



City of Cedar Rapids
DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MINUTES
City Hall Training Room
Wednesday, February 17, 2016
3:00 p.m.

The meeting was brought to order at 3:00 p.m.

Present: Council members Poe (Chair), and Overland. Staff members present: Jennifer Pratt, Community Development Director; Bill Micheel, Community Development Assistant Director; Anne Russett, Community Development Planner; Seth Gunnerson, Community Development Planner; Erica Kubly, Housing and Redevelopment Analyst; Paula Mitchell, Housing and Redevelopment Manager; and Anne Kroll, Community Development Administrative Assistant.

Council members Overland and Poe approved the minutes from January 20, 2016 with unanimous consent.

Presentations:

1. Ed McMahon Video/Zoning Code Update

Anne Russett, Community Development Planner, stated that a video will be shared of a presentation that Ed McMahon of the Urban Land Institute gave at a Tedx event in Florida. Mr. McMahon came to Cedar Rapids and this video gives a snippet of what was presented. The video can be found here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qB5tH4rt-x8>.

Bill Micheel, Community Development Assistant Director, stated that about 75 people came to Mr. McMahon's presentation. Mr. McMahon spoke about growth and indicated that Cedar Rapids has a lot of good examples of creating a place that is unique where people would want to live and move to. Mr. Micheel spoke of the following from Mr. McMahon's presentation:

- New construction should enhance community character. What is more important; the character of Cedar Rapids shaping new development or new development shaping the character of Cedar Rapids?
- Different examples were shown of chain businesses and how they do not have to look the same in every town. They can be unique. The town has a choice of what the design will look like.
- Strip mall development is the development for the last century. The new century belongs to main streets, town centers, and mix used development.

Ms. Russett stated that as staff moves forward with the Zoning Code Update and the Neighborhood and Corridor Action Plans, staff will look for opportunities to incorporate some of Mr. McMahon's ideas and expertise to make sure that the new plans and development standards consider the unique characteristics of Cedar Rapids.

Council member Overland stated that NewBo is a great example of old and new that draws people in every day. That same thing on a smaller scale can be created in other areas of City instead of what is traditionally put up where you go and get the service you need and leave. Almost everyone who goes to NewBo goes for a certain reason, but they most likely wonder around first before leaving.

Council member Poe gave an example of a Walmart that is in a log building and it took years for Walmart to be in that community because the community insisted that they be in the log building and not in their standard building. Council member Poe stated that sometimes you have to say no, so as the ordinances are being looked at it is appropriate to say no if these chain businesses are not willing to live up to our design standards. The design of the Flood Control System will also be critically important because it will be left behind for centuries.

Recommendation Items:

1. Parking

Jennifer Pratt, Community Development Director, clarified that this item is not a recommendation item, but an informational item.

Seth Gunnerson, Community Development Planner, stated that this discussion is about parking in the core, specifically in downtown and NewBo/Lot 44. Jon Rouse, the General Manager of Park CR, is here to assist with the presentation. Mr. Gunnerson stated that the number of permit parkers continues to increase. Two new ramps have been built in recent years and surface lots are being offered for redevelopment. On street parking (only Luke station and pay-by-phone only) has around 20,000 transactions per month (this only counts daytime Monday – Friday). Monthly permit parking has risen from 2,000 to 4,000 in the last three years.

Mr. Gunnerson shared the following about parking in NewBo and Czech Village:

- Free On-Street Parking
- Limited enforcement of time limits
- New off-street parking is private
- Demand in the neighborhood continuing to rise
- Czech NewBo SSMID created in 2015

Mr. Gunnerson shared the following about parking in Lot 44:

- 1,000 parking spaces along the river between 8th and 12th Ave SE
- In 2015, averaged between 22-91 paid visitor transactions per month (M-F 8-6)
- Signage added in 2015 to highlight free nights and weekends
- Flexible space for event parking

Mr. Gunnerson shared pictures and maps of the Flood Control System (FCS) and pump house construction. The following are impacts on parking of the FCS:

- Will result in loss of approximately 50% of parking in lot 44
- Future Development Opportunity
 - After construction of Flood Control
 - Parking could be included as part of future development

Council member Poe would like to know how much Lot 44 is used on weekends and nights with a windshield count. Council member Poe would like to see new housing there, but what is the plan for some of the parking that will eventually be lost with the FCS as NewBo continues to be this wonderful hub? Ms. Pratt stated that it is incremental because we do not know what will be

developed so we cannot plan ahead. Since the City owns the property, the approach has been that in the RFP there has to be coordination with the adjacent property owners so that the overflow market has space. The experience has been that there will not be any usage above and beyond what will still be there even with the FCS. Council member Poe asked if there is a sense of cooperation between property owners on parking. Ms. Pratt stated that there has been a lot of coordination and shared lots between property owners and having a SSMID established will only increase that.

Council member Poe asked Mr. Rouse if he felt there was enough parking downtown. Mr. Rouse stated that, today, there is. As growth continues, the area of concern is right around City Hall. With the potential of two buildings going up, parking four or five blocks away could create an issue. As the City continues to grow we will have to be creative with parking options. Council member Overland asked if there are more buildings downtown that could add underground parking. Mr. Rouse stated that there are, but it is extremely expensive and may not be feasible. Mr. Gunnerson stated that there is also private parking that could be leveraged.

