



**City of Cedar Rapids  
DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MINUTES  
City Hall Council Chambers  
Wednesday, March 9, 2016  
3:00 p.m.**

The meeting was brought to order at 3:01 p.m.

Present: Council members Poe (Chair), and Overland. Staff members present: Jennifer Pratt, Community Development Director; Paula Mitchell, Housing and Redevelopment Manager; Caleb Mason, Economic Development Analyst; Sara Buck, Housing Programs Manager; Bill Micheel, Community Development Assistant Director; Jeff Hintz, Community Development Planner; Anne Russett, Community Development Planner; and Anne Kroll, Community Development Administrative Assistant.

Council members Overland and Poe approved the minutes from February 17, 2016 with unanimous consent.

**Presentations:**

**1. Housing Programs Overview**

Paula Mitchell, Housing and Redevelopment Manager, stated that this is an overview of the CDBG/HOME Programs. The primary CDBG National Objective as established by Congress is to provide a benefit to the Low/Moderate Income (LMI) citizens. LMI is defined as at or below 80% of Area Median Income (AMI). Compliance with National Objective must be documented. The current trend is declining in federal funding for these programs. The City identifies programmatic needs by ongoing Housing Market Analysis; data from HUD, American Communities Survey, Census, etc.; and extensive public outreach during development of the current Five-Year Strategic Plan: Public Input Survey and CR Talks, interviews with key stakeholders and partner agencies, stakeholder focus group meeting, public open house meeting, guest editorial in The Gazette, and two (2) public hearings and 30 day public comment period.

Ms. Mitchell shared detailed information about the following CDBG and HOME funded Programs:

- Owner-Occupied Rehabilitation
  - Comprehensive Rehab
  - Emergency Rehab
- First Time Homebuyer Program

Ms. Mitchell shared some of the frequently asked questions, a map that shows property value changes by neighborhood, and the next steps.

Council member Overland expressed a strong commitment to finding ways to continue to invest and reinvest in core neighborhoods. If we let up on finding ways to assist in these core neighborhoods we will pay the price for that as we cannot let these neighborhoods deteriorate.

Council member Poe stated that as we see a decline in funding resources, how can you envision with the decline that the City would be able to have some sort of funds to continue on with a ROOTS project? Ms. Mitchell stated that there have been preliminary discussions, but staff has looked at what local resources exist. Staff is always looking for what State and Federal funding exists as well.

Council member Poe asked for an example of a Comprehensive Rehab project. Ms. Mitchell shared what the process is after an application is submitted and pulled from the waiting list. Council member Poe asked how a homeowner finds out about this program. Ms. Mitchell stated by word of mouth and referrals from social service agencies and Code Enforcement. Council member Poe asked how much funding is allocated to this program. Ms. Mitchell stated that the Comprehensive Rehab and Emergency Rehab are counted as all one activity, but it varies year to year in the range of \$250,000 to \$300,000.

### **Recommendation Items:**

#### **1. Neighborhood Development Corporation (NDC) Funding**

Caleb Mason, Economic Development Analyst, stated that in January 2009, City Council directed staff to pursue establishing a non-profit neighborhood development corporation. In March 2009, City Council accepted Articles of Incorporation and By-laws of the NDC of Cedar Rapids, Inc. In June 2009, City Council approved the NDC as a sub-recipient to receive \$1.5 million in Community Disaster Grant Funding. Mr. Mason shared the NDC's mission and key complete projects as well as the projects that are currently underway. The NDC is requesting City funding to assist with operations and project costs as well as a request to capture a portion of the increased taxes being generated by the projects. To date, the NDC's projects have not participated in any City Economic Development Program. Mr. Mason stated that staff recommends providing a 3-year commitment of \$50,000 per year based on increased taxes generated by projects.

Council member Overland asked if when NDC invests in these properties do they typically sell them or continue to own them. Mr. Mason stated that it is a mix of both depending on the project.

Council member Poe stated that she likes the proposal because she has seen the work of the NDC and the impact they have had on the community since the flood of 2008. Council member Poe likes their partnerships with developers and the fact that they have not come to the City to participate in any Economic Development Programs.

Council members Overland and Poe approved staff's recommendation to recommend approval to provide a 3-year commitment of \$50,000 per year based on increased taxes generated by projects by City Council with unanimous consent.

