1. Approval of Minutes
Councilmember Vanorny motioned to approve the minutes from the March 12, 2019 meeting. Councilmember Poe seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

2. Recommendation Items
   a. Ambroz Request for Proposal
Lauren Freeman, Community Development Program Coordinator, shared a presentation on the Ambroz Request for Proposal.

   Background
   - In April 2017, City issued an RFP to invite developers to redevelop the Ambroz Recreation Center. An initial proposal was submitted but later withdrawn.
   - In February 2019, a volunteer architect put together concept plans that looked at feasible adaptive reuse options, which considered:
     - Building Codes/City Ordinances
     - Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)
     - Secretary of Interior’s Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties
Development Objectives

- Financially viable redevelopment based on current market conditions
- Encourage investment along Mt. Vernon Road SE consistent with the goals of the Mt. Vernon Road Corridor Action Plan
- Preference for retaining a unique sense of place through renovation and/or new construction

Evaluation Criteria

1. Developer Capacity and Project Feasibility
   - Capacity, experience, and capability of the Developer
   - Market feasibility
   - Financial feasibility
   - Timeline for redevelopment and built-out

2. Community Benefit
   - Quality design and architectural features compatible with the traditional character of the neighborhood
   - Innovative sustainability features in the site and building design
Preference for retaining a unique sense of place with full or partial renovation of the existing building
Preference for housing, as identified in the Mount Vernon Road Corridor Action Plan

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:
- May 14 Resolution setting public hearing
- May 28 Public hearing and resolution inviting proposals
- July 19 11:00 a.m. – Proposal Deadline
- August 13 City Council consideration of recommended proposal

Councilmember Vanorny asked what the Ambroz building has been used for in the past.

Ms. Freeman stated that it is the former Buchanan School, and most recently used as a City of Cedar Rapids Parks & Recreation building.

Caleb Mason, Community Development Economic Analyst, stated that when the Northwest Recreation Center was built, the City offices relocated. The City was engaged with the Department of Justice on a settlement agreement. An informal review of the building will be conducted to determine what it would take to become ADA compliant.

Councilmember Vanorny asked if the City is offering to subsidize for an interested party.

Mr. Mason stated that as part of the request for proposal criteria, the City anticipates receiving different types of proposals. It is customary to cast a vision of what a historic property could become, and end use of the building determines how it becomes ADA compliant. If an addition is made to the structure, there may be different standards for a housing project. As part of the RFP, the City is asking for the proposer to provide that information. The City will then determine if it qualifies for an incentive.

Councilmember Vanorny asked if it would qualify for any of the historic incentives.

Mr. Mason stated that the City believes it may qualify, and have reached out to the State Historic Preservation Office to ensure this information can be provided to the proposer up front to assist in guiding them.

Councilmember Poe noted that there are no elevators in the building, and asked if there is any vision associated with Mt. Vernon Road.

Mr. Mason stated that this was identified as an opportunity and understood that the building would be vacated by the City. There is a considerable amount of land and parking that comes with this structure that would support a medium intensity use, and was discussed as part of the planning process.

Councilmember Vanorny motioned to move the Ambroz request for proposal to City Council. Seconded by Councilmember Poe. The motion passed unanimously.
3. 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
Advisory Group Kickoff Meeting

Themes heard:

- Item they would like to see in the future
  - Continuation of current development trend
  - Development of the Sinclair site
  - River recreation
  - Development that faces the river
  - An Arts & Cultural District spanning both sides of the river and 3rd Street SE

- Items that need to be avoided or changed
  - Negative retail (big box or bad design)
  - Parking issue perception - “it is a walking problem”
  - Negative impacts to historic character
  - Negative impacts to individual character

- Items to be considered
  - Pedestrian mall
  - Large public gathering spaces
  - Gateway entrances
  - Anchor grocery store

Timeline

- April 2019 - Advisory Group Kick-off and Area Tour
- June 5th 2019 – Visioning Workshop
- July 2019 – Design Workshop
- November/December 2019 – City Council Adoption

Councilmember Vanorny asked if ample handicap parking is available.

Mr. Lindenlaub stated that he would need to look into, as there is currently a combination of both private and public parking.

Councilmember Vanorny stated that she would like the area to be friendly for all mobility types, focus on buildings that need attention, and keep the grocery store small and locally sourced.

Councilmember Poe asked how many parking spaces will be lost while under construction, and when it will be completed at Lot 44.

Jennifer Pratt, Community Development Director, stated that before closing parking spaces, there will a large outreach to the property owners, stakeholders, and public as part of the communication plan. Based on two or three events during the year in this area, the City feels there will be enough continual parking availability to adequately manage. The handicap parking spaces will be closely reviewed in the planning process. In general, the district parking concept planning process is what the City is looking at long term.

Councilperson Poe asked if the City continues to encourage shared parking opportunities in the districts.

Ms. Pratt stated that shared parking opportunities are encouraged by the City.

