The meeting was brought to order at 4:01 p.m.

Present: Councilmember Vanorny; Councilmember Poe; Councilmember Hoeger; Jennifer Pratt, Community Development Director; Bill Micheel, Community Development Assistant Director; Scott Hock, Parks & Recreation Director; Seth Gunnerson, Community Development Planner; Sara Buck, Housing Programs Manager; Stephanie Schrader, Wellbeing Liaison; Eric Pate, Community Development Planner; Adam Lindenlaub, Community Development Planner; Lauren Freeman, Community Development Program Coordinator; Sylvia Bochner, Community Development Planner; Jillane Gilmour, Community Development Administrative Assistant; Todd Fagan, Parks and Recreation Arborist and Landscape Architect;

1. Approval of Minutes
Councilmember Vanorny motioned to approve the minutes from the February 19, 2019 meeting. Councilmember Hoeger seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

2. Presentation
a. Downtown Self Supporting Municipal Improvement District
Jesse Thoeming, Downtown Self-Supporting Municipal Improvement District (SSMID), shared the Downtown SSMID’s 2019 Goals and Objectives. Mr. Thoeming shared that 85% of the organization’s revenue is generated by property taxes in the 72-plot boundary, and 15% of the organization’s revenue is generated by the contract with the City for maintenance and beautification. There are approximately twenty responsibilities outlined within the contract. Mr. Thoeming shared that he has spoken to various district leaders in the country for insight on continuous improvement. The goals and objectives are not only for City leaders, but also for downtown district commissioners and stakeholders. There is a line item in the budget for a potential streetscape purchase, which will likely be for park benches. The Downtown SSMID will work with the City and Confluence on design, and the downtown operations team will manage implementation.

Mr. Thoeming shared that the Downtown SSMID will collaborate with Hughes Nursery on tree planting, and Blooms Nursery for flowers and planters. There will be ten public pianos throughout core districts provided by West Music. Mr. Thoeming stated that there will be a continued focus on improving district cleanliness. An interactive map will be built and maintained to highlight attractions, amenities, bars, and restaurants within all core districts, similar to the housing map.

Confluence is developing an alleyway master plan project, and the estimated completion date is at the end of August 2019 for a recommended path moving forward and inform which alleyways will be targeted for revitalization.
Rebranding:
- Comprehensive research and clarification of unique qualities defining Downtown’s story to develop vibrant brand that genuinely reflects the district. RFP distributed this Spring to local marketing firms for bid on the work.
- Outcome will inform updated brand, tag line, content and storyline as well as future wayfinding and signage project.

Other Initiatives
- Additional $20K to holiday lights budget with the intention of creating more of a wow factor for the district during the season
- Four new façade improvement projects all in various states of progress
- Working with Public Works on a sidewalk repair project on 5th Street and 7th Ave. (Terry-Durin Building)
- Food Truck Friday and Farmers’ Market schedules in place for the upcoming season, still working on confirming market layout
- Expand on-street parking enforcement in Kingston Village (working with ParkCR)

Councilmember Hoeger asked if return of the Fire and Ice Festival has been discussed.

Mr. Thoeming stated that the Downtown SSMID has decided to focus on other community initiatives at this time.

Councilmember Vanorny stated that she would like to see more artwork in 2019, particularly in the alleys, with lighting as a top priority. Councilmember Vanorny suggested shutting down streets on weekends to increase pedestrian foot traffic.

Mr. Thoeming stated that as ConnectCR moves forward, it presents a great opportunity to create a unique corridor between Cedar Lake and the Smokestack Bridge. Mr. Thoeming shared that public art opportunities on the walls of the Flood Control System have been discussed, and commissioners share that vision.

Councilmember Poe asked what the dollar amount is in relation to the 15% of revenue generated by the contract with the City.

Mr. Thoeming stated it is $134,000.

Councilmember Poe suggested lights from the US Cellular Center to 3rd Street ultimately leading to a lit arch on 8th Avenue as people enter the NewBo District to provide sense of place.

Councilmember Poe asked if there will be any changes to holiday lighting in 2019.

Mr. Thoeming stated that the Downtown SSMID is in the process of determining which colors to use, and are confident about the future displays with the installation of new streetlights and additional funding.

Councilmember Poe asked how the Downtown SSMID identifies the geographic boundaries of downtown.