#### **2. Section 8 Administrative Plan Amendments**

Sara Buck, Housing Programs Manager, stated that the Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher Program is funded through the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). The City serves as the Public Housing Authority (PHA) for both Linn and Benton counties and has administered the program for approximately 39 years. The Section 8 Housing Choice

Voucher Program provides rent assistance to very low-income families; ensures decent, safe, and sanitary housing; housing is provided by private owners and rental agents; and nearly \$5 million in rent assistance payments are paid directly to Linn and Benton County landlords. Ms. Buck shared who benefits from the program along with a chart of household demographics. Ms. Buck shared the PHA 5-year goals and PHA annual goals as well as the 2015 accomplishments. Ms. Buck described the proposed changes for the administrative plan.

Council member Overland asked for more explanation of the funding allocation for 75 participants. Ms. Buck stated that HUD requires that they are a set amount of participants in the Family Self Sufficiency Program. The City receives \$138,000 in grant funds for the administration of that program, so there has to be a minimum of 75 participants. Those 75 participants can earn escrow as their income increases, and receive referrals to services in order to become self-sufficient. This 5-year program is available to all Section 8 participants, with goals that must be obtained prior to graduation and receiving their escrow.

Council member Poe asked how many staff is working on this program because there is a lot of work being done especially with the Family Self Sufficiency Program. Ms. Buck stated that, she, along with four (4) case managers, two (2) inspectors, and two (2) administrative staff are working on the Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher Program and Family Self Sufficiency Program.

Council members Overland and Poe approved to recommend approval of the proposed changes for the administrative plan by City Council with unanimous consent.

### **Informational Items:**

#### **1. Food Trucks Ordinance**

Bill Micheel, Community Development Assistant Director, stated that food trucks are currently permitted as transient merchants. The City has seen an increase level of interest in this type of business model. This is a relatively new type of business for Cedar Rapids so there is not currently a licensing process for this.

Jeff Hintz, Community Development Planner, stated that Community Development staff began research and stakeholder outreach in January 2016 with other City Departments as well as external stakeholders. Staff plans to compile input and formulate a draft ordinance for internal comment, revise the draft and bring to the public for comment, come back to Development Committee in April for recommendation, and then bring it to City Council for public hearing and possible reading of ordinance in May.

Council member Overland asked for a preliminary rundown of thoughts for this ordinance. Mr. Hintz stated that staff has done research on ordinances of this type from other cities. Staff has also received good feedback from restaurant owners and current food truck owners in Cedar Rapids. Council member Overland suggested having food truck zones around the City. Mr. Micheel stated that staff is considering all elements that this impacts such as parking, existing business owners, and current and potential food truck owners and trying to balance the interest of all of those groups of people.

Council member Poe requested that staff bring the ordinance to City Council the first meeting in May. Council member Poe suggested having the food trucks in parks in designated areas on weekend evenings and when activities are going on in the parks.

Council member Poe asked about the license and fees. Mr. Micheel stated that, currently, they apply for the transient merchant license with the City Clerk's Office and then get a license with Linn County Public Health. Mr. Micheel stated that staff is taking a look at what the fee will be.

Council member Poe would like staff to be cognizant of the restaurants and businesses downtown that are paying taxes as this ordinance is being written. Mr. Micheel stated that the ordinance is being written based on a lot of conversations with restaurant owners, food truck owners, and Linn County Public Health as well as many others.

## **2. Chapter 18 Historic Preservation**

Anne Russett, Community Development Planner, stated that this is an update on the stakeholder outreach that has been done for the Chapter 18 update. Stakeholder outreach started in November with two focus groups including one for the historic review process and the other for the demolition review process. Staff also had meetings with the following key groups: Developer's Council, Economic Alliance, Czech Village/New Bohemia Main Street Design Committee, Affordable Housing Network, and SaveCR Heritage. Surveys were mailed to all property owners in local historic districts with a response rate of 15%. Staff also held a public workshop on March 8, 2016.

Council member Overland stated that it makes a lot of sense to make the process as easy as possible for the property owners and thinks that we should not overdo it so that you have to get approval for everything on the exterior.

Council member Poe stated that she is not a fan of unfunded mandates because it makes it difficult; however, in this case, if you want to maintain the integrity of the district these mandates are important because they increase the value of the home and provide continuity of that area. The HPC is there to help provide information and expertise. There is the forming of a nonprofit organization that will work with the HPC to help homeowners fund projects that are within the district guidelines.

### **Public Comment:**

Clark Rieke shared his ideas to make the process more efficient for the HOME program.

Justin Wasson shared his experience in working with the Historic Preservation Commission and Development Services for the addition on his garage.

Robin Kash shared his thoughts on the Chapter 18 workshop held on March 8, 2016 as well as his concerns on the Chapter 18 update.

Council members Overland and Poe adjourned the meeting at 4:44 p.m. with unanimous consent.

Respectfully submitted,

Anne Kroll, Administrative Assistant II  
Community Development