



**City of Cedar Rapids
DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MINUTES
City Hall Training Room
Wednesday, July 20, 2016
3:00 p.m.**

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

Present: Council members Poe (Chair) and Shey. Staff members present: Jennifer Pratt, Community Development Director; Bill Micheel, Community Development Assistant Director; Kirsty Sanchez, Community Development Planner; Jeff Hintz, Community Development Planner; Seth Gunnerson, Community Development Planner; Adam Lindenlaub, Community Development Planner; and Anne Kroll, Community Development Administrative Assistant.

Council members Shey and Poe approved the minutes from May 18, 2016 and June 15, 2016 with unanimous consent.

Presentation:

1. Neighborhood Associations

Kirsty Sanchez, Community Development Planner, shared the background, goals, overview, and the work plan and budget summary for the Neighborhood Service Delivery Program. Ms. Sanchez shared the differences between certified and registered neighborhoods and listed the participating neighborhoods. Ms. Sanchez stated that last year and this year two (2) of the neighborhoods went to the Neighborhoods USA Conference where they attended workshops on topics such as grant writing, youth, and crime in the neighborhoods.

Council member Shey stated that the certified neighborhoods have officers and boards, so who makes the decisions for the registered neighborhoods? Ms. Sanchez stated that the registered neighborhoods have boards also.

Council member Poe asked what is stopping the registered neighborhoods from becoming certified. Ms. Sanchez stated that in order to be certified a work plan and a year's worth of workshops is required.

Council member Poe asked if there is a staff liaison for each of the neighborhoods. Jennifer Pratt, Community Development Director, stated that the neighborhoods each have a director as a liaison and they get shuffled every few years. It is about making sure the neighborhoods know that there is someone at the City they can contact to get questions answered. Council member Poe stated that this program is better than it used to be and she is happy with the process.

Council member Poe asked if there are any restrictions for the list of activities. Ms. Sanchez stated that funding cannot be spent on alcohol, newsletters, or political items. Ms. Pratt stated that what has been traditionally spent in the past is all eligible.

Recommendation Items:

1. Four City-Owned Property Dispositions

a) 904 and 908 5th Street SE

Ms. Sanchez shared a map of the location for the properties of 904 and 908 5th Street SE. Ms. Sanchez shared the background, the development objectives, staff's recommendation to initiate the disposition process and invite proposals, and the proposed timeline.

Council member Shey asked if there is a house standing on one of the lots. Ms. Sanchez stated that they are vacant.

b) 68, 72, and 76 15th Avenue SW & 1505 B Street SE

Bill Micheel, Community Development Assistant Director, stated that the City received a request from the National Czech and Slovak Museum and Library to initiate the disposition process for lease of the properties with the idea being to maintain the property for current needs and future development planning. Mr. Micheel shared staff's recommendation to initiate the disposition process and invite proposals and the proposed timeline.

Council member Shey shared his concerns of leasing land in a primary area where there is a lot of interest that land is going to go to a nonprofit that could be otherwise developed, so what is the City giving up with this proposal. Ms. Pratt stated that the terms of the Development Agreement would be up to City Council. Council member Shey asked what the Czech Museum wants to use this land for. Ms. Pratt stated that they do not have a set master plan for this area, so what staff is proposing is that in the interim it would be a lease arrangement until they have a master plan. Council will decide if there is a time limit for the lease.

Mr. Micheel stated that the Czech Museum suggested using this land for current programming for larger events as things become clearer related to the Flood Control System adjacent to their property. Council member Shey stated that he does not have a problem moving this item onto the full Council, but he still has concerns. Council member Poe stated that they heavily use the area where the Flood Control System will be located, so there may not be anywhere else but these lots that they can use for their larger events. Council member Poe will like to get full City Council discussion on this item.

c) City Parking Lots 8, 30, 31, and 32

Mr. Micheel stated that this is focused on the City-owned parking lots that primarily service the Czech Village. There has been an agreement in place for a long time in which the City owns these lots and takes care of the major maintenance. The City received two letters of request to initiate disposition process for the lease of the properties. Mr. Micheel shared staff's recommendation to initiate the disposition process and invite proposals and the proposed timeline. Ms. Pratt stated that the Czech Village Association will take care of three (3) of the lots and the National Czech and Slovak Museum and Library will take care of the remaining lot.

Council member Shey asked why someone would want the lots when the City is taking care of them. Ms. Pratt stated that the two (2) organizations have been working with the City on this for a while as the City is not in the business of owning and operating surface

lots that serve businesses. Council member Poe noted that these lots need to remain free and open to the public.

d) 535 1st Avenue SW

Jeff Hintz, Community Development Planner, shared a map of the location for the lot at 535 1st Avenue SW. Mr. Hintz shared the background, RFP development objectives, evaluation criteria, and the proposed timeline. Ms. Pratt stated that the first three (3) proposals on this agenda were actual proposals and this one has gotten interest, but there have not been any plans given to the City.