2. IFA Demonstration Grant Support Request

Erika Kubly, Housing and Redevelopment Analyst, stated that there is a request for support from Commonbond Communities for a Low Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC) project with the following details:

- Housing for the Homeless Demonstration Set-Aside
- New construction of 45 total units
- 5 units will provide permanent supportive rental housing for persons experiencing homelessness
- Partnership with Willis-Dady for onsite case management services
- 5 units will be market rate

Ms. Kubly stated that the site location is 1200 Edgewood Road NW and is 1.98 acres of City-owned property. City Council accepted a bid of \$280,000 for disposition on February 9, 2016 and the sale proceeds go to the Fire Department budget. Ms. Kubly shared a rendering and site plan. This project qualifies for 10 year, 100% tax abatement under City's existing Economic Development policy under "Local Match" program, so staff recommends providing the match through Urban Revitalization Tax Exemption which would be contingent upon award of tax credits. Ms. Kubly provided the next steps.

Council member Overland asked if there is enough demand to fill this project. Ms. Kubly stated that the Market Analysis shows demand for this type of housing. Paula Mitchell, Housing and Redevelopment Manager, stated that for this particular market segment set aside for the homeless is a challenge that is seen frequently; getting subsidy that is deep enough or through a mixed income approach like this one that can serve that population. Council member Overland asked if this is one of the first ones with that component to it. Ms. Mitchell stated that Council did see one other project like this which is the Patriot Place project.

Council member Poe would like to see the sidewalk on Edgewood extended to O Avenue. Ms. Pratt stated that if there is development up from there where they maybe received a deferral until such time, which is typical, this could help with a chain reaction where the City can ask for those other sidewalks to be finished. That is believed to be what has happened in the past.

Council member Poe asked if there are specific units that are designated for homeless. Ms. Mitchell stated that the units have not been identified yet, but it would be a requirement that 10% of the units be set aside for homeless units. Council member Poe asked if they would be

segregated or placed throughout the unit. Ms. Kubly stated that they would be disbursed throughout. Ms. Mitchell stated that is an IFA requirement.

Council member Poe asked if the neighbors have been informed of this project and what their reaction was. Ms. Kubly stated that there was a neighborhood meeting and they had a lot of questions about tenant selection which the developer was able to answer. There was one concern about surface water management and the developer will speak with Development Services about that.

Council member Poe asked if there was bus transportation route nearby. Ms. Kubly stated that part of the site selection was the proximity to the bus stops.

Council members Overland and Poe approved staff's recommendation to recommend approval to provide match through Urban Revitalization Tax Exemption contingent upon award of tax credits by City Council with unanimous consent.

Informational Items:

1. Chapter 18 Update

Ms. Russett shared a map of the City's historic districts. The local historic districts are subject to Chapter 18. There are two review processes that apply in Chapter 18. The first one is the historic review process which is applicable to properties in the City's two local historic districts and local landmarks. These properties are required to go through historic review process for any exterior modifications that require a building permit. The second review process is the demolition review process which is applicable to primary buildings fifty (50) years or older city-wide. These properties are required to go through the demolition review process and currently, there is no administrative review process for demolitions. With the Chapter 18 update, staff is looking for opportunities to ensure consistency and clarity in the process, while also streamlining the processes (e.g. allow for administrative review); incorporate best practices in historic preservation; and address concerns raised by the HPC, property owners, and other stakeholders. Staff has been working with the HPC on this update since the Historic Preservation Plan was adopted in September 2015. There is an HPC sub-committee that meets monthly for this update. The following policy issues are being explored:

- Historic Review Process:
 - Requiring historic review for all exterior modifications, not just those that require a building permit
 - Expanding administrative permitting
- Demolition Review Process:
 - Allowing for the administrative review of primary structures 50 years and older
 - Adding a review process for accessory structures
 - Adding a review process for partial demolitions

Council member Overland asked what would be a partial demolition. Ms. Russett stated that is unknown at this time. The only demolitions that go through the process is if it is completely gone, so you could take away 75% of the building and it would not be subject to the demolition review process. It is unknown what would trigger that partial demolition process, but it needs to make sense and be easily implemented to make sure that it is clear what meets that definition.

Ms. Russett shared stakeholder outreach activities and the anticipated timeline.

Council member Overland asked if any analysis has been done to measure the success factor of having these local historic districts. Are the districts having the intended effect of improving values and shifting the neighborhoods to people who would like to restore the value of the homes? Council member Poe stated that it is a snowball effect because one house starts to improve their property and then the next house does the same. That activity has increased over the last four (4) years.

Council member Poe stated that part of this review process is the funding associated with that. The City requires certain historical structures to fit within the district and they have to have certain features and replacements. While all of that is wonderful, we have to help find ways to help the community as we redevelop. There is a newly forming organization called Cedar Rapids Friends of Historic Preservations and it will include members from every aspect of historic preservation for the sole purpose to raise money to fund people who come before the HPC.

Ms. Pratt stated that the HPC is interested in creating new local historic districts. In order to get the district created education needs to be given to the property owners. Without the Chapter 18 update finished it is hard to tell the property owners what rules and regulations they would be subject to, so this update is a key step as well as funding options in looking at additional districts.

Council member Poe stated that just because a house is over fifty (50) years does not mean that it is historic. It is important to get the houses that are relevant and important to the HPC to get their expertise on. Council member Overland agreed and thinks there should be different criteria than the number of years such as different benchmarks of architecture. Ms. Russett stated that the HPC reviewed at least two or three demolitions a month last year and out of those only two structures were considered historic. Council member Poe stated that should be streamlined because she wants the HPC, who has so many talented people and are an asset to the community, to be able to do what they do best and looking at structures that are not historic is not the best use of their time.

Council members Overland and Poe adjourned the meeting at 4:19 p.m. with unanimous consent.

Respectfully submitted,

Anne Kroll, Administrative Assistant II
Community Development