MINUTES OF SPECIAL
CITY PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING,
Thursday, January 5, 2017 @ 4:00 p.m.

Cedar Rapids City Hall Council Chambers, 101 First Street SE

Members Present: Jim Halverson, Chair
Richard Pankey, Vice Chair
Kim King
Karl Cassell
Lisa Peloquin

Members Absent: Virginia Wilts
Samantha Dahlby
Dominique Blank
Anthony Brown

CD Staff: Seth Gunnerson, Planner
Jeff Hintz, Planner
Betty Sheets, Administrative Assistant

City Council Liaison: Justin Shields

Call Meeting to Order

The meeting was called to order at 4:00 p.m.

Opening statements were presented stating the protocol of the meeting and the purpose of the City Planning Commission.

Roll Call

Roll call was answered with five (5) Commissioners present.

A. Approval of the Minutes

Commissioner Halverson called for any additions or corrections to the minutes. Commissioner Halverson stated with no additions or corrections, the December 8, 2016 Minutes stand approved.
B. Adoption of the Agenda

Commissioner Halverson called for any additions or corrections to the agenda. Commissioner Halverson stated with no additions or corrections, the agenda stands approved.

C. Action Items

1. Consideration of Renewal of the Downtown Cedar Rapids Self-Supporting Municipal Improvement District (SSMID)
   Seth Gunnerson, Community Development Planner

Mr. Gunnerson stated that the state code process for establishing of a SSMID and a notice of public hearing has been sent to the property owners and that a public hearing cannot be set until City Council receives a recommendation of the City Planning Commission. Therefore, because of that and a 30 day waiting period after the public hearing before City Council can act on the request, this special meeting is being held so that your recommendation can be passed on to City Council and then the timeline can be set so that the SSMID can be authorized to collect taxes this year. This process is needed to be completed by March 14, 2017.

Mr. Gunnerson gave a quick overview of a SSMID. It is a self-taxing entity that is proposed by property owners within a district. The tax limit is set by petition. This is unlike Tax Increment Financing or Urban Renewal which is tax abatement. This is additional tax that people in the district choose to pay. The petition before you is proposing a maximum of $275 per thousand. The funds can be used for activities described in the petition. City Council adopts it by creating an ordinance and the City Council appoints a SSMID Commission that oversees the use of funds and activities of the district. The City of Cedar Rapids currently has three SSMID districts: the Med Quarter, the recently created Czech New Bohemia SSMID and the Downtown SSMID.

Mr. Gunnerson further stated the petition was received December 28, 2016 and represents 45% of the property owners and 62% of the assessed value within the district. State law requires that at least 25% of each of those categories is met in order that the City Council considers the petition. We have been made aware that at least 10 additional petitions have been received. Mr. Gunnerson showed the proposed boundaries of the petition with one minor modification removing City property of the Cedar Rapids Fire Station.

Mr. Gunnerson also said that the Downtown SSMID has been operational since 1986 and some of the proposed activities include Downtown Economic Development Programs, Communications and Advocacy, Capital Improvements downtown, Enhances Maintenance and Parking Management.

Mr. Gunnerson further stated that City staff recommends approval to the City Council. Staff findings include: Petition meets requirements for consideration, the boundary demonstrates properties that are related, the proposed activities are appropriate, the Downtown SSMID has demonstrated broad support and a history of supporting the interests of the District and establishment of the Downtown SSMID is supported by EnvisionCR as means to reinvest in business districts and promote unique areas of the City.
Commissioner Halverson invited the applicant to come forward.

Casey Prince, 348 Garden Drive SE, Downtown Executive Director stated that he also invited the Mayor appointed Downtown SSMID Commissioners who were also in attendance. Mr. Prince stated that he had been on the job for two months and stated what is overwhelming that he had sent out the petition three weeks ago and to have more than half supporters and more that two-thirds of property values in the district supportive, that quickly goes to show that the work of his predecessors and the work of the commissioners have demonstrated value to downtown property owners both in the beautification programs, infrastructure improvements over the years and programs that have come to be because of the support of the Downtown SSMID.

Mr. Prince went on to reference the 10 year look back Report that was shared with the City Planning Commission. Mr. Prince said the report was produced to hold the Downtown SSMID accountable for what Commissioners had set out to do. But also to make sure they were staying engaged with downtown owners.

Commissioner Cassell asked what would be the reason for the owners not signing the petition. Mr. Prince stated that someone would have to feel they are not engaged or not benefiting. Mr. Prince welcomes constructive feedback from anyone and stated that the next ten years will look different than the last ten years. Mr. Prince would like to know what could be done better.

Following discussion, Commissioner Halverson called for a motion. Commissioner King made a motion to approve the Renewal of the Downtown Cedar Rapids Self-Supporting Municipal Improvement District (SSMID). Commissioner Cassell seconded the motion.

No further discussion was held; Commissioner Halverson called for a vote on the motion.

Voting: Adopted, 5 Ayes, Commissioners Halverson, Pankey, King, Cassell, and Peloquin
0 Nays

The meeting was adjourned at 4:17 pm

Respectfully Submitted,

Betty Sheets, Administrative Assistant
Community Development and Planning Department