Councilperson asked how successful wayfinding for Lot 44 has been.
Ms. Pratt stated that the City has been hearing positive feedback and will continue to over communicate. Overall, once the wayfinding system is implemented it will be another increase in efficiency in the Lot 44 wayfinding signage.

b. Historic Asset Inventory Sub-Committee
Sylvia Bochner, Community Development Planner, shared an update on the Historic Asset Inventory Sub-Committee.

Background
- Goal of identifying proactive strategies to preserve historic properties
- Members include HPC commissioners and members of local non-profits
- Used a list developed in 2017 as a starting point

Update
- The group has completed their initial list, which includes over 500 properties and several neighborhoods
- The list includes addresses, along with relevant information, including historic background and current use/condition
- Living document—maintained and updated biannually

Preservation Strategies
- Education and outreach
- Local Landmark
- Adaptive Reuse Plan

Councilmember Vanorny asked if the City can intervene during the sale of a historic property.

Ms. Bochner stated that property ownership changes are reviewed via assessment information. Proactive strategies and education for property owners as soon as possible provide for a better chance for success in saving or rehabilitating a historic property. The list is a tool the sub-committee can use to develop strategies.

Ms. Pratt stated that the key is being proactive by finding at-risk properties and doing an adaptive reuse. Private reinvestment is the best thing to help save historic structures, and is the purpose of the sub-committee. In addition, City Council approved the additional incentive amount for up to 100% over ten years if a developer incorporates a historic building in a project or moves the structure to a new site. Between both of those options, it makes saving historic assets a financially-feasible choice.

Councilmember Vanorny asked if realtors are included in the outreach efforts.

Ms Bochner stated that this aspect should be included in the process.

Councilmember Poe thanked the sub-committee for their work, and stated the importance of being proactive and educating property owners about local landmarking.

c. Historic Preservation Postcard Project
Ms. Freeman and Maria Johnson, Communications Manager, shared an update on the Historic Preservation Postcard Project.
Background
- Created to highlight Cedar Rapids historic properties and celebrate the city’s achievements in historic preservation
- Features 12 historic buildings that have been restored in the past few decades
- Packets of these collectible postcards will be available for purchase and proceeds will benefit local historic preservation non-profits

Councilmember Vanorny stated that she looks forward to the project, and it is great way to celebrate Cedar Rapids history and fundraise.

Ms. Johnson stated that packaging will be finished soon and they will be available for purchase at City Hall, and potentially at local non-profits and museum gift shops. The research and design took careful consideration, and the upcoming Our CR will be a historic issue and feature the postcards to help promote them.

Councilmember Poe stated that she is also excited about the project.

**d. City Flag**

Ms. Johnson shared an update on the City Flag.

**Kick off event – June 1, 2019**

- Resident Appreciation Day at City Sponsored Farmers Market
  - Engage residents about process
  - Provide information about flag design
  - Offer fun activities, and opportunities for input and submissions
Councilmember Poe asked if there was a City flag before our current flag.

Ms. Johnson stated that the City is not aware of another flag.

Councilmember Vanorny stated that the new flag will build branding and help people take ownership of Cedar Rapids. With social media input, be mindful about honoring voices who live and interact with Cedar Rapids and make sure voting is limited for residents.

e. Neighborhood Associations
Eric Pate, Community Development Planner, shared an update on the Neighborhood Associations.
City Service Delivery Teams
- Delivery teams were right-sized to accommodate the needs of the neighborhood.
- Each City Service Delivery Team Lead is responsible for assembling the team

Spring Neighborhood Workshop
- Spring workshop is scheduled for 4/24
- Workshops offer networking and capacity-building opportunities for NA leadership
- Parks and Rec director Scott Hock will speak to this workshop on park-neighborhood relations.

Spring Clean-Ups
Northwest Neighbors – April 6th
Mound View – April 6th
Big Bang Foundation at Redmond Park – April 20th
Wellington Heights – April 27th
Kenwood Park – April 27th
Westdale Area – April 27th
Taylor Area – May 5th
Oak Hill Jackson – May 11th

Councilmember Vanorny stated that she would like to work toward smokeless parks, and appreciates the efforts of Matthew 25.

Councilmember Poe asked if there are opportunities for neighborhood presidents and leaders to get together and share ideas.

Mr. Pate shared that quarterly workshops are held to highlight trainings and networking, as well as offer tips for community engagement and recruiting volunteers.

Councilmember Poe asked that the City team continues to share updates on construction projects.

Councilmember Poe stated that she would like to see Neighborhood Associations collaborate on community gardens to provide free produce for food banks.

5. Public Comment

Monica Vernon, with the Czech-NewBo Main Street organization, shared that she would like to see more wayfinding along 3rd Street and for Czech Village and interaction between NewBo and Czech Village.

Ms. Pratt shared that a large wayfinding study has been done, look forward to discussing and what can be done in the interim.

Councilmembers Poe and Vanorny adjourned the meeting at 5:08 p.m. with unanimous consent.

Respectfully submitted,

Jillane Gilmour, Administrative Assistant
Community Development