Council member Shey asked how much land the City still has that is development worthy. Ms. Pratt stated that staff is working on that now and there are few that are outside of the 100 year floodplain and buildable. There is a handful left in the NewBo are and fewer left in Kingston. Council member Shey requests this item on a future agenda. Council member Poe requested this as a future agenda item and mentioned that there is also a viable commercial district along Ellis Boulevard.

Council members Shey and Poe approved the four (4) city-owned property dispositions to move forward to City Council with unanimous consent.

2. Historic Rehabilitation Program

Mr. Hintz stated that based on the Historic Preservation Plan, City staff requested an additional \$25,000 for historic preservation activities. This was approved by City Council as part of the FY17 budget (July 1, 2016 – June 30, 2017). The program will have \$25,000 as a new budget item and also the \$25,000 from the existing Paint Rebate Program (within Urban Renewal Area boundaries) to equal a total of \$50,000. Mr. Hintz discussed the program proposal, the process to apply and receive grant/loan, eligible projects, eligible activities, and the grant/loan structure. The Historic Preservation Commission recommended the program and the income based funding approach at their July 14, 2016 meeting.

Council member Shey asked what the cap per ask is. Mr. Hintz stated that the proposed cap is \$5,000. Ms. Pratt stated that you receive 50% of the total project, so if the funding received is \$5,000 then the project would have to be at least \$10,000 total. Council member Shey clarified that funding is only available to the local historic districts. Mr. Hintz stated that local landmarks can apply as well. Ms. Pratt stated that there was an HPC discussion about this program becoming an incentive for someone to make their building a local landmark or to have a neighborhood become a local historic district.

Council member Poe is happy to see this program for the Local Historic Districts because she does not like unfunded mandates. This is a great opportunity to get people in to Community Development and the Historic Preservation Commission and get their permits ahead of time.

Council members Shey and Poe approved the Historic Rehabilitation Program to move forward to City Council with unanimous consent.

Updates:

1. ReZone CR

Mr. Micheel shared the project overview, accomplishments to date, the stakeholder outreach program, project committees, and June outreach activities. Seth Gunnerson, Community Development Planner, shared the technical audit of the current code, community character analysis, the character area map, character area development classifications, and open house results. Mr. Gunnerson will send the results of the open house and the online survey to City Council per Council member Poe's request.

2. Northwest Neighbors Neighborhood Association Plan

Ms. Sanchez stated that a second open house was held for the Northwest Neighborhood Action Plan on June 20, 2016 and there were forty (40) people in attendance. Boards were set up to show the feedback from the first open house and a dot exercise was done to show what was most important for each element of the plan. Ms. Sanchez shared the top two (2) items for each element. The interns in the Community Development Department put together an existing conditions report that is focused on the demographics, the neighborhood history, and housing and they are working on the character analysis. Staff is working on defining goals and action steps using all of the input received. Once that is finished staff will meet with different departments that would be responsible for the action steps to make sure what is proposed is feasible and to come up with a timeline to complete the action steps. After a third open house the plan will go to Council in September or October 2016. Ms. Sanchez will send the feedback from the second open house to the Development Committee per Council member Poe's request.

3. Mt. Vernon Road Corridor Action Plan

Adam Lindenlaub, Community Development Planner, shared details from the report that summarizes the feedback received from the visioning workshop on June 16, 2016. There were 210 people in attendance at the visioning workshop. All of the comments from the workshop can be found at the end of the report which is posted online. The second open house will take place in September 2016.

Council member Shey asked what will take place at the next open house. Mr. Lindenlaub stated that staff will show boards with draft goals and action steps and get feedback from the public. Staff will then have a third open house to take the feedback and formalize what is being proposed.

Council member Shey asked how staff is managing expectations. Ms. Pratt stated that having the small group discussion was helpful and staff will focus on how the City can make improvements that attract the kinds of businesses that people want. There is clearly a huge interest in this area and what is going to be important for the City is that staff identifies, early on, projects that can be done and completed quickly to keep the momentum going. Progress needs to be shown quickly on projects so that the public is seeing transformation in a meaningful way.

Council member Poe walks the sidewalks on Mt. Vernon Road and they are very dangerous. There is no traffic calming feeling at all and it feels like people are rushing in and rushing out. The streets should be narrowed to slow traffic and the sidewalks should be widened to make it more attractive. Council member Poe is excited to see what the public wants and what staff comes up with.

Public Comment:

Robin Kash stated that he went to the Neighborhood USA Conference representing the Wellington Heights Neighborhood Association and he would like to see a city-wide youth

program developed that would include recreational and educational opportunities. Ms. Pratt will be in touch with Mr. Kash on which staff members he will need to speak with.

The meeting adjourned at 4:16 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Anne Kroll, Administrative Assistant II
Community Development