Mr. Thoeming stated that Kingston is included, and the boundary goes up to 6th Ave. 8th Ave is the cutoff point.
Councilmember Poe encouraged inclusion of the west side when defining what is important downtown, and would like to see equal amounts of holiday lighting in this area.

Councilmember Poe asked to be able to view what the routine schedule is for trash removal downtown to prioritize busy areas, and encouraged the Downtown SSMID to work with business members who are part of the SSMID to keep alleyways top of mind.

Councilmember Poe stated that she would like to see hanging planters this year, and focus on the details to make sure the core of our community is beautiful and looks great every day.

b. City of Cedar Rapids and Trees Forever Growing Futures Partnership
Scott Hock, Parks and Recreation Director, opened his presentation by introducing Aaron Brewer, Trees Forever, Nancy Duncan, Trees Forever, Dave Blankenship, Trees Forever Board and Growing Futures, and Todd Fagan, Parks and Recreation Arborist and Landscape Architect.

Mr. Hock and Mr. Brewer shared a presentation on current Cedar Rapids Tree Planting, Right-of-Way Tree Planting:

- CIP Funding $150,000 per year
- Grant Funding: $5,000-$10,000 per year
- Plant 700-800 trees per year, mainly on the City ROW
- Competitive bid process

Other Highlights:
- Tree City USA for 41 years
- Partner on numerous grant funded projects including: Arbor Day, Treekeepers, school plantings, DNR Residential Tree Planting

Trees Forever History in Cedar Rapids and Linn County (Aaron)
- Over 21,000 volunteers contributing over 83,000 hours
- Planted over 51,500 trees
- Nearly $2.3 million in volunteer services, hours, trees and staff support over the past 30 years

Trees Forever Community Support
- TreeKeepers
  - Almost 200 volunteers trained
- Volunteer support
  - Provide technical assistance volunteer recruitment
- Tree planting funds
  - Community groups, neighborhoods, schools

Growing Futures:
How it works
- Modeled after programs in Des Moines, Indianapolis, Atlanta
- Agreement between City and Trees Forever to plant City trees
- Trees Forever will hire/train/supervise youth crews to plant trees
- Trees Forever will raise funds for additional plantings and projects
- We are all a part of growing leaders by employing and training youth

Giving back to Growing Futures youth employees
- Develop leadership skills
- Engage with youth of diverse backgrounds
• Experience nature and provide care for the trees of their future
• Gain job readiness skills
• Exercise daily

Benefits of Partnership:
• Leverages city dollars with private support
• Utilizes majority of CIP funds to support the project
• Non-profit flexibility including grant funding eligibility
• Ability to bring in additional partners
• Maintains consistency with our current tree planting numbers over the five year period
• City Staff continues to identify locations/type of trees
• Provides a broader social benefit to the community through youth engagement and employment

Proposed Timeline
April – June 2019
• Finalize Contract Agreement & Fundraising
September – Early November 2019
• Team leader and crew work Saturdays to plant and water trees
April – Early June 2020
• Spring crew works Saturdays to plant and water trees
Mid-June – Early August 2020
• Summer crews work Monday-Wednesday to water, mulch, prune trees
September – Early November 2020
• Fall crew works Saturdays to plant and water trees

How it works:
• Teams of 7-10 with 2 adult leaders per team:
  • Spring and Fall: 8 hrs/week for 5-6 weeks
  • Summer: 20 hrs/week for 10 weeks
  • 1-2 teams in the first year. Grow to more teams in future
• Enrichment activities provided
• Lunch provided each day
• Youth transported to work sites with water trailer and necessary equipment by Trees Forever

Councilmember Hoeger asked how locations are determined for tree planning, and if there are any programs for new development.

Mr. Hock stated that tree planting for new development comes from a separate planting source. There is a fairly long list of trees waiting to be planted, and are planted once funding becomes available. Approximately 1,000 trees are lost every year, and this figure does not include Ash trees.

Councilmember Hoeger asked if there is a specific tree size that needs to be put in the Right of Way.

Mr. Hock stated that they look for an inch and a half caliper.

Mr. Fagan shared that the bigger stock can be challenging to find.

Ms. Duncan shared that new trees need to be watered and looked after on a regular basis, and that is what this program focuses on. There is a rotating group of volunteers to make sure they are mulched properly.

Councilmember Vanorny asked if there are designated tree signs in the City.

Mr. Hock stated that signs have been installed, but will work to determine some more visible locations.

Councilmember Poe asked what the student age range is, and how to apply.

