimous consent.

Presentations:

1. Introduction to Sustainability Coordinator & EnvisionCR Sustainability Related Initiatives

Eric Holthaus, Sustainability Coordinator, stated that a Sustainability Model is what the City's goal is. There is increasing demand for resources and an increasing population. As our finite resources are really in decline, there is a lot more demand, which creates a funnel that we are trying to push Earth through. How do we rectify this and make sure that we are on a sustainable course? The City already does this with the WPC Nutrient Reduction and Solids Facilities Plan, Complete Streets, and Electrical sub-metering at WPC. We will raise the bar with internal and peer assessment; benchmark and prioritize; and review, act, share, and evaluate.

Anne Russett, Community Development Planner, stated that EnvisionCR has four themes that underpin the entire plan and one of those themes is sustainability. Sustainability is central to any planning process: smart growth, economic development, environmental resource management, and creation of livable and equitable communities. Ms. Russett shared a few EnvisionCR initiatives that incorporate aspects of sustainability:

- Planning Program (e.g. Neighborhood Action Plans):
 - Evaluate land use policy issues (e.g. access to open space, environmentally sensitive areas, housing types and affordability).
 - Evaluate the transportation network and identify improvements that meet the needs of all users and ensure multi-modal connectivity.
 - Explore opportunities for infill and redevelopment of vacant and underutilized parcels.
 - Address service and infrastructure needs.

There is also an initiative to develop a more comprehensive Transportation Plan. Transportation touches sustainability in a variety of different ways. Nationwide, the transportation sector

accounts for around 27% of total greenhouse gas emissions. As part of the Transportation plan, staff will look for ways to reduce emissions.

There is an initiative to develop an Annexation Plan that incorporates smart growth planning principles, analyzes infrastructure and services issues and costs, and environmental and other land use constraints.

Ms. Russett stated that the Zoning Code update will be initiated in early 2016 and there are a variety of things that address sustainability:

- Explore modifications related to design, parking, and use standards.
- Promote mixed-use and compact development.
- Allow for a variety of housing types and choices.
- Explore public right-of-way and public space standards.
- Explore green building and low-impact development (e.g. green roofs, permeable pavement) features.
- Amend requirements for urban agriculture.
- Identify environmentally sensitive areas in need of protection such as wetlands, habitats, and other areas of biological diversity for inclusion in the Environmental Conservation Overlay.

Ms. Russett stated there are a lot of ways to address climate change at the local level for planning. There are two initiatives in EnvisionCR that address climate changes.

- Municipal & Community-wide Climate Action Plans:
 - Addresses GHG emissions from land use, transportation, street lights, water consumption, waste generation, and building energy
 - Incorporates:
 - GHG inventory
 - GHG reduction target
 - Measures for reducing emissions and reaching the target

Ms. Russett stated that there are other Midwestern cities that are taking action and some have joined the Compact for Mayors.

Council member Vernon asked about 50% of the City's energy and if it is used for cleaning our water. Steve Hershner, Utilities Director, stated that the City as a business uses 3% of the total energy consumed in the community (based on numbers from 6 or 7 years ago). Of that 3%, half of it (48%) is used to treat waste water/pollution control and another 25% is used to treat drinking water. Council member Vernon asked what ways are used to reduce that. Mr. Hershner stated that one of the primary tools is variable frequency. In that case it is not a condition of on or off, but scaled to the specific need at that time. The other thing is that we try to push usage to off peak periods and use pumping out of tanks to reduce the peak. We are also using significantly less natural gas. With Mr. Holthaus on board, we will continue to find ways to limit those peak costs and start talking about climate benefits and CO2 offset. Council member Vernon stated that sustainability topics would be a good idea to add to City open houses.

Council member Vernon also asked if the City has considered joining the Compact for Mayors. Ms. Russett stated that this is something that could be explored.

Recommendation Items:

1. Wellbeing Advisory Committee

Sandi Fowler, Assistant City Manager, stated that in January 2013 the City became a Blue Zones Project Demonstration Site. In November 2015, the Blue Zones Project staff conducted a certification review of the community's work with a proposed certification date of January 2016. Staff has been discussing the next steps for Blue Zones and figuring out a sustainability plan. As a demonstration site, Cedar Rapids maintained a structure of an advisory board, a Power 9 steering committee, and several leadership teams that led the work of each sector. The Wellbeing Advisory Committee is proposed to put into place a structure to support the on-going effort of creating a healthy community.

