



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

The meeting was brought to order at 2:58 p.m.

Present: Council members Poe (Chair) and Overland. Staff members present: Jennifer Pratt, Community Development Director; Bill Micheel, Community Development Assistant Director; Erika Kubly, Redevelopment Analyst; Sara Buck, Housing Programs Manager; Seth Gunnerson, Community Development Planner; Adam Lindenlaub, Community Development Planner; and Anne Kroll, Community Development Administrative Assistant.

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

Presentation:

1. Neighborhood Housing Finance Strategies

Erika Kubly, Redevelopment Analyst, shared the background, and details of the Neighborhood Finance Corporation that provides forgivable and amortizing loans for home purchases and home improvements in targeted neighborhoods. Ms. Kubly also shared the two (2) phases in the scope of work, progress to date, and the next steps.

Council member Overland stated that he is excited about the potential of this organization being established in Cedar Rapids especially with the ROOTs Program ending this year. As you drive around the City you see all kinds of areas that could benefit from this program. As this program moves along there will be a lot of support for it.

Council member Poe asked if this program will dovetail with the Housing Market Analysis. Ms. Kubly stated that a lot of the questions for this program are some of the same questions that are looked at for the Housing Market Analysis. Council member Poe asked for an example of a neighborhood outside of the core that could use this program. Jennifer Pratt, Community Development Director, stated that Kenwood Neighborhood is a good example of a neighborhood that is stable now, but there are a lot of starter homes. The rehab grant that is part of their program was a huge help in modernizing some of those homes and making them more marketable. Council member Poe clarified that this program is not for \$200,000 or more homes.

Council member Overland envisions identifying a neighborhood in each of the quadrants to start. The City of Des Moines spends \$800,000 to \$1 million dollars a year on this program, but they recoup the money with the increase in property values and preventing a decrease in property

values. There is a means to get the money back through those taxes. If Cedar Rapids does the same thing then over time the City will benefit from the stable or increase in tax revenue.

Recommendation Items:

1. Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher Program Public Housing Agency Administrative Plan Amendments

Sara Buck, Housing Programs Manager, shared the background of and who benefits from the Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher Program. Ms. Buck shared the Administrative Plan proposed changes and key dates to approve the changes.

Council member Overland stated that these changes will make it more user-friendly to fulfill its mission. It looks like this program has been successful with less than 1% of participation being terminated for violations. Ms. Buck stated that staff is constantly looking at those numbers as they do change from time to time.

Council member Poe stated that it is important to review who actually participates in Section 8. Too often times, there are a lot of miscommunications and judgements about the people who participate in the program. This program helps the elderly, disabled, and single moms.

Council members Overland and Poe approved the proposed amendments for the Administrative Plan to move forward to City Council with unanimous consent.

Updates:

1. Analysis of City Owned Property

Seth Gunnerson, Community Development Planner, shared considerations and planned projects for City owned property and a map of City owned parcels in special districts and business corridors. The following is a list of available sites:

<u>District:</u>	<u>Sites</u>	<u>Acres</u>	<u>% In 100 year Flood Plain</u>
Kingston Village	37	12.6	58%
Downtown	0	0.0	N/A
Czech Village/ New Bohemia	9	1.5	100%
Ellis Boulevard	62	17.8	80%

Ms. Pratt noted that part of the Northwest Action Plan is bringing in people from the development, lending, and business communities to find out some of the perceived barriers along Ellis, for example, that would make those areas more marketable sites. Staff will come back and report that out to Development Committee.

Council members Overland and Poe expressed their desire to see more development along Ellis and spoke about how much potential there is with the large amount of land available there.

Council member Poe noted all of the exciting things coming into that area such as gateway signage, the rec center, and the plaza.

2. Cedar Lake

Bill Micheel, Community Development Assistant Director, shared the events timeline and the next steps which includes Phase I Environmental Site Assessment (ESA), Phase II (ESA), a mitigation plan, and a purchase agreement. The mitigation plan will only be formulated if it is necessary after the Phase II (ESA) is complete.