Mr. Brewer stated that the age range is 14-18 years old, and they may apply through the Trees Forever website.

Councilmember Poe asked what the City investment is.

Mr. Hock stated $125,000.

Councilmember Poe asked where the trees are sourced from.

Mr. Fagan shared that they are sourced from boundary states in the Midwest.

Councilmember Poe asked if equal amounts of shade trees are being planted.

Mr. Brewer shared that it is all about putting the right tree in the right place to shade concrete. The public is encouraged to plant diverse species.

3. Recommendation Items
a. 720 1st Avenue NW Property Disposition
Lauren Freeman, Community Development Program Coordinator, shared a presentation on 720 1st Avenue NW Property Disposition:
  ➢ City staff received a request to initiate the standard competitive disposition process for 720 1st Avenue NW
  ➢ 19,602 square feet of vacant City-owned property
  ➢ Under Chapter 32 - Zoning, this property is zoned as Urban Neighborhood Tech Shop, which requires:
Development Objectives
- Financially viable redevelopment based on current market conditions
- Design that enhances the character of the neighborhood
- Project that results in a community benefit

Evaluation Criteria
1. Developer Capacity and Project Feasibility
   - Capacity, experience, and capability of the Developer
   - Market feasibility
   - Financial feasibility
   - Timeline for redevelopment and build-out
2. Community Benefit
   - Quality of architecture
   - Innovative sustainability features building design
3. Economic impact
   - Overall project investment
   - Jobs created or retained
   - Amenities or services provided

Recommendation & Next Steps
Staff recommends initiating the standard competitive disposition process:
- March 26  Resolution setting public hearing
- April 9   Public hearing and resolution inviting proposals
- June 7    11:00 a.m. – Proposal Deadline
- July 9    City Council consideration of recommended proposal

Councilmember Hoeger asked if a committee of stakeholders in the neighborhood will review proposals.

Ms. Freeman stated that there would be a stakeholder committee.
Councilmember Vanorny stated that she is impressed with the work of Hobart Restoration, and looks forward to seeing more of their creativity.

Councilmember Poe asked if the railroad line is active.

Ms. Freeman stated that it is active.

Councilmember Vanorny motioned to move the 720 1st Avenue NW Property Disposition to City Council. Seconded by Councilmember Hoeger. The motion passed unanimously.

b. 1028/1032 5th Street SE Property Disposition
Ms. Freeman shared a presentation on the 1028/1032 5th Street SE Property Disposition:

Background

- City staff received a request to initiate the standard competitive disposition process for 1028 & 1032 5th Street SE
- 11,200 square feet of vacant City-owned property (two parcels)
- Under Chapter 32 - Zoning, these properties are zoned as Traditional Residential Single Unit (T-R1):
  - Permits small lot, single unit homes
  - Intended to preserve existing neighborhood character

Development Objectives

- Financially viable redevelopment based on current market conditions
- Design that enhances the character of the neighborhood
- Project that results in a community benefit

Evaluation Criteria

1. Developer Capacity and Project Feasibility

   - Capacity, experience, and capability of the Developer
   - Market feasibility
2. Community Benefit

- Quality of architecture
- Enhanced sustainability features in the site and building design
- Innovative housing options to meet the needs identified in the City’s comprehensive housing market analysis

3. Economic impact

- Overall project investment
- Amenities or services provided

Recommendation & Next Steps

Staff recommends initiating the standard competitive disposition process:

- March 26: Resolution setting public hearing
- April 9: Public hearing and resolution inviting proposals
- June 7: 11:00 a.m. – Proposal Deadline
- July 9: City Council consideration of recommended proposal

Councilmember Poe asked if the railroad line is active.

Jennifer Pratt, Community Development Director, stated that it is active.

Councilmember Vanorny motioned to move the 1028/1032 5th Street SE Property Disposition to City Council. Seconded by Councilmember Hoeger. The motion passed unanimously.

