City of Cedar Rapids  
DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MINUTES  
Cedar Rapids City Hall, Council Chambers  
Wednesday, September 20, 2017  
3:00 p.m.

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

Present: Council members Poe, Shey and Overland. Staff members present: Jennifer Pratt, Community Development Director; Caleb Mason, Economic Development Analyst; Paula Mitchell, Housing Programs Manager; Anne Russett, Community Development Planner; Anne Kroll, Community Development Administrative Assistant.

Council member Shey made a motion to approve the minutes from August 16, 2017. Council member Overland seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Recommendation Items:

1. Disposition of 5131 Council St NE
Caleb Mason, Economic Development Analyst, stated that City staff received a request from Pat McGrath of McGrath Automotive Group, requesting the City initiate the process to invite development proposals for the property at 5131 Council St NE. The property was acquired in 2004 for the 51st Street NE realignment project. The realignment project is slated to be completed within the next month. The parcel remaining after completion of the 51st ST NE realignment is one (1) acre. The property was acquired using tax increment financing (TIF) funds and is located in the Council Street Urban Renewal Area. Staff recommends initiating a request for competitive redevelopment proposals for the site based upon the criteria of: proposer capacity and experience, overall investment, community benefit, and the timeline for completion. Mr. Mason shared a map of the location and the proposed next steps that lead to City Council’s consideration of the proposal(s).

Council member Shey asked if McGrath is vacating the current 51st Street NE for another access to the site. Mr. Mason stated that is a separate request that would follow a separate process subsequent to the proposal process for this property. A future road improvement project on Council Street will influence access in and to the site.

Council member Shey made a motion to approve staff’s recommendation to initiate a request for competitive redevelopment proposals for the site based upon the criteria of proposer capacity and experience, overall investment, community benefit, and the timeline for completion. Council member Overland seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

2. Annual CDBG and HOME Priorities
Paula Mitchell, Housing and Redevelopment Manager, stated that this is the annual process adopted to establish priorities for CDBG and HOME funds for July 1, 2018 through June 30, 2019. CDBG funding has decreased by thirty-one (31) percent and HOME funds have decreased forty-nine (49) percent since 2010. Some assumptions are the recommendations are based upon FY2017 final allocation amounts as FY2018 numbers will not be available until the spring of 2018 and both CDBG and HOME priority recommendations are consistent on a percentage basis with past practice. Ms. Mitchell shared a chart of CDBG and HOME percentage recommendations and recommendations for the Neighborhood Certification Program as well as the next steps that lead to the City Council’s adoption of the final Annual Action Plan.

Council member Poe asked how many Neighborhood Associations are certified. Ms. Mitchell stated that there are five (5) CDBG eligible neighborhoods and of those there are three (3) or four (4) that are certified. Jennifer Pratt, Community Development Director, added that of all of the Neighborhood Associations there are six (6) that are certified. Council member Poe asked if any of the other Neighborhood Associations are working towards certification and asked if staff could email Council with that information. Ms. Pratt stated that there are and that an email will be sent to Council.

Council member Shey made a motion to recommend City Council’s approval of the annual CDBG and HOME priorities. Council member Overland seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Updates:

1. ReZone Cedar Rapids
Anne Russett, Community Development Planner, provided an update on outreach staff has done regarding form-based regulations. Initial areas for form-based regulations include NewBo/Czech Village, Ellis Boulevard, Kingston Village, the MedQuarter, and downtown. Initial comments from public outreach include the following topics: parking, process, and aesthetics. There will be an open house in October where staff will seek feedback on a number of issues, such as: signs, exterior lighting, parking (location and amount), predictability in the review process, and trees. Ms. Russett noted that the City of Des Moines is also working on updating their Zoning Ordinance and are facing similar issues. Staff is following their progression to learn from them as they are a little ahead of Cedar Rapids in the process.

Council member Overland asked if the form-based code will eventually be rolled out to the entire city. Ms. Russett stated that after certain planning processes, such as the College District Area Action Plan, an action step after that would be to look at form-based zoning for those areas. Ms. Pratt added that some of the corridor focused areas, such as 1st Avenue, would be a logical area to include, but public input is needed for that. Once the developer community is used to the form-based code, there will be opportunities in additional areas.

Council member Poe asked if the form-based code will be applicable for the Mount Vernon Road Corridor. Ms. Russett stated that it is unknown at this time, but if it becomes clear from the community that they want Mt. Vernon Road to be form-based then staff can look into that. Council member Poe stated that she felt like that is what the community wanted during the Mount Vernon Road Corridor Action Plan process. Ms. Russett stated that the direction from the plan is to restrict certain uses in the commercial areas and staff will be looking at ways to do that.

Council member Poe commented that she wants to see the 360 vision of buildings in future development. Going forward, she encourages staff to have developers focus on all sides of a
building instead of concentrating on just the front side looking nice. Council member Overland agreed and used the example of seeing dumpsters in a parking lot every day. Ms. Pratt stated that all new construction is required to hide dumpsters and mechanical items, so the key is to figure out ways to get older buildings to do that as well. Council member Shey agrees with Council members Poe and Overland, but noted that it is expensive to make all sides look exactly the same, so the other three (3) sides will not look as good as the front, but they do need to look better.

Future Discussion Items:

Council member Poe has a contact person for state trails funding that she would like to pass onto staff for the Sleeping Giant Bridge since they have funded trestle bridges in the past. Council member Poe would also like a trails update in a future meeting.

Public Comment:

There was no public comment.

Council member Shey made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Council member Overland seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously and the meeting adjourned at 3:36 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Anne Kroll, Administrative Assistant II
Community Development