Council member Overland asked if it makes sense to determine how often the lake would need to be dredged or removal of material from the lake as part of the assessment and how quickly the lake fills back in over time because you would have to build the cost into the maintenance estimate. Mr. Micheel stated that this goes into stormwater management planning. You cannot manage that without dredging unless you address what is going on upstream and that is a question that is attempting to be answered now and quantifying what that looks like.

Council member Poe shared concerns with the Cedar River seeping into Cedar Lake and asked if that would require additional mitigation. Ms. Pratt stated that there are a lot of moving parts that include stormwater issues and the Flood Control System. Mr. Micheel stated that there are a lot of other sources to be considered whether or not that will have a negative impact on the lake. That would come out in Phase I or II. The conversations that address this concern relates to conversations with the DNR and what it would take to create a high quality fishery here. There is a connection between the Cedar River and Cedar Lake focused on species of fish migrating back and forth. There is a slope that needs to be achieved to prevent some of this migration. DNR is focused on how you keep the undesirable fish species out of Cedar Lake.

Council member Overland asked if the railroads there are all in use or if some are abandoned. Mr. Micheel stated that the committee has just started research to determine ownership including trackage rights. There is a desire to improve and enhance the aesthetics.

3. ReZone CR

Mr. Gunnerson stated that at the open house staff showed a series of four (4) boards looking at residential options, commercial options, mixed use options, and streetscape and parking options and asked people to select the pictures they would like to see in the community and also the pictures that represent development that they do not want to see in the future. Mr. Gunnerson shared the results from that exercise. Comments from the open house will be posted online and City Council will be made aware when that is available for viewing.

Council member Poe stated that the reason she voted against a property development at the last Council meeting is because the parking was located in the front of the building instead of the back. The open house results show that the public agrees that the parking should be located in the rear.

4. Mt. Vernon Road Corridor Action Plan

Adam Lindenlaub, Community Development Planner, stated that the feedback from the visioning workshop and online questionnaire will be taken to the open house on September 12, 2016 from 4:30 to 7:30 pm at the All Saints Gymnasium. The open house will have different stations that have draft goals and action steps based on the feedback. There will be another open house in October as a last chance to get feedback.

Council member Overland stated that no decisions by the City have been made in regards to this area. We do not have any idea what is going to happen with this area and that is why we are doing this. This will take a long time to evolve because it is all on private property, but this gets the ball rolling so that property owners and others can think about what they would like to see. Ms. Pratt stated that it is hard to get that message across. That is why in the first public meeting staff did not put ideas out there as we are taking in what all the interests are because there are no predetermined plans. With the consultants staff help provide framework, so once the interests are heard staff researches the best practices for this area.

5. Northwest Neighbors Neighborhood Association Plan

Mr. Micheel stated that the first open house was in March 2016 which took residents through an exercise of identifying strengths and weaknesses of the neighborhood related to a set of issues such as streetscape, transportation, and other items. The second open house had an exercise that showed possible ways to address the weaknesses from the first open house and enhance the strengths identified. Those responses have been used to start drafting plan elements. Those will be presented at the third open house in October. Staff has decided to do more analysis through data sources that are available as to what people surrounding Ellis purchase and do residents purchase that outside of the area to give staff an idea as to what exists in terms of opportunities there. Staff will also organize a focus group with real estate professionals, developers, and residents to see what their perceptions are and barriers related to the commercial possibilities.

Council member Overland stated that what is seen so far in the redevelopment of downtown, NewBo, Czech Village, and Kingston is that they are not all the same and developed the same way. It is great to have that diversity that creates places that people want to go.

Public Comment:

Robin Kash likes the Neighborhood Finance Corporation idea and thinks it would be helpful. Another thing that could help that along would be the City embracing a public bank which would give finance and capabilities not presently available.

Rick Davis also believes that the Neighborhood Finance Corporation is a great idea. Mr. Davis stated that the land around Cedar Lake is 65%-70% owned by the railroad and they use that land as a hub. They always wanted a double track there so it will always be a hub. Mr. Davis also stated that he grew up in the Time Check area and the core to the issue is the berm and getting that safety. Mr. Davis commented that there is no bus service in the area that he lives and he sees many people walking in the rain. Staff will follow up with Mr. Davis on bus service.

The meeting adjourned at 4:07 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Anne Kroll, Administrative Assistant II
Community Development