4. Updates

a. Czech Village/NewBo Area Action Plan

Adam Lindenlaub, Community Development Planner, shared an update on the Czech Village/NewBo Area Action Plan:

Advisory Group

- Role
  - Provide feedback
  - Preview public engagement activities
  - Encourage and advocate
- Member Entities
  - SSMID
  - NewBo Association
  - Oak Hill Jackson Neighborhood Association
  - Czech Village/New Bohemia Main Street District
  - Czech Village Association
  - Southside Investment

Considerations unique to the Czech/NewBo Area Action Plan include:

- Czech Village Greenway Park Plan Review
- Gateways
  - 3rd Street SE/8th Avenue SE
  - 16th Avenue SE Bridge
- Trail Connections and bicycle traffic
Draft Timeline
• April 2019 - Advisory Group Kick-off and Area Tour
• May 2019 – Visioning Workshop
• July 2019 – Design Workshop
• November/December 2019 – City Council Adoption

b. Bike Share
Sylvia Bochner, Community Development Planner, shared an update on Bike Share:
• Partnering with VeoRide
  • Founded in 2017
  • Based in Chicago
  • Operates in about 15 other cities
    ▪ Lawrence, KS
    ▪ Pella, IA
    ▪ Urbana-Champaign, IL
• 150 electric-assist e-bikes – will be customized with CR colors to be consistent with City branding
• E-scooter pilot program (30 scooters)
• Additional 20 fat tire bikes, located at Mt. Trashmore, added in Summer 2019

Stations:
• City will install stations to implement “hybrid” model
• Plan to install 90 racks, each holding up to 6 bikes
• Funding from Wellmark grant

Walk your Wheels:
• Expanding on Walk your Wheels campaign to prevent bike/scooter and pedestrian conflicts
• 50 new decals and signs
• Funded by Wellmark grant

Other Safety Info:
• Partnering with Iowa BIG to create instructional/safety videos
• Free/discounted helmets
• Safety info on VeoRide website and app

Code Updates:
• Definitions of “bicycle” and “electric stand up scooter”
• Generally regulates e-scooters in the same way as bicycles
• No riding on sidewalks in core area (2nd St SW to 5th St SE and 1st Ave to 16th Ave)
• Coordinating with Police Department

Launch
• May 13, coordinated with Bike to Work Week (May 13 – May 17)

Bill Micheel, Community Development Assistant Director, stated that the scooters are a pilot program to make sure it works for our community by limiting to 30 scooters. Bike Share will operate on a hybrid system, and those using ebikes will be able to park bicycles at racks. There is a defined area for scooters, and they are GPS enabled. Mr. Micheel shared that the scooters can be disabled in particular areas such as the Farmers Market and areas around it, for example. Data indicates that ridership is increasing with ebikes opposed to pedal bikes. Three, local employees will be hired along with a full-time manager for maintenance. City staff are working with the Police Department to help regulate and educate users.
Councilmember Poe asked what the timeframe is in terms of how long the scooters will be in their pilot program.

Mr. Micheel stated that they would be in operation for one season, from May 13 through October, as long as there is not an obvious, serious issue and will be watched closely.

c. Wellbeing Advisory Committee
Stephanie Schrader, Community Development Wellbeing Liaison, shared an update on the Wellbeing Advisory Committee. The purpose of the committee is to support on-going work of creating a healthy community and assist the Cedar Rapids City Council with matters related to well-being. The Wellbeing Advisory Committee was established three years ago as a result of the community’s successful participation and certification as a Blue Zone Community.

Ms. Schrader shared that the City received a Healthy Hometown designation from the Iowa Healthiest State Initiative, and were one of three communities awarded the distinction in the inaugural year. The Wellbeing Advisory Committee frames their work plan around the three, key tenants of the healthy hometown project:

Eat Well
• Expand community garden options
• Promote and expand community orchards
• Implement healthy concessions
• Enhance Farm-to-School Programming

Move More
• Continue walkability projects and broaden community partnerships
• Continue bike promotion

Feel Better
• Promote mental and emotional well-being through social connectedness events
• Advocate for nicotine-free playgrounds
• Expand worksite (wellness) initiatives

d. Iowa League of Cities All Star Community Nomination
Ms. Schrader shared an update on the Iowa League of Cities All Star Community Nomination. The Iowa League of Cities sponsors an All-Star Community award that seeks to acknowledge and encourage excellence in local government. The City will submit an application to recognize the work done with the Sinclair/NewBo Flood Control Measures. Ms. Schrader stated that the nomination will focus on the levy, detention basin, pump station, and the fact that there is a concrete pedestrian trail on top of the levy. The City will fall into the communities greater than 10,000 category.
5. Public Comment

There were no public comments.

Councilmembers Poe and Vanorny adjourned the meeting at 5:21 p.m. with unanimous consent.
Respectfully submitted,

Jillane Gilmour, Administrative Assistant
Community Development