Stephanie Neff, Health and Wellness Supervisor for the Cedar Rapids Community School District, stated that, over the past three years, the Blue Zones Project has been striving towards the certification metrics to engage more than 30,000 citizens in the community along with a couple hundred organizations. The Blue Zones Project worked hard to get people involved and, as a result, we have seen that return investment because people are anxious to see what the next steps are. The leaders in this initiative have stepped up and want to continue to do great things. Sustainability is where the success of Blue Zones came from. People from different sectors getting together thinking about health in the work they do and this committee will allow those conversations to continue so there are not significant gaps and things are not missed.

Ms. Fowler stated that the hope is that once Council approves the creation of this committee, a structure will be set to appoint members and have the committee start in March. This date matches the certification process from Blue Zones, so there will still be momentum in moving forward. Staff is proposing nine members. The Committee is proposed to be staffed from the City Manager's Office and the Assistant City Manager with additional support as necessary from funds pledged by Cedar Rapids, Linn County, and other community sponsors. Staff would like to see a representative from Linn County Health and the Cedar Rapids Community School District serve on this committee. Efforts to get community support will continue and that will need to be defined as work plans get developed to see what that look like in the City structure.

Council member Weinacht asked about the Treasurer proposed for this committee and how the financial structure will work. Ms. Fowler stated that we would typically roll everything into the City, but it is possible that fundraising would need to be done. Ms. Neff said that there is a fund at the Greater Cedar Rapids Community Foundation for Blue Zones where fundraising money has gone into. There is some of that money left so there will need to be a point person to manage that. Ms. Fowler stated that management of funds would need to be further discussed with the Finance Department.

Council member Vernon asked if this would be a commission or committee or if this would be more like the Corridor MPO. (The MPO serves many different entities that put their own money in and we manage that for them.) There is also the Library Board and Civil Rights which are different. Ms. Fowler stated that it should be a city committee with staff assistance. Council member Vernon stated that to help the Council this will need to be defined. Discussion was held on the definitions of committee and commission.

Council member Vernon sees this as a committee that could bring a healthy perspective to take a look at something or Council could get an opinion by this committee. It would be a whole army of citizens that are coming from all of these facets to make this into a healthy community. It solidifies and helps Council and staff to achieve the goals of a healthy community.

Council member Weinacht asked if this committee will be staff supported. Ms. Fowler stated that it would; staff would take minutes and post them, Council/Mayor would appoint the members, and it would have a Chair and Vice Chair.

Council members Vernon and Weinacht approved staff's recommendation to recommend approval of the creation of the Wellbeing Advisory Committee by the City Council with unanimous consent.

2. Land Use Actions Related to the Flood Control System

Bill Micheel, Community Development Assistant Director, stated that staff is recommending two land use actions. Action one (1) is the rezoning of publicly owned property to Public Zone District (PUB) for the purpose of applying the appropriate zoning designation for future uses of flood control system and parks. Action two (2) is the expansion of the Northwest Flood Overlay District for the purpose of expanding the Overlay District to include all property within the mandatory buyout area.

Mr. Micheel stated that in September in 2014, the Council established the NW Flood Overlay District. At that point the primary purpose was due to a limited number of users of services that created a situation where the City was spending a disproportionate amount of money providing services. The purpose for the expansion of the Overlay District is to match the Mandatory Buyout areas where there are nineteen (19) additional private lots. The Overlay District does not allow new applications for zone changes; conditional uses; home occupation; expansion, construction, or relocation of new structures; site development plans; platting, re-platting, or subdividing of land; and rental registrations. Property owners are allowed to complete routine maintenance and upkeep, such as roof replacement; meet requirements of building and mechanical codes; and keep properties in this area safe and enjoyable. Mr. Micheel displayed a map of the area.

Council member Vernon asked if all property owners are aware of this. Ms. Pratt stated that they are. Mr. Micheel stated that property owners will be notified again and can request a one on one meeting with staff. Council member Vernon thinks that is a great idea.

Council members Vernon and Weinacht approved staff's recommendation to recommend approval of the rezoning of publicly owned lots impacted by the Flood Control System and the expansion of the NW Flood Overlay District to match the mandatory buyout area by the City Council with unanimous consent.

Council members Vernon and Weinacht adjourned the meeting with at 5:06 p.m. with unanimous consent.

Respectfully submitted,

Anne Kroll, Administrative Assistant II
Community Development